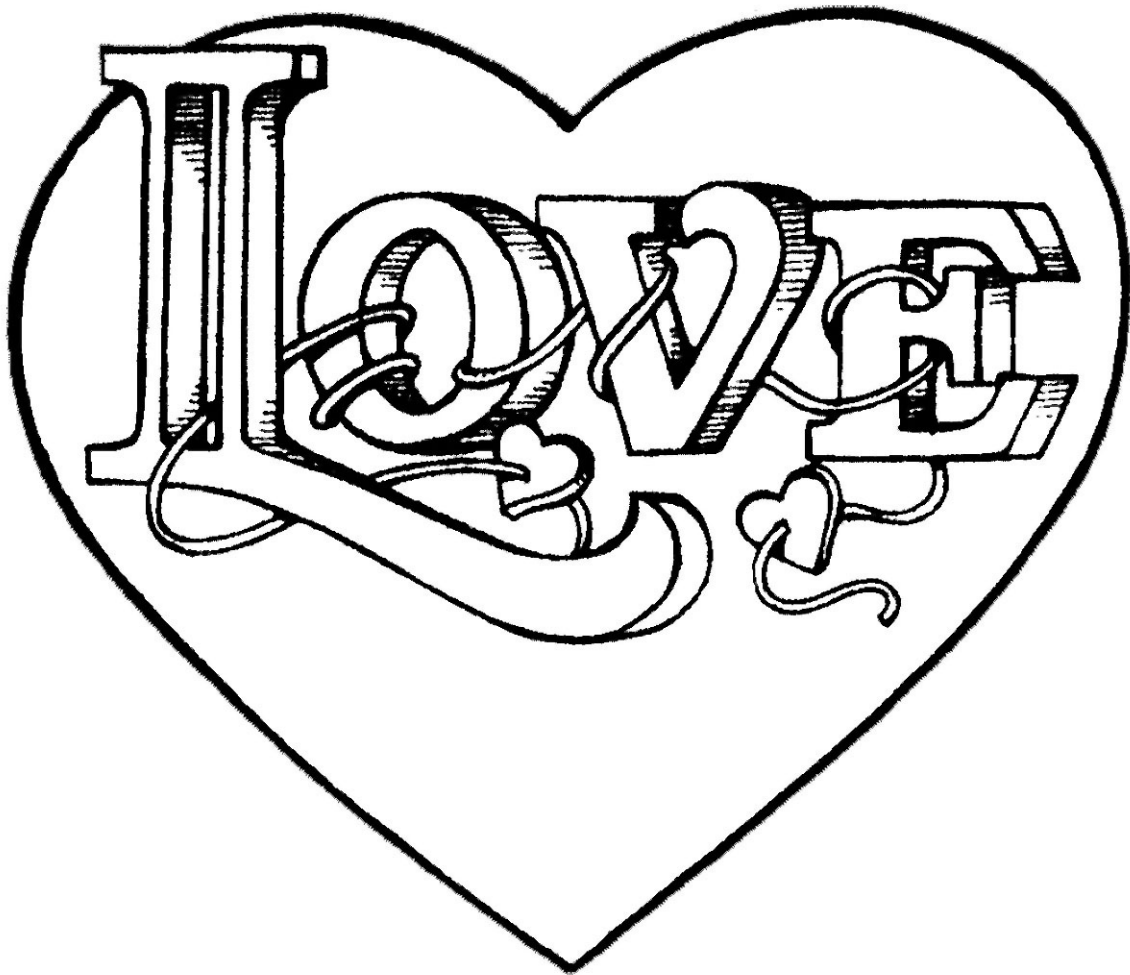




SHARINGS

Volume 37 Number 2 February 2007



*"Love is patient, love is kind...
Love never fails"
(1 Corinthians 13: 3,4)*

CONTENTS



- ♥ *A word of Thanks...3*
- ♥ *Hosts of World Youth Day '08 Curbing Costs...4*
 - ♥ *Vatican Ties With Vietnam closer...4*
- ♥ *U.S. Bishops Choose Top 10 Films...5*
- ♥ *Christmas in West Greenwich...6*
 - ♥ *News from temporary professed sisters...6*
 - ♥ *Youth Group...8*
 - ♥ *A Prayer - Cardinal John Newman...9*
- ♥ *Sharing on the Seminar at the Overseas Ministry Study Center...9*

Sharings is published at:
Provincial Communications Office
399 Fruit Hill Ave - North Providence, RI 02911
Tel: (401) 353 - 5804 Ext:130 Fax: (401) 353 - 8755
E-mail: Fmmsharings@aol.com or Web: <http://www.fmmusa.org>

*As long as we have memories,
yesterday remains.*

*As long as we have hope,
tomorrow awaits.*

*As long as we have friendship,
Today is beautiful.*

(Jan's Valentines)

Happy Valentines Day!

