



June 2017

Marriage & Family Enrichment

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Intentional Fatherhood

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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"I would like to ask you, dear families: Do you pray together from time to time as a family?"



Pope Francis
Homily
October 27, 2013

Have I ever mentioned to you one of my favorite websites [The Art of Manliness](http://TheArtOfManliness.com)? Seriously it is a must read for all dad's in the world as well as all men who want to be the very best that they can be.



Started by a young gentleman named [Brett McKay](http://BrettMcKay.com) along with his wife Kate and several other contributors in 2008, this constantly updated website is devoted to teaching virtues, integrity, morals, health, literature, philosophy, social skills and tons of practical advice for daily living that folks of all ages and backgrounds can appreciate. I read it daily and encourage everyone I can to do the same. The articles (and [podcasts](#)) are awesome, not just for men but for women too; virtue, you see, is something of which we can never hear enough.



As you might suspect, one of the most talked about subjects on this website is that of [fatherhood](#), the subject of this month's newsletter. There are literally dozens of practical and thought-filled articles relating to it on the site, but one article in particular recently caught my eye. The article was entitled ["Fathering with Intentionality: The Importance of Creating a Family Culture."](#)

In the article, Brett seeks out parents of the families whom he admires for having a tight family bond: the parents were happy, the kids were all well-adjusted and generally did the right thing and everyone in the family seemed to genuinely love, respect, and care about each other. He makes it a point to ask them what their "secret" is to creating such a tight family bond and they all pretty much say the same thing: they're all intentional about creating and fostering a positive family culture.



The article spends a significant amount of time explaining what a family culture is, and how one arises in all families in one form or another, whether intentionally shaped or not. Brett concludes that three ingredients are always necessary in order to create a positive family culture: **values, norms and traditions**. As Brett defines them, they are:

- **Values** give a family an overarching purpose and guide as to how each family member acts and behaves in different situations. Positive family values could include kindness, mutual support, respect, sacrifice, hard work, fun, and service.

Marriage & Family Enrichment cont.

- **Norms** are the spoken and unspoken rules of how a family operates; they represent your values in action. Norms guide how family members interact with one another and with the outside world.
- **Traditions** are a set of behaviors and routines that provide a family a sense of identity and purpose. They provide cohesion to the nuclear family and connection to extended family.

Brett is very clear that the specifics of all of these may vary greatly from family to family, but certain aspects concerning these are always present in families to admire: these are positive and deliberate.

I encourage you to read the entire article [HERE](#) to go deeper with what makes a good Family Culture . . . and make Brett's blog a regular read if you can. I think you will find it enlightening, inspiring and full of great content for everyone's enjoyment.

Counseling Services

What's a Father To Do?

As Father's day approaches we're reminded that active participation by dads is good for everyone. The kids become healthier adults. The fathers come to a fuller and more complex maturity. The mothers have a reliable co-parent to share the responsibilities and challenges as well as the accomplishments of parenting. How does this idea of "involved father" translate to daily life? Current research points to the following practical guidelines for responsible fatherhood.

- **Embrace your responsibility.** Once you are a father, you are a father for life. The knowledge of fatherhood changes a man. It can be a source of pride and maturity or a source of shame and regret. Even if you have good reasons for not being actively involved, acknowledging your paternity is a minimal gift you can provide to your child. With it come many legal, psychological, and financial benefits. If you want to be in your child's life, it also protects your rights to have time with your child should you and the child's mother have a falling out.
- **Be there.** In study after study, kids consistently say they would like to have more time with their dads. Regardless of whether a dad shares a home with the children and their mother, the kids need dad time. Working together on a chore or simply hanging out can be as meaningful as attending events or having adventures. Kids want to know their fathers. Just as important, they want their fathers to know them.
- **Be there throughout their childhoods.** There is no time in a child's life that doesn't count. Research has shown that even infants know and respond to their fathers differently than they do to their mothers. The bond you make with a baby sets the foundation for a lifetime. As the kids get older, they'll need you in different ways but they will always need you. Insistent toddler, curious preschooler, growing child, prickly adolescent: each age and stage will have its challenges and rewards. Kids whose parents let them know that they are worth their parents' time and attention are kids who grow up healthy and strong. Boys and girls who grow up with attention and approval from their dads as well as their moms tend to be more successful in life.
- **Balance discipline with fun.** Some dads make the mistake of being only the disciplinarian. The kids grow up afraid of their dads and unable to see the man behind the rules. An equal and opposite mistake is being so focused on fun that you become one of the kids, leaving their mother always to be the heavy. Kids need to have fathers who know both how to set reasonable, firm limits and how to relax and have a good time. Give yourself and the kids the stability that comes with clear limits and the good memories that come with play.
- **Be a role model of adult manhood.** Both boys and girls need you as a role model for what it means to be adult and male. Make no mistake: The kids are observing you every minute. They are taking in how you treat others, how you manage stress and frustrations, how you fulfill your obligations, and whether you carry yourself with dignity. Consciously or not, the boys will become like you. The girls will look for a man very much like you. Give them an idea of manhood (and relationships) you can be proud of.



