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# Catholic Girls Forever



Issue #61  
**June**/July

Dear Readers,

Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July! There is SO much I want to talk to you about! Where to start.... Well, let's start with patriotism. Now I am pretty sure all of you celebrated the 4<sup>th</sup> of July in some way and that is fantastic! But what I find is that too often we only care about our country on a very superficial and honestly quite ignorant level. I mean, most of you would probably say, 'Yeah, America is great! The land of the free!' Especially with the recent overturn of Roe vs. Wade (If you don't know about this ask your parents, it is a pretty wonderful moment in American History) we feel a surge of joy and pride in our country, and rightly so. Or, perhaps, you are that person that sees all governments as corrupt and imperfect and rarely give a positive thought to our country. Whatever the case may be there are a few things I find all too common. #1 is that people often just repeat what they hear without actually making a judgment for themselves. They rarely invest time and energy into knowing much about their country. How many of you know who the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 presidents are? How about the last 3? The current state senators? Yeah... I remember in my government class in 11<sup>th</sup> grade when our teacher brought us in the US Citizenship test and gave it to us. I can assure you that none of us passed. Not even close. But I learned a lot that year! And with that learning I came to understand why my Father said the things he did about the government and when I thought about my country I did so with a storage (albeit a small one) of knowledge and understanding. The 4<sup>th</sup> of July has meant a little more to me since then.

My sister Beth was big on knowing about politics. She was big on knowing about all sorts of things, whether it was politics, the history of the SSPX, or how to train a horse. Did she ever sit and study one of those for more than a day? Probably not 😊 She was a terribly sanguine person and so easily distracted onto the next good thing to know about. Anyhow, at one point when we were about 11 and 12 she decided to study the popes and was going to memorize ALL of them. I looked at that long list of popes and said.... Yeah.... I think I am going to go with the Presidents of the United States, there are a lot fewer! She was aghast that I would be such a heathen to choose something secular over religious but I was unphased. I had this little bookmark/ruler that had the presidents listed and their dates and within a week I knew them all. Then I realized I wanted to know more about them than just the names. So I found every book we had in our at-home library (Mom was fantastic about having a large variety of great books for us to read) and devoured it. Soon I was showing off my knowledge to my aunts and uncles. I could list all the presidents, vice-presidents, their party and the years they were in office along with a few fun facts for each. To this day I can still list all of the presidents though the dates and other information has faded. As for my sister, Beth.... Well, about 25 Popes in she decided that studying church History would be more beneficial to her 😊

As silly as it was, that memorizing of the Presidents did set a good foundation for my understanding of the workings of America. Now, I am not saying you should go do the same, though who knows, you may enjoy it as much as I did, but what I am trying to say is learn, learn about America. In order to love something you must know it. Get books on it. They don't have to be huge boring History books. Check out the kids section and you will find all sorts of great things that you sort of knew but forgot about America. Find an era or event or person in American History who interests you and find even more books on that. And soon you will be able to truly be patriotic.

The second thing I find is that people often see America as something separate from themselves. What do I mean by that? Well, they may love America and think we are the greatest nation ever, but they do not take an active role in being that great America. Or the opposite, they see all the problems in our country (and we definitely are not a perfect nation!) and they criticize and complain but do little or nothing to change it for the better. Now, I know America is HUGE so it seems like the actions of one person do so little and that we are just at the mercy of the mob. In a way that is true, but that is not an excuse to not be an active and excellent citizen of America and pray that one day the nation will be a God-fearing one. I am not saying you need to run for President, or maybe you should 😊, but I am saying that you should make an effort to be a positive part of your country. Make a conscious effort to see yourself just as that, a PART of your country, and not just a cheerleader for America or a victim of America's defective government. Some of you are still young and can't vote yet but taking part in voting is just one way to be a positive citizen. It is never too early to learn and care about your country and make plans on the type of citizen you want to be.

## Challenge of the Month

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**Go one week without any screen time.** And when I say any screen time, I mean even no texting your friends. I know that to some of you that sounds insane and terrible, but I promise, you will grow from the experience. Plan ahead of time. Know that you will be taking the week off and let your friends know. You can still make phone calls, just no time spent looking at the screen. Plan in person activities with your friends and family for that week. We live in an age where we are surrounded by and too often addicted to screens. This can especially become true over our summer vacation. We have time on our hands and so we watch a movie, text our buddies, watch YouTube videos, check our email, scan Facebook, or whatever else you are into. In moderation these are all fine things, but too often these are more of a filler in our lives than a purposeful part of it.

