



June 2018

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

Marriage & Family Enrichment

contact: Deacon Stephen Bowling, sbowling@archlou.org

The Unattainable Heights of Fatherhood

I must confess writing about the concept of fatherhood fills me with a bit of dread. As a father myself, and as a son as well, I cannot help but think of the concept in terms of flaws and imperfection.

FATHERHOOD
is a vocation in
God's service,
to be not held
lightly or frivolously,
but with the
serious determination of
SERIOUS MEN.
-Father Lawrence Lovasik

The responsibility is so huge, the goal so important and the object of our efforts so precious, that I cannot help but feel inadequate. I recognize the great gifting I have received as a father - and pray I never take that gift for granted - but in many ways, this fact only reinforces my fears. It is like holding a delicate and fragile flower in your hands . . . you are scared to do anything for fear of making a mistake, especially if you have experienced some of those mistakes yourself.

As an adult child of a functional-yet-constant alcoholic father, I recognize my dread is inextricably linked to my own unique experience. As someone whose own father was both disengaged as well as flawed, and how that experience wounded me forever in many ways, I often feel outrage at my own experiences with fatherhood. Perhaps as a result of this, I recognize that I tend to obsess over my own shortcomings or missed opportunities with my own three beloved children.

I know that there are many people with similar experiences in their lives and histories, and that there always will be. I am certain that all of us in some ways have experienced the negative sides of humanity in at least some of those we know, if not love. However, it was a recent conversation with a friend that made me realize I was missing something very important . . .

My friend Deacon Walt Jones is the deacon at Holy Trinity Parish and, as he will tell you if you ask, an alcoholic himself who has been in recovery for over thirty years. In one of those Holy Spirit moments that cannot be explained, at a recent encounter with him, the subject of my father's alcoholism and my resentment of its subsequent effects upon me as an adult somehow came up.

And that was when the Holy Spirit took over.

Walt proceeded to tell me the details of his own story - I knew them only slightly - and imparted to me words that I will never forget. He asked me if I could imagine what my life would have been like if my father had NOT been an alcoholic. I was tempted to answer yes, but caught myself as what Walt was trying to tell me slowly penetrated my brain.

He smiled and said, "The good man that you are now . . . the caring person who lives to be a good husband, good father and indeed a good deacon . . . don't you think that

Marriage & Family Enrichment cont.

the experience you had with your father helped to bring that person into existence? Not that you would ever go through it again, nor wish for anyone else to go through it, but it is ultimately God's gift to you. A gift that makes you a far better person than you would have been without it. Would you be a deacon today who can empathize with those who suffer without all that behind you? Would you be serving God at all without this experience in your past? That is how I view my alcoholism and perhaps you might consider viewing your father's in the same way."

Walt's words to me are some of the most important I have ever heard. They eased a pain I thought could never be healed and brought me a new perspective on fatherhood and God's constant presence in our lives. Through his words I gained a new understanding that the mistakes we make as parents are not near as powerful as the Holy Spirit's ability to transform them into something good, something holy and something better than we could ever imagine. And indeed I do think very differently today than I did before the Holy Spirit spoke to me that day with Deacon Walt's voice.

Fatherhood to me is a joy . . . and if my less-than-ideal experience as a child benefits my own children and the people to whom I minister today to an infinitely positive degree . . . I can live with that.

God is indeed good and indeed good all the time.

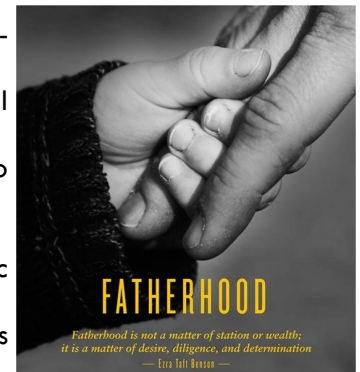
Pastoral Care

Fathers Matter

It is nearly impossible to be engaged in current events without hearing the phrase "children at risk." According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 24 million children in America — one out of three children — now live in a home in which the biological father is absent. However, nearly every study conducted through the social sciences confirms — fathers matter.

Following are some important facts from social science research on the effects of having a father in the home . . .