What matters most is for fathers to be committed to their children and involved with them over time. When fathers take that responsibility seriously, their children are more likely to do well and the fathers have few regrets.

A Father's Courageous Love - the Last Letter of St. Thomas More



"Although I know well, Margaret, that because of my past wickedness I deserve to be abandoned by God, I cannot but trust in his merciful goodness. His grace has strengthened me until now and made me content to lose goods, land, and life as well, rather than to swear against my conscience. God's grace has given the king a gracious frame of mind toward me, so that as yet he has taken from me nothing but my liberty. In doing this His Majesty has done me such great good with respect to spiritual profit that I trust that among all the great benefits he has heaped so abundantly upon me I count my imprisonment the very greatest. I cannot, therefore, mistrust the grace of God."

St. Thomas More wrote this to his daughter Margaret from his cell in the Tower of London. He was unjustly imprisoned by King Henry VIII. Soon after writing this letter, Thomas More was beheaded for refusing to acknowledge Henry as Supreme Head of the Church of England and the annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon.

In an era where manly virtue and heroism is sorely lacking, it is refreshing to recall the noble and courageous sentiments of St. Thomas More to his beloved daughter, Margaret. Even in the face of harsh treatment, imprisonment and ultimately the undeserved sentence of death, St. Thomas More never wavered in his stance for tenets of his Catholic faith.

Exemplifying what fatherhood is all about; St. Thomas was more concerned about the welfare of his daughter and family than his impending sentence of death.

"Farewell, my dear child, and pray for me, and I shall for you, and for all your friends, that we may merrily meet in heaven."

St. Thomas More had 4 children and was regarded as a affectionate father. Thomas More was a devoted family man. He was a writer and an intellectual of his time and he wanted to make sure his children were well educated, especially in the Catholic faith. He regularly wrote letters to his children whenever he was away on legal or government business, and always encouraged his children to write to him as well.

More was known to have a jovial and dry sense of humor. Like many of the great saints at their time of death, extraordinary grace engulfed St. Thomas More. His fears were gone, he was ready to meet his Savior and he even had the last laugh as he merrily faced his executioner. "He laid his head down on the chopping block but pulled his beard aside, telling the hangman, 'I pray you let me lay my beard over the block lest ye should cut it.'" As legend, he purportedly quipped, "This hath not offended the king."

St. Thomas More is a man for our times, as well, not only a role model for fathers but as a martyr and defender of religious freedom. Sir Thomas More died on July 7, 1535. He is memorialized on June 22 along with St. John Fisher, bishop, cardinal and martyr, who also died during the English Reformation for refusing to acknowledge Henry as Head of the Church of England.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is holding its annual Fortnight for Freedom, a special time for prayer, education, and action. The Fortnight includes the 14 days from June 21 – the vigil of the Feasts of St. John Fisher and St. Thomas More, great martyrs who remained faithful in the face of religious persecution – to July 4, Independence Day. The theme for 2017 is "Freedom for Mission." We encourage you to hold firm, to stand fast, and to insist upon what belongs to you by right as Catholics and Americans. Our country deserves the best we have to offer, including our resistance to violations of our first freedom. <https://www.archlou.org/fortnight/>



A special Fortnight for Freedom Mass will be held in Louisville on Friday, June 23, 5:00 p.m. at the Little Sisters of the Poor (15 Audubon Plaza Drive, Louisville, KY 40217).

