



Volume 3/Issue 6 - Summer 2018

The Family Apostolate

Where Faith and Family Meet

**PARENTS,
REDISCOVER
YOUR SPINE**

**HOW WORK
DIGNIFIES
THE FAMILY**



Parenting and Presence

WHY WE ADOPTED

7 KIDS

DEAR SINGLE

PARENT

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The Family Apostolate provides pastoral care, promotes the critical need for family prayer and regular reception of the sacraments, imparts catechesis, offers opportunities for family get-togethers, and builds bridges between individual families and the larger church community. Through offering diverse spiritual and psychological resources, the Family Apostolate seeks to bring the merciful presence of Christ to families in an increasingly difficult world.



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Family Apostolate at Christ the King,
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Family Apostolate Activities

Wednesday Evening Holy Hour

Join us every Wednesday for an hour of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament – Scripture reflection, silent prayer, praise and worship music and benediction. 7:00-8:00 p.m. For more information, contact Chris Sybert - sybernet@comcast.net

**Christ the King Church at
Crucifixion Parish**
100 Scott Ave
Glen Burnie, MD 21060

First Saturday Mass and Breakfast

Held every first Saturday morning of the month. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass honors our Blessed Mother, Queen of the Family Apostolate. Anniversaries, birthdays and special occasions are also recognized and blessed. Mass is followed by breakfast in the Holy Trinity hall. Begins with 8:30 am mass. For more information, contact Marlene Lauer - graysoxmom@msn.com

Christ the King Church at Holy Trinity Parish
7436 Baltimore Annapolis Blvd
Glen Burnie, MD 21061

Home Blessings

Having your home blessed is a beautiful way to sanctify your dwelling place, often referred to as the domestic church. Home blessings involve a priest accompanied by a small prayer team who visit people at their homes. The priest blesses the house and the encounter is one that is both touching and deeply spiritual. Home blessings are primarily delivered in the month of October (Mary's month) or by special appointment.

Contact
Fr. Vin or Patti Rubin -
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Special Events/Prayer Requests

The FA sponsors special events throughout the year such as retreats, healing masses and group celebrations. Our prayer teams also pray for your special needs and requests. For more information, contact Patti Sadler - pattisadler7@gmail.com



Father. Albert Nze and Father. Justin Okoro pray over people at the Healing Mass on August 4th, 2018 @ CTK - Holy Trinity



Father. Albert Nze Blesses the people at the end of the Healing Mass on August 4th, 2018



Father. Vin and the FA Volunteers pray with house owners at a Home Blessing

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Do you have any questions on faith, marriage, family, or catechism?

Send your questions to us at fathervinarisukwu@familypriest.com

Editorial

Presence is more than just being there

(Malcolm Forbes)

Growing up in a family of eleven was no joke. With nine children of the same parents, you can imagine what that was like. My siblings would flock behind mom and dad at various occasions. We had good and bad times. We had our fights, threw tantrums, and occasionally gave each other the silent treatment. Sometimes, we dragged our feet when it was time for farm work. But our parents made us understand that through working and helping to support the family, they were able to feed us, pay our tuition, and take care of our medical bills. It didn't matter if it was just washing the dishes, fetching water, collecting firewood or sweeping the house. We had our good times too. Having dinner together was fun. We sat by each other's side, sometimes eating from the same plate. Playing and studying together were natural for us. We loved competition and challenging each other, feeling each other's muscles in most things we did. The question is, how did my parents do it? How were they able to take care of nine children with such limited resources? And they still remained happy while doing it.

A friend has this bold print on her kitchen wall: "Raising children is like being pecked to death by chickens." That makes sense. As I look back at how my parents journeyed through raising nine children, putting them through college and seminary, feeding and clothing them, resolving sibling disputes, balancing their love, and guiding them in their faith, I concur that raising children is like being pecked to death by chickens. It couldn't have been easy, yet they did it. Mom and dad were physically and emotionally present to us. They established a rock-solid connection with us. When they had to be away from home, we awaited their return, feeling unsafe without them. They weren't too soft with us either, as they gave us tough love and taught us how to distinguish between good and bad. They made us stick with what we needed, not what we wanted. They were our parents and faithful guardians, not our buddies.

In our interview with Cricket and Craig Traverson in this edition of the FA magazine, they made a rhetorical but very true statement, "When is parenting not hard?" Think about Mary and Joseph as parents of Jesus. Technically, the boy Jesus was the model of childhood perfection. Yet the Holy Family had their struggles. If the Mother of the God-Man experienced the challenges of parenting, therefore, when is parenting not hard?

Our modern society needs to re-evaluate the meaning of parenting. The society needs to reappraise the value of being present to children. Being present means being physically and emotionally involved in parenting. The world is now greatly influenced by the digital age. Sadly, family life has become increasingly attached to internet and social media, replacing traditional family time and parental roles. Families spend more time with their iPads, cell phones, video games and computers than with each other. Many children hear from their Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat friends more often than they hear from their parents.

In this edition of the FA magazine, we've taken a close look at parenting and presence. Are you a single parent? Do you have a special needs child? Are you considering adoption? Are you scared of not being loved for being tough on your children? Are you looking for answers to the ethical issues of In Vitro Fertilization, Reproductive Technologies, and Surrogate Motherhood? Does the contraceptive myth worry you? Are you concerned about the family's dignity through labor? Are you a youth searching for answers to your future parenting? We have addressed all these issues in this edition. Father Julian Carron once wrote, "A true relationship between parents is also the best educative proposal for the children, who, through the beauty of their parents' relationship, are introduced, as by osmosis, into the meaning of existence." Our message to families and parents in this summer edition of the FA magazine is, JUST BE PRESENT!



V Arisukwu

Letters to the Editor



Dear Father Vin,
Congratulations on such a high quality magazine. The photographs are wonderful. The well written articles are so pertinent for today's world. They helped to clarify Church teaching in several areas for me. It is reassuring to know that all of the information has a "Catholic identity".

As I read the articles, I found myself reflecting on my own experiences. The whole magazine feels like a personal witness for Our Lord, Jesus. I enjoyed having the information about the author/writer included. Even though I personally know some of the contributors, after reading their bios, I now know them a little better. May God continue to bless all involved in the Family Apostolate. I look forward to reading the next edition. Wishing each of us His Peace & Joy,

Donna Dupuis

I would like to share with you what a profound impact your Spring issue of The Family Apostolate magazine had on me. My mom, who was 93 years old, took ill around Mother's day. After spending a night in the ER, it was determined that she needed surgery. At her age and in her condition, it was considered high risk but without the surgery, she would not make it. We decided to go for the surgery which was scheduled for 2 days later. Prior to surgery, I found myself doing a lot of thinking. What if she didn't do well? What if she ended up needing life sustaining procedures? How far would I go to keep her alive? This was a subject that unfortunately mom and I never discussed. My mom loved life and she lived it well, but I knew she wouldn't want to just exist. I wanted to make the right choices not only for mom but also as a Catholic. Mom made it through the surgery but soon started to decline. The questions still remained unanswered in my mind. The

following Sunday, as I was leaving church, I picked up a copy of The Family Apostolate magazine. It was as if this edition was written just for me. I found my answers! Later, when it was evident that mom was not going to make it and continued to be in pain, I sat by her bedside and pondered over Father Vin's words in the editorial. It was indeed a privilege as my mom's caregiver and daughter to be with her, provide comfort, and love her during her suffering and imminent death. I no longer felt I had to do something to keep her from dying. I embraced the thought that God had a plan for her, and she would gladly go.

As I read through the articles, I began to understand that I didn't have to put my mom through further procedures or other surgeries which would not "cure" her. I was not required to do everything to preserve her life, only to preserve her dignity and ease her suffering. I had no knowledge of what palliative care was until I read the article written by Father Michael DeAscanis. He also spoke of the distinction between medical treatment and human care. In my mom's last days, that human care he spoke of was what kept our family constantly at her side. She knew we cared. In Fr. Vin's article "Eucharistic Care," I found a different way to view suffering and pain. I had never looked at it in such a spiritual way before and the situation became easier to accept. The article written on the Igbo people's culture gave me insight into my own family's strong belief in caring for our elderly as a blessing and not a burden. It served to remind me that the elderly deserve to be treated with respect, even at death. My mom lived her life loving and trusting in God and now she is in a much better place. While I am deeply saddened and miss her terribly, I am happy for her. So you see, this edition truly had meaning and purpose for me, and for that, I thank you and the authors of these wonderful inspiring articles. And from above, my mom thanks you too.

Gracias, very much....
Carmen Flynn

Dear Father Vin,
Since our interview with the Family Apostolate magazine for the Spring 2018 edition, many close and even unknown friends have said they enjoyed it. We have always felt blessed in our lives. The only certainty in life is God's love. We have maintained our sanity through very difficult times only by God's Grace. We are so-o-o blessed!

Thank you for caring,
Richard and Lois Gross

I would like to suggest to the FA readership two forms of meditation. The Rosary and the "4 R's".

Saying a Rosary together for 15 - 20 minutes as you reflect on the "events" (mysteries) of Jesus' life can be very relaxing and a means to "spiritual self care".

The "4 R's" (Read, Reflect, Relate, and Resolution) is an expanded form of Lexio Divina (sacred reading). In this method you silently 1) Read: Read from Scripture or a book written for spiritual meditation. 2) Reflect: Write it down or underline it and reflect on it. What is the Holy Spirit telling you? 3) Relate: In silent listening to this passage how does it relate to your life, or how it points you to Jesus. 4) Resolution: Resolve to apply the grace from this meditation to change you. Write down what you are going to do, or do differently, so you can refer to it during the day.

Although the 4 R's meditative practice is usually an individual effort in spiritual self-care, married couples can use the same readings. I would suggest the daily Mass readings for couples. Then discuss your meditation with your spouse after an allotted time or at the end of the day during your prayer time together.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ken Katafiasz



Parenting



How the family boundaries worked in our parenting styles

By Kathy and Larry Kirby

When we were first married, we didn't have a "parenting philosophy" *per se*. In fact, neither of us had been around babies very much so it was almost a shock when our firstborn entered into our world. Kathy remembers thinking that very first night, "Wow, we have complete and full responsibility for a whole other human being, body and soul!" and it was somewhat terrifying! Twenty-seven years later, with six additional children, the terror strikes every so often ("It's 2 am and the car's not in the driveway!"), but we have managed, by trial and error, and ultimately, God's grace, to make a few practical decisions that have seemed to bear "good fruit" in our adult children (so far!).

Firstly, we work vigilantly to facilitate our love for each other and our children's love for one another. Let's focus on the latter. Siblings can inflict tremendous harm on each other as children. It is so important that siblings recognize at an early age that they are not only "on the same team," but that they owe each other respect and love. Because we are a homeschooling (through 8th grade) family and spend much time together, we

deliberately minimized verbal and physical viciousness, and encouraged the children to develop friendships and even an older-to-younger "buddy system." It was well worth the time and effort. They squabbled, and some have had extremely tense times with each other (and us!), but now they truly love each other and interact constantly.

Secondly, we're unafraid to be unfair and even downright dictatorial! Several Kirby non-negotiables directly contradict societal norms. Our first middle-and high-schoolers bemoaned them, but our adult children now defend our decisions to their "buddies."

They are required to participate in family prayer times and devotions and to be involved in our parish community (as much as possible). Attending Mass, often even daily, is totally expected. Can we as parents guarantee or even gauge their love for the Lord? Does this assure their adult commitment to the Faith? Do we know that they are attending Mass and have a regular prayer life in college and beyond? Are they consistently cheery and bright-eyed at these times? Well – no, no, no and... errr... no. We figure, though, that the heavy lifting is done

by the Holy Spirit. In a great article about living out faith in the family by simply following the precepts of the Church, author Rick Becker writes:

A religious upbringing thus rooted in both a moral imagination that aspires to holiness and a will determined to affirm even unpopular truth becomes a lifeline of grace that keeps even the most wayward Catholic tethered to God – and can help him find his way home again.

We concur.

