



Dear Miss Marlene,

I am a 23-year-old working girl. Five years ago I had fallen for a man who was a perfect stranger to me. I happened to meet this man in a store owned by a relative where I stayed. And maybe because of the thrill of being given a special attention from this man I came to admire him until I found myself seeing him often. We got along together smoothly, when one day he told me that he is a married man. I felt hurt from that time on, yet I found myself again caring for him.

Up to now I still cling to hope though I haven't heard from him for a year now.

So, please, Miss Marlene, could you give me a dose of reason that will make me be sensible and forget about this man? One thing is that I don't quite get interested anymore in any man ever since I had met this five-years-ago-man.

H.N.

Dear H. N.,

You are a sensible girl, 23 years of age, with your whole life still before you. What on earth can you hope to gain by clinging to the memory of a man whom your holy Faith teaches you is not for you. He is married and that puts an end to everything between you and him. It is not only wrong for you to keep thinking about him, but absolutely foolish and useless.

I would advise you to take a firm grip on yourself. Make a determined resolution to erase him from your mind completely and irrevocably. It is up to you to make the most of it. Keep yourself occupied, mentally and physically. Don't allow yourself to brood and think of the past. Go out with other young people and enjoy yourself. And don't worry about not falling in love again. There are many nice unattached young men around, and the right one will come along soon enough if you give him a chance. Also pray hard and frequent the Sacraments, and Jesus and Mary will surely help you forget what is best forgotten and choose your right partner for life.

Dear Miss Marlene,

What is the life of a Carmelite nun?

Cary

Dear Cary,

The Carmelite nun undertakes an expiatory life of penance in atonement for the sins of the world. She is called to an apostolic life of supplication for the salvation of souls, and especially for the needs of the Church, interceding for the temporal and spiritual aid of all who seek her prayers, for health and relief of soul and body, and for conversion of heart and perseverance in well-doing. To make her prayers more efficacious, she purifies her soul by penances and perpetual abstinence by almost continual fasting, and by wearing coarse woollens, and by many other exercises of constant mortification.

Dear Miss Marlene,

May I accept the invitation to be the Godparent of a child whose parents are lax Catholics and for whom I could expect to do very little in a spiritual way?

Ted

Dear Ted,

Yes. It would be a very great advantage for this child to have a Godparent who understands her duties and will fulfill them in so far as circumstances allow. The first duty of Godparents is to pray for the child. After that, they do whatever they can. Sometimes they are not allowed to do very much, especially when their interest is looked upon as an interference. But little gifts in the way of religious articles, a talk with the child, helping the child to get a Catholic education — these are some of the ways in which Godparents can fulfill their duties.

Dear Miss Marlene,

If a Catholic man and wife separated by mutual consent, could the wife enter a convent and the husband be free to marry again?

Vic

Dear Vic,

No. In the first place, a Catholic man and wife cannot lawfully separate permanently just by mutual consent; they must apply for, and obtain, the permission of a competent ecclesiastical authority (usually their Bishop), granted for legitimate and serious reasons. Only if it is certain that sufficient reason exists and there is danger in delay may they separate on their own authority. Moreover, even if they separate legitimately, neither is free to marry again during the lifetime of the other.

Dear Miss Marlene,

I'm one of those teen-agers in college who often go to parties once in a while and get to know boys but avoid getting steady with any of them.

One problem of mine is this. I am a girl who is quite moody and sensitive and often argues with friends especially boys on matters of little importance. I get to know boys and I guess they are all pleased to know me during the first few days, but later they seem to turn cold towards me.

Could it be that I am a girl who isn't worth making friends with? How can I develop a lasting friendship? How would you treat a boy who liked you before, but since he received no response he has decided to go steady with another girl. Nevertheless, he still seeks your friendship, but it would merely occasion gossips on the part of friends and his girl-friend. Would it be alright to avoid his friendship completely?

Mercedes

Dear Mercedes,

You yourself have given the reason why you cannot keep your friends for any length of time. It is certainly difficult to remain friendly with a person of unaccountable moods, touchy and easy to take offense, and given to arguments over trifles—as you admit you are.

The fact that you know and acknowledge your faults is a great help and step in the right direction. Start working on them, earnestly and patiently, and you'll be surprised at the change in your life. Try to practice a little self-control, and don't give vent to your feelings. When you feel grouchy and irritable, for instance, force yourself to smile and be pleasant. Think of the other person and cease concentrating on yourself. Stop acting suspicious of other people's motives — they mean well. And hold your tongue. Count ten slowly before starting an argument.' You may be wrong, and the other party right, so why make a fuss?

As to your next question — there is nothing wrong with being friendly with a former admirer. However, if you are convinced that being so will only cause trouble, then try to have nothing to do with him anymore.

Dear Miss Marlene,

Is it true that if the Sacred Host sticks to the roof of the mouth it is indicative that one is still in the state of sin? This is a common saying and it has often happened to me. Is it sinful to remove the particles of the Host with our tongue?

Sianing

Dear Sioning,

Whoever told you that superstition is ignorant and silly. It is but natural that sometimes the Sacred Host sticks to one's palate. However, that has nothing to do with one's worthiness to receive Holy Communion. Certainly, one should try to loosen with one's tongue whatever particles of the Sacred Host that have become imbedded in parts of the mouth, and then swallow them reverently.

Dear Miss Marlene,

Is it permitted for Catholics to act as witnesses to a non-Catholic marriage?

Lou

Dear Lou,

Catholics may not act as witnesses in a non-Catholic marriage in a non-Catholic church, before a minister exercising his religious functions. Such an action would be considered an approbation of a heretical religious function, and would be gravely sinful. When the marriage takes place not as a religious function, but as a civil or legal ceremony, Catholics may sometimes act as witnesses, provided there be no danger of scandal, or other ill effects. But each such case should be submitted to the confessor pastor, who will be able to examine the circumstances, and decide what is to be done.

FROM DUST TO DUST

*In smouldering disgust
I kicked the loathed dust,
 sending into the air a cloudy spray,
ghostly; which rose, pursued the fleeing dust,
 and vanished far away.*

*Ah, bleak reminder of
my pampered frame! Mislove!
 Who knows, a hundred years from now,
at play a careless child will fling my dust above
 his head in wanton way.*