

July 2016

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

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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"[We invite all] Christian families to value the gifts of marriage and the family, and to persevere in a love strengthened by the virtues of generosity, commitment, fidelity and patience."

Pope Francis
"Amoris Laetitia"
April 19, 2016



Marriage & Family Enrichment

contact: Deacon Stephen Bowling, sbowling@archlou.org

When Something is Important You MAKE the TIME

Okay, I will make a confession here . . . I am a HUGE Star Trek fan.

I have been one since I was so small I can hardly remember, and growing up in the Seventies, Sunday mornings always had two huge events for us every week: 10:00 a.m. mass at St. Catherine's in New Haven with either Father Paul Russell or Father Jack Caldwell, followed immediately by Captain James T. Kirk as soon as we got home. Both had influences on me, and I can truly say that integrating them has actually been a far easier process than you might imagine.



I recently confessed of my love for Star Trek to my parishioners at St. Gabriel and let them in on one of the secret ingredients for many of my homilies . . . a dash of Star Trek whenever appropriate, which not surprisingly happens fairly frequently.

If you hear me quote someone with the lead-in of "a wise man once said" it is probably Spock more often than not. It's actually turned into a bit of a running gag now as many parishioners are far more Star Trek savvy than I gave them credit for . . . they usually spot my references now without me having to use any of my code-phrases at all.

And so it is that this practice of mine prompts me once again to steal another Star Trek quote for this newsletter, this time from the great James T. Kirk himself:

"When something is IMPORTANT, you MAKE the TIME for it."

As usual, the great captain of the Enterprise hits it right on the head . . . and the subject he was talking about when he spoke those words is perhaps the most obvious one for us to hear about now, in light of the Pope's recent exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* . . . the subject of "family."

Family is something so easily taken for granted; something so constant and necessary for all of us, just like water or air. No matter its shape, composition or condition, family in some manner is an essential need for all human beings . . . a "basic human right" just as important as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Marriage & Family Enrichment

And this precious gift of family requires time as its essential nutrient.



Children want their parents to be with them . . . wives and husbands crave time together, both with their children and otherwise. We want undivided attention and conversation with those we love. We want games played and experiences shared. We desire meals together and recreation that is inclusive of all, both of the family we are born or married into as well as those we choose for ourselves: our friends and our communities, most especially our parish communities where we come together to better integrate God into our lives.

Summertime is indeed a great time for family sharing . . . for making experiences and memories that will last a lifetime. Whether you're going to the beach or the lake, a theme park or museum, or even just staying home and watching TV together (Star Trek anyone?) . . . nothing cements families together better or more permanently than simple time spent with one another.

Spend some quality time with those you love as often as you can . . . it is indeed worth making the time for . . .

Pastoral Care

contact: Michelle Herberger, mherberger@archlou.org

Take Time to Play

The demands on the time of families today, have greatly limited quality time spent together. According to a survey taken for the Virgin Holidays and Universal Orlando Resort, "Families are busier than ever."

- On average, families spend just eight hours a week together.
- Weekend is best with two hours twenty minutes devoted to the family each day.
- During the week the amount of time shrinks to a daily average of just 36 minutes.

Some demands are unavoidable. Often, it takes the income of two parents to sustain even the most meager budget. Children must be educated and that typically means time spent away from the family.

However, other "demands" are often negotiable. This does not mean the choices are obvious and simple, but those choices can be directed by asking oneself the question:

How does this foster a sense of family and strengthen the relationship of its members?

There is another intruder on family time....social media. It has become commonplace for people to sit together in silence at meals while scrolling through social media or in front of a television or computer screen. That same question can also be applied to those things that take place when families are actually together.



There is an old saying "Families that pray together, stay together." Perhaps in addition to praying together, there could be a commitment to play together, as well. This summer, set some regular time to nourish family bonds and create some memories that both teach and sustain what it means to be family.

Counseling Services

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Summer, Family & Time Together

"When I was little and growing up in the Beechmont neighborhood in the South End of Louisville, there was little extra money to take vacations or go out to eat. Many of my neighbors were relatives, and the ones that weren't related, seemed to be. We all looked out for each other, shared joys and sorrows, shared excitement over a new home purchase or car, took pride in our flower beds and yards, "raced" to see who would grow the first tomato, and shared meals with one another. Our neighborhood full of many children was so lucky to have grown up in such caring and simple times.

There were two convents at the end of our street; the Charity Sisters who taught at our school, St. John Vianney, and the Dominican convent next door at Holy Rosary. St. John Vianney had a rectory bursting at the seams with priests, and all of them looked out for us too. We were blessed. My parents often reminded my four siblings and me that time spent together as a family was what was most important. There didn't have to be any big event, just that we were sharing time together. As I now look back on my childhood, my most vivid and precious memories are just as they said, simple. Cookouts in the backyard with family, working in the yard together, picking blackberries for mom's famous cobbler, watching my uncle churn homemade ice cream, helping dad hang birdhouses he so carefully crafted, playing games with my siblings while our pets ran in the yard, and chasing the Merry Mobile for a 7 cent popsicle. There may have been fights with the hose, water balloons and climbing trees but no matter what we were doing, we were doing it together.



On Sunday mornings we would dress in our best clothes and walk down the street to Mass to pray together. We always took the time to visit at church with friends who didn't live as close. We would kneel by mom and dad's bed at night facing a small altar on their wall (it now hangs in my home) to say our nightly prayers together. When I think back on those days I am overwhelmed with a sense of love, safety and family. Of course it is bittersweet, both of my parents are gone now, but the lessons they taught about family and their legacy lives on. They taught us that love, charity, acceptance, forgiveness and compassion start at home, and then we take those gifts and share them with others. They were wonderful teachers. Life wasn't so busy then. We learned how to play using our imaginations, jump ropes, steel skates with keys!, catching lightning bugs, playing catchers and riding our bikes. We learned to deal with adversity, disappointment, unpleasant kids, and few luxuries. Those were the days of hanging clothes on the line, no air conditioning in school, home or car, unlocked front doors at night to let the cool night air in, washing our own dishes, using things until they literally wore out, sharing clothes and a tiny bathroom for seven people! This would be so foreign to my four kids who grew up quite differently. One thing that has stayed the same however is the importance of time and prayer together as a family.