Remember what I spoke about in the last issue, being sure to choose WHO you become and not just WHAT you do with your life? Well, this is very much related. Take screens out of your life for a short time and fill that time with purposefully chosen alternatives. Instead of texting a buddy, call them. It isn't worth a phone call? Then just store it away to tell them later as part of an in-person conversation. You will soon realize that without texting your life seems... quiet.... simple. This is a good thing! Bored and want to watch a movie? Well, find something else to do. Hang out with a sibling. Play a game. Go on a walk. Read a book. Do a project. Write a letter. Phone a friend. Bake something. The options are endless, but they are all going to be things that add more to you as a person than sitting down and watching that movie would have. When you are forced to find alternative entertainment and ways to spend your time you are forcing yourself to grow, to make personal choices, to help determine the person you are.

So give it a try! I will be taking the last week of July off so feel free to join me then or whatever time works best for you! Let me know how it goes and trust me when I say it will be so worth it! And when you go back to technology after that week, think a little more about the choices you make when using it. Make sure it is a purposeful part of your life and not just a time-filler and escape from reality.

*Technology is a useful servant but a dangerous master.*

*– Christian Lous Lange*

## Pen – Pals/ E – Pals

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One of the best ways to grow as a person is to surround yourself with good friends. There is no perfect time to start making new friends, it is something that you should continue to do as you grow and mature and find your path in this world. Sometimes though you wonder just where to find a friend for your particular stage of life. Perhaps God has already put one in your life, or perhaps you are still waiting and looking. Connecting with other readers of this newsletter (there are around 200 currently) is a great place to start new friendships. Even if you think you already have enough friends, consider expanding your horizons and meeting someone new.

Did you know that some of our readers are from another country even? One of them, Agnes, would love to become a Pen-Pal/E-Pal. Since she lives in Australia communicating via email is more efficient but there are international stamps that can be easily purchased at any local post office. I could give you a whole introduction to Agnes, but then that would spoil the whole fun of getting to know her yourself, so instead I will insert her email here and encourage you to reach out to her and perhaps start what will be a life-long friendship 😊



Meet Agnes at [agnesbaxter7@gmail.com](mailto:agnesbaxter7@gmail.com)



# Immortal Poets' Society

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This poem is one of the most powerful ones I have ever encountered. I still remember the first time I read it. I was having a hard time sleeping when I was about 10 years old and so I slipped out into the hallway outside our bedroom that was simply filled with books. I selected this very old looking book that was filled with verse. I opened up to "The Lay of the Last Minstrel". It didn't sound super interesting, but hey, I had nothing to lose and I had already learned that you can never judge a book by its cover or even title. It was beautiful. My little heart fell in love with poetry that day and I remember reading this section over and over, slowly, and just enjoying the beauty of it. Hopefully you all can enjoy it at least a fraction of what I felt that night.

## *Breathes there the Man with Soul so Dead*

- Sir Walter Scott

*Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land?  
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,  
As home his footsteps he hath turned,  
From wandering on a foreign strand?  
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;  
For him no Minstrel raptures swell.  
High though his titles, proud his name,  
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;  
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,  
The wretch, concentred all in self,  
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,  
And, doubly dying, shall go down  
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,  
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.*

## Just for Laughs

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**What did one flag say to another?** Nothing, it just waved!

**Did you hear the one about the Liberty Bell?** Yeah, it cracked me up!!!!

An Englishman, an Irishman and a Scotsman are drinking in a bar. A fly lands in the Englishman's pint. The Englishman is disgusted and pushes his beer away and orders another. A fly lands in the Scotsman's pint. The Scotsman looks at the fly shrugs, and just drinks the fly down. A fly lands in the Irishman's pint. The Irishman is furious. He picks out the fly, and violently shakes the fly over his pint glass while screaming, "Spit it out, spit it out!!"



## Girls, You're Important – Fr. Siekmann

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*This chapter is definitely one of my favorites for a few reasons. First, it is so applicable to everyone, no matter their age or state in life. Second, it is something I have always been grateful to my parents for teaching us by their actions. If you know my family at all, you know that they are some of the most generous people you will ever meet. They are the ones who will walk up and introduce themselves if you are new to the parish or community, they will reach out and make sure you have someone and somewhere to celebrate holidays, they will remember your birthday and give you a call, they will travel hundreds of miles to be there to support you in a difficult time even if they have never met you, their door is always open, and they have touched the lives of thousands of people. This chapter is titled "Be Considerate" which more or less translates to "Think of Others" and that is certainly the motto that my parents live by. We can certainly benefit from this chapter and perhaps one day we too will be able to make the difference that my parents make.*

Other people have feelings. Whenever you are inconsiderate towards them you hurt them. You know how you feel when thoughtless people fail to consider you. Certainly if you want to be liked you will make yourself likeable by first being kind to others. Your kindness will practically force others to be kind to you in return.

