



FAMILY MINISTRIES

# Family Life Newsletter



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

May 2018

## Marriage & Family Enrichment

contact: Deacon Stephen Bowling, [sbowling@archlou.org](mailto:sbowling@archlou.org)

### Holding Ourselves Accountable

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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As a parent who has somehow managed to see three children through Grade school and almost High School (my youngest is a junior at DeSales), I sometimes wonder how my wife Susan and I managed to raise and educate our kids to a fairly great degree of success. The future looks bright for all three of them I'm happy to report - "at least for today," [as Bono would say](#). How did this happen? What did we as parents (apparently) do right here?

Well, bookshelves are full of parenting advice, along with books on succeeding in today's world, and the suggestions they give are as numerous as the stars in the sky. However, there was a brilliant technique employed by my high school American Literature teacher, [the late and deeply missed R. Carter Lasure](#) that I have found particularly helpful in narrowing down infinite choices for essential questions such as these.

It was one day in junior literature class, as we were discussing the far-reaching effects of the world's greatest authors that Mr. Lasure posed us this particularly powerful question, one that I still remember today well over 30 years later.

He asked us, "If all of the authors throughout all of history were to be considered as fakers and charlatans, and only one of them could be considered as a 'true genius,' which one would it be?" We as a class wrestled with the possibilities for some time before he gave us his answer.

For him, the answer to the question was [Dante](#), author of the [Divine Comedy](#) . . . something that lead me to read that daunting work as a mere junior in High School and to count it among one of my favorites even today. However, to use his method as it relates to parenting, we might ask the following, similarly phrased, question:

"If there could only be ONE teachable quality or virtue necessary to raise children who succeed well in life, what would it be?"

Well, I'm sure there are many ways that many good folks could answer that question, and likely those answers would all be good and valid. However, if pressed for ONLY ONE answer, for my wife and I, there's no real contest. It would have to be [accountability](#) . . . or perhaps more precisely, "self-accountability."

To be clear, we are NOT talking about "holding your children accountable" here, although that does have its place. No, we are talking about us as parents – the primary influencers of our children - [holding ourselves accountable](#) in all things, both as parents as well as citizens of the world.

YOUR CHILD WILL FOLLOW YOUR EXAMPLE, NOT YOUR ADVICE.

"The desire to marry and form a family remains vibrant, especially among young people, and this is an inspiration to the Church."



Pope Francis

## **Marriage & Family Enrichment cont.**

To put it another way, it has always been an inviolable philosophy in our married and family life that “GIVING and KEEPING YOUR WORD” is ALL. Everything is subject to it, and from it flows all goodness. Just as God is always faithful ([Luke 16: 10](#)), so must we be also.

You see, when as parents we do THAT clearly, consistently and unambiguously, children will naturally imitate us and ultimately learn to value this quality themselves . . . and it is with that in mind that perhaps the importance of this virtue becomes clear.

Self-accountability is about always saying what you will do and doing what you say. It means showing up on time and being ready. It means going through with those difficult things when you’re tempted to just stay home. It’s about not ignoring others and reaching out to speak to them, even when the introvert inside you is yelling for you to keep quiet. It’s about valuing the advice of others and always finding wisdom in reflection and consultation. But perhaps most important of all, it’s about remembering that we all need friendship and strong, warm relationships with as many people as possible in order to succeed – and it is by earning their trust through our own reliability that we make this happen.

Jesus taught us to always focus outwards towards our neighbor, and as any faithful Christian can tell you from experience, this is - paradoxically - perhaps the greatest path towards happiness here in this life.

Self-accountability is an essential part of the Christian life. If Christ himself is the way, the truth and the life, it is up to us to model our belief in those qualities. For as we all know, our children may not always remember what we have told them in this life, but they can never forget those things that they saw us always do.

### **Pastoral Care**

*contact: Michelle Herberger, mherberger@archlou.org*

#### ***When Your Parishioner is in the Hospital***

There are times in a family's life when it seems more important than ever to have the Church present among them. This is often the case even to those who see themselves marginally connected to the Church. One such time is during a serious illness when a loved one is hospitalized.

During the admission process the patient or patient's family is asked if they have a religious preference. Once they state their preference (and perhaps their parish name), there is the assumption that the hospital will immediately contact the parish. However, because of a very strict HIPPA law, parishes are not notified. This often leads to added pain as the patient and/or family believes they have been ignored by the Church during a very real time of need.