And speaking of tethers, our children do not receive a cell phone or even an email account until it is **necessary** to have those privileges; usually, it is when they are 14 or even 15. Fortunately, they can commiserate with a few friends with equally draconian parents, but even if we were the *only parents* in the *entire universe* this obtuse, we would stand firm. Yes, a few times (per child) we haven't had an immediate communication link with an 11- or 12 year-old, but the likelihood of a child being abducted by stranger is one-hundredth of 1 percent.

In addition, a few recent studies have been released on the problems between children, cell phones and social media : diminished cognitive ability, inappropriate use of social media, childhood obesity, childhood depression and general unhappiness. Our 5th child, currently 16 and attending Catholic high school, is actually content with her pay-as-she-uses flip phone. It sets her apart! Less drama, and on her own dime.

Additionally, we discourage exclusive dating until our children are eighteen (presumably with over-18 year-olds). If it were a hundred years ago, when older teens could actually begin married lives together, then we wouldn't have this rule. Are they permitted to like someone, to the point of tiring their friends with talk of their infatuation? Can they suddenly develop a habit of organizing their friends ("love" interest included) to socialize in healthy, open environments? Can they attend proms, homecomings and other special events with someone in particular? Can they begin to get to know themselves, and consider others' personalities, and pray for their vocation (and future spouse)? Yes, hopefully yes. And: Will they storm around the house loudly and weepily protesting our mean decisions? Will they perhaps sneak around our backs and meet the person anyway? Yep. Assuredly yes. This is not for the faint of heart. But, we are not called to be their friends, yet...

Finally, we try communicate as directly as possible with our children, as we are raising adults. We all know how difficult it is to shield our children's natural innocence and allow

the outside world in gradually, striking a balance between instilling an unhealthy caution and suspicion and careless conformity. When they ask for something, we try to say "yes" when we can and “no” when we must. Our goal is to help them understand that we are on their side, and we do want to get to a "yes" answer on matters important to them. If we cannot, then we explain why it is not possible. (“Yes, you may get a faux-hawk. No, you may not dye your hair purple and have “Ravens” shaved across your head.”) We take a head-on approach to important issues that face them today: use of the media, mental health (hopelessness, suicide, cutting, drugs, alcohol), and human sexuality, despite sometimes feeling like total hypocrites based on our own adolescence. They don't need to know everything about our pasts, but we relate some stories when necessary. Most importantly, we emphasize the Catholic Church's sound, hopeful, and beautiful positions on these issues.

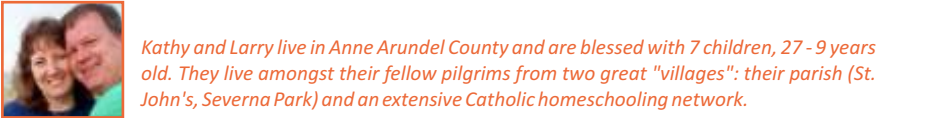
To quote Yogi Berra, “It ain't over 'till it's over!” Let's pray for all parents as we negotiate the interesting time and culture in which God has particularly placed us. He's in charge!



“A religious upbringing thus rooted in both a moral imagination that aspires to holiness and a will determined to affirm even unpopular truth becomes a lifeline of grace that keeps even the most wayward Catholic tethered to God – and can help him find his way home again.”

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Kathy and Larry live in Anne Arundel County and are blessed with 7 children, 27 - 9 years old. They live amongst their fellow pilgrims from two great "villages": their parish (St. John's, Severna Park) and an extensive Catholic homeschooling network.



Dear Single Parent

(Single Mother Parenting Secrets)
By Victoria Maria Aguirre de Nicholson

Single parenting is the hardest and yet the most fulfilling job in the world. It is something that you don't ever expect to have to do, though. You envision the perfect marriage when you say “I do,” with the perfect house, perfect children, and everything lining up just right. Then reality sets in and you find everything is not the way you thought life was going to be. Some of you experience divorce, some of you have had your husband or wife walk out on you and your family. Sometimes a spouse dies suddenly or from a long illness. No matter how it happens, single parenting is challenging.

The most important thing to remember is that you are not alone. There is hope and lots of it!

When I became a single parent, a term I really hate, by the way, I was not ready for the task. I was only 34 years old with two children. My son was seven, and my daughter was three and a half. My husband and I met when we were 17 and were married shortly afterwards. I loved him with all my heart. He was my best friend, my partner in crime, and the only person who truly understood me. My husband was a landscaper. While he was working, he had a heart attack. Later at the hospital, he suffered a stroke and was pronounced brain dead.

I was so overwhelmed with grief. How in the world was I going to raise two kids by myself? What about my son not having a father in his life? What about my daughter when she has

her Quinceanera and wedding? What about me? I don't want to be in the dating scene. The last time I had a date, I was 16 years old. That's why I got married; I wanted to be with my husband. Why did God allow this to happen?

A very good question. Why me? A widow at 34 years old, unheard of! What was I going to do? I was mad! I was mad at God. I was mad at the whole world. After Ray's funeral, when everyone went back to their normal lives, reality set in. Is this what it's going to be like forever? Funny, I thought back then that my life was over. Now when I look back, I see that my life had just begun. I started looking at the world very differently. I thought, “Now that I am on my own, what do I want? What do I want for my kids?” That got me thinking about what really mattered in life... God and family.

It was this tragic event that changed my life for the better. I decided that if God wanted me

to raise my children by myself, then I had to step up to the task. I had to be strong, because my kids needed me. Truth be told, I needed them just as much. I began to start taking the kids to daily Mass. Having a three and a half year old at daily Mass can be challenging, but she learned the Mass very quickly. I started to implement my Hispanic culture into our homeschooling. Day of the Dead became and is still a huge day in our household. Day of The Dead allowed time to talk, cry, and heal from my husband's passing. Day of the Dead to me is the most beautiful way to remember your loved ones. My kids loved the way that we remembered their Dad. It made us closer as a family. When I noticed the fruits of this, I started to do more. We began saying the Rosary every night. Whenever we were



worried, sad, or just having a hard time, I would tell my kids to stop and pray. I began to feel like I was going to be okay. God put people in my life to help the kids and me. I am very thankful for my friends because they have become family to me.

As for my son, that road has been challenging. I am a mom; how was I supposed to raise a son without his dad? My son taught me so much about life. The day I told my children that their father passed away in the hospital was the hardest thing I have ever had to do. My son was seven years old. How was he going to react and how was I going to explain Heaven? As I told my son the terrible news, he gave me a hug and said, “Everything will be okay, Mommy.” At that moment, I knew we were going to be okay. As the years went by and my

son grew older, I noticed something very inspiring. Being in church all the time, my son was able to witness Godly men. Men in the pews with their families and priests who were so encouraging to my son. As for me, I learned how to throw a baseball, to kick and score a soccer goal. I learned how to start a fire (while my son learned how to put out the grease fire that I started). I would read to him (and his sister) every night and we talked about all the books he had read. Another bonding point was music. Ray had loved music. Before the kids were born, he and I would see every band that came to town, so sharing music with my son was and is very special to me. Hearing about the newest song that had come out and taking him to his first concert were great experiences. Teaching my son to drive,

a huge struggle. She was worried that she wouldn't be back in the pool. God had other plans for my daughter. Since she was out of swimming for the time being, what was she going to do? That's when your kids help you, when you have lost a little hope. She said, “Mom, I want to be an altar server.” I said, “Are you sure? You don't like to be in front of people on stage anymore.” She said, “Mom, I want to be closer to God.” And that's when I realized she was right. “Yes, Mija (my daughter), through your lips God has told me to be more faithful.” Later that week, we went to the doctors and found out she had Lyme disease. That was a huge blessing because now we could treat her appropriately and she could get better. Today, she swims competitively, better than she did before. She still has Lyme disease and takes a lot of medicine, but she is close to the end of the treatment. There are good days and bad days, but she never gives up. At a recent swim meet, my friend motioned for me to look at my daughter. I saw her kneeling on the floor and praying. She was so worried about her race, and all the girls her age are so much taller than her. She got up on the block, the buzzer went off, and she came in first in her 100m fly. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” she later told me she had repeated to herself. With God she won the race. Coming from not being able to swim at all to winning a race is a huge deal. She has faith and determination to always become better.

If Ray hadn't died, would life be different? Faithless? Would my kids still be in the Church at ages 20 and 16? Maybe, maybe not. However, so far God has provided and helped me grow as a mom and my children into faithful young adults. My journey as a single parent has been a long road, yet it is still not finished. Yours may have just begun, or possibly you are tired of being on the long road. Just know that you are not alone. God has a plan for your life. He puts the people and the resources there for you. Just pray and keep coming to Mass. Put your family first and everything else will fall into place. God Bless!



Faith of Our Fathers

Why a Masculine Example of Holiness Is Vital for Children

By Joseph Pronechen

The father knelt in the dark of night, deep in prayer. Sometimes his young son would wake up and witness his devotion.

Such witness made a deep impression on the son. Who were this father and son? A young Karol Wojtyla — the future Pope St. John Paul II — and his father.

Karol Wojtyla Sr. well recognized that a father's primary duty is to get himself and his family — wife and children — to heaven.

Others have been likewise impacted by a father's faith.

“My dad was very much the spiritual leader of our family,” recalled Father Richard Heilman, pastor of St. Mary's of Pine Bluff Church in Cross Plains, Wisconsin, and founder of the website RomanCatholicMan.com. What dad Walter “represented for us

kids — I'm third of seven children — is all of us got to Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation, and we were active in our parishes helping out. That was instilled in us early on.”

Today, all his brothers (one is deceased) and sisters are joyful Catholics. “They all love their faith,” the priest said, “and Dad did it with such great joy, too. He loved living out his faith, primarily at the local church.”

It's essential for fathers to take the lead with their children. Father Heilman and others point to the findings of a study conducted by the Swiss government in 1994 and published in 2000, which revealed that the religious practice of the father of the family “determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.”

The study found if a father doesn't attend church, “no matter how faithful his wife's devotions — only one child in 50 will become a

regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, 75% of the children will continue as churchgoers.

“This confirms the essential role of father as spiritual leader, which I would argue is true fatherhood,” said Father Heilman.

Such masculine example is increasingly important. In January, a Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University national study of young millennials who left the Church found that 74% decided to leave as young as 10 years old, and only 17% replied that when they were Catholic, they went to Mass weekly.

And in 2015, the Pew Research Center found that, among Catholics, 73% of those who say “religion was very important to their family while they were growing up describe themselves as Catholics today, compared with just 38% among those who say religion was 'not too' or 'not at all' important to their families.” Matthew James Christoff is helping men turn the tide through the “New Emangelization Project” (NewEmangelization.com).

“A Catholic man's greatest duty is to lead his spouse and children to meet Christ in the Mass,” said Christoff, on Sundays and holy days of obligation, as the Church dictates. Men leading their families to Sunday Mass “will have a lasting impact.”

He cites dire findings that Bishop Thomas Olmsted of Phoenix referred to in his apostolic exhortation to Catholic men called “Into the Breach” in 2015. The statistics include: Only 29% of Catholic men believe attendance at weekly Mass is “very important”; merely 34% strongly agree Catholicism is among the “most important parts of life”; only 26% think of themselves as “practicing Catholics”; only 33% say they attend Mass weekly; only one-third pray daily; and less than a third believe confession is important.

In “Into the Breach,” Bishop Olmsted noted, “[T]he truth is that large numbers of Catholic men are failing to keep the promises they made at their children's baptisms — promises to bring them to Christ and to raise them in the faith of the Church.”

“Fathers who lead their children to Mass are helping in a very real way to ensure their eternal salvation,” emphasized Bishop Olmsted.

“The Mass is a refuge in the Spiritual Battle, where Catholic men meet their King, hear his commands, and become strengthened with the Bread of Life.”

Fathers need to take the lead, Christoff agrees. “As a man, the father needs to build unity at the top,” said Christoff. “The father plays a very significant role.”

The fatherly witness of prayer, participation at church and actively teaching children the faith “has a huge impact on children” as part

of the “domestic church militant.”

