



# Family Life Newsletter



Marriage & Family • Pro-Life • Pastoral Care • Counseling Services

November 2017

## Marriage & Family Enrichment

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### Gratitude Is All In The Attitude

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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Well, it's November and you know what that means . . . more pumpkin spice stuff than you can shake a stick at (yuck) and enough articles about the "virtue of thankfulness" to fill the Grand Canyon.

Just because we celebrate a great holiday about gratitude on the fourth Thursday of November every year, does NOT necessarily mean that gratitude itself is inherently virtuous. In fact, Jesus reminds us very clearly that this is NOT the case in one of my favorite parables.

Do you remember the parable from [Luke 18: 9-14](#) about the Pharisee and the Tax Collector? The one where the Pharisee takes up his place in the front of the synagogue and loudly gives thanks to God that "he is not like other people"? This fellow had the "thankfulness" bit down to a polished stage act, but his "prayer" was in no way pleasing to God, so Christ reminds us.



Humility, one might say, is the essential gravy necessary to go with the meat of gratitude . . . without it gratitude is made nearly as "inedible" as last year's leftover turkey. (Yes, November is also the month for the proliferation of turkey references.)

Thankfulness is good to have, certainly, but like so many things, it must be carefully considered and focused through the lens of Christ's teachings. Are we oriented towards the good of others in our gratitude? Is the support of the weak and the powerless prominent in our thoughts, prayers and actions? Do we "feel for" the needs of our brothers and sisters before we desire material things?



**Thankful Living**  
Rejoicing in God's Overflowing Goodness

At this time of year when we remember all the many gifts we've been given and how we should be thankful for them, let us remember that gratitude by itself is simply not enough. Gratitude should be for us a key motivating factor so as to further share our many gifts among our fellow travelers along life's journey. I promise you, Jesus does indeed want us to be our "brother's

keeper" . . . and as such, a great vista of opportunity to do so stretches out before us.

Especially in November . . .



"Gratitude is a flower that blooms in noble souls."

Pope Francis

# Counseling Services

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## Gratitude & Giving Thanks

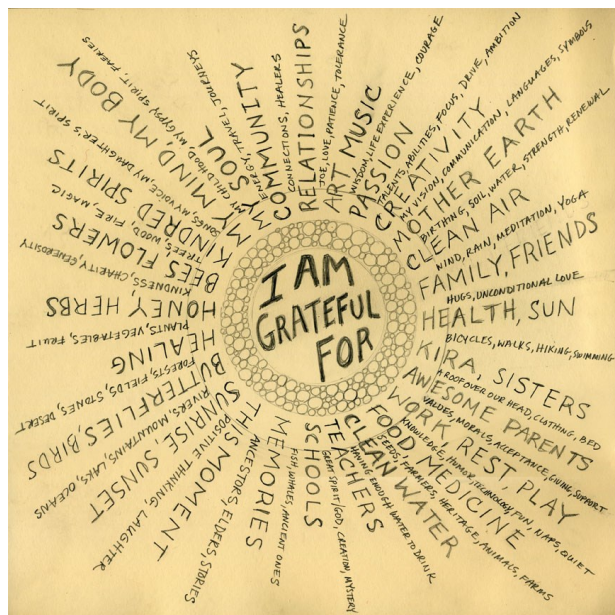
*I wish to give thanks to you, Lord, with all of my heart; I will tell of your wonderful deeds. – Psalm 9:1*

**It is our human nature to dwell on the negative.** This tendency is called the “negativity bias,” or the propensity to focus on problems, annoyances, and injustices in our lives rather than focusing on being grateful for the events or people in our lives that are working and we feel good about.

There are increasing indications that feeling grateful can have a powerfully positive effect on our lives, health, and psychological and emotional well-being. Research by Jeffrey J. Froh, an assistant professor of psychology at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y., has found that adults who feel grateful are more optimistic; report more social satisfaction, experience less envy, less depression and fewer physical complaints. They also sleep better and get more exercise. Kids who experience more gratitude do better in school, set higher goals for themselves, derive more satisfaction from life, friends, family, and school and are generally less materialistic and have more desire to give back.

**Here are some suggestions to help with being mindful of gratitude:**

1. **Keep a gratitude journal** – document daily what you feel grateful about
2. **Get a gratitude buddy** and talk about what you are grateful for with your buddy. Your buddy can help you make sure you acknowledge where your joy comes from (the difference between bragging and feeling grateful).
3. **Pay a gratitude visit** to someone who has helped you in the past or write them a letter.
4. **Pause mindfully** during the day to when something happens that you feel grateful about; make a mental note.
5. **Watch your language** even when talking to yourself – be mindful of when you are focusing on the negative.
6. **Savor the good times** with family and friends. Photos, drawings, written accounts and verbally acknowledging and appreciating people and events keeps you focused on the things you feel grateful for.