If you or a loved one is hospitalized, please contact your parish to let them know. If you do not have a parish home at this time, please let someone in the hospital chaplain's office know of your desire to see a priest. Some of the hospitals have a priest on staff. A few of our local hospitals, who have no priest on staff, have a team of deacons who receive the initial request. At that time they will get information, access the real need of the patient and/or family, and either make an immediate visit or contact a priest to meet the sacramental needs of the patient. The deacons who formally do this ministry in the hospital, receive special training and are called and committed to being present to the sick and dying in the hospital.



Please know that the Church has not abandoned you or your family. There is simply a legal barrier that prohibits their being automatically notified. If you make a request and it appears as though it has not been followed through, please contact the Family Ministries Office (502-636-0296).

## Family in Crisis: Parental Rights and the Tragic Story of Alfie Evans

Catholic Social Teaching and even society at large, tells us that parental rights concerning the welfare of our children is a preeminent, inalienable right, and a foundational principle of any civilized society. However, the tragic case of Alfie Evans shows that the increasing power of the state is ever more usurping individual rights, and marshalling in the culture that continually hastens death and throws aside the desires and rights of parents and family members.



[The Alfie Evans case](#) has been all over the news for the last month. Sadly, Alfie lost his battle for life on April 28<sup>th</sup>. After a series of court cases, doctors at Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool removed his life support on Monday, against his parents' wishes. Until public pressure was applied, Alfie was not initially given even water, food or oxygen.

Alfie proved medical experts wrong when he continued to breathe unaided for days. Alfie's heroic parents even provided mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to help Alfie survive, but Alfie eventually died in the early hours of Saturday. "My gladiator lay down his shield and gained his wings at 02:30, we are absolutely heartbroken," the boy's father Tom Evans wrote on Facebook. "Our baby boy grew his wings tonight . . . Thank you everyone for all your support," his mother Kate James wrote.

Medical experts in Britain had agreed that more treatment for Alfie would be futile, but his parents wanted to take him to Rome, where the Vatican's Bambino Gesu hospital had offered to care for him thanks to the direct intervention of Pope Francis. Recently, as Alfie's case was gaining worldwide attention, Pope Francis met with Alfie's parents. On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Pope tweeted "Moved by the prayers and immense solidarity shown little Alfie Evans, I renew my appeal that the suffering of his parents may be heard and that their desire to seek new forms of treatment may be granted." At his Wednesday Audience, Pope Francis went on to "reiterate and strongly confirm that the only master of life, from the beginning to the natural end, is God! Our duty is to do everything to preserve life," he stated. Over the weekend Pope Francis mourned for Alfie, "I am deeply moved by the death of little Alfie. Today I pray especially for his parents, as God the Father receives him in his tender embrace."

This tragic story is stacked with a myriad of subtly increasing religious freedom violations that strike at the heart of Catholic Teaching, the inherent dignity of human life, and the God-given rights and responsibilities of families and parents.

However, the most consequential aspect that should concern all faithful citizens is the denial of parental rights to protect their children. We should all be concerned on the continual slide toward the culture of death when government, and NOT the parents decide who lives and who dies. The cruel paradox is being played out more often (i.e. [Charlie Gard](#)), especially it seems in the United Kingdom, where the state's legal "right to kill" promotes the destruction of thousands of unborn children, enables euthanasia, and yet denies the right of parents to save their children's lives, even if they are willing to pay for it themselves.

In this case, government and government-run healthcare, is abdicating its role of "do no harm" and moving toward "medical tyranny" according to Dr. Anthony Cole, the Catholic chairman of the Medical Ethics Alliance. He has written an open letter, co-signed by nearly 60 others, including a number of prominent Catholic doctors, saying that the treatment of Alfie and his parents, Tom Evans and Kate James, brought the medical profession in the U.K. into "disrepute."

"The parents are being tortured as they watch the hospital take actions expected to lead to his

Cont. next page



## Pro-Life cont.

death," said the April 24 letter, which was "Despite a viable alternative being available (namely transfer by air ambulance for further assessment to a specialist hospital in Rome), the hospital and doctors responsible for his care insist that he remains under their care and on a pathway toward death," the letter said. "While he now has some oxygen and some fluid, this has taken huge effort to obtain for him."

"Actions such as these have now brought the Alder Hey (Children's) Hospital to worldwide attention and, by extension, bring our whole profession into disrepute."

"'Medical tyranny' must stop! Poor Alfie must not be killed in this way," they said.