Father Heilman said his father's faithful witness “instilled ... that we take our faith seriously. It's not a matter of fulfilling our obligations, but putting it into practice. That's the key,” adding: “If you take your faith seriously — more than just fulfilling an obligation and looking at your watch, but you understand that faith is a daily matter — when duty calls, you're first in line to say, 'Send me.' Children are watching. That was the way in which faith has been anchored in each one of us. It wasn't just an obligation of worship, but actually doing everything the Church asked us to do, and doing it with joy.”

In growing in faith, dads should look to faithful examples of the saints, including Jesus' earthly father, St. Joseph.

“Our ultimate goal as men is to be spiritual fathers,” said Christoff, and for fathers who do so, “their children will see how the faith has made their father better. As the father grows in holiness, the family realizes and naturally follows.” Christoff is also a co-founder of CatholicManNight.com, “a website dedicated to help men meet, get to know and build a friendship with Jesus Christ.”

Another program helping men fulfill their faith-focused mission is Fraternus.net. As a parish youth director, co-founder Jason Craig wanted to support men in faith formation.

Fraternus, which has several chapters around the country, has become a place where fathers pass on their faith to future men, whether they be their own sons or fatherless boys or those who are fatherless spiritually.

“Every faithful Catholic man can point to a mentor or a man that really taught him to be a Catholic man,” Craig emphasized.

“If as young adolescent men they don't have fathers or fatherly mentors, they will not practice the faith without a man's intervention. The Son reveals the Father. If you don't have an image of fatherhood, it's hard to understand the faith.”

“In Fraternus, we look the man in the eye and say, 'You are the example.’” Craig explained it as foremost a training for men, who then bring young men to maturity via solid faith formation, conversations and catechesis about the virtues, in addition to Mass attendance and other prayer practices.

As fathers become leaders in faith formation, Father Heilman agrees that there should be a sense of integrity.

“If you want children to grow up and take their faith seriously [you must guide] by the example you're setting.”

Father Heilman also strongly recommends fathers exhibit Christian joy. He well remembers, “Dad was joyful in the faith.”

PARENTS, REDISCOVER YOUR SPINE

By Vincent Arisukwu

“Basically, when the couple is sound, the rest of the family is sound”
-Taibbi

Parenting has some resemblance with being a school teacher. The fundamental difference is the biological relationship between parents and their children. In terms of rules, discipline, and moral standards, we could see great relationships between what being teachers and being parents. Flash your mind back to your school days and recount the teachers that you passed through. Make a mental list of those you remember and why you remember them. Start thinking. Isn't it hard to remember some of your teachers? Why? The reason is that the teachers that easily come to mind are those who make great impact on you. Apart from teaching the requirements of the syllabus, the teachers who help you towards positive discernment when you're in confusion are easily remembered. The teachers who are firm in their positions, who assist you to recognize boundaries. Typically, they don't appear to be “friends” within those times of learning but they eventually end up being admired in later years. The teachers who are merely nice and passively okay with almost all your choices fizzle out along the noisy corridors of graduation. How about parents? Can parents be forgotten? Can they be merely remembered if they play a passive role? It is hard to say that it can happen. Maybe!

The job of parenting is surely complicated, same goes with parenting styles. Rarely any two parenting styles work exactly the same. But one common thing is that parents have to be parents for family to function as a healthy system. One of the great authors in the family therapy insists that adults must be adults to maintain a healthy balance. Taibbi (2015) marshals out what being adults entails:

- ✦ Being able to take responsibility for one's emotions, behaviors, and problems, rather than blaming others, or being dependent on others to relieve one's distress.
- ✦ Being able to be assertive rather than aggressive or passive when problems arise.
- ✦ Being able to be emotionally supportive of others without being controlling or over-responsible.
- ✦ Being able to be emotionally calm; not reacting in kind to anger, or anxiety of others.
- ✦ Being able to view others as anxious or fearful (rather than malicious or manipulative) in conflict.
- ✦ Being able to be calm, thoughtful, and proactive in decision making.

This would surely be a wonderful checklist for parents and families.

I usually think about three words each time I talk about parenting: *parent, friend, and peer*.

Parent: A parent is the father or mother of the child. S/he is the one who is responsible for the child as a caregiver. One becomes a parent by biological relationship or through the law by adoption. The role of being parents is naturally endowed by God, and takes its clue from him. Saint Paul says, “This, then, is what I pray, kneeling before the Father, from whom every fatherhood, in heaven or on earth, takes its name (Eph 3:15).” The term, “fatherhood” could be interpreted to mean “familyhood.” God has given us families and placed parents in charge of the families. This makes parenting both a responsibility and a privilege. God entrusts parents the role of guiding, directing, accompanying, loving, and caring for their children just as he cares for us his creatures.

Friend: I believe that every parent is a friend to his/her child. The dictionary defines friend as “a person attached to another by feelings of affection or personal regard.” “A person who gives assistance, patron, supporter.” “A person who is on good terms with another; a person who is not hostile.” Every parent is absolutely a friend. Parents are affectionately attached to their children. Parents are patrons and supporters to their children. Parents relate with their children in some very cordial terms. Parents play with their children, cook with them, enjoy sports with them, and pray with them.

Peer: A peer is someone who is equal to another in abilities, qualification, age, background, and social status. One's peer is mostly the person's mate. This is where some parents get it wrong about their parenting roles. They mistakenly become peers to their children. They compromise their roles and neutralize their authority as parents. Parents who play peer role to their children simply fizzle out like those teachers who have no significant influence on their students.

Obviously, there is a hierarchical structure in every family. Parents are invested with more powers than the children. These structures help the family

ily to operate fine. The boundaries become clearly marked. The family system stays connected. Parents take responsibility for the psychological, spiritual, and social development of their children. They help them to take positive decisions. They inspire their actions. Even as children mature into adulthood, there is always a fine line between being parent and being child.

Imagine the family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Scripture says of Jesus, “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Phil 2:6-8).” Mary and Joseph were friends with Jesus. Mary and Joseph loved Jesus. Mary and Joseph cared for Jesus. Mary and Joseph respected Jesus. Mary and Joseph also exercised their parental role over Jesus. An example is the finding in the temple. After searching for him for days, Mary didn't behave like a peer when they found Jesus. She didn't say, “Hey, buddy, are you cool here?” Mary was calm, thoughtful, and proactive in asking him to move towards what is good for

him as she said, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you (Lk. 2:48).”

There is a great challenge for today's parents to rediscover their spine and be the adults they need to be. Irrespective of the varied influences of the social media, children still look up to their parents for correct signals. And because society feeds them with divergent views, they get disappointed if their parents fail them too. What is socially right or wrong? What is spiritually right or wrong? What is morally right or wrong? What is economically right or wrong? What is politically right or wrong? The parents remain the first vital source of information about these values which will accompany the child for life. Parents must therefore speak with conviction, authority, and sincerity. The famous scripture passage says, “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it (Proverbs 22:6).” That confirms Taibbi's statement at the beginning, “when the couple is sound, the rest of the family is sound.” Parents, please take back your authority and make the best out of your children, else, they might forget you in later years.



Fr. Vincent is a priest from Nigeria, currently serving as associate pastor at Christ the King Church in Maryland. Founder of the FA Ministry and FA Magazine, he holds a master's degree in Communication and is presently a doctoral student of Marriage and Family Therapy at Eastern University in Pennsylvania.



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Fashion's A Stitch



● Alex Traverson

“WHEN IS PARENTING NOT HARD?”

INTERVIEW *With* CRAIG AND CRICKET TRAVERSON

Craig and Cricket Traverson live in Glen Burnie, Maryland and have been married for twenty years. They are a Catholic family, full of energy, humor and passion. Both serve at different ministries in the parish community where they live. Craig works for a Lighting Company while Cricket is a lawyer by profession. Cricket described herself as “lawyer by training, stay-at-home mom by choice” since she took up the full-time task of taking care of the children with special attention to Alex. She described her husband as the, “brainstorming engineer” who provides answers to almost all family and logistic challenges related to taking care of their special needs child. While Craig is a cradle Catholic, Cricket has been a convert for twenty-two years. The couple enjoy what they do as a family. As Cricket puts it, “It always reminds me how fortunate I am to have married my best friend.” The couple have four kids: Abby (17); Emily (15); Angela (12); Alex (9) with a neurological condition called polymicrogyria.

FA: How does raising children posit a challenge to you as your kids are mostly at their adolescent and teenage stage?

It is an interesting dynamic. We homeschool, so I'm with them all the time. And they are always with each other. Obviously, it can be good, and it can be bad. Emotions often run high in our house with teenagers but it's also an incredible dynamic to see them together. They are the best of friends and they are the worst of friends depending on the moment.

But there are so many times when I walk into the room and see two of them together laughing or comforting each other or really being together as family. There's just a special relationship among our kids as siblings, a bond that nothing else can ever change.

How does Alex fit into this bonding?

It's a very different situation. My girls have been so grateful from Day 1 of bringing Alex home. They understand what unconditional love is because Alex doesn't talk to us. Alex can't tell us what he needs. When he's happy he will laugh out loud, but you don't get a whole lot of response otherwise. You're not loving him to get something out of it. You're loving him because of who he is. And for them there's never a question - all the doctors' appointments, the therapies, and all the things we had to drag them to when they were younger. It's always about what Alex needs, and this is what we have to do. They have learned to love him in a way that most people never really experience. Alex is just such a blessing in our household.

FA: Was Alex born with this condition?

Yes. We didn't know until he was a little older. At about six weeks old, he stopped breathing but we resuscitated him. He was in and out of the hospital a little bit, and they said it was reflux. When he turned nine months old he wasn't making any of his milestones, and we took him to the neurologist who said it was cerebral palsy. She advised against doing an MRI to confirm it then because it wasn't going to change his course of treatment. When Alex

turned 3, we took him for the MRI and it came back a lot different than we had anticipated. Alex has a condition called “polymicrogyria” (PMG) which translates to “many-small-folds.” This condition caused his brain to form improperly as it developed in utero. This abnormality affects his entire brain. Neurologically, Alex has a lot of high voltage electrical activity in his brain that leads to seizures and multiple developmental delays. However, we learned that the brain can be rewired. Once we discovered his diagnosis, we worked from there to find ways to help him. That's where we're at, training and retraining him to be able to do things like a normal child will be able to.

FA: As parents what did that do to you? Was there grief?

When we got the news about Alex's MRI, Craig was in Maryland and we were back in Pennsylvania trying to sell the house. I had the other small children who had their own needs. In fact, the entire house was filled with boxes. Craig was working three days in Maryland and two days at home. Then the neurologist calls and says, “Well, I have some interesting news. The MRI came back different than we anticipated. You will have to get in touch to follow up with the neurologist when you get to Maryland.” I asked if I should change anything I am doing with him and she said that I should continue with what I am doing until I get to MD. For me that was a lot. I felt as if I couldn't handle all of that. Even though Alex wasn't progressing

developmentally, we didn't realize medically that he was a sick child. Then, the neurologist says to me, "You have a very sick little boy." That was the moment it hit me that it wasn't just a developmental issue. Right now, his medical condition is well controlled with medications. But we're very fortunate to have his medications.

The truth is that we are blessed because you never know what God has in store. There is hope because we don't know what amazing things Alex is capable of, but he is also very sick. So, we have to deal with that. A stomach bug for Alex isn't just an ordinary stomach problem. It could lead to aspiration and possible seizures. When he is sick, it's always watching and waiting and making sure he is okay. It's not just me or Craig, it's the whole family. All of his sisters are protective of him, and so good with him.

FA: Does that stress you out?

Sometimes. Everyone is there for him. Everyone is involved. Whether it is Abby packing a bag to go to the hospital, Emily holding him while I park the car, Angie comforting him

I think to myself that we have this special kid. I see that this is where God wanted us to be

with his presence. We simply work as a team. I think to myself that we have this special kid. I see that this is where God wanted us to be. He wanted us to be present to each other. Our family works like a team where everyone knows what they have to do.

FA: What could you say is the real cause of anxiety in handling Alex?