As a counselor of young people I see how stressed they can get with too many structured activities. I encourage parents, especially in the summer, to let their children play. Let them deal with boredom; it can encourage creativity and resourcefulness. Let them know what it feels like to be surrounded by nature. Go on hikes and teach them as you go. My mother taught me so much about birds and flowers, and I in turn taught my children. Play some old fashioned outdoor games, catch lightning bugs (and let them go), let them hold a toad or turtle, watch a crawdad swim, and look at the clouds and stars. God created a big, beautiful world full of the most amazing things, explore and share that with them. Show them how to play marbles, hop scotch, and jump rope. Look for four leaf clovers and pick honeysuckle. These are the things they will remember . . . time with you! Most especially, pray together. Make this a priority - at Mass, at home, before meals (no matter where you are) and give thanks for the many blessings you share. Keep them close to God, to family and to all He created. Remind them every day how much they are loved by their family and by God. Share every day with your children, we only have them for a short time, so make these days the best you can (and put down the cell phones).

Pro-Life

contact: Ed Harpring, eharpring@archlou.org

Beach Vacation or Family Retreat?

When the summer months roll around, it's easy to reminisce about the many beach vacations we experienced together as a family. As parents of four children (now young adults) and their busy lives, we don't get together for vacations as much. Looking back, like many families, the beach vacations were some of the best. Memories bubble up immediately, recalling playing with the kids in the ocean, long walks on the white, sandy, breezy, gulf coast beaches, and the delicious nightly fresh seafood along with a few tropical drinks that made for a spectacular week with my wife and kids.

When our oldest son reached his later high school years and early college, he attended a summer week-long family vacation-camp in West Virginia with a friend. The so-called vacation consisted of living barrack style in the remote hollers of West Virginia, with the emphasis on family sharing, Catholic retreat and social outreach to the area poor. Our son was so touched by this new type of vacation, that he encouraged our family to give it a try. So for the next two years, we did give it a try, and headed to West Virginia for "family week."



There were so many unique and fascinating aspects to these so-called vacations. For example, the counselors were all recent college graduates. As you would expect, they were enthusiastic and talented. Many of them played musical instruments or sang. There was a Catholic (Dorothy Day) emphasis on simplicity, so kids, and adults, for that matter, were allowed to lick their plates clean. No paper plates were used, so we all worked together to clean dishes by hand, and the cry from the counselors was "slide scrape and stack!" (Slide your plates to the end of the table, scrape or lick your plate clean, and stack your plates at the end of the table).

Showers were old-time "bucket showers." Bucket showers were just that – gather a few 5-gallon buckets, pour them into another bucket (with holes in the bottom) that was hung on a nail in a wooden stall, and take the fastest shower of your life. Expediency was the key, if you hoped to rinse the soapy water off your whole body before the water ran out. And to add to the simplicity, and the natural country smells, we were allowed only two of these bucket showers per week. Three, if you were extra smelly! Kids and young adults loved this shower regime. Adults – not so much.

Meals were always community style, which meant including invitations to area neighbors that mostly lived below the poverty line. Dinners were prepared by one or two family groups, and were usually cooked with the garden crops of the farm we stayed on. Many of these people that we served were elderly and alone, so for them, having a group of families coming together, working on their house, and then sharing a meal with them, meant the world to them. We truly became friends, after hearing moving stories about their lives in the country, their children and spouses. We heard of lost family members resulting in many of these residents finding themselves alone in their homes without a lot of human interaction. Most of these salt of the earth folks were not Catholic, but certainly showed us all the face of Christ with their emphasis on simple living, Christian faith, and wanting to know all about us and our families.



Night time was magical in the mountainous West Virginia retreat. Besides the cool calming air, there were groups of kids and adults involved with story-telling, skits, humorously recounting the day's activities, sing along country music, board games, ultimate Frisbee (the fathers actually beat the sons one night) and just plain good conversation. Before bedtime, individual families would regroup, share the day's highlights and pray together. At bedtime we would come together again as a community in praise, worship and reflection. We would then return to our barrack bunk beds with fathers and sons in one set of barracks and mothers and daughters in the other set of barracks.

Pro-Life cont.

When the week ended we all realized we had experienced something special, something that would be hard to re-capture as family, yet something we still recall with some of the best memories of our family life.

Now, several years later, my wife and I are so thankful that we were able to enjoy many years of family beach vacations. The beach was fun and we immensely enjoyed the time together, especially as a young family. But in West Virginia, while we didn't get to imbibe in as many beach and ocean pleasures, we were immersed in the natural beauty of the mountains, and we experienced what all families really want – simple family fun, seeing our children freely and enthusiastically practicing their faith, and for a few days – living the gospel value of being in true community with our neighbors.



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, July 9 TBD

Visit: HelpersLouisville.org

Safe Environment Training

Mon., July 11 3:00 p.m. Catholic Charities
2234 W. Market Street

Tue., July 19 6:30 p.m. St. Bernadette
6500 St. Bernadette Ave, Prospect

Mon., July 25 6:30 p.m., St. Gabriel,
5505 Bardstown Road

Marriage Encounter

A weekend retreat for married couples who desire time away to enrich their marriage.
Cincinnati weekend - July 29 - 31, 2016
To learn more, visit www.wmme.org



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



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