

August 2016

MARRIAGE & FAMILY + PASTORAL CARE + PRO-LIFE + COUNSELING SERVICES

Marriage & Family Enrichment

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Reaping What We Sow

Full of great content written by the Family Ministries team, the Family Life Newsletter is a source for information, resources and faith-based discussions about all manner of issues affecting families today.

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"The triune God is a communion of love, and the family is its living reflection."

Pope Francis
"Amoris Laetitia"
Paragraph 11

Every year at this time, I dream of corn on the cob . . .

It sounds kind of silly I know, but it was always in early August when the corn would "come in" as we used to say.

I still remember picking bushel after bushel of Silver Queen corn in both my parent's and grandparent's gardens growing up. There was always just a tiny number of days when the corn was perfect . . . sweet and juicy and you had to hit it just right or it would be hard and chewy. I'll never forget those special years when we got it perfectly on time. My record is eating 14 ears in one sitting which I accomplished on the back porch of my grandparent's house in Howardstown so many years ago . . .



Yes, those were the days.

This is the time of year when many of us think of reaping what we have sown. Harvest is upon us as we plan for a new school year, as our vacations come to an end and as the days begin their slow shortening. Ordinary Time is with us and green vestments are the norm. This is a time for us to hear of parables and of miracles; Christ's message takes front and center in our liturgy during these warm days of plenty. Hopefully, we are able to take some time to reflect upon how we are integrating his teachings into our families and our daily lives . . . making them a part of us as he intends us to do.

As harvest happens around us, we also remember that our time is always short. We are only given so many days here on this earth to make a difference for those in need. Just like with the corn, we ourselves have but a tiny number of days ourselves to "get it right" or "do the right thing." It is so easy for us to miss opportunities or not to notice the days fly past. Harvest time is a time of plenty to remember and to share . . . something we do every time we gather liturgically in fact. Every mass we celebrate is a harvest . . . a sacrifice of sharing, of plenty and of remembrance.

As summer rolls on towards its ending . . . as we gather the fruits of the land into our barns and make our plans for the upcoming seasons . . . let us remember those who lack, those who yearn and those who need. Let us be the gift of plenty to all those we encounter . . . and let us widen our circles to encounter as many as we can.

"The harvest is plenty but the laborers are few" . . . let us try and field a few more workers this harvest season into the vineyards of the Lord.

Pastoral Care

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Gratitude and Hope

There are times when life can feel overwhelming, taking tremendous effort simply to navigate through the necessary requirements of daily living. Thankfulness or gratitude is often saved for that time when suffering or worrying is relieved.

However, troublesome times are the very times when thankfulness is most important. Today, when the world is experiencing constant trauma, and people's fear and anger is escalating, many are asking the question "Where is our God?" Our faith tells us that God never abandons us and that God's grace is abundant. But, one could ask, "How do I access that grace or open myself to it?"

Perhaps that grace can flow in and through us through gratitude. Heartfelt gratitude is the very seed from which hope grows. It is the expression of a steadfast belief of God's continuing presence.

Individually and as family, for the next few months, you might begin to plant the seed of gratitude by naming one thing for which you are grateful that day and do that every day for the next few months. It could be exciting to see the beauty of the gift of your harvest.

The following link is one that could assist families in "Giving thanks before Thanksgiving." Enjoy!
www.sheknows.com/parenting/articles/842319/plan-a-neighborhood-family-harvest-party



Counseling Services

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Adult Children of Alcoholics

Most of the adult children of alcoholics who I know, underestimate the effects of being raised in an alcoholic family. Perhaps it's wishful thinking. Perhaps it's denial. More likely it's shame and simply not knowing that adult children of alcoholics (ACOAs), as a group, tend to struggle with a particular set of issues.

If you're an adult child of an alcoholic, you feel different and disconnected. You sense that something is wrong, but you don't know what. It can be a relief to realize that some of your struggles are common to ACOAs.

You don't outgrow the effects of an alcoholic family when you leave home.

If you grew up in an alcoholic or addicted family, chances are it had a profound impact on you. Often, the full impact isn't realized until many years later. The feelings, personality traits, and relationship patterns that you developed in order to cope with an alcoholic parent, come with you to work, romantic relationships, parenting, and friendships. They show up as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, stress, anger, and relationship problems.