Please remember in your prayers

Our sick sisters, relatives and friends:

Ann Foster was hospitalized

Rita Huit, volunteer for many years critically ill.

Our deceased sisters, relatives and friends:

Frances, Rosemary Sullivan's sister.

Johanna Eekelder, fmm

Tracy Rielly, Mary Beth Robinson's niece

Beatrice Ferrari, fmm



Errata:

This is Phi Uong's corrected telephone number

011 27 31 205 8141

A word of Thanks - Jeanne Letendre, fmm

Sr. Jeanne Letendre who celebrated her 100th birthday expresses her deep gratitude to all who remembered her on this joyous occasion. Sisters from different provinces have sent her messages so she is responding to them by means of Sharings with these words;

I thank you for your goodness,

For your kindly thoughts of me,

But poor is human gratitude

And so we'll let it be.

But here's my heart's acknowledgement

It's simple speech expressed-

May the good God bless and thank you

On the way that He knows best.



Hosts of World Youth Day '08 Curbing Costs

SYDNEY, Australia, JAN. 11, 2006 (Zenit.org).- To foster solidarity with developing countries, organizers of World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney are keeping costs low.

The World Youth Day coordinator, Dominican Auxiliary Bishop Anthony Fisher, said the packages were designed to encourage maximum participation by pilgrims from Australia's neighbors in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

"We know that for many people in Oceania, this may be the only chance they have to attend a World Youth Day," Bishop Fisher said. "With this in mind, one of our guiding principles was to ensure that pilgrims from developing nations in Oceania pay as little as possible to attend."



Details of accommodations, meals and transport for the world's largest youth celebration reflect lower costs than the previous World Youth Day.

The 10th international World Youth Day will be held from July 15-20. It is expected to attract 500,000 pilgrims, including 125,000 international visitors.



Vatican Ties With Vietnam Closer, Cardinal Says

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam, JAN. 24, 2007 (Zenit.org).- The establishment of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and the Vatican could soon be a reality, says Cardinal Pham Minh Man.

The archbishop of Ho Chi Minh City made that observation today to AsiaNews, on the eve of Thursday's meeting between Benedict XVI and Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung.

According to AsiaNews, it is the first meeting between a Pope and a head of the Vietnamese government.

"In November, I and some bishops met with the president of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Nguyen Minh Triet," the cardinal said. "We discussed and exchanged points of view about religious freedom, property rights, the Church's responsibilities towards the country's development, especially in the areas of education and health care.



Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI and Vietnamese Prime Minister

"The president promised that the government would gradually meet the right expectations.

"I think that through meetings and dialogue, the Vatican and the Vietnamese government will understand each better and their relations will improve. I also think that it is the time for official relations. Gradually, the issue of ties [with the Vatican] is taking shape in the socialist country and I believe that they will become real very soon."



U.S. Bishops Choose Top 10 Films for 2006

WASHINGTON, D.C., JAN. 12, 2007 (Zenit.org).- "The Painted Veil" and "The Pursuit of Happyness" are among the top 10 movies of 2006, according to the U.S. bishops. The bishops' Office for Film and Broadcasting also chose "Happy Feet" and "The Nativity Story" as two of the top 10 family films of the year... For an alphabetical listing of both lists, see the U.S. bishops' Web site: www.usccb.org.