It's the uncertainty. "Well, he's going to learn how to communicate with this device..." You get excited and dedicate the time and effort, but ultimately, it still doesn't work. Then the therapist says, "Sorry, this is all you are going to get." Those things are disappointing and difficult. Sometimes we get bad news, that his



seizures are back, and this affects every aspect of his life. And there are times when we want to do things as a family together that aren't possible for a little boy in a wheelchair. But he's such an integral part of our family that we miss him when we go out without him. So, we have to find a balance to do things that we want, and still include him.

FA: What is different for you Craig as a man?

Craig: Alex is our special guy, and he is Alex. I have my kids, and my kids are my kids. I love them all. I wish I had half of the outgoing love that my kids and my wife have with him. I do find some trouble relating. It's tough for me to

work on the communication stuff. A lot of what comes out from me is based on feedback and response, and there's not a lot of that that occurs. I do have a lot of things to work on when it comes to communication. But seeing him smile, seeing him laugh, listening to him play, seeing him do everything, just makes me happy.

FA: There are times you come into the church and Alex starts whining. We know you love to be in church but at the same time you have to move out to quiet him, and a few times you don't even get back on time. How does that make you feel?

I think that it is hard. It is difficult to take him out in those moments. But at the same time, I would rather take him out in those moments than not come at all. You know you take what you can get from the Mass. Alex is our fourth child, and I think with Abby who is the first child, it was much harder because I went from being this career driven, independent

I would like to come every day, sit in front of the Eucharist...

I would rather come and get something, than not come and get nothing.

woman to being a mother. So, I'm used to taking the kid out as the fourth child.

FA: Do you experience people who aren't friendly or welcoming to Alex?

Occasionally, but not that often. Sometimes they just moan at us not sure of what to say. We generally don't get a whole lot of resentful reactions. I occasionally get some dirty looks in places where it is usually quiet and he is not. But I take him out. I try to be kind and not interrupt people's peace. People sometimes have very strange reactions when they see him. They mostly stare at us because I guess they don't know what to say. Generally, we are pretty fortunate.

FA: How does he get along with kids?

Kids are the best in terms of reactions because they just talk. They just start asking questions, and the parents try to stop them and shut them down. I think that one of the great vocations that God gave to Alex is to educate people on the beauty of life, how precious life is at each stage. God uses him to teach us how connected we are, to know that everyone has their purpose. My favorite question is when people ask me, "Do you think that God could heal your son?". My response to them is, "Of course, God can. Nothing is impossible to him." But he is not going to. From the beginning of creation, God had Alex in mind. God knew what's the best for him. Obviously, Alex has changed our lives so much, and the lives of those around him. Everyone is happy around him. Why then would God take that away from him? Theologically, I think that Alex is a "saint". He is incapable of sin. He is in a constant state of grace. All those who come around him want to rub his little head, want to touch and feel him. They touch him like a relic. That's amazing.



FA: What message do you have for parents about parenting?

Parents, love your children. Be present to them. Look at what their needs are and help them grow. Help them be the people that God would want them to be. I think we (parents) get so busy with all the things we are doing that sometimes we just forget to stop and talk to them and listen to their concerns and to know where they are at. If we can provide guidance to our children in their small

moments, that's what will help them in those great moments. Parents should be actively present to their children. It can be easy to get bogged down by the day to day activities. But every evening when, for instance, Craig comes home, the entire mood in the house is lifted just by having him home. It is a wonderful feeling of completeness knowing we are all together for dinner.

FA: How do you think parents who care for children with disabilities could best handle the situation?

We would say to keep moving forward and to do things with their children. Go out into the community and let other people see what you're doing so they are not afraid.

Faith is a good portion of it because without faith, it is simply impossible. I don't know how one could do it without faith.

FA: What would your advice be for pregnant women and parents who just got the news that they are carrying a special-needs baby?

The issue is that you don't know that this child you describe as perfect is perfect. What difference does it make? What do you do with this child if he has issues at eight? It is hard to define perfection from the human perspective. If you meet a down syndrome child, you know pure love. There isn't any guarantee that any child will be "normal." Of course, it will be hard. The question is, "*When is parenting not hard?*" There are always unique challenges with every child. There is just no guarantee. Whether it be Alex or any of our kids, there is a challenge. You just don't know what God has planned. Our advice would be, take a deep breath and move forward knowing that you're going to love this child and this child is going to love you regardless of any disability they have. God has given parents the privilege to "create" a new person that you bring into this world together.

Parenting is simply sharing with them the love that God has given to you.

- Emily lovingly lifts her brother Alex to his wheelchair
The Family Apostolate photo credits

Parents, love your children. Be present to them...

Help them be the people that God would want them to be.

Genesis 37 Bible Quiz

Joseph sold into Egypt

- Where did Jacob (Israel) settle in the opening line of Gen. 37
 - Bethel
 - Edom
 - Canaan
 - Gilead
- Why did Jacob love Joseph the best of all his sons?
 - he was the oldest son
 - he was the son of his old age
 - he was obedient
 - he was handsome
- Who made a long ornamented tunic for Joseph?
 - Bilhah
 - Zilpah
 - Rebecca
 - Israel (Jacob)
- Why did Joseph's brothers hate him?
 - Joseph was a better shepherd than them
 - Joseph was rude to them
 - Joseph was their father's favorite son
 - Joseph hated them first
- What was the recurring theme in Joseph's dreams?
 - Egypt would go into a famine
 - Joseph's family would bow down to him
 - Joseph would one day be rich
 - Joseph would kill his brothers
- Which of Joseph's brothers wanted to save him and convinced the others not to kill him?
 - Reuben
 - Hemdan
 - Shepho
 - Simon
- Instead of killing Joseph, what did his brothers do to him?
 - broke his legs
 - tied him to a tree
 - threw him in a cistern
 - beat him
- After stripping Joseph of his tunic, how much did Joseph's brothers sell him to the Ishmaelites?
 - 10 gold pieces
 - 50 naira
 - 20 shekels
 - 20 silver pieces
- How did Jacob react when Joseph's bloody tunic was returned to him?
 - he cried and left home to find him
 - he sought revenge
 - he tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins
 - he blamed the brothers
- Who was Joseph finally sold to in Egypt?
 - Pharaoh
 - Potiphar
 - Judah
 - Cleopatra

Questions for reflection:

- 1 What parenting style do you see in Jacob's action that you might love for your own family?
- 2 Do you see problems in his parenting style and would you parent differently?

Spring Issue Bible Quiz Answers

- Acts of the Apostles
 1. Theophilus
 2. Mathias
 3. Lameness
 4. The Hellenests' widows were being neglected
 5. Stoning
 6. Philip
 7. Me
 8. Unclean animals
 9. An angel let him out
 10. Circumcision

The Church Was Right About Contraception

By Michael DeAscanis



The Catholic Church is an expert on the human person. It understands who we are and why we act. It draws knowledge from the teachings of Jesus as well as from its lived experience of the past two thousand years. Jesus told his followers, *You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.* [Jn 8:31] What is the truth about contraception? Fifty years ago, July 1968, Pope Paul VI wrote the encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae* (On Human Life). In it he declared that the use of hormonal drugs (birth control pills) in marriage to prevent conception is immoral and predicted that the pill would have serious negative effects on marriage and society.¹ Why?

As human beings we have two choices in life: either we conform ourselves to reality or we attempt to conform reality to us. Regarding sexuality, either we accept God's definition for sexual intercourse or we make up our own definition. Sexual intercourse serves two inherent purposes: bonding and babies. It is a way in which married couples express love for each other and the way in which children are created. Sexual intercourse, when in accord with our human nature, is healthy, happy, and holy. When not, it is unhealthy, unhappy, and unholy. Contraception is an attempt to redefine sex by taking children out of the equation. In so doing, contraception contradicts human nature and thus God's will. It has negative effects on us, and Christianity teaches that it is sinful.² This article considers four primary negative effects: divorce, childlessness, cancer, and abortion.

CONTRACEPTION CAUSES DIVORCE

Pope Paul VI predicted that the birth control pill would lead to the breakup of marriages. Since the invention of the pill in the 1960s the divorce rate in the United States has soared to over 50%.³ What is causing this staggering failure rate for marriage?

The sexual urge is a good part of our human nature. It is an existential urge, attracting men and women to marriage. However, it is difficult to control this urge because of our divided hearts; we desire to be generous but are tempted to be selfish. Contraception fosters selfishness. In stripping procreation out of sexual intercourse, it makes it more casual, less significant. Rather than an act of giving ourselves to our spouse, it becomes an act of taking. Men can gradually begin to use sex for pleasure or for relieving stress, rather than for generously loving their wives. One main cause for divorce today is that wives feel alienated from their husbands. These women report feeling used by their spouses. On the other hand, women sometimes use contraception contrary to the wishes of their husbands, cutting the man out of the decision to have children and causing a division between husband and wife. Intercourse, which should normally bind a couple closely together, ends up drawing them apart. Contraception begins by disconnecting sex from children—and ends by disconnecting husband from wife.

CONTRACEPTION CAN CAUSE CHILDLESSNESS

Since the development of the birth control pill in the 1960s birth rates have decreased dramatically in first-world countries. In order for a nation's population to sustain itself, each married couple must

have 2.1 children on average. Generally speaking, that means that each couple should have 3 children. Contrary to the views of many today, three children is NOT a large family; it is an average size. Many countries have birth rates below that level: Germany 1.5, Japan 1.4, Brazil 1.7, United States 1.8.⁴ They begin to face economic problems since the decreasing young population cannot economically sustain the larger aging population. An unnatural shift has occurred that will have dramatic societal effects. Some countries such as Japan have even taken the humorous tact of paying couples to have children.⁵ Something that should be naturally desirable, now has to be paid for!

Once couples start contracepting and disconnecting sex from children, they begin to lose a desire for children. They begin to limit their family size not based upon need but upon preference. They begin to prefer material things to children. Children come to be seen as a burden. A couple that is open to life and has several children are labeled “backward” and irresponsible. Truth is turned upside down—good is called bad and bad is called good.

CONTRACEPTION CAN CAUSE CANCER

It's not organic! How strange that today many women will pay extra for organic meat and milk from cows not treated with steroids, but then unthinkingly flood their bodies with artificial hormones through the birth control pill. These artificial hormones can hurt women, and there is science to prove it.

Consider these statistics. Since 1975 there has been a 400% increase in breast cancer among women under 50 years old, which coincides with the increase in birth control during that same period.⁶ A study of the famous Mayo Clinic in Minnesota confirms that women who are on hormonal birth control for 4 years prior to their first full term pregnancy increases their breast cancer risk by 52%.⁷ Women who use hormonal birth control for more than 5 years are four times more likely to develop cervical cancer.⁸ These statistics are bad news for women. The International Agency for Research on Cancer classifies all forms of hormonal contraception as a Group 1 carcinogen. This group of cancer causing agents also includes cigarettes and asbestos.⁹

Contd on page 21

Hormonal Birth Control and CANCER

In 2005, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that "estrogen-progestin oral contraceptives" (combination pills) could cause cervical, liver, & breast cancers.

The problem with hormonal contraceptives:

- Significantly raise the risk of breast, cervical, and other cancers
- Deplete key nutrients, such as B vitamins and vitamin C
- Deplete thyroid hormones, which can result in hypothyroidism
- Increase the risk for fatal heart attack and stroke
- May affect insulin levels and increase long term risk of diabetes

There are 2 forms of hormonal birth control:

#1 PROGESTIN-ONLY

PROGESTIN-ONLY PILLS CONTAIN THE SYNTHETIC VERSION OF THE PROGESTERONE HORMONE.

#2 COMBINATION

COMBINATION PILLS CONTAIN SYNTHESIZED PROGESTERONE AND ESTROGEN.

The Truth About CANCER™
educate • expose • eradicate

Read more: <https://thetruthaboutcancer.com/hormonal-birth-control-cancer>

What A Summer Vacation!