- Children living with fathers in the home tend to fare better on cognitive achievement and behavioral outcomes.
- Among urban fathers, those who frequently attend religious services tend to be more engaged with their children.
- Close relationships between adolescents and their fathers are positively associated with adolescents' psychological well-being.
- Adolescents with more involved fathers tend to exhibit lower levels of behavioral problems.
- Individuals whose fathers showed more involvement in their lives early on tend to attain higher levels of education.
- Fathers' religiosity is linked to higher quality of parent-child relationships.
- Fathers' engagement in their children's activities was linked to higher academic performance.
- Among adolescent girls, those who have a strong relationship with their fathers are less likely to report experiencing depression.
- Close father-adolescent bonds protect against the negative influence of peer drug use.
- Adolescent girls who have a close relationship with their fathers are more likely to delay sexual activity.
- Adolescent males who report a close relationship with their fathers are more likely to anticipate having a stable marriage in the future.
- Fathers of intact families spend, on average, more time with their children.
- Children raised in intact families by happily married parents tend to be more religious in adulthood.
- Children raised in intact families are more likely to have stable and healthy romantic relationships as adults.
- Intact families are more likely to provide a safe home for children.



Let us pray for all fathers . . . and find ways in our parishes to encourage and support their presence in the home. Information sourced through www.familyfacts.org.

Religious Beliefs Compel Brave Father to Stand up for His Faith

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me." MT 5:11

On June 4th, the Supreme Court decided the much-anticipated Religious Freedom case of Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission in favor of Jack Phillips, a Christian baker who declined in 2012 to create a custom wedding cake for a same-sex wedding ceremony. For six years Jack Phillips suffered for his Christian beliefs, including death threats, defamation of his character, and the loss of half of his business.

In an interview Phillips recounted that the worst thing about his notoriety were the hateful remarks that his wife and daughter received.

"In all of this, the threats against me or disparaging comments, the worst part is that I have to answer the phone so they're not threatening my wife or my daughter when they pick it up," Phillips said. "They don't wait to see who's on the phone. You pick up the phone, they're already talking."

Phillips, a devout Christian, said repeatedly throughout the case that he would have no issue serving gay customers in a context outside of a custom cake for a same-sex wedding. In adherence to his religious beliefs, he also refuses to make Halloween cakes, products with alcohol, and cakes for bachelor parties.

Phillips remained adamant that he never refused service to the couple; rather, he invited them to select anything in his store. But Phillips says he had to say no to becoming personally involved in the couple's wedding because he opposes same-sex marriage and the Bible proscribes homosexual relations.

Ironically, it was the Colorado Civil Rights commissions that exhibited a discriminatory and bigoted view against Christianity. Justice Anthony Kennedy said some commissioners "disparaged Phillips' faith as despicable and characterized it as merely rhetorical, and compared his invocation of his sincerely held religious beliefs to defenses of slavery and the Holocaust."

The epitome of enduring unjust maltreatment was the charge by the Colorado Civil Rights Commission. Justice Anthony Kennedy said some commissioners "disparaged Phillips' faith as despicable and compared his religious beliefs to defenses of slavery and the Holocaust."

It was perhaps the ultimate irony in the assault on Phillips' battle for religious liberty. His father was not only wounded fighting the Nazis during the Second World War, he participated in the actual liberation of a concentration camp.

Phillips said he was deeply wounded when his Christian opposition to same-sex marriage was somehow construed by the Colorado Civil Rights Commission as being morally equivalent to a Holocaust criminal.

"For her to compare standing for my faith and not making a cake to Hitler's atrocities just is unspeakable," Phillips said.

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Chairman of the Committee for Religious Liberty, issued the following joint statement:

Today's decision confirms that people of faith should not suffer discrimination on account of their deeply held religious beliefs, but instead should be respected by government officials. This extends to creative professionals, such as Jack Phillips, who seek to serve the Lord in every aspect of their daily lives. In a pluralistic society like ours, true tolerance allows people with different viewpoints to be free to live out their beliefs, even if those beliefs are unpopular with the government."

Coincidentally, or providentially, Archbishop Kurtz, the chairman of the USCCB's Committee for Religious Liberty recently announced the observance of Religious Freedom Week from June 22-29, 2018. Serving Others in God's Love: Religious Freedom Week 2018, which begins on June 22, the Feast of Sts. Thomas More and John Fisher, and ends on June 29, the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul.