Akeelah & the Bee – Irresistible story about a South Los Angeles 11-year-old loner who reluctantly agrees to compete in a national spelling bee – under the tutelage of an emotionally fragile English professor. There are inspiring messages about conquering fears, winning by honest means, the strength of community, and, above all, the beauty and potency of words. A-I

Babel – Quietly powerful film charting three interconnected stories: an American couple stranded in Morocco; the deaf-mute teenage daughter of a widower father in Tokyo who achingly longs for love; and a Mexican governess and her nephew who take her two young charges across the border with disastrous results. Conveys an admirable message about a shared global humanity and the senselessness of violence. L

Flags of Our Fathers/Letters From Iwo Jima – It wouldn't be fair to separate these companion World War II dramas that tell the story of the Battle of Iwo Jima from the American and Japanese perspectives respectively. "Flags" recounts the story of the iconic flag-raising photograph, while exploring heroism and the power of images to exploit and inspire. "Iwo Jima" illustrates our shared humanity and shows ignorance as a root of international conflict, by focusing on Japanese soldiers on the island as they prepare for the U.S. invasion. A-III

Joyeux Noel – Moving World War I tale of soldiers – Scottish, French and German – who spontaneously agree to a cease-fire on Christmas Eve, intermingle and bond on a human level, to the eventual disdain of superiors. Tells a powerful message about the senselessness of war, A-II

Little Miss Sunshine – Immensely likable film about an Albuquerque, N.M., family who trek to Los Angeles in a creaky van so their daughter can compete in a beauty pageant. A refreshingly offbeat tale that, underneath the zaniness and some troubling elements, comes over as an extremely positive validation of family and genuine values. L

Miss Potter – Beautifully crafted story of "Peter Rabbit" author Beatrix Potter and her bittersweet romance with her awkward young publisher, despite the disapproval of her class-conscious parents in turn-of-the-century England. The kind of quality film that's all too rare. A-I

The Pursuit of Happyness – Feel-good tale based on the true story of a selfless medical supply salesman who raises his 5-year-old son on his own while pursuing a new career path as a stockbroker through financial struggles, homelessness and other vicissitudes. The protagonist nurtures his son under trying circumstances with admirable decency throughout. A-II

Sophie Scholl – Gripping true-life drama chronicling the final six days of a 21-year-old German college student executed by the Nazis in 1943 for distributing anti-war leaflets at her university, resulting in a quietly powerful testament to bravery while examining themes of freedom of conscience and peaceful resistance to tyranny and imparting a strong anti-war message. A-II

The Painted Veil – Excellent adaptation of W. Somerset Maugham novel set in the 1920s about an English doctor who vengefully takes his adulterous wife to a remote Chinese village during a dangerous cholera epidemic there, and how, over time, they establish an abiding love. The love story, spiritual journey and final redemption of its heroine, are movingly conveyed. A-III



Volume 37 Number 2 February 2007

United 93 – Tense, well-acted documentary-style drama about the hijacking of an aircraft on Sept. 11, 2001, when passengers fought back, downing the plane in the ensuing melee and preventing destruction of a probable Washington target. A testament to heroism and a vivid cautionary tale, sensitively handled. A-III

Christmas in West Greenwich - Ruth Tamulis, fmm



The radio blared the famous melody “I’m Dreaming of a White Christmas” but there was no white Christmas in West Greenwich. Of course, the natural surroundings already beautiful because of the towering evergreen trees would have been enhanced by a snowfall, but it was not to be.

Christmas Eve found most of the community attending Midnight Mass at St. John & Paul parish Church. The choir, as always, was magnificent, and the Liturgical Committee outdid itself, with Christmas wreaths, displays of lights, and poinsettias galore, and a simple large shed as the shelter for the manger display.

Sr. Ruth and Sr. Cathy went to pick up two homebound women: an elderly mother and her daughter, who longed to attend Christmas Mass. The mother feared she might cry aloud at the beauty of the singing, but as it turned out, she was able to remain calm and at peace. Later, a relative would bring them to a family celebration.

We had invited Claire, another homebound parishioner whom Sr. Barbara visits, to join us for Christmas dinner. Sr. Barbara brought her to one of the morning Masses, before bringing her to our novitiate home.

We, too, had been busy a few days before, putting up the Christmas tree, arranging the crib in the chapel, and brightening the house with garlands, etc. to enliven us all. Claire was delighted to be with us and we ourselves were happy to share our celebration of the Lord’s birth with her. Sr. Hoa prepared a very meaningful prayer to start off the meal, food for our spirits, and then we feasted happily on what each of us had prepared for the dinner. It was only when speaking to Claire that we found that it was her birthday too, for she had just turned 80. So it was a double celebration of the nativity of Jesus and of Claire. We did not have a white Christmas, but it was a happy one in the sharing of our lives with those who needed this sharing.