"When the state is atheistic or secular, human life is no longer seen as sacred, and human dignity suffers. Hopelessness is not a strategy. Miracles are possible."

Stories such as Alfie Evans and Charlie Guard will continue if we allow countries to embrace the inhumane errors of the culture of death. As faithful Catholics, and engaged citizens, we must continue to speak up for the sanctity of life in and out of season.

## Counseling Services

contact: Martine Bacci Siegel, [msiegel@archlou.org](mailto:msiegel@archlou.org)

### Family Day



It's May and the month for Mother's Day. Mothers are supposed to be treated with breakfast in bed, a bouquet of roses, time for bubble bath and pampering, right? But often the day doesn't live up to the advertisements.

So: Let's redefine the day. Let's make it "Family Day" – a day to celebrate our families and the love and sense of home they provide for us. After all, Mother's Day can't exist without our children (and their fathers too). Ask the family to set aside some time and day this month to celebrate your family-ness.

Here are some helpful ideas to get you started:

- Declare a moratorium on electronics for at least a few hours. Plan on going for a walk or playing a game. Togetherness happens at times like these.
- Pull out the picture albums or call up photos on your computer. Find the baby pictures and talk to the kids about the day each was born and how cute they were when they were little. Emphasize the positive. A little nostalgia is good for everyone.
- Do you have a hundred pictures in a box somewhere? Sort through them together and remind each other of what was going on when the picture was taken. Put them in an album or make a family collage by mounting special pictures on a piece of cardboard.
- Make a meal together. Keep it simple. Stick to family favorites. This isn't the time to try out a gourmet recipe unless that's always part of your family thing. This is a time to celebrate the familiar.
- Make at least part of the evening special. Make popcorn and watch a movie that everyone enjoys.
- If the kids can't be with you, you can still be with them. Don't wait for a phone call, if not getting one will break your heart. There are too many ways to communicate these days not to be in touch. Tell each of the kids what makes him or her special to you.

Mother's Day founder Anna Jarvis was eventually appalled at the commercialism that erupted around her holiday. Later in life, she advocated removing Mother's Day from the yearly calendar altogether. I think she'd approve of renaming and reframing a day this month to a time dedicated to family togetherness and love.

# Up & Coming

## Joined by Grace Training



### Companion Couple - "Joined by Grace" a Parish based Marriage Preparation Training Sessions

Thursdays, May 17 & 24 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. St. Gabriel

Contact Dcn. Stephen Bowling for more information [sbowling@archlou.org](mailto:sbowling@archlou.org) or 502-471-2127

## FOCUS Training

Two Evening Training for Facilitators

Thursdays, July 12 & July 19, 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., St. Gabriel

Cost is \$75 per individual/couple; \$20 for refresher.

Registration required by July 5: [ckupper@archlou.org](mailto:ckupper@archlou.org) or 502-471-2142.



## Retrouvaille (French for rediscovery)

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

Louisville Area - Sept. 14 - 16

To learn more, visit

[www.HelpOurMarriage.org](http://www.HelpOurMarriage.org)



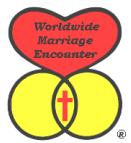
## Marriage Encounter

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

Covington area - June 8

Louisville area - August 17

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, May 19 - celebrant TBD

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

## Safe Environment Training



Mon, May 14 6:30 p.m. -  
St. Albert the Great

Wed, May 23 6:30 p.m. -  
Assumption High School

Mon, June 11 1:00 p.m. -  
St. Gabriel Church

Mon, Aug 6 6:30 p.m. - St. Gabriel Church  
Visit [www.archlou.org/restoringtrust/safe](http://www.archlou.org/restoringtrust/safe)

## Staff

**Deacon Stephen Bowling**, Director

**Michelle Herberger**, Associate Director

**Ed Harpring**, Coordinator of Pro-Life Ministries

**Carolyn Kupper**, Administrative Support Staff

**Martine Bacci Siegel**, Director of Counseling Services,  
Victim Assistance Coordinator

**Scott Fitzgerald**, Administrative Support Staff,  
Safe Environment Coordinator

*Family Ministries Office, Archdiocese of Louisville  
Maloney Center, 1200 So. Shelby Street, Louisville, KY 40203  
[www.archlou.org/family](http://www.archlou.org/family)*

*Family Ministries - 502-636-0296; [family@archlou.org](mailto:family@archlou.org)  
Counseling Services - 502-636-1044; [counseling@archlou.org](mailto:counseling@archlou.org)*



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