1



3



2



4



6



7



8



9



11



5



10



12



13



14



15

1. Brucksch Family - Lake Anna, VA
2. Chris Kaufman - Bermuda
3. Hensley Family - Ocean City, MD
4. Fratantuono Family - Hood Canal, WA
5. Erdnic Family - Canada
6. Miller Family - Ocean City, MD
7. Sherry Yachera - Wicomico River, MD
8. Obby and Peter Abba Family - Niagra Falls
9. Rogers Family - Hershey Park, PA
10. Rhinehart Family - Rome
11. Richardson Family - Rome
12. Arriaga Family - Six Flags, MD
13. Mueller Family - Cross Country Road Trip
14. Grady Family - Brownfield, ME
15. Smith Family - The Philippines

CONTRACEPTION CAN CAUSE ABORTIONS

The pill often has the unintended consequence of aborting a child. It can kill your baby without you even knowing it. The drug companies don't want you to know it. Abortion clinics like Planned Parenthood don't want you to know it. However, women have a right to know!

The hormones released by the pill fakes the woman's body into thinking that it is pregnant so that it stops releasing egg cells. However, no birth control practice is completely effective or used completely consistently. The woman's body sometimes still ovulates. If sexual relations occur during that time, it is possible to get pregnant. Then the secondary effect of the hormonal pill kicks in. The lining of a woman's uterus must be at least 8mm thick in order for a baby to implant and grow in the womb. The use of hormonal contraception generally keeps the uterine lining below 6mm.¹⁰ If a baby is conceived by a woman on the pill, the embryo may not implant and may instead be unknowingly aborted by its mother.

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Fr. Michael DeAscanis is a priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, ordained in 2004. His seminary studies specialized in bioethics and medical ethics. He currently serves as pastor of St. Philip Neri and St. Clement parishes. He also serves as chaplain of the Catholic Medical Association in Baltimore, giving spiritual and ethical support to physicians and medical students.

CONTRACEPTION DESTROYS WOMEN, FAMILIES, AND SOCIETY.

HUMAN LIFE INTERNATIONAL

THE POPE WAS RIGHT

Looking back fifty years, it seems that Pope Paul VI was correct in his teachings on the negative effects of contraception. He will be canonized a saint this September 2018, further validating his teachings.

When human beings try to redefine nature we get hurt. Contraception redefines the meaning of sexual intercourse. In doing so, it disconnects sex from children, disconnects sex from God, and ultimately disconnects husband from wife. Many Americans have been misled by the false promises of contraception. However, if we admit our mistakes, confess our sins to God, and embrace the truth of human sexuality, we will find the truth that sets us free for a good life.

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CHRIST THE WORKER

How work dignifies the family

A Reflection on Labor Day

By Patti Rubin



Watching his dark, calloused hands move seamlessly across the stone block, he carefully placed the level on top of the slab. Squinting away a bead of sweat from his brow, he focused intently, checking for precision. Hector is a stone mason from South America who barely speaks a word of English. It was another oppressively hot July day, around 100 degrees with high humidity. Watching him from my air-conditioned kitchen, he reminded me of Jesus the Carpenter of Nazareth. In this humble man working on our new home addition, I can see the dignity in a hard day's work. I can see holiness. Hector simply and deliberately goes about his daily duty under harsh working conditions without complaint. He is edifying to watch.

Jesus was no stranger to labor. The crucified man on the Shroud of Turin, believed to be the burial cloth of Jesus, was a lean muscular man around 6 feet in height with six pack abs. He was accustomed to physical work. During his time in Nazareth, Jesus would have witnessed the large construction project about 6 miles away in a town called Zippori. It's a pilgrimage site in Israel to date. The chances are very good that Jesus and Joseph might have worked

there. Imagine the King of Heaven and Earth laboring with hammer and chisel, one among many construction workers and tradesmen, perhaps even squinting away a bead of sweat from His brow.

America observes Labor Day on the first Monday of every September. It's often celebrated with cookouts and family gatherings, but it's a day specifically to recognize the efforts and achievements of workers. Technically, Labor Day is a tribute to the strength and prosperity of workers in our nation. The rich history of the Catholic Church of course plays a role in Labor Day, although unrecognized.

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII released his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor). In the encyclical, the pope challenged Catholics to stand up for and to defend the rights of human persons above profit and money. The dignity of the person, created in God's own image and likeness, is always to be valued above capital. He reinforced that through labor, people need and have the right to own property, prosper and provide for their families. Thus, "Man precedes the State, and possesses, prior to the

formation of any State, the right of providing for the sustenance of his body."¹ At the time Pope Leo wrote this encyclical, he was contending with the Industrial Revolution in the mid 1700's, when working conditions for men, women, and children were deplorable. Wages weren't regulated, worker's rights were flagrantly denied, and child labor was rampant. It was a time of misery for workers.

The world now stands on the precipice of mass industrialization, globalization, and the technological age. Ironically, we live in a time where robots are replacing people in the name of profit. The genius of Catholic social teaching is that Truth is timeless. Reiterating the dignity of labor, Pope Francis, like popes before him, faithfully promotes the timeless truth that charity and justice must remain the central concern of labor, with the dignity of the human person and the family as its central focus. All authentic Church teaching is essentially Christocentric – having the person of Christ at its center -- and basically enthrones work as a means to sanctification; a path to holiness. We must realize that work was made for man, not the other way around. Joseph went to work. Jesus also went to work. His response to the Jews was, "My Father is always at his work to this

very day, and I too am working." (John 5:17) An honest day's labor, regardless of the task, to support our spouse, children, and family leads to a deep sense of satisfaction and ultimately to joy by enjoying the fruits of our labor. It leads us to God. Pope St. John Paul II affirmed, "...the eloquence of the life of Christ is unequivocal: he belongs to the "working world", he has appreciation and respect for human work. It can indeed be said that *he looks with love upon human work* and the different forms that it takes, seeing in each one of these forms a particular facet of man's likeness with God, the Creator and Father."²

It was easy to recognize Jesus in the person of Hector. Slicing up some fruit and grabbing a cold drink from the fridge, I headed out the door to offer him a bit of refreshment. He was surprised as I handed him the plate. Breaking into a big smile and nodding his head in thanks, we understood each other. Kindness and respect is a universal language. And Jesus was there. He's always is.

Happy Labor Day!

1. Pope Leo XIII. *RERUM NOVARUM* Encyclical - Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor (May 15, 1891). Paragraph 7. Vatican Website: http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html
2. Pope John Paul II. *LABOREM EXERCENS* Encyclical – on Human Work (September 14, 1981) Paragraph 26. Vatican Website: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html



Patti Rubin is a cradle Catholic who lives in Maryland with her family. She is the administrator of the Family Apostolate.



● Jose Perez levels a stone facade wall

WHY WE ADOPTED 7 KIDS

STEVEN & DIANE



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• The Duhig Family
– by photographer William Petruzzo (410-417-8206)

By most accounts, Steven and Diane Duhig may not be the most typical couple. Married since 1998, Steven is a cradle Catholic and former British Government officer from Essex, England. Diane is a convert from Judaism, active in the prolife community and an attorney from Maryland, USA. The couple had what they described as an extraordinary wedding witnessed by 4 priests, 2 deacons, and 240 guests. They will celebrate their 20th wedding anniversary in October. Like most couples, they longed for a home filled with children. This dream of Steven and Diane would lead them on an adventure from their home in Bowie, Maryland USA on a trip halfway around the world and ending with their family of two suddenly becoming a family of nine. This is their story.

FA: What led you to consider adoption?

Steven - I first thought of adoption when I was about 6 years of age having been introduced to the charity OXFAM by the Sisters of Mercy at my elementary school. We supported children in need in Africa with our old English copper pennies. A feeling probably reinforced when I lost my own father at age 11, but acquired a very important and charismatic step-father figure. It came strongly to mind again when I was about 18 years old. While Diane and I were engaged, we discussed adoption as we were getting married late in life. Diane always wanted a large house and

family. Our adoption plan was also a factor in deciding to settle in the USA. We were already too old to be considered for adoption of even one child in the UK. After we were married, and we had moved to that large house, we agreed that now was the time to fill it! We then took the PRIDE parenting course with Social Services before becoming foster parents for our county for a year, with a view to local adoption.

FA: Why did you choose the particular children you adopted?

After a year of fostering, despite our desire to

help any child of almost any age, of any background and with any health problems, we were given no opportunity at all to adopt locally. By now, I was approaching 50 years of age, so we entered Catholic Charities International Adoption program. At first Diane indicated that she wanted to adopt three children. I thought it would likely be four in the end. Catholic Charities then offered us a sibling group of five but that group adoption fell through. We then accepted the offer of our sibling group of seven, but this fell through too. Father Mordino, a priest friend of ours was closely

following our adventure. He assured us that our original group of seven really would happen. We were skeptical as this would almost be unprecedented in the world of adoptions but he was right!

FA: What made you chose to adopt from the Philippines?

We looked into several countries but The Philippines came through because of the following reasons: 1) they were not too concerned about our age. 2) the cost of multiple adoptions was encouraging. 3) so

FA: What was it like bringing the seven children back to the US?

Stressful. Problems started with the journey before we even left the USA. Our project planners were unable to get the flights coordinated. Upon arrival, they weren't available to take us to the children's home. While we waited, we delivered some presents to relatives of our Filipina US Pediatrician. They both promptly took time off work and immediately took us the thirty miles, well over an hour's journey, up into the mountains to our children's home. We immediately

throwing big tantrums with them being across our shoulders thumping us both repeatedly!

FA: How did having an instantly large family change the dynamics of your marriage?

Clearly, we now have a lot more to worry about than ourselves. I had a well-paid, high pressure job at the time so my wife took the initial brunt of all the necessary work with medicals, remaining immunizations, organizing the Sacraments and CCD etc. and even, (phew), obtaining stool samples. Diane

many children, even sibling groups, are available for adoption. We realized that if we didn't adopt someone they likely would not ever gain any other family. 4) we both had separate and good social experiences from Filipino friends and 5) the Philippines is a Catholic country.

Ironically, our adoption of seven siblings was an early adoption from a new Pentecostal Church institution, which was actually a little hostile towards some Catholic practices and beliefs.

FA: What makes adoption from the Philippines different from the US and other countries?

Each county's process is different. The Philippine Government Agency wants to meet each new adoptive family. To adopt from the Philippines you have to actually go there to bring your children back and then go through US court action to finalize the adoption(s) a few months later.

became part of their amazing Samaritan's Place Pentecostal community, and saw their terrific work first hand. Our hosts were wonderful. Nevertheless, early on we began to realize the children were reluctant to make the sign of the cross and there was clearly a bit of unlearning of Pentecostal teaching to be done from a Catholic perspective.

We only stayed four days, and a lot of that time was spent trying to get flights home. Packing with a family of nine for the first time was quite an experience, considerably lightened on our last night when our youngest knocked on our door holding a trophy almost as big as himself indicating in pre-programmed broken English "Mom & Dad, This to USA"?

It was hard at the airport, but they all stuck close to us. We had been well prepared to deal with the various official and financial demands to be met, but it was hard for the youngest boys. Both of them took turns

also decided that she would be Homeschooling them all too!

FA: What was the impact on the children?

They had been prepared, but they did not speak as much English as they needed or we expected. Thankfully Diane had actually taught herself some Tagalog which was very useful. They would collectively discuss everything, even the movies and cartoons they watched on TV, to try to understand what was going on, rather than listen to the program and pick up the English. We tried initially to encourage them to keep their Tagalog and use it among themselves, but it soon became necessary for them to only use English at mealtimes. Nevertheless somehow, despite social contact with many other Filipinos, their Tagalog slowly slipped away. The younger they are the less they know of Tagalog. Sadly, our young ones have lost most of their Tagalog now, except that is, for the occasional insult.



• First meal out together at Pizza Hut in Manila.

FA: What was their adaptation process like?

The six youngest children immersed themselves very successfully in sports, especially soccer and tennis. Three of the youngest four have had at least one year of college experiences. Our youngest daughter has graduated after a three-year Bachelor's Degree in Canada, so that seems to suggest the younger ones adjusted more quickly. Most important of all is that they accept their own unique personal identity. Broadly speaking from our point of view, as expected, the younger they were on arrival, the easier it has been for them. They were quite well prepared for the change while still in the Philippines. That seemed to help their acclimatization.

