

# Saints and sinners: How to be a sympathetic listener

“Yoo-hoo, Mrs. Bloom.”

Those of you whose memories go back to the 1930s and ‘40s will remember Molly Goldberg’s friend on old-time radio.

When Molly had something pressing on her mind, she would throw open the window of her apartment in the Bronx and call out “Yoo-hoo, Mrs. Bloom” across the courtyard to the adjoining apartment.

On a domestic scale the two bosom buddies were better than the League of Nations or the UN Security Council in settling problems that would baffle the world’s heads of state.

But the Mrs. Blooms are rare in today’s mobile society. When people no longer live in the “old neighborhood” all their lives, they don’t make enduring friendships of the Mrs. Bloom kind. Counselors agree that the state of our mental health would be better if we all had a

Mrs. Bloom to tell our troubles to.

“There was nothing more effective than the old-fashioned ‘kitchen-counseling,’” says a Lutheran pastor. “My mother had no training in counseling but the number of troubled and anxious people who trekked into her kitchen to talk and went away feeling better was legion.”

When they consider this kind of heart-to-heart counseling, pastoral counselors who see people in their offices by appointment realize they are at a distinct disadvantage. Nothing beats a good friend and the smell of coffee brewing on the stove to banish the blues.

But the big, old-fashioned kind of kitchen had something to do with it, too. A kitchen is warm and reassuring; a counselor’s waiting room is cold and clinical.

Can you imagine Jesus setting up an office appointment for someone who needed help —



**george  
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even if he had an office? He would have taken him on a walk through the open fields or along the seashore. It would have been something warm and human. The old-fashioned kitchen was warm and human.

Kitchen counseling may belong to a bygone era, but you and I may do more kitchen counseling than we realize. It is important to know what to say and what not to say to people who unload their troubles on our shoulders. Here are

some hints on how to proceed.

— Offer your hand. When someone feels grief, pain or fear, the warm touch of another person can be more assuring than cheerful words.

— Avoid platitudes such as “Don’t worry,” “Try to look on the bright side” or “You’ve got to snap out of it.” And people down in the dumps aren’t interested in your philosophy of life — at least not right then.

— An invitation is worth a thousand words of hollow sympathy to a person in trouble. Consider the following little vignette:

When Elise felt low and called Agnes, Agnes listened and said, “I’m sure it will all work out, dear. I’d like to talk to you longer, but Bob is taking me out to dinner tonight, and then we are going to a show. Call me again, honey. Promise?”

With that, Agnes hung up.

If Agnes had really wanted to lift Elise’s spirits, she would have said, “Why don’t you come over tomorrow night for dinner, Elise? Bob and I would love to see you. I won’t take no for an answer.”

That is an example of real sympathy—the kind that heals.

The basic rule for a layperson who engages in “kitchen counseling” is: Listen sympathetically and go easy on advice.

One counselor says, “Most of us tend to be free with advice, usually based on what we would do in a similar situation. Or we may think we are helping by telling them about people who are in even worse trouble. But listening helps more.”

And if there is a Mrs. Bloom in the neighborhood where you live, don’t ever let her move.

## In reversal of history, African priests find themselves preaching in Portugal

**By Cristiana Pereira**  
*Associated Press Writer*

FRAGOSELA, Portugal — The Rev. Joao Bento is the Roman Catholic leader of a small, conservative community of farmers and factory workers — a place where priests are so scarce that several parishes had to share one until he arrived.

Yet Bento’s presence in this village of 2,500 people was greeted with mixed emotions.

The reasons? He’s the only black person in Fragosela and he comes from Angola — a former Portuguese colony where white missionaries landed five centuries ago.

Then, Portuguese and Spanish Jesuits led the drive to spread Christian beliefs, joining the voyages that set out to map distant lands and control lucrative

trade routes. Today, Bento and his colleagues are completing the circle of history by returning to the land of those European priests.

“Like a son who comes back to teach his father,” Bento says of his move to this village from his home in southwest Africa four years ago.

Bento is one of four Angolan priests who have come to Portugal to minister in rural parishes around Viseu, a city roughly 185 miles north of Lisbon.

They are working here under a cooperation agreement between the Bishop of Viseu and his counterpart in Benguela, a city along the western coast of Angola. Portugal ruled Angola for about 500 years, until the colony gained its independence in 1975.