News from temporary professed sisters

From Dec 26 to Dec 29 all of us temporary professed sisters: Martha, Thao, Hoa, ToAnh, Annie, and Cathy had a chance to gather in Bethany for our meeting with Sr. Elizabeth, who is in charge of accompanying temporary professed sisters.

We arrived at Bethany from Waukegan, Brighton, West Greenwich, and De Chappotin. It was so nice to welcome Annie and Cathy to our group since they had made their first vows last November. At our first gathering, Elizabeth gave us time to share where each of us is at and what each one’s hopes are. It was done in a very prayerful atmosphere and each one listened attentively and respectfully to the sharing. Elizabeth then gave a brief introduction of the sessions she would give us in the next few days. After evening prayer, we enjoyed pizza and bread sticks.

On Dec 27th, we had a whole day learning about Sacred Scripture with Elizabeth. She presented to us many points on “Vatican II on the Interpretation of Sacred Scripture” which were very helpful for us to prepare for our short study about the Bible this time. We read a few chapters in the book of Genesis and looked at the diagram of the history and the literary history of Israel to understand how and when different books of the Bible were written. In the evening, Nzenzili and Barbara Dopierala came to teach us about Theological reflection. We discussed the difference between the word reflection and Theological reflection. For your



V o l u m e 3 7 N u m b e r 2 F e b r u a r y 2 0 0 7

information, we would like to share with you from the handout we had received from Barbara and Nzenzili:

Reflection is the act of deliberately slowing down our usual processes of interpreting our lives to take a closer look at the experience. Theological reflection is the process of seeking meaning that relies on the rich heritage of Christian tradition as a primary source of wisdom and guidance. We read a part of Sr. Christiane's letter written on Dec 6, 2006 to apply some of her writing into our knowledge about Theological reflection.

After the meeting in the evening, we had time for personal preparation and we had group sharing in the morning of Dec 28. It was a deep and fruitful sharing. Each one of us was moved and touched by the sharing of one another to pray and support each other in whichever way that each one needs.

In the afternoon of Dec 28 we helped Alma, Barbara, and Nzenzili to welcome the Franciscan youth group who came to sing Christmas carols to our sisters and residents of Fruit Hill. It was so nice to see many young people at this event.

After a long day of reflecting, sharing, and singing we had a treat for a movie and light supper at the mall in Providence. Movie tickets were donated by one of our benefactors. We all enjoyed it tremendously, thanks to the generosity of our benefactor.

On Dec 29 we went back to deepen our understanding of the Bible. We read some chapters of the book of Exodus and compared some of the characteristics of the Priestly writer, the Elohist, and the Yahwist. When we read the text from the book of Exodus, we noticed the writing styles and we could see how the differences influenced our understanding of the text. In the evening we went to La Salette in North Attleboro, MA to see the lights and the nativity scenes from all over the world. It was so nice to see many people visiting this beautiful place. When we came back to Bethany we prayed night prayer to thank God for gathering us together in this space and thank Elizabeth for all her prayers, support, and accompanying.

On Dec 30th after attending morning mass, we had morning prayer and adoration together. After that, we rolled up our sleeves to clean Bethany as much as we could and of course we all were hungry after this commotion; therefore, enjoyed a farewell feast before we parted to go back to our communities. We would like to express our thanks to all the sisters in the province for your continuous prayers and support. We ask God and Blessed Virgin Mary to walk with all of us in our present journey of faith.

Your sisters, Martha, Thao, Hoa, Toanh, Annie, and Cathy.



L-R: Annie Nebres, To Anh Bui, Thao Phi, Elizabeth Ann Conyers, Cathy Tshitenge, Nguyen Vu, and Hoa Nguyen





On Innocents' Day, December 28th, 2006, the Youth Group from St. John the Baptist Parish in Pawtucket RI, under the direction and guidance of Margarita Zuleta, once again beguiled the sisters in Fruit Hill with their rendition of the Nativity. It has become a tradition for the youth to come every year to entertain the sisters especially during the Christmas season, with a play coupled with songs and dances. As early as 1:00 pm, Margarita, who is one of the faithful and supportive friends of the sisters, together with a throng of youth, trooped towards Lourdes Hall lugging their costumes.