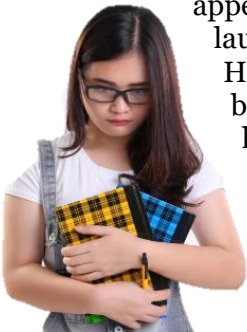
***Charitableness is one of the striking qualities of a Christian.***

Charitableness is one of the striking qualities of a Christian. Love of neighbor is a real necessity for anyone who would be a true Christian.

You show your consideration for others by little things, or rather by the way you feel towards other people. Seldom are you called upon to do anything **really** big for your neighbor. In fact, you will seldom be expected to go out of your way at all to give money or time to help someone else. You will show your consideration rather by the attitude you take towards others.

If you force yourself to think kindly of old people, you will show this by a smile, a passing favor, such as holding a door for an elderly person, by a cheery word of greeting when you meet someone. All these little acts of kindness cost little, yet they do much to brighten the perhaps drab and dull lives of others. Young people, who are bubbling over with youthful joy and enthusiasm, often do not realize the burdens, aches and pains, the troubles and the heartaches of older people. The latter often need encouragement to brighten their day. The thoughtful girl, who is considerate of others, will spread sunshine and cheer into the lives of these depressed persons by her timely acts or words of kindness.

Then there is the unpopular girl or boy who does not have any friends. He or she may have been made different by circumstances that could not be avoided. Let us suppose that a girl of your acquaintance is odd in appearance, wears unattractive clothes, and cannot act properly or gracefully in a group. Others laugh at her. This hurts her **deeply**. She would like to be popular like the rest, but she cannot be. Her mother was sick for a long time and finally died. This girl had to shoulder much of the burden of her family when she was all too young for the task. There just was not enough money left from her father's pay check after the groceries and other necessities were bought to buy nice dresses for her. Remember, this poor girl did not have the carefree, normal childhood that you enjoyed. Is it any wonder that she finds it hard to fit in now with girls of her own age group?



Life has been hard for her. How inconsiderate it would be for anyone to make life even harder for her by making her feel that she is different. The girl who has real Christian charity, who is truly considerate, will try to overlook the odd qualities of this poor girl, and show her many acts of kindness.

There will always be some girls who will be different in an unpopular sense. Sickness, background, lack of talent or of ordinary intelligence, also of the ordinary advantages which other girls have, will set them apart.

***How pleased God must be with the popular, attractive girl who, in the spirit of charity, tries to make all other girls happy and cheerful.***

Laughing at them, or ignoring them, will make them all the worse. Consider, too, how much pain this can cause them.

Try to accept such girls and, by your kindness and consideration, win them over to companionship with the rest. Very often these unpopular girls are merely fearful. They fear that

they are going to be made fun of; they fear that unkind things will be said about them. If you deliberately show that **you**, at least, want to be kind, that you mean to be friendly, you will do much to strengthen the confidence of such lonely girls.

How pleased God must be with the popular, attractive girl who, in the spirit of charity, tries to make all other girls happy and cheerful. Consideration for others is what makes life beautiful. Inconsiderateness is what tears to shreds the aching heart of the less fortunate. Always consider the feelings of others. What some may be neglecting to do, for lack of good example, you can do. Your kindness and consideration will be copied. Charity has a way of multiplying by itself. A good deed will be noticed, and will be the inspiration for a second, and many more to follow. But someone has to start the chain. In the circle of your friends and acquaintances, as well as among those whom you do not consider your friends, there may be a great need for kindness, and charity and consideration. You can be the one to start this movement of Christian charity. Life will be better and happier for all of you as a result.

