



MOTHER LOVE

A NEWSLETTER TO THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER VOL. 76 NO. 2 *Spring!* 2018

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Peace be with you!

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I am going to share with you some shocking statistics:

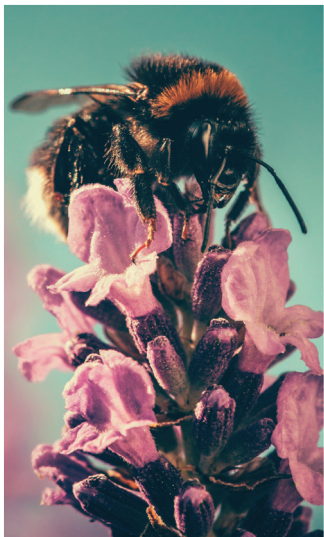
- 80% of Catholic kids leave the Church by age 23
- Only 30% of all Americans raised Catholic are still Catholic
- 10% of all Americans are ex Catholics

These facts are the result of several recent research studies. What is happening to our Church? If 80% of all college graduates were unemployed after graduation, people would stop going to college; college would be a waste of time and money. Yet only 20% of all people who receive a Catholic upbringing in Catholic families, including Catholic schools, parish religious education, youth groups and the rest, remain Catholic. What are we doing wrong?

Here is a typical family story: Back in the 1950's and before, parents established a pattern for raising children: Sunday Mass, family prayer, Catholic schools or at least religious education and involvement in parish life (altar servers, choir membership, May processions, Holy Week attendance, etc). Children raised in this sort of family usually remained Catholic and did for their children the same that was done for them by their parents. For generation after generation this was the way to pass on the faith to the next generation.

We continued to do with our children the same thing that our parents and grandparents did. It used to work. It no longer does. Why?

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Your Children & Grandchildren Do Not Go To Mass. What Do You Do?

Pray. Never forget the example of Saint Monica who prayed for many years for her son, Saint Augustine. No case is hopeless.

Don't nag, don't get angry, don't argue. It doesn't help.

Let your children and grandchildren know that you love your faith, that you find comfort in prayer, that you enjoy your relationship with God.

Delve deeply into your own faith. Become a better Catholic yourself! Go to Mass often, pray daily, read the Bible, study and know your faith. Your children need you to be more than an average lukewarm Catholic. For their sake you need to be a strong woman of faith.

Invite. Never stop inviting your family to attend Mass, go to a special religious event, attend a retreat. Invite and don't be discouraged when you get a NO. But keep inviting.

Don't despair. God loves your children even more than you do. We all hope that our children have the joy of a full Catholic life. But God saves people even late in life. Don't forget that Christian training early in life may bear fruit even on a deathbed, long after you are gone.

Give good example. Show your children that your faith in Christ makes you a better person. Don't be a bitter, hateful, dishonest, harsh or angry person. Your children need to see that your faith makes you good.

Joy. Your children and grandchildren need to see that the fruit of a Christ centered life is joy and peace. If your faith does not lead you to love, why should they want to follow your example?

Fr. Thomas Betz, OFM Capuchin

Going, Going, Gone!

(Continued from front page)



In the past 50 years the culture got much stronger and the culture is anti-Catholic, anti-Christian, anti-religious. If parents today do what their parents and grandparents did, it won't be enough. So in a time of weakening of religious sentiment, parents must do MORE, actually much more, if there is any hope of passing on faith to the next generation. While Catholic families decline, the anti-religious culture gains strength. It is a recipe for disaster!

We all know many parents and grandparents who are heartbroken that their children and grandchildren no longer go to Mass, rarely pray and sometimes even scoff at the Church. The Church scandals regularly publicized in the media embolden young adults to despise the Church and give them a good excuse for staying away from the Church.

Parents sometimes console themselves with a myth. They tell themselves that young people drift away but they will usually come back. Not true! They usually don't. Of course, some do, but the sad truth is that most of the young people who have stopped going to Mass will never return to regular Church attendance. There are exceptions, but the exceptions are not the norm.

Why have we failed to pass the faith on to the next generation?

Too many young people have not heard good news in Church and in their families. They have not met Jesus Christ and His love. Too often they enjoyed their parish life, they found solace in the devotional and liturgical practices of the Church, but deep in their hearts they did not come to know Jesus as a person, a friend and as one who loves them.

It is a privilege to be able to write to Christian Mothers. If anyone can bring young people back to the faith and keep the next generation in the Church, mothers can. Some might think that the most important audience is priests. Priests are important but mothers are essential for the transmission of the faith. Mothers and grandmothers are more influential than priests, bishops, teachers or youth ministers to help young people to know the joy that comes from an encounter with Jesus and His love. Mothers, you are our best hope! We need you to become evangelizers of your families.