In orderly fashion, the children dutifully registered their names, as Sr. Nzenzili welcomed them with her cheerful smile. Afterwards, each one put on their respective costumes and suddenly Lourdes Hall turned back into the time of Jesus' birth. In their bright suits, the children were transformed beautifully as shepherds, angels, wise men, Mary and Joseph. Of course, their costumes did not cover up their youthfulness, for some roamed around the hall and some chatted with each other which was characteristic of children their age. Yet once, Margarita and another parent named Dora, called their attention, all of them attentively took their posts to begin the rehearsal.



At 2:30 pm, the sisters headed into the hall ready to meet their younger counterparts and watched them perform. This time, the children took on a serious mode while still keeping their lively stance. Scene after scene of the nativity was narrated by Andres in his deep voice, from the Annunciation, the birth of Jesus, the angels calling the shepherds to see their King and the arrival of the wise men. It all unfolded and came alive with exuberant singing of carols in Spanish and English and performances by each character.



The tableau of the Nativity scene unfurled right before our very eyes as the entire performers were on the center stage. The greatest character of all came into the scene and took the stage when the figurine of Baby Jesus was brought by Julia, one of the angels, to the audience to give him a kiss. In the background, Norma Veresko played the piano and Sr. ToAnh strummed the guitar, while some of the temporary professed sisters, Martha, Thao and Cathy, led the group in the singing of Christmas carols. With enthusiasm and unexhausted energy, the whole performance crew followed Sr. Cathy around the hall and danced to a song with an African rhythm, "He Came Down That We May Have Life." and circled the audience with their arms outstretched to enact the song.

In addition to the play, some teenage girls and 2 boys danced to Cumbian songs, music native to Colombia, which was choreographed by Dora, another faithful and committed mother, who also sewed the colorful skirts and blouses together with her mother.

In the spirit of Christmas when bounty abounds, each child received a gift and a stuffed toy from the sisters. There was indeed bounty, for the room was filled with joy and love when the sisters encountered the young ones with a gentle embrace, sweet kisses and cute smiles as they handed the gifts. The time together was well spent and everyone who was in Lourdes Hall went to their respective homes with a feeling of fulfillment, satisfaction and joy.



A Prayer - Cardinal John Newman (1801-1890)

Teach me. Lord, to be sweet and gentle in the events of life, in disappointments, in the thoughtlessness of others, in the insincerity of those I trusted, in the unfaithfulness of those on whom I relied. Let me put myself aside, to think of the happiness of others, to hide my little pains and heartaches, so that I may be the only one to suffer from them.

Teach me to profit by the suffering that comes across my path; let me use it that it may mellow me, not harden and embitter me, that it may make me patient, not irritable, that it may make me broad in my forgiveness, not narrow, haughty or overbearing.

May no one be less good for having come within my influence; no one less pure, less true, less kind, less noble for having been a fellow traveler in our journey toward eternal life.

As I go my rounds from one distraction to another, let me whisper, from time to time, a word of love to you. May my life be lived in the supernatural, full of power for good and strong in its purpose of sanctity.

Dear Jesus, help me to spread your fragrance everywhere. Flood my soul with your spirit and life. Penetrate and possess my whole being so completely that my life may be only a radiance of yours. Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel your presence in my soul. Let them look up and see me no longer, but only Jesus.



Sharing on the Seminar at the Overseas Ministry Study Center

Theme: Culture, Values, and Worldview: Anthropology for Mission Practice by Dr. Darrell Whiteman

Martha and I attended the annual Seminar at the Overseas Ministry Study Center in Connecticut, New Haven, from January 15 to 19, 2007. Dr. Darrel Whiteman known by some FMM was, as usual, the resource person for the third week. Here are the highlights of the Seminar.

We were 42 participants of whom eight Catholics and the thirty-four others were our Protestant sisters and brothers of various denominations. The group was mostly composed of Asians from Korea, China, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, and India etc. Three were from Africa of whom one came from Uganda and two others from Tanzania. There were a few Americans working as missionaries in Honduras, Niger, Ivory Coast, and Papua New Guinea.

Classes were very enjoyable since Dr Darrel Whiteman's teaching was an integration of his broad knowledge as a missiologist anthropologist with his worldwide life experiences. Motivated and enthusiastic participants put many questions, and shared their own experiences on the various fields of mission.

The objective of the seminar was to equip the participants, non-anthropologists who want to know and work in another culture, with some useful conceptual tools which will enable them to understand the concept of culture and become aware that various cultures meet the same problems, the same needs but they do not meet these problems and needs in the same way. And this is an important step toward effective evangelization. To know this enables a missionary to deal with cross-cultural issues in a more meaningful way, more successfully.