FA: What are some of your favorite or most poignant memories of your new family?

It's a lot. -Mom meeting our oldest, 14 years old, son and lifting him up into her arms. -Our first home cooked US breakfast together of scrambled eggs and rice. -Ordering a table for nine. -Our first Mass together; seeing all seven baptized together, and realizing when our Parish Pastor needed help to identify each of them. -Wrapping a huge number of presents for them all for their first Christmas with us. The memories are too many to count.

FA: What are the major challenges with parenting adopted children?

Discipline can be frustrating. Although the young ones might not agree, nearly all of their punishments were simply consequences of their behavior with the exception of a few (sometimes highly amusing) sets of lines! The young ones' understanding of materials and valuables was one set of lines. They could not understand why some possessions (e.g. wedding presents) are precious to their parents. They shared so much between them that it was virtually impossible to give one of them a present just for themselves. If one of them owned something, they all felt they

owned it too. Focusing on an individual person's needs and instilling honesty, humility and honor was very hard!

It has been difficult understanding their relationships with each other, much of which was forged in adversity, and long before they met us. Understanding Philippine traditional cultural hierarchy was a challenge. There were times that there really did seem to be (9 x 9) 81+ relationships within our family. For example, we went through a long period when family occasions could never find everyone in a friendly and cooperative mood. There was always at least one person out of sorts who fled to their room and we had to learn to live with that. Addressing Far Eastern restroom practices, including the practice of "Tabo" (intimately washing themselves with warm water after using the bathroom). Mom found herself discussing "tuli" with the boys (traditional circumcision at the age of 12 or 13), and that was not easy. Understanding them all individually and collectively, their changes and moods have been quite a challenge.

FA: How did faith play a role in your family?

For our part this always was, and still is, a Faith based enterprise. Ever since I first heard about these young ones, I was personally convinced they were deeply in prayer for a new family. Faith led us there and it would have been impossible to reach this point without it. Our parish and our pastors have been very supportive of our needs, from the precautionary sevenfold baptisms right through their sacramental and CCD needs. Parish and successive pastor's commitment culminated with all nine of us taking up a third of our parish allocation to attend Pope Benedict XVI's Mass in Washington D.C. in 2008.

FA: How did God impact the family?

Enormously. Diane had, on more than one occasion, when gathering the children together remarked that

sometimes it's like herding cats. At times she did not know how we were going to get through the challenges we had, except through prayer. I am told it is particularly rare for an adoption to be called off and then be back on again. It is almost an absolute rule that, even if the adoptees become available for adoption again, once an adoption is called off, they will never be assigned to the same adoptive parents again. Although not a Catholic institution over in The Philippines, their home was deeply faith based too. They had prayed hard for the seven to be able to stay together and more than accepted their placement with a family of a fundamentally different denomination. When there were serious issues with the State Department requiring documentation, they sent their own representatives to travel across the islands in person to resolve these issues. Given that extraordinary effort, and the premonition of one of our priests too that, against all odds, those same adoptions would go forward nevertheless, it is hard not to feel that our adoptions were not, at least in part, a result of Divine intervention.

FA: How did your families of origin contribute?

My family found it hard to accept our decision and sadly my mother fell ill and passed away not long into the adoption and never met her grandchildren. My only other near relative is my brother. He and his wife will not travel outside the U.K., but he has met and hosted our second eldest daughter on her visit there. Diane's family are not Catholic, but their support has been outstanding throughout, giving many generous gifts, joining us for Thanksgiving, Christmas and even Easter for full blown family occasions. We have got quite used to cooking for up to 14 now! Their grandmother still valiantly sends birthday cards and presents for each child's birthday every year.



• At the Pentecostal Church of God home, Samaritan's Place, in The Philippines.

FA: What piece of advice would you give to couples considering adoption?

Get your heads tested! (A psychiatric interview was part of the adoption process, but we passed)! Take time out to do a foster parenting course such as PRIDE together. If you have no children, try fostering for a year. If you have your own children, involve them in the adoption process and carefully address the impact on each individual. Make yourself aware of conditions in the country you are considering adopting from. (E.g. Some countries' children adoptees are almost certainly to have been impacted by alcohol or other substances in pregnancy). Avoid cell phones and digital technology such as computers, games etc. Patience, patience, patience. If possible learn some of their language.

Lock away things of particular nostalgic value. Recognize from the beginning that your children may not share your material values or behavioral expectations. Arguably, take a professional rather than an emotional approach to your family, but still display your love to them. Build your own community of families who have also adopted siblings from the same country. Share the Faith (Homeschooling and homeschooling communities were excellent for this). Focus on improving and healing each child's personality and each soul rather than pushing them hard to academic achievements.

Finally, this is intended to be an optimistic account, with examples of some funny moments.

We are not going to advertise the negative aspects but there have been some. It has not been, and still is not, a bed of roses or a fairy tale. For every good thing you can read here there will be a bad one, for every funny one, a sad one.

Remember that the focal point for us is, not that you can create your ideal family, but rather to follow God's plan. These children already have their personality challenges – but God, in his infinite Wisdom, knows that you really are needed to love and parent these challenging children. They are the “independent variable”, we are the “dependent variable”, but gifted with more than abundant blessings to rise (albeit imperfectly) to the task. Most of all recognize that doing your best is exactly that. If you have really done your best there is nothing more to be done, except prayer.

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IVF

Reproductive Technology:

Does the end justify the means?
By Aloysius Ochasi

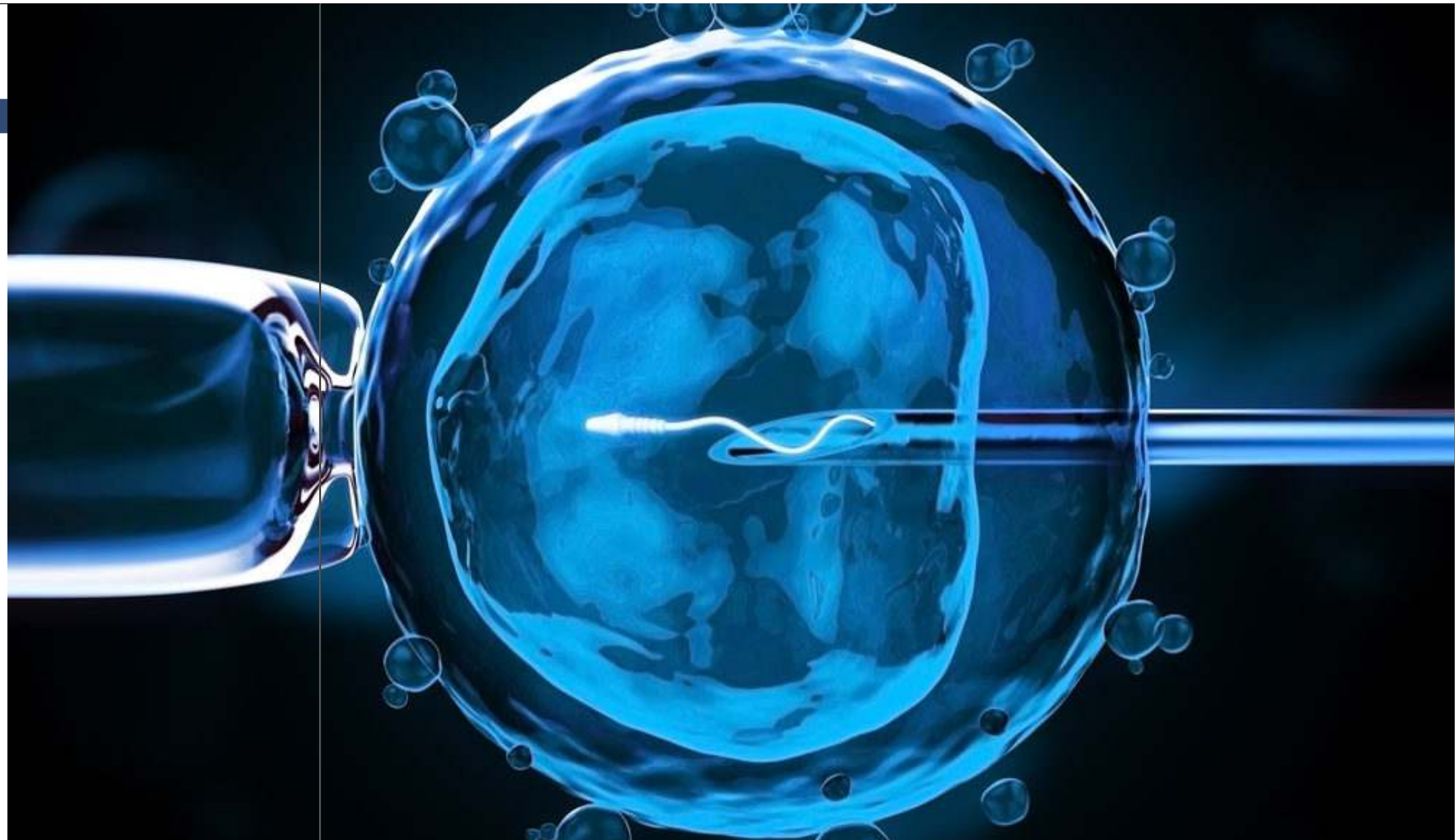
The natural way of procreation is for a man and a woman to engage in genital intercourse, which ultimately results in conception and the birth of a new human being. When couples who have engaged in unprotected genital intercourse are unable to conceive after 12 months or longer, they are considered to be infertile.¹ Infertility can be challenging for married couples who want to bear children. Many couples who want to overcome this problem of infertility resort to artificial reproductive technologies (ART). In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), the most common form of ART consists of an artificial insemination process in which the female eggs are mixed with the sperm to make embryos in a petri dish, and then put back in the woman's body to gestate.

IVF involves a five-step process that begins with fertility medications given to the woman in order to stimulate egg retrieval. The second step consists of egg retrieval via a minor surgical procedure using ultrasound imaging. The male is asked to produce sperm (usually through masturbation) in the third step. Next, the sperm and egg are mixed together in a lab dish for fertilization or a single sperm is injected directly into the egg through intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI). Finally, the embryo is transferred into the uterus three to five days following retrieval and fertilization. Implantation usually occurs six to ten days following the egg retrieval. Some of the risks of IVF include bleeding, infection, pregnancy with multiples, ectopic pregnancy, and ovarian hyper-stimulation syndrome (OHSS).² IVF has been in practice since 1978 with the successful birth of Louise Brown in the United Kingdom, the first baby to be born through the procedure. In 1981, Elizabeth Jordan Carr became the first baby born in the United States from IVF.³ The average cost of a basic cycle of IVF in the U.S ranges from \$12,000 to \$15,000.

Literally, “in vitro” from its Latin origin means “in glass” signifying the occurrence of pregnancy in a laboratory setting as opposed to “in

vivo” which refers to conceptions occurring within the body (or within the living). Colloquially, babies conceived from IVF, are referred to “test tube babies” which was derived from the tube shaped containers as glass (test tubes) commonly found in laboratories. IVF could be homologous or heterologous. It is homologous if the eggs and sperm belong to spouses joined in marriage. On the other hand, it is heterologous if the sperm and eggs come from donors. In both instances, fertilization takes place outside the uterus (in a petri dish).