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Pro-Life cont.

"Religious freedom allows the space for people of faith to serve others in God's love in ministries like education, adoption and foster care, health care, and migration and refugee services. We encourage people of faith to reflect on the importance of religious freedom so that we might have the space to carry out our mission of service and mercy, and we invite everyone to pray for our brothers and sisters who face intense persecution in other parts of the world."



On Friday, June 22, 5:00 p.m., the Pro-Life office of the Archdiocese of Louisville will sponsor an opening Religious Freedom Week Mass at the Little Sisters of the Poor (15 Audubon Plaza Drive, Louisville, KY 40217). The memorial Mass for SS. Thomas More and John Fisher on June 22 (their feast day) will recognize how they bore witness to the truth (and paid for it with their lives). Fr. Pat Dolan, (Brigadier General) Army National Guard Assistant to the Chief of Chaplains and Moral Theologian will celebrate this special Mass.

I hope you will join us and encourage your fellow parishioners to attend.

Counseling Services

contact: Martine Bacci Siegel, msiegel@archlou.org

Importance of Fathers

June means Father's Day. Why is dad important when it comes to the family? Here are a few reasons why.

Kids With Good Dads Are More Intellectually Inclined

Research has shown that fathers — or the absence of fathers — are just as important as mothers in child development. In recent studies researchers found consistent evidence that children of involved fathers were more likely to show cognitive competence and educational success than those whose fathers weren't engaged, and were also more likely to enjoy school and take part in more extracurricular activities.

Kids With Good Dads Have Fewer Behavioral And Emotional Problems

Over the years, research has shown that kids with good fathers are more likely to grow up without aggression, low self-esteem, or behavioral issues. Involved fatherhood has been linked with greater resilience to stress and frustration, as well as better abilities to solve problems and adapt. Kids who grow up with a dad present are less likely to develop substance abuse problems or to become incarcerated as adults. Perhaps most importantly, kids who grew up with involved fathers have been shown to have a lower risk of depression.

Fathers Impact Their Kids' Later Relationships

A father acts as a role model for his kids, and the way he treats the children's mother will impact the children later in life. Research has shown that boys whose fathers exhibited respect toward their spouses were less likely to show aggression to females later on, while daughters were less likely to maintain violent or unhealthy relationships with men.

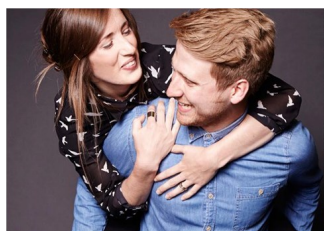
Paternal Absence Takes Its Toll

When talking about the importance of fathers, it perhaps becomes even clearer when we look at what happens when fathers aren't there. From an economic standpoint, fatherless children are more likely to be poor; data from 2011 found that 12 percent of children in married-couple families were living in poverty, compared to 44 percent of kids living in single-mother families.

For daughters, the lack of a father figure has been correlated with a greater risk of teen pregnancy or early marriage before education is complete. Fathers act as protectors both physically and emotionally; as the traditionally strong, manly figures in the family, they may act as barriers to anything from bullying to child abuse.

Up & Coming

Marriage Enrichment Retreat



Marriage Enrichment Retreat

Facilitated by Deacon Richard and Cherie Zoldak

Saturday, **June 23** 8:30

a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

St. Martin of Tours, 639 So. Shelby Street, Louisville

No charge, lunch included, registration required. Contact

FOCCUS 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 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



Marriage Encounter

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

Louisville area - August 17

To learn more, visit www.wmme.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, June 9 - Archbishop Joseph Kurtz

Visit: HelpersLouisville.org

Safe Environment Training



Mon, June 11 1:00 p.m. -

St. Gabriel Church

Mon, Aug 6 6:30 p.m. - St. Gabriel

Tue, Aug 14 6:30 p.m. - St. Gregory,

Cox's Creek

Thu, Aug 23 St. James, Elizabethtown

Visit www.archlou.org/restoringtrust/safe

Staff

Deacon Stephen Bowling, 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

Family Ministries - 502-636-0296; family@archlou.org
Counseling Services - 502-636-1044; counseling@archlou.org



<http://archloufamilyministries.org>



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