This Thanksgiving, and all year, count your blessings! There are usually more than we tend to acknowledge.

## Retrouvaille (French for rediscovery) - Help for Hurting Marriages



**Retrouvaille** is a proven effective, peer ministry for hurting marriages consisting of a weekend experience and six additional four-hour-long Post Weekend sessions.

Space is still available for upcoming sessions the weekend of **January 12-14** in both **Owensboro** and **Cincinnati**.

For more information or to register for an upcoming weekend, call 1-800-470-2230 or check out Retrouvaille's website [www.HelpOurMarriage.com](http://www.HelpOurMarriage.com)!

## Thanksgiving, Families and Adoptive Families

November is one of my favorite times of year. Why? Fall, Thanksgiving and family. The month begins with a cool crispness in the air and the myriad of emerging fall colors delighting us with their increasing intensity. The end of the month brings Thanksgiving and the once a year Feast that calls us to give thanks for the many special people in our lives.



Most of us have been blessed to be part of a family, so we enjoy and give gratitude for our spouses, our children, our parents, sibling and close friends. There's nothing much better than sharing delicious Thanksgiving comfort food and long overdue warm conversations with family members and friends. And while every family has its ups and down, there is a sense of belonging that forms our identity. The sense of belonging to family is a universal longing based on our inward desire for something greater than ourselves that we are part of. St. John Paul in an Apostolic Exhortation on the Family, *Familiaris Consortio* succinctly stated that the family is "a communion and community of persons where love is the source and the constant impetus for welcoming, respecting and promoting each one of its members in his or her lofty dignity as a person, that is, as a living image of God."

According to Karyn Hall, PH.D, "Having a sense of belonging is a human need, just like the need for food and shelter. Feeling that you belong is most important in seeing value in life and in coping with intensely painful emotions. Some find belonging in a church, some with friends, some with family, and some on Twitter or other social media. Some see themselves as connected only to one or two people. Others believe and feel a connection to all people the world over, to humanity. Some struggle to find a sense of belonging and their loneliness is physically painful for them."

November is also National Adoption Month providing a time to reflect on the gift of family, but also to remember that we are called to "bring justice to the fatherless (the orphans)." For orphans and children in foster care who have been separated from their families, these feeling of being disconnected can be overwhelming and sometimes can lead to despair or depression. The Catholic Bishops remind us that "welcoming a child, through adoption, is an act of faith as well as an act of love." Through the loving gift of adoption, children who need a family, can rebuild their sense of identity and their sense of belonging. In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis asserts "Adopting a child is an act of love, offering the gift of a family to someone who has none."

Even those who have been successfully adopted, struggle at times with reconciling feelings about their biological parents with their adoptive parents. And that's why family is so necessary. Family life, whether biological or not, inherently, unites, and satisfies our need to belong and to be needed and appreciated, simply for who we are.

Thanksgiving is a time to be grateful for adoptive parents, but also to remember the sacrifice of the natural parents who were open to life and yet willing to put the needs of an unborn child first. Perhaps, this Thanksgiving, we can make room in our hearts, and maybe even at our dinner table, for a child waiting to be adopted, or for a single mother who has placed her child with an adoptive family. The following poem reveals the loving sacrifices from both the adoptive parents and biological parents, and the in this case, the gifts of both "mothers."

### Legacy of an Adopted Child

Once there were two women who never knew each other.  
One you do not remember, the other you call mother.  
Two different lives, shaped to make your one.  
The first became your guiding star, the second became your sun.  
The first gave you life and the second taught you to live it.  
The first gave you a need for love, and the second was there to give it.  
One gave you a nationality, the other gave you a name.  
One gave you a seed of talent, the other gave you an aim.  
One gave you emotions, the other calmed your fears.  
One saw your first sweet smile, the other dried your tears.  
One placed you for adoption that's all that she could do.  
The other prayed for a child and God led her straight to you.  
And now you ask me, through your fears,  
the age-old question unanswered throughout the years.  
Heredity or environment, which are you the product of?  
Neither, my darling neither.  
Just a precious human being from two different kinds of love.

