

QUIET!!!!!!!

October 15, 2004

I knew it was only a matter of time! The lead article of our local newspaper was entitled, *"Marian The Librarian Would Not Have Approved"*. Forget about road rage, the problem emerging at our local library is **cell phone usage rage!** As our paper so aptly put the problem, *"When one is devouring the latest John Grisham novel or studying algebraic functions for a big exam, the high-pitched ring of the "Rocky" theme song and the subsequent loud conversation are nearly intolerable ... many people chat away, unconcerned about the impact on fellow patrons. As a result, librarians are logging many complaints and seeing annoyed patrons confront each other."*

"Patrons speak angrily to those using cell phones," said library trustee Mary Ann Cluggish. "I'm afraid of a patron having cell phone rage ... I don't want to have an incident."

I've had the same problem in church!!! I can't begin to tell you how many times I've had sermons interrupted by cell phones going off. It's gotten to the point where at special services like Christmas and Easter, we actually put a reminder in the bulletin reminding people to turn their cell phones off.

But, as a member of the clergy, what I find interesting is the psychological and spiritual dynamics behind cell phone usage. As Carol Page, founder and editor of CellManners.com, writes, "cell phone use often relates to people's sense of self-worth ... Many people still think it's prestigious and cool to have a cell phone ... their attitude is 'I'm an important person. So I have the right to disturb everyone else around me.'"

Let's be honest - we live in a culture where basic manners and courtesies are almost non-existent ... selfishness is the religious spirit of the age and cell phones are its prayer books. Self importance becomes a thinly disguised veil for basic insecurities ... just take a gander at the "letters to the editor" section of any newspaper.

Saint Paul, on the other hand, encouraged believers to "honor one another above yourselves". He defined love as "not self-seeking" - simply reflecting

Jesus' words to "love your neighbor as you would love yourself ... do unto others as you would have them do unto."

Who sits on the throne of your heart? A selfish self important creature ... or the Lord of all creation? How you answer that question probably answers the question about the appropriateness of your cell phone usage