

Don't Chew Jesus! Authors

Danielle (Dani) Schaaf and **Michael (Mike) Prendergast** are lifelong friends who met as Catholic School first graders in South Florida. Early on a nun told them they were bold and cheeky. Not much has changed in forty years.

For eight years at St. Luke Catholic School in Lake Worth, Mike and Dani spent many hours together, praying the rosary, attending Mass, and kneeling side-by-side cleaning out their messy desks

Much to the nuns' chagrin, Mike and Dani opted out of attending Catholic high school to see how the other side – the Publics – managed. It was a tough transition but eventually the two learned to enjoy homework-less afternoons, wearing clothes that didn't come with ties and beanies, and talking to kids of the opposite sex without running to the confessional. They did slip and call their teachers "Sister" a couple of times, which didn't please Mike's P.E. teacher. That was the day Mike learned he had a gift for running. He's been an avid jogger ever since.

After high school, both attended and graduated from the University of Florida where they occasionally tossed back a beer at the campus pub and gabbed about the nuns who taught them. For nearly 25 years since, Dani has been a public relations consultant in Houston, and Mike, an attorney with a labor employment law firm in Jacksonville, Florida. They still toss back an occasional beer and have earned a living out of gabbing.

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Both are married, their spouses enduring nearly twenty years of bold and cheeky behavior. As a lector and CCE teacher, and serving in the men's and women's club, Mike and Dani are taking steps to pass along their Catholic heritage to their children – Dani's twin sons and daughter, and Mike's two daughters. Although none of the kids have yet to follow in their parents' footsteps as a Sodality Girl or president of the Altar Boy Society, all have mastered eye-rolling.

Blaming Irish bloodlines, the authors share a gift of blarney, quick wit and love of storytelling. They also have sloppy handwriting and a penchant for following rules – all of which they attribute to their years with the nuns. As authors, they hope to honor the sisters who taught them by invoking vows of poverty. There's been no mention of celibacy and obedience.

For Dani and Mike, Don't Chew Jesus! has become more than a blast-to-the-past. It's a link to their heritage; a legacy to share with their children and grandchildren. To that end, they hope Don't Chew Jesus! helps preserve the dedication, passion, and influence of the nuns.

Not bad for a couple of bold and cheeky kids.

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