The effects of growing up in an alcoholic family are varied. Many ACOAs are very successful, hard-working, and goal-driven. Some struggle with alcohol or other addictions themselves. Others become codependent.

An alcoholic home is chaotic and unpredictable.

Children crave and need predictability. Your needs must be met consistently in order for you to feel safe and develop secure attachments. This didn't happen in your dysfunctional family. Alcoholic families are in "survival mode." Usually everyone is tiptoeing around the alcoholic, trying to keep the peace and avoid a blow up. (cont. next page)



Counseling Services cont.

Denial is prolific. You really can't understand addiction as a child, so you blame yourself, and feel "crazy" because your experiences didn't line up with what adults were telling you (namely that everything is fine and normal).



Home could be scary. Addicts are often unpredictable, sometimes abusive, and always checked-out emotionally (and sometimes physically). You never knew who would be there or what mood they'd be in when you came home from school. Stress levels were through the roof. There may have been a lot of overt tension and conflict. Or you might have sensed all the tension just below the surface, like a volcano waiting to erupt.

Growing up in an alcoholic home, you feel insecure and crave acceptance. The constant lying, manipulation, and harsh parenting makes it hard to trust people. It also leaves you highly

sensitive to criticism and conflict. You work hard, always trying to prove your worth and make others happy.

Because as a child life felt out of control and unpredictable, as an adult you try to control everyone and everything that feels out of control (which is a lot). This leads to controlling behaviors in your relationships. You struggle to express yourself, subconsciously remembering how unsafe it was to speak up in your family.

Nine common struggles for adult children of alcoholics:

1. Being rigid and inflexible

You have a hard time with transitions and changes. A sudden change of plans or anything that feels out of your control can trigger your anxiety and/or anger. You thrive on routine and predictability. These things help you to feel safe.

2. Having difficulty trusting and being closed off

People have let you down and hurt you. It's natural to close off your heart as a form of self-protection. It's hard to trust people (including yourself). You hold back emotionally and will only reveal so much of your true self. This limits the amount of intimacy you can have with your partner, and can leave you feeling disconnected.

3. Feeling shame and loneliness

Shame is the feeling that you're bad or wrong and unworthy of love. There are so many things that alcoholic families don't talk about – to each other and especially to the outside world. These secrets breed shame. When there are things so awful that they can't be talked about, you feel there is something awful about you and that you'll be judged and cast away. When you feel unworthy, you can't love yourself and you can't let others love you either.

4. Being self-critical

External messages that you're bad, crazy, and unlovable become internalized. You're incredibly hard on yourself and struggle to forgive or love yourself. During childhood, you came to believe that you're fundamentally flawed, and the cause of the family dysfunction.

5. Striving for perfection

You try to be perfect in order to avoid criticism (both internal and external). This sets you on a treadmill of always having to prove your worth by achieving more and more. But your achievements aren't satisfying. Perfectionism and low self-esteem force you to set your goals higher and continue to try to prove yourself.

6. Needing to please people

You have a strong need to be liked and accepted. This again stems from experiencing rejection, blame, neglect, or abuse, and a core feeling of being unlovable and flawed. People-pleasing is also an effort to avoid conflict. Conflict was scary in your family.

7. Being highly sensitive

You're actually a highly sensitive person, but you've shut down your emotions in order to cope. You're sensitive to criticism, which fuels your people-pleasing. But you're also a highly compassionate and caring person.



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Counseling Services cont.

8. Being overly responsible

Out of necessity, you took on some of your parents' responsibilities. These may have been practical (like paying the bills) or emotional (like comforting your siblings when Mom and Dad fought). Now you continue to take responsibility for other people's feelings or for problems that you didn't cause.

9. Experiencing anxiety

ACOA's have high levels of anxiety. Childhood fear and trauma left you in a hyper-vigilant state. You often sense problems when there aren't any. You're on edge, tense, and full of worry. Anxiety keeps you trapped as whenever you try to move away from the other eight traits, it flares up.

You may find that you identify with some or all of these traits. There are many other lists of common ACOA traits available. The most popular is probably the Laundry List from Adult Children of Alcoholics World Service Organization. I developed this list from years of clinical practice with ACOA's. You might like to create your own personal list, as well. Healing can start in simply knowing that you aren't alone. Groups like Al-Anon and ACA (Adult Children of Alcoholics) provide free support and recovery.