Some Catholics have used IVF to conceive their babies or know someone who has done so. Many wonder why IVF is deemed immoral by the Catholic Church since its end goal is to bear children. If the Church is “pro-life,” why are married couples not allowed to overcome infertility through IVF to bring forth new human beings into existence? It is pertinent to state that the moral concerns raised about IVF have nothing whatsoever to do with the child who is born. Every child is a gift to be cherished and treasured. As a young human being, a child has inestimable rights and dignity that ought to be respected. No matter how a child comes into existence, whether through a loving marital relationship, through acts of adultery, rape or fornication, or through modern reproductive technologies (such as IVF) or even cloning, he or she deserves to be loved and cherished.⁴ It is also important to stress that the Church feels the pain of couples suffering from infertility and accompanies them in their journey. The Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, addressed the Pontifical Academy for Life in 2012 in these words: “The Church pays great



attention to the suffering of couples with infertility; she cares for them and, precisely because of this, encourages medical research”. However, the Pope cautions against “the fascination of the technology of artificial insemination.”⁵

The Catholic Church considers IVF morally objectionable for several reasons. The first objection is that it violates the true meaning of marital (human) sexuality. Marital sexuality has two components: unitive and procreative. IVF severs the unitive and procreative significance inherent in the marital act. IVF replaces the marriage act as the means of achieving pregnancy. It not only substitutes an act of laboratory manipulation for an act of bodily union between spouses, but also turns “procreation into production.”⁶ When procreation turns into production, it treats the child as an end product or a commodity produced in the laboratory through a series of actions carried out by persons other than his or her parents. For example, in homologous IVF, the husband and wife become merely the originators of the genetic raw materials which are manipulated by technicians to create a child. Ultimately, the child is “made” not “begotten.”⁴

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a document in

1987 called *Donum Vitae* (“The Gift of Life”), in which it evaluated the morality of modern reproductive technologies including IVF and embryo transfer (ET). It is interesting to note that the document did not give a blanket condemnation of the use of technology to overcome infertility. It stipulates that medical interventions that *help* or *assist* the marriage act to achieve pregnancy may be considered moral, whereas, medical interventions that *replace* the marriage act to create life are not moral. Reproductive methods that violate the dignity of the human person and the institution of marriage are immoral.⁷ Heterologous IVF, where donor eggs or sperm comes from outside the marriage, is “contrary to the unity of marriage, to the dignity of spouses...and to the child's right to be conceived and brought into the world in marriage and from marriage.”⁸

The IVF process requires the fertilization of many eggs which brings many embryos into existence. These embryos are screened via preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) and the healthy and viable ones are implanted in the womb, while the rest are discarded, used for experiments or frozen indefinitely in liquid nitrogen (cryopreservation).

Such profane treatments constitute a violation of the sacredness of

young human lives. Similarly, in cases of multiple embryos, doctors perform what they call “fetal/embryo reduction” or “selective reduction” which simply is killing the less healthy embryos in order to allow the healthier ones to come to term. The killing of young human beings at the early stages of their development contradicts the commandments of God and goes against Natural Law. Also, most IVF procedures require that the sperm be obtained through masturbation, which the Church considers immoral. In addition, IVF increases the risks of multiple births. Children born from IVF are twice as likely to have birth defects, three times as likely to be underweight and handicapped, and six times as likely to have cerebral palsy.³ There are morally acceptable interventions that may be used to treat infertility, ranging from surgery and fertility drugs to Natural Procreative Technology (NaProTECHNOLOGY). NaProTECHNOLOGY works with the woman's menstrual and fertility cycle to achieve pregnancy. The Church also believes that infertile couples can extend

their vocation as parents through adoptions. The Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in *Dignitas Personae* (The Dignity of a Person) states: “In order to come to the aid of the many infertile couples who want to have children, adoption should be encouraged, promoted and facilitated by appropriate legislation so that the many children who lack parents may receive a home that will contribute to their human development.”⁹ Through adoption, they will fulfill their roles as parents to the many children who desire loving parents and stable families.

As mother and teacher, the Church empathizes with the struggles of infertile couples, and at the same time offers moral guidance on procreation. She maintains that a child is a gift from God, not an entitlement or right. The strong desire to have children does not justify the use of morally objectionable means to achieve that end; otherwise, it would constitute the choice of a bad or illicit means to a good end.

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By Any Means Necessary



Does a married couple have a right to parenthood?
An ethical perspective on third party donors and surrogate motherhood

By Christine Sybert

According to government statistics, in the United States, about 10% of couples experience infertility, which is defined as not being able to get pregnant after one year of trying.¹ Multiple factors can result in infertility, from blocked fallopian tubes to low sperm count, but sometimes there is no definable cause. The desire for a child is natural and good. It indicates a vocation to fatherhood and motherhood that is an integral part of marriage. Does that mean a married couple has a right to parenthood? To answer this question, we have to look at the purpose of marriage as well as the rights of the child in light of what medicine offers infertile couples as a remedy.

The Purpose of Marriage
What is the purpose of marriage? Traditionally speaking, the primary purpose of marriage is the generation and nurturing of offspring; the second purpose is the mutual help of spouses, and the third is the remedy for concupiscence (our tendency to sin as a result of original sin).² Love should be an integral part of all three purposes. What about sex within marriage? Often, Catholics are not aware that *each* physical union between a husband and a wife must be an act of giving themselves to each other as well as one that is open to new life. This does not mean that a child is conceived with every marital act, but simply that the couple is willing to allow God to



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create a new life if He chooses. The conjugal act “achieves the twofold end of marriage: the good of the spouses and the transmission of life.”³ In other words, each physical union within marriage must be both unitive and procreative. Any sexual act that disassociates either (or both) of these functions is not permissible. God is our Creator. He designed sex for our benefit: to help a couple grow closer together and to let them assist Him in growing the human family. We cannot misuse the gift of sex and twist it to our own desires without suffering the price. If the focus of a marriage becomes only on procreation – on having children at any price – then the husband and wife are reduced to mere sperm and egg donors. This undermines the unitive function of marriage. Understanding God’s purpose for sex within marriage is of utmost importance to evaluate the morality of assisted reproductive technologies (ART).

The Rights of the Child

The Catholic Church teaches that life is a gift from God, where He shares something of Himself with us. This makes life sacred. Therefore, it is not to be manipulated by man for his own whims and desires.⁴ Additionally, each person has an inherent dignity due to being made in God’s image, and every child has a right “to be conceived, carried in the womb, brought into the world, and brought up by his own parents.”⁵ Numerous fertility treatments currently offered violate these principles.

Through these procedures...
life and death are subjected to
the decision of man, who thus
sets himself up as the giver of life
and death.

Assisted Reproductive Technology – When ART is Not Dignified

Many people do not realize that what the medical community promotes as ART is rarely in line with the dignity of life. The process of creating viable embryos often results in destruction of some embryos for “selective” or genetic preferences. “Through these procedures... life and death are subjected to the decision of man, who thus sets himself up as the giver of life and death by decree.”⁶ Doctors and fertility clinics use terms like *third party donor* and *surrogate mother* that sound simple and almost charitable. We donate blood to help others, why not donate sperm? Let’s examine these terms in more detail. A *third party donor* is someone who donates sperm or eggs to a collection and storage facility so that a

person or couple seeking assistance in having a child can obtain the required gametes (the half of the human genetic material that is passed through the sperm or egg) to have a child. In scientific terms, heterologous fertilization (at least one donor who is not the husband or wife) is made possible by third party donation and leads primarily to the process of *in vitro* (outside of the body) fertilization. In a marriage, this heterologous fertilization introduces an element of adultery, as the child produced by these methods is not related to both of the spouses: the unitive function of marriage is violated. From the child’s perspective, he or she is not being raised by both of his or her parents. In *surrogate motherhood*, a woman is contracted to carry an implanted embryo (most likely through in vitro fertilization) that is not related to her. After delivery of the child, she agrees to give the baby to the person or persons who created the contract with her, who may or may not be the parents of the child. This exploits the woman as just an incubator, it completely removes the conjugal act from procreation, and the child has not been carried in its own mother’s womb. “Surrogate motherhood... sets up, to the detriment of families, a division between the physical, psychological and moral elements which constitute those

families.”⁷

The Suffering Caused by Infertility

The Church acknowledges that sterility can be a difficult challenge to a married couple and urges the faithful to support and encourage them. The couple is called to unite their sufferings to Christ’s on the Cross and to remember that spiritual fruitfulness can be gained through other ways, such as adoption, educational work, or assisting poor or handicapped children. Scientists are applauded for their efforts to help cure sterility while keeping the dignity of marriage and human life in the forefront of their work. At no time, however, should science or medicine use its current knowledge or future discoveries to assist couples who feel they have a right to parenthood by any means necessary.

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A Prayer for the Family

Composed by St. Mother Teresa

Heavenly Father,
you have given us the model of life
in the Holy Family of Nazareth.
Help us, O Loving Father,
to make our family another Nazareth
where love, peace and joy reign.
May it be deeply contemplative,
intensely eucharistic,
revived with joy.

Help us to stay together in joy
and sorrow in family prayer.
Teach us to see Jesus in the members of our families,
especially in their distressing disguise.
May the eucharistic heart of Jesus
make our hearts humble like his
and help us to carry out our family duties
in a holy way.

May we love one another
as God loves each one of us,
more and more each day,
and forgive each other’s faults
as you forgive our sins.
Help us, O Loving Father,
to take whatever you give
and give whatever you take with a big smile.

Immaculate Heart of Mary,
cause of our joy, pray for us.

St. Joseph, pray for us.

Holy Guardian Angels,
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When Is Evangelization Cultural Appropriation?

By Stephen Driver

I've been thinking a lot lately about cultural appropriation. Ok, that's a lie, I'm not thinking about it a lot. It's summer. I'm thinking about my summer vacation a lot. Cultural appropriation? I'm thinking about a little. But I *have* been thinking about it, at least. To add context, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York opened its exhibit called *Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination*. Almost immediately gallons of ink were spilled about the event focusing mostly on the gala event at which celebrities dressed up in various costumes around a "Catholic" theme.

Opinions on the event, the Vatican's willingness to cooperate with it (although the Vatican issued a statement afterward saying they weren't aware of the gala and were focusing on the art exhibit itself), and the event's role in promoting beautiful, the good, and the truth about Catholicism specifically (and Christianity more broadly) vary wildly and, at times, vocally. The disagreement ranges somewhere between, "This is the greatest thing to happen to Catholicism since Santa," and, "This is the worst thing to happen to Catholicism since Satan."

At a similar time, I saw some chatter on the internet regarding a prom dress. In this instance, a young lady (who did not appear to be of Asian descent) had posted pictures of herself wearing a traditionally styled Chinese dress. Shortly afterwards, she was met with criticism on Twitter. One person wrote, "My culture is NOT your . . . prom dress," an accusation of cultural appropriation. Following that, the internet came alive with various factions condemning or supporting either side in the argument.

For those not familiar with this issue, there is an ongoing debate about what is cultural *appreciation* and what is cultural *appropriation*. When does an appreciation for the beauty of a culture not your own morph into using the beauty of a culture not your own for your own gain?

I connect these two events because I think they're related and it helps that they happened within a couple of weeks of each other.

As Catholics, our mission is to go out and preach the good the news to all nations. As with everything, the devil is in the details. How do we go out? How do we preach? What is the best method for reaching those nations (or even just the folks down the block)?

On the one hand, the conversation about the beauty that exists within the Church can spark curiosity and interest, especially if that conversation is happening in a community that wouldn't typically discuss *anything* related to the Catholic Church (as it was in New York). On the other hand, I think the costume Rihanna wore was in poor taste.

So as a parent, how does one teach a child this delicate balance between appreciation and appropriation? I think it starts with respect, which we could all use a little more of. It's easy to dismiss someone's cry of appropriation when it isn't your culture being insulted, and yet we all feel a tinge when it's our own being misused. Being aware of someone else's feelings, putting yourself in their shoes, treating them as you would like to be treated (funny how it always seems to come back to the Golden Rule) is exactly how you teach someone to strike that balance.

But that's what evangelization is, isn't it? It's going out into a world that doesn't already agree with you and trying to show it what it's missing. Sometimes that world gets it muddled, confused, or just plain wrong. Sometimes it dresses up in a sexy Pope Halloween costume, and we all roll our eyes. However, through the act of reaching out, with respect and love, we can aim to bring them not just to the beautiful, but eventually to the good and the true.



Stephen Driver is an editor in the Washington, D.C. area. He has been a part of Holy Trinity Parish in Glen Burnie since he was old enough to walk. He's still working toward being a better Catholic.

Special Children Poetry

The Special Child

I can walk, but cannot see
I can hear but not understand
I can crawl but cannot walk
I can love but cannot hate
I am honest but cannot lie
I know God and He alone teaches me to love,
how to love
My friends and I aren't the same but there is one
thing that is the same. God gave all of us a heart
of love to use by a smile, touch, kiss and a hug.
On your bad day, I am good to have around for a
hug with love and laughter
Do you know God loves you? My friends and I
do!
If you really look at yourself, you are a Special
Child too.
Be honest, aren't you!