“The diocese of Benguela always had a missionary plan to prove that it’s

not just the old Christendoms that can provide missionaries,” Bishop Oscar Braga of Benguela said during a recent trip to Portugal.

The Angolans are helping make up for an increasing shortage of priests in Portugal. As in other European Union countries, the number of Portuguese priests has dwindled by nearly one-fifth to 4,250 over the past 20 years. In Germany and Austria, clergy from the former Soviet bloc are taking up posts to compensate for the shortfall.

When priests from the Iberian peninsula reached Africa, Asia and Latin America, their mission was to implant Christianity, in some cases suppressing local beliefs by force.

The situation is obviously — and enormously — different now. “I’m not here to pass on my culture,” Bento says.

“I’m here to pass on my faith.”

Tall, with chiseled cheekbones, the 35-year-old Bento speaks with a stammer that suddenly disappears when he’s celebrating Mass. He intersperses his conversation with a comical “Mamma mia!” which he picked up from a Brazilian soap opera — a mainstay of Portuguese and Angolan television.

Despite his cheerful nature and good intentions, some resent Bento’s presence.

Maria das Dores Leandro, who works at the Lopes cafe in Fragosela, acknowledges that the arrival of black priests ruffled local feathers.

“They’re not really welcome here. You know, we’re a little racist. We wanted a white priest,” she explains with a sheepish smile.

A local bride is said to have switched

her wedding ceremony to the city of Viseu because she didn’t want to be married by a black priest.

The Rev. Andre Sahoi, a 29-year-old priest who also came from Benguela and is posted nearby, figures the initial alarm was a natural reaction.

“Sometimes children even ran away from us,” he says, a broad mustachioed grin lighting up his thin face.

Yet Bento, nearing the end of his stay in Portugal, believes the passage of time has helped people see beyond the color of his skin. Some parishioners questioned on the cobblestone streets of Fragosela say they’ll sign a petition to keep Bento from returning to Angola.

They seem unlikely to succeed. The Bishop of Benguela has instructed Bento to return to Angola in the next month or so, now that he has finished a

degree in humanities at the Catholic University in Viseu. Two new Angolan priests are expected to replace him next year.

“You’re not leaving so soon, are you really?” Maria de Lurdes Almeida asked Bento anxiously over the counter at the Estadia cafe, which she owns.

In Sahoi’s smaller parish, a village of 200 people called Travanca de Tavares, there’s an ancient church of granite stone in a walled field with a broad view of pine forests and bright green vineyards.

Maria dos Prazeres Cabral, who keeps the keys to the church, said she doesn’t care if the parish priest is Angolan or Portuguese, so long as he’s there.

“Before, we had to borrow a priest,” she said. “Now we have our own.”

### **Bible Baptist Church**

**Pastor:** Don Crutcher  
Fifth & Broadway  
899-7368

**Sunday:** Sunday School: 9 am  
Worship Service: 10 am  
Evening Service: 6:30 pm

**Wednesday:** Evening Bible Study: 7 pm

### **Calvary Gospel Church**

**Pastor:** Rev. Steve Rains

Fourth & College • 899-3605

**Sunday:** Sunday School: 9:15 am  
Morning Worship: 10:30 am  
Evening Worship: 6:30 pm

**Wednesday:** Family Night: 7 pm  
Adult Bible Study and Youth Group  
**Saturday:** Prayer Meeting: 5-7 pm

*If you would like to receive a free newsletter, please call the church office.*

### **Church of Christ**

401 Caldwell  
899-6185

**Sunday:** Bible Study: 9:45 am  
Worship Service: 10:45 am  
Evening Service: 6 pm

**Wednesday:** Bible Study: 7 pm

### **Church of the Nazarene**

**Pastor:** Matthew Delp  
Third & Caldwell  
899-2080 or 899-3797

**Sunday:** Sunday School: 9:45 am  
Worship Service: 10:50 am  
Evening Service: 6 pm

**Wednesday:** Evening Service: 7 pm

### **First Baptist Church**

**Pastor:** Bud Chester  
Fifth & Center • 899-3450

**Sunday:** Sunday School: 9:15 am  
Morning Worship: 10:30 am  
Evening Worship: 6:30 pm

**Tuesday:** Mens’ Prayer Group: 6:00 am  
**Thursday:** Night Bible Study: 7:00 pm

### **Seventh Day Adventist Church**

1160 Cattletrail

**Pastor:** Bobby Potter • 332-3956  
**Saturday:** Sabbath School: 9:30 am  
Worship Service: 11 am



## **First Baptist Church**

### **First Christian Church**

(Disciples of Christ)