*Now that you have read it, I am sure all of you can think of someone you know who is overlooked, unpopular, and must feel 'unwanted'. Perhaps that is how you feel, or how you used to feel. Let's all try to be that person who starts the trend of including others, whether an elder person or an unpopular girl, and little by little we will change the world. If you are too shy or unsure how to go about it, look for someone to follow or join you in this apostolate.*

*I remember seeing my brothers as teenagers stop to greet some of the elderly gentlemen on Sunday after Mass who normally have no one to socialize with. Seeing their faces light up when my brothers would wish them a good day and ask how life is going was one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen and made a deep impression on me. They would stay and chat with them a while and as the elderly gentleman walked off he had such a look on his face.... And my brothers just did it naturally!*



*My brother chatting with one of our neighbors*

*Another instance that struck me was at a young adult dance. There was one girl who was far less popular in school and yet who desperately loved dancing though she had never really learned the ones we were doing. My brother chose to walk past all the popular, talented girls and ask her instead for a dance, showing her the steps and being the most patient of teachers. No, he didn't have a crush on her, he had learned the lesson my parents lived, to be considerate, to think of others. It goes without saying that that girl was beyond happy the rest of the evening, she had finally had a chance to dance. And the great thing was that after my brother's example, the other gentlemen followed suit and went out of their way to ask the less popular and talented girls to join them on the dance floor. It was one of the best dances we ever hosted. You know what made the difference? Being considerate.*

*P.S. If you are ever in the St. Cloud area and someone introduces themselves to you as 'Bob', that is my dad, and his real name is Peter, but I guarantee he will make you feel welcome and invite you out to our farm for socializing and board games. If you have the time, take him up on the offer. No worries, my mom is used to it and somehow always manages to have food for everyone and a clean house. And I am pretty sure you will not be the only guests that day, there are very few Sundays that there are not guests at our family farm enjoying one another's company and playing board games 😊*

Cut on the dotted line and find a prominent place for this quote.

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*"Consideration for others  
is what  
makes life beautiful."*



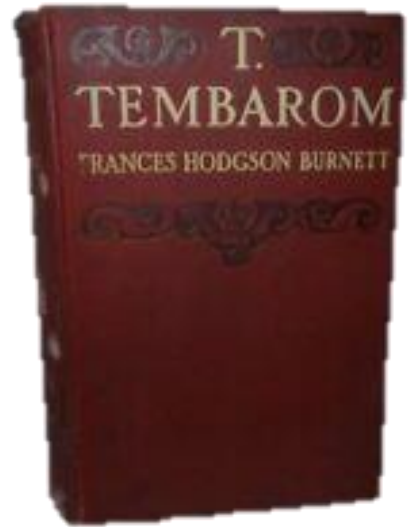


## Read Me or Rue It

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### *T. Tembarom* – by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Now, don't get me wrong, this is a terrible title! One day I was in the library at the Dominican school in Massena NY looking for a stack of books to enjoy on my break and one of the nuns came in. I asked her if she had any recommendations and her face lit up and she said, 'Have you read T. Tembarom?' I thought I was losing my hearing or that the book must be in a foreign language but she assured me that was the title and proceeded to find the book for me. I was familiar with the author (She wrote The Secret Garden and many other novels.) so I figured it was worth a try, besides, the sister was so excited about it that there had to be a gem hidden beneath such a drab and un-enlightening title. Now I won't spoil it for you, but it is a very charming story and has some wonderful life lessons for teenage girls. I would rate it alongside An Old-Fashioned Girl by Louisa May Alcott which you MUST read at some point in your life. And yes, the cover of the book is sadly as dull as the title, but if you decide to read it, let me know what you think! I assure you that you will at the very least be entertained by the story if not inspired.



### *Mistborn Series* – by Brandon Sanderson

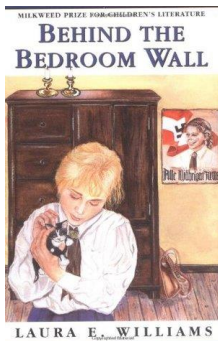


Now the last book is old, classic, and can be hard to find. This series though is written by a modern-day author and the best thing is that these books are entirely clean! No foul language or inappropriate behavior, a refreshing change from most of what our modern world presents. This series isn't particularly deep and inspiring, but it does present good role models and has a clear battle of good versus evil that will have you on the edge of your seat. If you are looking for some good clean fun reading and enjoy fantasy such as Narnia then give this series a try. They are easy to find at most local libraries as well as for sale at Barnes and Noble. Brandon Sanderson has MANY series and novels that are worth reading so if you enjoy these then you will soon have a long list of 'want-to-read' books.



P.S. There is even a board game based on one of his series that is quite enjoyable. No need to have read the books to play the game but it definitely brings a new element to the game once you read them. It is called "Call to Adventure, Stormlight Archives".