You
are
FAR MORE
than
your
circumstance.

Pro-Life

contact: Ed Harpring, eharpring@archlou.org

The Harvest is Plentiful

"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Luke 10:2

Recently Pope Francis urged our youth to listen to the call of God, stating that life is often fraught with obstacles and requires "going against the tide." Pope Francis went on to encourage young people, "We Christians were not chosen by the Lord for small things; push onwards toward the highest principles. . . . And the harvest will be plentiful, proportionate to the grace we have meekly welcomed into our lives."

We hope to bring more laborers for the harvest with the new Archdiocesan "Ambassadors for Life." Ambassadors for Life is being formed consisting of high schools students from area high schools, and is coordinated through a joint partnership between the Pro-Life and Youth Ministry Offices. Ambassadors for Life will promote an active culture of respect for human life through prayer, education, awareness, and participation in community service.

The name Ambassadors for Life was inspired by Archbishop Kurtz in his homily at the March for Life Mass in Washington DC in 2015. Archbishop Kurtz said *"ambassadors for life...think of what an ambassador is ... someone who represents to others a great case. In this instance, the case is the good news of Jesus Christ."* The Ambassadors mission is to become and seek the face of Christ by practicing the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

Students will learn about the spectrum of Life issues from area ministries and those who are involved with social outreach. Some examples include:

Fr. Pat Delahanty / Abolition of Death Penalty - discuss the abolition of the death penalty and arrange meeting with local and state legislators.

Marissa Castellanos / Human Trafficking – discuss human trafficking and ways to identify and help victims. Meet and talk with area victims.

Elderly Advocacy – learn how to help elderly victims of abuse and neglect.

Mike Michalak / Disabilities-Down Syndrome – learn about area organization that support and assist individuals and families in coping with disabilities such as Down Syndrome.

Ed Harpring / Abortion/Sidewalk Counseling – understand how to approach mothers and father in crisis pregnancy and ways that we can provide alternatives to abortion.

Pro-Life cont.

Ellen Wichmann / Pregnancy Help Centers – learn how PRCs help women choose Life with resources for mothers, children, and families.

End-of-Life Care / Euthanasia – learn how our culture and medical community is trending toward euthanasia/assisted suicide. Learn what true compassion really is.

Cathy Blandford / Theology of the Body – learn about the teachings of St. John Paul II, and how the human person, consisting of body and soul, and man's desire for truth, our complimentary sexual design, and our destiny, which is ultimately to be united with God in heaven.

Overall, these students benefit by being formed in Catholic Social Teaching and the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. They will be educated on the major Life issues, on the official teachings of the Catholic Church, and on all the possible avenues open to them for addressing the needs of their neighbors in need. The knowledge and experience they gain will equip them to assume leadership roles in high school and beyond. Service hour opportunities, of course, will also be plentifully available.

Please pray for these students and that the Lord will "send out laborers into his harvest."

Up & Coming

Helpers of God's Precious Infants



7:00 a.m. - Mass at Cathedral of the Assumption followed by procession to local abortion facility.

9:00 a.m. - Benediction at Cathedral

Saturday, Aug 13 Archbishop Kurtz

Visit: HelpersLouisville.org

Safe Environment Training

Wed, Aug 3	5:00 p.m.	Holy Trinity
Mon., Aug 8	6:30 p.m.	St. Gregory
Wed, Aug 10	3:00 p.m.	Assumption High School
Thu, Aug 11	6:30 p.m.	St. James Elizabethtown
Tue, Aug 16	6:30 p.m.	Immaculata Classical Academy
Mon, Aug 22	6:30 p.m.	St. Dominic School
Thu, Aug 25	6:30 p.m.	Holy Spirit School
Mon, Aug 29	6:30 p.m.	St. Albert the Great School

Retrouvaille (French for rediscovery)

This ministry is designed to help couples in troubled marriages to heal and renew.
Next Louisville area weekend - Sept. 16 - 18
To learn more, visit www.HelpOurMarriage.org



Marriage Encounter

A weekend retreat for married couples who desire time away to enrich their marriage.
Cincinnati weekend - Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 2016
To learn more, visit www.wme.org



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