

**THE
SECOND** **BOOK OF**
CATHOLIC
JOKES

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Foreword by Father Paul Boudreau

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PUBLICATIONS

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INTRODUCTION



Someone's bound to ask: How dare I make jokes about the church?

Okay, here's why: Our human attempts to understand God and God's action in the world are hilarious. When we forget that very powerful truth, we risk losing our real connection to the divine.

The life God gives us can be very humorous. Comical. Downright laughable. Despite that, there are lots of very religious people running around these days with frowns on their faces, with grimness in their hearts, and words like "don't you dare..." on their lips.

How sad. But don't take my word for it. No less than the inestimable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, that celebrated evangelist of airwaves, said in a 1959 broadcast that Jesus had a "divine sense of humor." Sheen said, "There was nothing in this world that he ever took seriously — except the salvation of souls."

Not convinced? Still think that religion means having a dour outlook on life? Count the priests, deacons, and occasional male or female religious or layperson you know who use jokes and other humor in their homilies because they present an outlook on life we can all relate to. After all, we humans can be the funniest of all God's creatures, without even trying.

Archbishop Sheen used humor to reach into the hearts, minds, and souls of the millions who were touched by his broadcasts. More

than 30 years after Sheen's death, his stories — some of them really no more than long jokes — still resonate. Here's one. He said that at one parish where he was preaching there would be an envelope in the collection with a note: "IOU \$35" or "IOU \$50." This went on for weeks. Finally there was an envelope filled with cash, the total of all the IOUs. Sheen said he felt good about his preaching until the following week, when there was another envelope. This time, the note read: "You owe me \$25."

Still not convinced?

Even the Vatican's newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, says that it appreciates the jokes and humor in "The Simpsons," as irreverent and comical a slice of exaggerated life as ever existed. When the animated TV show marked its 20th anniversary in 2009, the pope's semi-official publication commented that without Homer Simpson and his often befuddled and sarcastic pals "many today wouldn't know how to laugh."

If that's not a character reference for religious humor, I don't know what is.

Humor is very malleable. In researching thousands of jokes, some suitable for publication in this book and others not, one thing became clear to me: There's a thread of humor running through nearly all faiths. In fact, many of the jokes in this book began in one faith tradition and "swam the Tiber" to find a home among Catholics. Undoubtedly, many have swum the other direction as well. (For example, a Mormon newspaper writer in Salt Lake City took several of the jokes from my first book of Catholic jokes, changed all the characters to Mormons, and published them in his review of my book. They all worked just fine.)



While the majority of jokes in this volume have a Catholic slant, others look at our sometimes warped understandings of God, the Bible, the afterlife, and even other faiths and denominations. Always with a smile, of course, and all done in the spirit of love.

In other words, “Godly” humor is ecumenical and interfaith.

The question for religious people is always whether or not we have the courage — and the faith — to laugh at our own foibles and pretensions and not, as Archbishop Sheen warned us against, take ourselves so seriously all the time.

For Catholics, celibacy can be a choice in life, or it can be a condition imposed by circumstances.

While attending a Marriage Preparation Weekend, Walter and his future wife, Ann, listened to the instructor declare, "It is essential that husbands and wives know the little things that are important to each other."

The instructor then addressed the men: "Guys, can you name your wife's favorite flower?"

Walter leaned over, touched Ann's arm gently, and whispered, "Gold Medal All Purpose, isn't it?"

Thus began Walter's life of celibacy.

Little Jonnie had been exceedingly naughty, and during dinner he was forced to eat alone in the corner at a card table. When everyone was seated, his father bowed his head and gave thanks.

Then little Jonnie gravely bowed his head and prayed out loud, "Thank you, Lord, for preparing a table for me in the presence of my enemies."

Why do they say "amen" at the end of a prayer instead of "awomen?"

The same reason they sing hymns instead of hers.