Dr Whiteman introduced us into the intricate issue of crossing cultural boundaries; the crossing takes



V o l u m e 3 7 N u m b e r 2 F e b r u a r y 2 0 0 7

place when the Gospel encounters the culture, given that the Gospel affirms and confronts, purifies and transforms all cultures. The most striking example of successfully solving the problem related to cross-cultural boundaries is the episode narrated by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles (Act. 10) Peter and the conversion of Cornelius; Peter was able to overcome his Jewish cultural bias because he was a true Jew, fashioned by his closeness to Jesus, Peter knew his culture, recognizing its positive values and limitations and so was able to make the leap and welcomed Cornelius in the church.

The culture shapes and influences who we are, our understanding of others, and our beliefs about God. The main challenge consists in distinguishing the Gospel from, e.g. the North American cultural values.

A person grows up looking very much like the cultural background in which he or she was raised. And when a person leaves the safety of her/his culture and enters another, she or he does not leave her/his cultural baggage behind; she/he takes it with her/him. Culture holds shared models that people (of the same culture) carry in mind for perceiving, relating and interpreting the world around them. But people who share the same culture do not have an identical worldview. Even an individual has within her/him a competing worldview.

The concept of worldview is very important in the field of evangelism. The worldview is the lens through which we look at the reality of life; it is shaped by our language. The worldview is more basic than religion. Worldviews are central assumptions, conceptions and premises shared by members of a given culture or sub-culture; it tells what is real in a given society. It is very difficult to change one's worldview. It is so engrained in us that Dr. Whiteman did declare that "I am more American than Christian". Our worldview is very resistant to change, to conversion. The immersion in another culture affects our way of seeing the world, of looking at it. No two persons sharing the same cultural values have the same worldview.

Culture is like a mental-map that states only the most important behaviors, but not the details; as missionaries, we need to learn the mental-map of the people with whom we live so as to understand them. The culture evolves through history; it changes but the society remains.

In every human being there is a god-shaped vacuum waiting to be filled (Pascal). A missionary does not bring God, she/he has to work with the people, empower them to discover the God of Jesus Christ. That is why the missionary, while entering in a new land, has to remove his sandals because the ground she/he is treading on is holy; she/he enters the new country as a LEARNER:

*Go to the People.
Live among the people.
Learn from them.
Love them
Start with what they know.
Build on what they have.*

It is the wrapping in which we bring the Gospel that causes damage to the people to whom we announce it. That is why a missionary said: "We have to bring the naked Gospel to the Massai (Kenya) people and let them wrap it by themselves. Nevertheless we have to know that there is no naked Gospel; it came to us in its own Jewish background. Culture is so important that God uses culture to reveal himself.

A challenge for all the missionaries: before sending our missionaries we train them very well in the domain of theology and very often we overlook the Anthropological area, how can they ask the right questions when they arrive in their new mission?



V o l u m e 3 7 N u m b e r 2 F e b r u a r y 2 0 0 7

ARE YOUR VALUES IN ORDER? (From OMSC Seminar)

A national sample of American adults was asked to rank these 18 values in order of importance. To compare your value system with that of the typical U.S. citizen, rank the values in order of their importance as guiding principles in your life, from most important (1) to least (18). A summary of the survey results appears later in this article. (Do not fall into temptation, answer first and then go to the survey results)

Your value system

A Comfortable Life
An Exciting Life
A Sense of Accomplishment
A World of Peace
A World of Beauty
Equality
Family Security
Freedom
Happiness
Inner Harmony
Mature Love
National Security
Pleasure
Salvation
Self-Respect
Social Recognition
True Friendship
Wisdom

Response: The value system of the typical U.S. citizen.

1. Family Security.
2. A World at Peace.
3. Freedom.
4. Self-Respect.
5. Happiness.
6. Wisdom.
7. A Sense of Accomplishment.
8. A Comfortable Life.
9. True Friendship.
10. Salvation.
11. Inner Harmony.
12. Equality.
13. National Security.
14. Mature Love.
15. A World of Beauty.
16. Pleasure.
17. An Exciting Life.
18. Social Recognition.



*Detachment brings inner peace
which no one can take from me.*

(T. Merton)