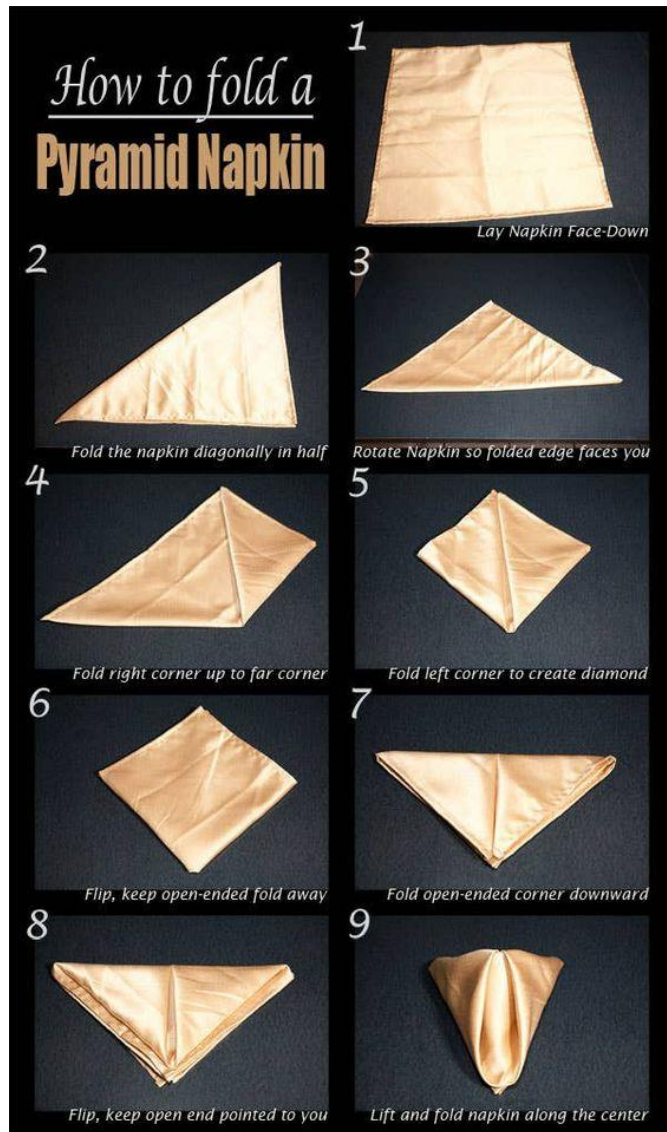
### *Behind the Bedroom Wall* by Laura E. Williams



This story follows the life and decisions of a young teenage girl in Nazi Germany during World War II. If you have ever read *Enemy Brothers* then you will also enjoy this book. Age appropriate for any middle schooler, this book shows that life went on as normal as possible for many during that terrible time and that life lessons can be learned from the most unexpected of people. Filled with suspense, love, humor, and hope this book is an easy read for a summer afternoon. Can you already guess what the title means?

***"A child who reads will be an adult who thinks."***

## Pinterest on Paper



Last night we were honored to host some of the Consoling sisters at our house for supper as well as their chaplain. It was a last minute arrangement but it was a lot of fun preparing a nice meal and beautiful table for them. They commented on the napkin fold I had done (a very simple and quick one) and asked me to show them so they could do it back in Italy for their dinners. I was delighted to do so. It made me realize how lucky I am to have been taught things like properly setting a table and folding napkins in unique ways. As kids we would have formal dinners every now and then at home and it was always so much fun to do a fancy napkin fold. Here are my 2 favorite ones. The one on the left is the one I did for the sisters. You can place it as is on the plate or above the silverware next to the plate, or even tuck a little flower, greenery, or placecard in the end of it. The rose one really isn't hard but some types of napkins are harder to use for this one, so don't give up right away, try another type of napkin! They can be those medium quality paper napkins or cloth napkins for best results. And....now that you have this lovely skill, try it out for a formal dinner for the family, or for the birthday person. Have fun and feel free to send me pictures of your success 😊



## Subscription

Thank you to all those who responded already about renewing or cancelling their subscription. As much as I wish I could send it to whoever wanted it free of charge, our bank account does have its limits 😊 Emailing is totally free though so if you would like to start receiving it via email, just let me know! My email address is on the front with the address. If you would still like to receive it via mail, please let me know ASAP and send a \$5 fee at your convenience. This mostly pays for the stamps to mail them and I cover the printing expenses. Hope you all are enjoying the issues! And I love when I hear from you 😊