~ Author Unknown ~

# Pastoral Care

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## Seasonal Survival

The clock has “fallen” back. The daylight hours are dwindling away and sooner than one would like to imagine, Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas will be upon us - the seasons of gratitude, promise, light and hope, of warmth, love and excitement. For those grieving the death of a loved one, this time of year can be a painful reminder of the empty space at the table; of the hole in the family garment. The light of the season may not be as bright as in the past. The air may be a little more cutting than in the past; our home, our heart more empty than in the past.

A loved one has died. It is important to make the distinction that one has not ‘lost’ this significant person. The person had died. The loved one will always be in the heart and that love will never be lost.

So how does one make it through the ‘dark days’ of winter and this impending holiday season? Darcie Sims, a well-known psychotherapist, grief management specialist and bereaved parent, offers these suggestions:

**BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF.** Know that hardly anyone is as happy as you think they might be. Do what you can and let it be enough.

**BE REALISTIC.** It will hurt, but don’t try to block bad moments. Let them come, deal with them and let them go.

**BE KIND AND GENTLE TO SELF.** Figure out what you *should* do and balance it with what you are *capable* of doing. Then *compromise*. Forgive yourself for living.

**PLAN AHEAD.** Make lists. Prioritize. Decide what is really important to you. And don’t try to buy away your grief.

**LISTEN TO SELF.** Become aware of your needs and share them.

**UNDERSTAND.** As you unpack the decorations, the heartache will come and so will the warm memories. Give yourself the gift of healing tears.

**CHANGE SOMETHING.** Everything has already changed so don’t be afraid to change some traditions - keep some traditions. What doesn’t feel right can be stopped. Choose what is comfortable.



**DON’T USE THE “OUGHT” WORD AND ASK FOR HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT.**

**WORK AT LIFTING DEPRESSION.** Take responsibility for yourself and take care of your body.

**SET A PLACE AT THE TABLE / HANG A STOCKING / LIGHT A CANDLE.** Do this in celebration of the life and love shared, not in memory of a death.

**ACKNOWLEDGE THE GIFTS OF YOUR LOVED ONE’S LIFE.** Voice these gifts in the prayer before Thanksgiving meal. At Christmas, write them on small pieces of paper and place in a gift wrapped box, or in a stocking, as a reminder that we still have the gifts even though the giver has died.

**LIVE THROUGH THE HURT** so that joy can return to your heart.

*\*\*See page 5 for information about Surviving the Holidays Seminars at St. Margaret Mary Parish.*

### Staff

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## Up & Coming

### Holiday Grief Support

St. Margaret Mary Parish offers their Surviving the Holidays seminars to help participants discover:

- How to deal with emotions
- Helpful tips for surviving social events
- What to do about traditions
- How to find hope for the future

**DIVORCE CARE** - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; Donation if able: \$5



Attempting to pick up the pieces of one's life during or after a divorce is challenging and complex. With the holidays approaching, it can be cause for even more anxiety. "Surviving the Holidays" is being offered to help you through this time.

**GRIEF SHARE** - THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.; Donation if able: \$5



When you are grieving a loved one's death, the holiday season can be especially painful. Our Surviving the Holidays seminar helps participants discover:

St. Margaret Mary, 7813 Shelbyville Rd. – Across from Oxmoor Mall; Sacred Heart Spirituality Center  
Contact: Denise Ruiz at 502-426-1588 ext. 126 or [druiz@stmm.org](mailto:druiz@stmm.org)

### Anniversary Mass



#### Archdiocesan Celebration of Matrimony

**January 20, 4:00 p.m. - St. Raphael**

For couples celebrating 5, 10, 15, 20 & 25 years of marriage in 2018.  
Information will be sent to the parishes early December.

### Worldwide Marriage Encounter

**Marriage Encounter Weekends** are a special time for a married couple away from all distractions: work, kids, bills, and other pressures and concerns. Weekends take place at a local hotel or facility where communication tools are taught to help couples better connect in healthy, constructive ways on areas that can deepen their intimacy and connectedness.

Our next local weekend is on February 2nd through the 4th.

To learn more, visit [www.wwme.org](http://www.wwme.org)



### 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

Sat, Nov 11 - Fr. Seejo Thandiackal, CMI

Visit: [HelpersLouisville.org](http://HelpersLouisville.org)

### Safe Environment Training

Thu, Nov 9 6:30 p.m. - St. Agnes

Mon, Nov 13 6:30 p.m. - St. Joseph,  
Bardstown

Visit [www.archlou.org/restoringtrust/safe](http://www.archlou.org/restoringtrust/safe)  
for additional dates



<http://archloufamilyministries.org>



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



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