Pro-Life cont.

Prayer of Saint Thomas More



O God Our Creator, From your provident hand we have received our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. You have called us as your people and given us the right and the duty to worship you, the only true God, and your Son, Jesus Christ.

Through the power and working of your Holy Spirit, you call us to live out our faith in the midst of the world, bringing the light and the saving truth of the Gospel to every corner of society.

We ask you to bless us in our vigilance for the gift of religious liberty. Give us the strength of mind and heart to readily defend our freedom when they are threatened; give us courage in making our voices heard on behalf of the rights of your Church and the freedom of conscience of all people of faith.

Grant we pray, O heavenly Father, a clear and united voice to all your sons and daughters gathered in your Church in this decisive hour in the history of our nation, so that, with every trial withstood and every danger overcome – for the sake of our children, our grandchildren, and all who come after us – this great land will always be “one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

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Pastoral Care

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The Forgotten Fathers

Every year around Mother's Day, I hear from women who continue to grieve their decision to terminate a pregnancy. It's expected; they will call. However, there is another person who rarely comes to mind when the pain and devastation of abortion is mentioned. That person is the father.

Men have no legal choice in whether or not the mother carries the baby to term. Periodically, I will hear from men who are devastated by the mother's choice to end the pregnancy. They desperately want to parent their child and ask nothing of the mother other than to birth the baby.

Women, who find themselves in untimely pregnancies, often think they can go back to the time before they learned of their pregnancy. What they learn though, is that there is no returning to that time. That pregnancy will shape them in some way, forever. The same holds true for the man. He will always be that baby's father, regardless of whether he ever held his child.



There is help for men who grieve the loss of their child to abortion. Project Rachel as well as Rachel's Vineyard offer abortion recovery help to men. Please contact the Family Ministries Office (502-636-0296) for a list of healing ministries or contact Project Rachel, a confidential hotline (502-471-2155) for those who've experienced abortion.

This Father's Day, let us hold in prayer the many fathers who grieve the loss of their children through abortion.

Up & Coming

Trainings

Pastoral Care for the Sick & Dying and Befriender Hospital Teams

Ten Sessions: June 10 - September 30. Contact Michelle for more information.



FOCCUS Two Session Training: Thursdays, July 6 & 20th at 6:30 p.m.

Cost is \$75 or refresher \$25 Location: St. Gabriel Parish, 5505 Bardstown Road
Contact Carolyn, ckupper@archlou.org to register.

Companion Couple (Sponsor Couple) Parish based Marriage Preparation Training

Saturday, August 19, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at St. Gabriel

Contact Dcn. Stephen Bowling for more information.



Building Your Financial Foundation, Two Session Workshop

For newly married and engaged couples with personalized advice from a Certified Financial Advisor. Saturdays, October 7 & 28, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at St. Gabriel.
Contact Dcn. Stephen Bowling for more information.

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, June 10 - TBD

Visit: HelpersLouisville.org

Safe Environment Training

Mon, June 5 6:30 p.m. St. Margaret Mary

Thur, June 15 6:30 p.m. St. Christopher, Radcliff

Mon, June 19 6:30 p.m. St. Leonard

Mon, July 10 6:30 p.m. St. Agnes



Retrouvaille (French for rediscovery)

This ministry is designed to help couples in troubled marriages to heal and renew.

Owensboro weekend - Sept 15 - 17

To learn more, visit www.HelpOurMarriage.org



Marriage Encounter

A weekend retreat for married couples who desire time away to enrich their marriage.

Louisville area weekend - Aug 18 - 20

To learn more, visit www.wwme.org



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We invite your comments & suggestions. Contact:
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<http://archloufamilyministries.org>



<https://www.facebook.com/ArchdioceseLouisvilleFamilyMinistries>



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