**Pastor:** Loren Strait

Eighth & Arcade • 899-5233

**Sunday:** Worship Service: 9 am

**Activities:** Junior High & High School Youth Groups,  
Adult Bible Study, Choir, Men’s and Women’s Groups,  
Devotions Study, Monthly Fellowship

**Special Notice:** Handicap Accessible, Hearing  
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### **First United Methodist Church**

1116 Sherman

899-3631

**Pastor:** Rev. Carol Moore-Ramey

**Sunday:** Sunday School: 9:15 am  
Worship Service: 10:30 am

### **Sonrise Christian Church**

Ninth & Caldwell • 899-5398

**Minister:** Tony Kafka

**Youth Minister:** Doug Bean

**Sunday:** Worship Service: 9:30 am

Sunday School: 10:45 am

**Wednesday:**

Junior/Senior High Meeting: 7 pm  
Adult & Children’s Classes: 7 pm

### **Emmanuel Lutheran Church**

13th & Sherman • 899-6161

**Pastor:** Scott Grimshaw

**Sunday:** Sunday School: 8:45 am

Worship Service: 10 am

**Wednesday:** Confirmation: 6 pm

### **Kanorado**

### **United Methodist Church**

**Pastor:** Leonard Cox

399-2468

**Sunday:** Sunday School: 9 am

Worship Service: 10:15 am

### **Goodland Bible Church**

109 Willow Road • 899-6400

**Pastor:**

**Sunday:** Sunday School: 9:45 am

Morning Worship: 11 am

Evening Worship: 6 pm

**Wednesday:** Call for location

### **Grace Fellowship Church**

104 E. Hwy 24 • 899-6423

**Pastor:** Bob Snyder • Residence: 899-0134

**Sunday:** Sunday School: 10 am

Worship Service: 11 am

### **St. Paul's Episcopal Church**

13th & Center

899-2115 or Rectory 899-2114

**Priest:** Father Charles Schneider

**Deacon:** Gretchen Talitha

**Adult Forum:** Sunday : 8:30 am

Morning Prayer: 9:30 am 1st & 5th Sundays

**Holy Eucharist:** 2nd, 3rd, & 4th Sundays: 9:30

Sr. Warden for emergencies during the week 899-2067

### **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints**

1200 15th Street • Burlington, CO • (970) 664-2470

**Sacrament Meeting:** 9:30 am

**Sunday School:** 10:45 am

**Priesthood/Relief Society:** 11:30 am

### **Word of Life Foursquare Church**

223 E. 10th

899-5250

**Pastor:** John Coumerilh

**Sunday:** Worship Celebration &

Kids’ Church: 10:30 am

### **United Methodist Church**

**Brewster:**

**Pastor:**

Worship Service: 10:45 am CST

Sunday School: 9:45 am CST

**Winona:**

**Minister:** Rev. Bob Winters

Worship Service: 9 am CST

Sunday School: 10:15 am CST

### **Iglesia Del Dios Vivo**

La Luz Del Mundo

Spanish Speaking Church

**Minister:** Esteban Ortiz B.

1601 Texas • 899-5275

**Daily Prayer:** Sunday thru

Saturday: 5 am & 6 pm

**Sunday:** Sunday School: 10 am

### **Our Lady of Perpetual Help**

**Pastor:** Father Daryl Olmstead

307 W. 13th • 899-7205

**Sacrament of Reconciliation:**

4:30-5 pm Saturday or by appointment

**Mass Schedule:**

**Saturday:** 6 pm

**Sunday:** 8 am and 9:30 am

**Spanish Mass:**

1st & 3rd Sunday: 2 pm

### **Pleasant Home Church**

*Serving the rural community for over 100 years*

Rt. 1, Box 180 • 694-2807 • 3190 Road 70

**Pastor:** Jim Cress

899-5784

**Sunday:** Worship Service: 9 am

Sunday School: 10 am

Evening Service: 6 pm

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