Thoughts of Special Children

Someone watches over us,
He sees that we are loved.
Someone watches over us,
He is our Lord, our God, our Love.

We may not be as you,
But we know His love is true.
He loves us the way we are,
How about you?

Are we really different?
What is it you really want?
Is it to be accepted?
Is it to be loved?

See? That is what we want.
So, deep inside we are all the same.
We know someone that calls us "Special."
Do you know His name?

Just in case it slipped your mind,
It is in ours all the time.
Jesus is the one.
He loves us, just the way we are.

By Jenny Marrero



The Asian Americans Model Minority Myth

What you need to know
by Vivien Ngai

Some common labels we give to children of Asian immigrants include 'Brainiac,' 'math whiz,' 'overachiever' the reason is because Asian American students are said to outperform other children in many national standardized tests, year after year. Also, Asian immigrants work hard, study hard, pay their taxes and don't mess with the welfare system.¹ That's why they are crowned as the 'model minority.'

In this article, I would like to examine both the privileges and the burdens that this seemingly positive stereotype has on Asian Americans. I will approach this essay in three parts: first, to clarify who the Asian Americans are; second, to unpack the model minority myth and its impact on Asian Americans and other racial/ethnic groups; and third, to conclude by addressing how the model minority stereotype affects Asian Americans' mental health and attitudes towards help-seeking behavior along with ideas of how to solve this.

Who are Asian Americans?

Moy, in her article about Asian Americans, defines them as

individuals of Asian descent who live in the United States regardless of their citizenship status.² Quoting from the 2010 Census, she states that 'Asian American/Pacific Islander' is a group, “including persons from over sixteen nations of origin and ethnic groups and over twenty Pacific Island cultures; a highly heterogeneous group with multiracial and multiethnic heritage.” While Asians account for sixty percent of the world's population, Asian Americans amount to five percent of the United States population. Members of these ethnic groups include, but are not limited to, people from Korea, Japan, China, India, Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Hawaii, Laos, Myanmar, Samoa, and Guam.³

Strictly speaking, Asian Americans might be considered more of a demographic category rather than a specific community or locale where language, religion, history, or culture are shared. However, Moy's argument is that with all the diversity among Asian Americans, they always face a shared experience of otherness and invisibility in the United States.

The impact of the model minority myth on Asian Americans

The term 'model minority' was first coined in 1966 by sociologist William Petersen in his effort to glorify the apparent success story of Japanese Americans twenty years after they suffered forced incarceration in internment camps during WWII.² While Petersen's work is regarded as one of the most authoritative pieces written about Asian Americans, the term 'model minority' has also been used to solidify a widespread stereotype of Asians as hard-working and with behavior that would stand in direct contrast and conflict to African Americans, a “problem minority,” who are still struggling against oppression, poverty, and a past rooted in slavery.^{4,5}

Asian Americans are isolated and pitted against other minority groups.⁶ Some people might have viewed the model minority myth as a seemingly positive and benign label as it appears to applaud Asian Americans for their success and achievements. This myth has many repercussions: First, when the model minority framework is generalized to all of Asian Americans, it makes the contrary experiences of different pockets of Asian American invisible.⁴ For instance, when people think about examples that support the idea of brilliant success stories of Asian Americans, they think of East Asians who go to prestigious colleges and universities and not the fact that only 12-13% of Hmong, Cambodian, and Laotian Americans have college degrees, and less than 10% of Samoan Americans do.⁴

Second, the model minority stereotype pits Asian Americans against other minority groups. Allred citing Saito argues that Asian Americans are triangulated as the model minority and a buffer between those identified as White and Black.⁶ She further postulates that Asian Americans are isolated from both sides of the Black/White paradigm, saying, “African Americans and Hispanic Americans may resent Asian Americans for their perceived success. On the other hand, Whites are also not eager to claim Asians as their own. The perpetual foreigner stereotype belies any alliance between Asian Americans and Whites, as does the very term 'model minority.'” Since Asian Americans are perpetually othered and viewed as foreigners -- no matter what they do, how successful they are, what friends they make -- they don't belong. They are foreign. They are not American.² Asian Americans can be treated as enemies against whom “real Americans” can unite against during times of economic

hardships, national emergencies, and crises.⁶

Third, the model minority myth covers up the historical and intergenerational traumas that some groups of Asian Americans have sustained in the United States. This may lead to Asian Americans internalizing the false idea of their identity that poses a threat and danger to the psychological well-being of the Asian American community and reduces the faith and likelihood of seeking help from mental health services when needed.

The model minority myth and mental health

It is important to stress that determination and survival instincts have been great tools for the Asian Americans. However, no one is invincible. Since the perpetuation of the model minority myth, the implication is that even when Asian Americans have problems, they effectively deal with these problems by hard work, honorable cultural values, and support from family or a close-knitted community rather than seeking professional help. While intended to be admirable, this mindset can be detrimental to one's health. To bridge the gap, deal with barriers, and provide mental health services to Asian Americans, more research is needed to explore how the internalization of the model minority myth impacts Asian Americans, their mental health, and their willingness to utilize mental health services.² Additionally, more training for culturally competent and culturally sensitive therapists is necessary to support them.

As an Asian American myself, I must continue to examine and reflect on my experiences and preconceived notions of Asian Americans. My goal is to also expand my understanding of the nuanced complexities of Asian American identities and not to allow them to be flattened by the model minority myth. In addition, I advocate for the proper education of Asian American children. Parents have great role to play in this regard. It is important, therefore, that parents feed their children with the proper information regarding their family's origin and do so without cultural bias. This will be a great antidote against absorbing the myths to which some of them might be directly or indirectly exposed.

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Vivian is a School Counselor at The Bronx High School of Science and a Pastor wife at Chinese Conservative Baptist Church (CCBC) for the past 26 years. She is currently enrolled in a doctoral program at Eastern University focusing on Marriage and Family Therapy Studies. With husband Isaac, they have three adult children and 2 cats. Vivien loves listening to instrumental music remarking, “It’s my ‘therapy.’”

TESTIMONY OF FAITH

HOW MY PARENTS INFLUENCED WHO I AM TODAY

By Holly Peifer

I am fortunate to have parents who have greatly influenced me to love my Catholic faith and to be active in my parish at Christ the King. How did they do that? Let me tell you a little bit about them.

Both of my parents are “cradle Catholics.” Mom has been going to Holy Trinity (now Christ the King) from the time she was 7 years old. She started bringing my Dad to church here while they were dating. Although Dad belonged to St. Bernadette's when he was younger, once he started going to Mass with my Mom, he felt that this Glen Burnie parish was his home. They eventually got married and a couple of years later, they had five sons... and then me! Having a big family is kind of unusual these days, but I think that is a big proof of their faith and a beautiful witness to others.

The most important thing they did was to insist that, no matter what, we would go to Mass. My Dad coached several baseball teams and, with four boys playing ball, we were always busy! He made sure that we always made it to Mass, whether on Saturday night or Sunday morning, even if we sometimes had to split up. During Mass, my Mom and Dad made sure we all behaved - if not, we weren't allowed to do anything fun for the rest of the day! Gradually we got this patter and it has been fun.

Along with going to Mass, we also went to religious education classes every week. My Mom and Dad wanted to make sure we were learning and understanding our Catholic faith. Religious education made so much of an impact on me that now I help out in the religious education classrooms, and I hope one day be a catechist.

Mom has been teaching Confirmation small groups since I was about



two years old. I didn't really think much of it, but we always seemed to have a house full of teenagers on Monday nights. It was busy, but a lot of fun, and as I grew older I looked forward to when it would be my turn to be in the groups. Mom set the example for me of how to live out my faith and use the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given to service. It inspired me to serve as a peer for Confirmation and to participate in many events for the Church as well. I feel like it is hard for youth nowadays to be so involved in their church. Many kids fear being disliked for being strong in their faith. Some kids don't even have a relationship with God which always saddens me. Whenever I tell Mom or Dad about a friend from school who doesn't exactly know God, the first thing they do is tell me to invite them to church. That kind of boldness comes from an active life in the Church.

More recently, Mom and Dad have been going to the Family Apostolate Holy Hour of Adoration every Wednesday night at Crucifixion. They come back from it stronger in their faith every time. I know they spend time praying for me and my brothers. This sets a strong example of the priority they have to spend time together and spend time with God.

In addition to prayer and giving time to the Church, my parents also taught me about tithing and understanding God's plan for our finances. Now that I have a job, I can give to the collection basket. It may not be much, but I know that God is pleased with my sacrifice.

In conclusion, I hope that my story about my parents encourages other parents to influence their children in the same great way my Mom and Dad have influenced me! I hope it also encourages my fellow youth to imitate their parents and to engage more in community service in order to enhance their faith in God.

God bless you all...



Holly is a junior at Old Mill High School and is a Confirmation peer leader and religious education aide at Christ the King parish.

Celebrating THE JOY OF Marriage

By Vincent Arisukwu

I still cannot imagine what could be greater than the joy of marriage. Each time I officiate at wedding ceremonies or witness a couple renewing their vows, I wonder at the excitement in the community. Usually, the atmosphere is electric. The cheerfulness on the faces of the bride, her adornments, the groom's handsome styles, and the candor of the processions speak eloquently of this joy. Everything captures that moment in the Genesis account when, “God fashioned the rib he had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man. And the man said: This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” (Gen. 2:23)

The joy of marriage is the joy of love. It is the joy of the community. First, the community of life and love is instituted at the celebration of the marriage sacrament. The couple, who take each other as husband and wife, enter into this covenant of love. They mirror the Trinitarian relationship of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whose mystery the marriage union celebrates. Second, the couple celebrates the joy of the Eucharistic community who gathers to bear witness to such an act of love. At marriage, the community ponders the value of the bond existing among the members through the Eucharistic meal which they all share. Importantly, the community celebrates the great relationship between them and God. The community rejoices at “the beginning of a new community, a community of equal disciples and partners under the impact of the power of the Spirit.” (Rubio, 2003, p.38)



○ Onyebuchi and Kelechi



● Kathy and Bob's Wedding Anniversary

In this edition, our featured couples express this joy at the various stages of their marriage journeys.

Above, Onyebuchi and Kelechi took their marriage vows on July 1st. They began their marriage journey, a relationship of commitment which they intend to live out for the rest of their lives.

Below, Bob and Kathy marked their forty-ninth marriage anniversary on July 19th. They celebrated years of commitment and fruitful love with each other. In each of these couples, we see an appreciation of God's gift of marriage.

The marriage institution is the beginning of the family. It is the starting point for parenting. It is the platform for presence. It has its challenges but its joy is marvelous. Celebrating marriage in God's presence makes a difference. It makes the marriage joy complete. Hence, Christ says, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh”. So, they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.” (Matt. 19:5-6)

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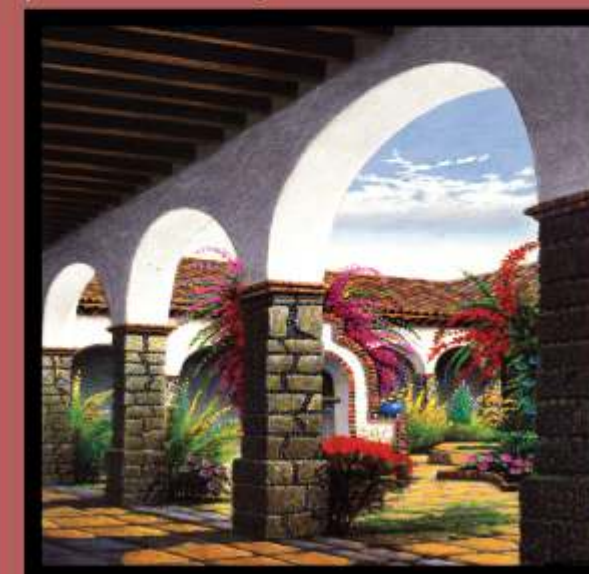
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