

## *KEEPING THE FAITH*

Although *Keeping the Faith: Making a Difference* is a useful read for people of all ages, its primary audience is young adults. Fr. Wilson D. Miscamble, C.S.C., says that young people everywhere face compelling yet common questions about what to believe and whom to trust. They confront similar and critical choices about vocations, relationships and values. Fr. Miscamble says that *Keeping the Faith* is "an invitation to young adults to mature reflection on their Christian faith."

### WHAT YOU SHOULD THINK ABOUT BEFORE YOU READ *KEEPING THE FAITH*

Fr. Miscamble suggests that there are three questions that you might think about before you read *Keeping the Faith*:

- How am I doing in my relationship with God?
- How does my faith influence my personal relationships?
- How do I live out my Christian calling in the world?

### QUESTIONS

- Fr. Miscamble cites writer Andrew Delbanco's assertion that Americans have lost their sense of evil, their belief in Satan.

Discuss whether you think this is true. Have the events of 9/11/01 changed your perspective or the perspective of others around you?

- True friendship sometimes involves correction of a friend. But, as Father Miscamble observes, we don't want to be busybodies or narcs.

Share any occasions when someone corrected you in good spirit and how you reacted.

- As children we had different perceptions on the meaning and role of chastity in our lives than we do as adults.

Give a description of a modern form of chastity that everyone can and should live with.

- Genesis says, "It is not good for one to be alone." Fr. Miscamble says that we should reaffirm our faith in the institution of marriage. He says we should mean what we say when we pronounce the marriage vows.

How can you as a Christian strengthen the institution of marriage?

- Fr. Miscamble talks about some women who might have ambivalent feelings about their role in a patriarchal church.

How can a modern woman participate in today's church with a feeling of fulfillment?

- Pope John Paul II, who helped bring about the fall of Communism, doesn't like unbridled, free-market capitalism. Fr. Miscamble says that this position comes from church teaching about the equality of all people. He says that Christians must try to change the system so that all people can share in the common good.

Discuss whether you've had any opportunities in the workplace to make things better for others. What was the result of your efforts? Have there been any missed opportunities?

- Work can be just a job, or it can be a career, or a calling.

What are the markers that tell us that work has gotten out of proportion in our lives?

- In many ways American culture is the culture of the cowboy. Violence has permeated our society and sometimes has official sanction, such as in the case of abortion and the death penalty.

How can we mobilize Christians to assert a proper perspective and morality in public policy issues?

- These are troubled times for the Catholic priesthood. How can we strengthen the priesthood and help to restore its high esteem?

- Pope John Paul II has set an example for the Catholic as evangelist. Father Miscamble says that young Catholics have the obligation to "be church."

What concrete steps can be taken to make life in your parish more rewarding and to encourage others to participate in parish life? How can we be not just consumers of parish life but full participants?

- The Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life showed that more than 85 percent of those involved in the ministry to the poor, grieving handicapped and sick, were women. More than 80 percent of CCD teachers are women. Sixty percent of people involved in youth ministries are women.

What are the barriers to men's participation in this ministry? How can we break down those barriers?

- In a world in which details can suck the faith out of us, how do we keep the faith?

#### ABOUT FR. BILL MISCAMBLE

In writing *Keeping the Faith*, Fr. Miscamble had both a perspective on the past and an eye to the future. A history professor at the University of Notre Dame, Fr. Miscamble also has a decade of experience as a minister in residence halls on the Notre Dame campus.

#### FATHER MISCAMBLE'S SPECIAL MESSAGE ABOUT KEEPING THE FAITH:

"My friends, our religion, our faith, does not take us out of life but energizes and gives meaning to everyday life. It links us in solidarity to a community that stretches back 2,000 years. This community has gone through history, ever changing and adapting, in one century never the same as before, its doors always open to the world. It has been sustained by men and women such as yourselves—the merciful, the single-hearted, the peacemakers. In all that time the hungry have been fed, the sick have been comforted, the strangers

have been welcomed and prisoners visited. And, deep in their hearts, men and women have discovered what makes life truly worthwhile. Dear readers . . . keep the faith! Keep the faith, and in so doing, live it and share it."