

Extracted from St John Vianney March 29, 2009 Bulletin

### Father Mansfield to become Punk Rocker by Carl E Beyer

Father Mansfield has decided to step down from the clergy to pursue a career in a Punk Rock Band. I know that after just completing the new Parish Hall, this must come as a shock to most of you but ask Father Mansfield at the next mass about his new punker career. OK, OK don't run to the phones!! APRIL FOOLS. Yeah a little early but I thought I would catch your attention.

I got to wondering where did April Fools' Day come from. Here's a little history for you from Wikipedia. *"The origin of April Fools' Day is obscure. One likely theory is that the modern holiday was first celebrated soon after the adoption of the Gregorian Calendar; the term referred to someone still adhering to the Julian Calendar which it replaced. In many pre-Christian cultures May Day (May 1) was celebrated as the first day of summer, and signaled the start of the spring planting season. An April Fool was someone who did this prematurely. In the eighteenth century the festival was often posited as going back to the times of Noah. An English newspaper article published on April 13th, 1789 said that the day had its origins when he sent the raven off too early, before the waters had receded. He did this on the first day of the Hebrew month that corresponds with April. A possible reference to April Fools' Day can be seen in the Canterbury Tales (ca 1400) in the Nun's Priest's tale, a tale of two fools: Chanticleer and the fox, which took place on March 32nd."*

With April Fool's Day falling on a Wednesday this year I think I will just hide out at home and avoid being the fool. My kids are pretty much April Fool proof after all these years so we may just be a fool proof home.

How can this possibly relate to the Church? Simply speaking, the calendar was fixed by the Church. After researching it, I found the calendar was only off by ten days, not by months, so what was the big deal?

But was ten days enough to start years of April Fools? It seems a little over the top. Can you imagine hanging out on your farm following the calendar that you have followed for decades and one day someone stops by and informs you that you are an April Fool for having the wrong calendar?

The last day of the Julian calendar was Thursday, 4 October, 1582 and this was followed by the first day of the Gregorian calendar, Friday, 15 October, 1582. So we skipped ten days but kept our week days in order. Should not it have been Monday, 15 October, 1582? I guess it makes sense, because if they had moved ahead the weekdays along with the number of days, Sunday would have been skipped. People would have lost their weekends so they would have had to work two weeks in a row without a day of rest. Seems like a big waste of calendars also since one could not just skip ten days; one would have to get a whole new calendar.

Makes you wonder what God thought of all this. I mean did he look down in the fourteenth century and say look at those fools celebrating the Lord's day of rest on a Thursday. It is only logical that God knew what day it was and that mankind had royally messed it up. This shows you the patience of God to wait fifteen centuries before whispering in someone's ear that spring was coming earlier and earlier over the centuries. Only one day every 150 years was lost, well past anyone's lifetime to notice.

But the problem does not end there. By the fifteen century the Catholic Church had lost most of its power over civil authorities so each civil authority had to decide when and if to adapt the new calendar. What a mess that must have been. World travelers must have had a suitcase full of calendars for traveling from country to country.

Fools? I believe one of our greatest gifts from God is our sense of humor. When have you seen your dogs out back laughing? No, this one quality is given to mankind to enjoy. And since we were made in the image of God I believe that God enjoys humor. Why else would he make a year 365.2425 days long.? On the other hand, maybe it was to teach us that perfection is reserved for God and God alone. We can seek perfection but we can never achieve it.

I imagine God's humor is quiet humor, not the rolling-on-the-floor-laughing kind but a more reserved humor. It is the twinkle in God's eye or the quiet smile when he thinks of the humor he sees in us and about us. I always imagine God's humor when I watch the Animal Channel. Some of the things He programmed into animals cannot be anything but humorous. The prime example of this is the Platypus. This egg-laying, venomous, duck-billed, beaver-tailed, otter-footed mammal is most certainly humorous.

One only has to brush the surface of animal mating rituals. It would seem that God programmed into the male animal something of the fool in finding a mate. He either has to do this weird dance or build this weird nest to be attractive to the opposite sex. Personally I think it is a little biased that the male always has to chase the female, but then who am I to question God? I am sure if we ask our fellow parishioners, we could get plenty of examples of the foolish and humorous things we have done in the name of love.

Here is a list of the various kinds of humor: Adviser, Anecdotes, Aside, Banter, Blendword, Blue Humor, Blunder, Bull, Burlesque, Caricature, The Catch Tale, Conundrum, Epigram, Exaggerism, Freudian Slip, Hyperbole, Joke, Nonsensism, Parody, Practical Joke, Recovery, Repartee, Satire, Situational Humor, Switching, Understatement, Wisecrack, and Wit.

With that list, how could God not have humor? How could he give each of us a different type of humor without knowing what humor is. Most of us have our own unique funny bone that triggered uncontrollable laughter, sometimes during the most inappropriate of times.

So why not April Fools' Day? Wake your spouse up and tell her she doesn't have to work because it snowed five feet last night. Tell your coworker that the boss has set a new policy that everyone has to call him "Master". Be cruel to your kids and tell them school was canceled and then a few minutes later say "April Fools".

God Bless you all. Go forth and laugh for God will laugh with you. Go forth and do something foolish and God may laugh at you but also with you. Go forth and spread humor in the name of God.