Fr. Thomas Betz, OFM Capuchin



A Mother Who Prayed For A Wayward Son

Saint Monica (331-387 AD) is remembered mostly because of her famous son, Saint Augustine. All that we know of Monica we know because of her son, Augustine, who wrote about her in his autobiography, *Confessions*. Monica was married to a man named Patricius, a man of many vices, a drinker and womanizer with a bad temper. But by far, Monica's greatest grief in her marriage was her husband's contempt for Christianity, a scorn that he passed on to his children. He would not let Monica have her young children baptized, preferring instead that they make up their own minds when they became adults.

Augustine was a brilliant man, one of the greatest minds the world ever produced. But in his early years he was given to lustful pleasures and intellectual arrogance. He chose a theological world view that was not Christian and which justified for him his sexual indulgences. He was too proud to admit his sins and he was too arrogant to give Christianity serious study.

Monica prayed. That's all she could do. She prayed for her son. She prayed for 33 years, watching him drift farther and farther away from the Catholic Church and from Jesus Christ. But then slowly, her prayers were granted.

Augustine began to feel a restlessness in his heart. He was too intelligent to be satisfied with a religion that let him do whatever he wanted without restraint. Eventually he met the bishop, Saint Ambrose, whose preaching touched his heart. Even then, conversion took a while and it took grace. At one point, Monica lamented to the great bishop Ambrose, a man who was later to be the one whose preaching would touch Augustine's heart. "I should have been a better mother," St. Monica said to Bishop Ambrose about her son Augustine. "If Augustine had been an easier child, God would not have given him a mother like you," he responded.

Augustine had no doubt about the goodness of his mother or that it was his mother's prayers that caused his conversion. He wrote, "O Lord, you heard her and did not scorn those tears of hers, which gushed forth and watered the ground beneath her eyes whenever she prayed." Monica was his mother, but for her, his birth as a Christian was far more important than his birth into mortal life. Again in Augustine's words, "I can find no words to express the intensity with which she loved me: with far more anxious solicitude did she give birth to me in the spirit than ever she had in the flesh."

Near the end of her life, Monica told her son that she was ready to go to the Lord. Her son was now a faithful Christian and as far as Monica was concerned, her life's work was done. She told her son, "Son, for myself, I have no longer any pleasure in anything in this life. What I want here further, and why I am here, I know not, now that my hopes in this world are satisfied. There was indeed one thing for which I wished to tarry a little in this life, and that was that I might see you a Catholic Christian before I died. My God has exceeded this abundantly, so that I see you despising all earthly felicity, made His servant—why am I here?"

Many mothers reading these words could say the same: that their deepest desire in life is to see their children become faithful Catholics. Mothers, never give up on your children and never stop praying for them!

"How many difficulties there are also today in family relationships and how many mothers are anguished because their children choose mistaken ways! Monica, a wise and solid woman in the faith, invites them not to be discouraged, but to persevere in their mission of wives and mothers, maintaining firm their confidence in God and clinging with perseverance to prayer."

(Pope Benedict XVI)

Novena to Saint Monica

Exemplary Mother of the
Great Augustine,
you perseveringly pursued your
wayward son,
not with wild threats but with
prayerful cries to heaven.
Intercede for all mothers in our day
so that they may learn to draw
their children to God.
Teach them how to remain close
to their children,
even the prodigal sons and daughters
who have sadly gone astray.
Amen.

Dear St. Monica, troubled wife
and mother,
Many sorrows pierced your heart
during your lifetime.
Yet you never despaired or lost faith.
With confidence, persistence
and profound faith,
you prayed daily for the conversion
of your beloved husband, Patricius,
and your beloved son, Augustine.
Grant me that same fortitude,
patience and trust in the Lord.
Intercede for me, dear St. Monica,
for *(mention your petition here)*
and grant me the grace to accept
his will in all things,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.
Amen.

We Have a New Director!

Archconfraternity of Christian Mothers has a new Director, Fr. Joseph Tuscan, OFM Capuchin. Stay tuned for a full biography and introduction in our next MotherLove newsletter!

Highly Recommended

Every Christian Mother in the world should have and be using the "Mother Love" prayer book. Therein is the relationship with God and others that we expect our Mother to live by day-by-day.

MotherLove Prayer Book
\$15.00 Plus S&H



Fr. Joe

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Father Angelus Shaughnessy

In our last issue we announced the death of our dear Father Angelus. He was a true Christian and a tireless apostle of the Lord. He preached the Gospel on several continents and traveled thousands of miles to announce the Good News. He reached millions of people on EWTN. He was a man of prayer and charity.

The Lord called him home. He now prays for the Christian Mothers he loved so much. He prays for your children and grandchildren.

We are confident that Father Angelus has heard the words of Christ, "Come, you who are blessed of my father. Receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world." May he rest in peace.

