

Reflections

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St. Paul Ministry

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Love One Another

Blessings to All:

The world around us is full of various kinds of unhealthy practices or addictions. The first thing that may come to our minds is the addiction to drugs. There are many forms of enslavements in our lives and I am using the word addiction and enslavement as the same meaning to bring a point across.

The dictionary gives addiction the following meaning; "The condition of being habitually or compulsively occupied with or involved in something." This covers a lot of ground. In my last Reflection Newsletter, I discussed the need for a moral compass.

As parents, we are the primary moral compass to our children and to all who know us. We are the first line of defense against addictions of all kinds that tempt our children. One major direction we can point our children too, is *away* from bad company. "Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." 1 Corr:15-33.

Bad company can mean a person; music; internet; iPhone; unsupervised parties; or any morally unhealthy access to these and many more while taking a blind eye. Parenting is a full-time job. The world presents unhealthy choices to all of us and especially to our children. The family is being pulled in all direction and in some cases is being torn apart. The family has dramatically changed in the last 50 years and so has the moral compass. You don't have to look far to see this. Many who read this Newsletter can cite examples.

We know that divorce is a major factor affecting a large percentage of our society. I saw statistics ¹recently that show the following:

- 1. First marriage divorce rate is 41%**
- 2. Second marriage divorce rate is 60%**
- 3. Third marriage divorce rate is 73%**
- 4. Average age of people getting divorce is 30 years old**
- 5. The average length of marriage before divorce is 8 years**
- 6. Half of all American children will witness the breakup of a parent's marriage. Of these, close to half will also see the breakup of a parent's second marriage." (Furstenberg, Peterson, Nord, and Zill, "Life Course")**

¹ <https://www.mckinleyirvin.com/Family-Law-Blog/2012/October/32-Shocking-Divorce-Statistics.aspx>

7. Approximately 60% of children 6 years of age or under will see their parents' divorce.

These statistics underlie one of the major reasons why the moral compass has shifted from families with two parents into broken families. At the root of the sorrow in all of this are the children who are most affected. The scars they have seeing their mother and father fighting and divorcing, will not be seen with the eyes, but hidden inside their souls and minds.

It's no secret that children of divorced parents are more likely to get divorced, says Christina Steinorth, California-based psychotherapist and author of "Cue Cards For Life: Thoughtful Tips for Better Relationships." Studies indicate that daughters of divorced parents have a 60-percent higher divorce rate in marriages than children of non-divorced parents, and sons have a 35-percent higher divorce rate, says Steinorth. "Part of the reason is that when parents are divorced," she says, "it seems to send a message in a non-direct way that divorce is acceptable."

Both parents working increases stress on the children.

In today's society, it is common for both parents to work which puts increased stress on children and the working parents. Below is a good article on both parents working and the added stress it causes. It is worth the read. Although written from a purely clinical study, the moral implications to Christians are evident.

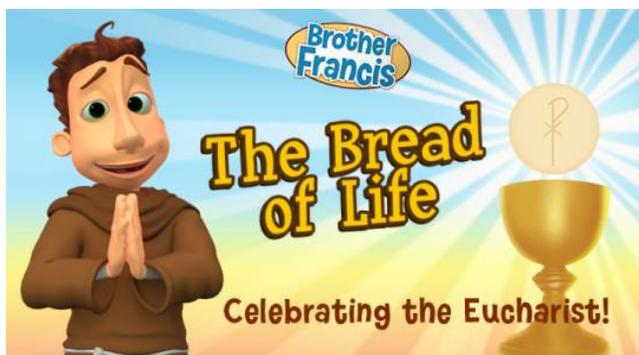
'Caring for Your School-Age Child: Ages 5 to 12, American Academy of Pediatrics'



"When both parents work, some children feel neglected. No matter how hectic your life becomes, you need to set aside time each day for your youngsters. Let them know just how important they are to you, not only through words or gifts but through a commitment of time. Two-parent working families may have more money, but material things and access to costly activities are no substitute for a parent's time.

Encourage your children to talk with you about how your job is affecting your relationship with them; if they are upset that you are spending less time with

them than in the past, you need to make an extra effort, perhaps developing a ritual of having them call you at work each day at a certain time. Let them know you really want to hear from them each afternoon.



Or watch TV together or www.formed.org programs which have videos especially for children on our Christian faith. Or go for walks. Or play some games. Or listen to what the children have to say. Or just spend some time with your children and discuss what is going on in their lives.

“It's important to keep in mind that stress at work can find its way home. When parents feel overworked or unappreciated at their job, they may vent their frustration and anger at their children or at each other. And the way parents are supervised at work frequently becomes how they "supervise" their children at home. If you have to abide by many rules and rigid policies at work, you may find yourself running a very structured household with lots of rules. Finally, parents tend to encourage their children to develop skills similar to those they use in their work. For example, parents whose jobs involve autonomy and creative problem-solving are likely to guide their children toward those same types of behaviors, while parents whose work rewards organizing information or materials may value those skills at home.

Some parents awaken their families a few minutes earlier each morning so that everyone can eat breakfast together and thus share a few minutes with one another as the day begins. In the evenings they turn off the television set and replace it with family activities like games, sports, music, and conversation.

A family with two wage earners can be a positive influence on children. Everyone—both children and adults—will enjoy some of the benefits. Boys and girls will tend to see the world as a less threatening place, knowing that both Mom and Dad are succeeding in the workplace; girls in particular perceive themselves as having greater career options if they have a mother who works. Children also tend to feel proud that their parents have careers. Depending on their after-school child care setting, middle-years children also have greater exposure to other youngsters and new social experiences, which can contribute to their development. ”



The moral principle in this article is to preserve the family values and to show love through taking time with them and each other. When children 6 years or

younger make up the majority of children with divorced parents, the stress on them is tremendous.

There was a ²video posted on the internet by a divorced mother. Her 6-year-old daughter (Tiana) was heartbroken and pleaded with her Mom to get along with her Dad. The mother shared this video on her Facebook. **I recommend that you view this video by going to the web address shown in reference 2 below.** Here is a part of what the little girl said.

"Mom, are you ready to be his friend?" Tiana starts.

Her mom answers 'yes'.

Tiana continues: Try not to be that high up [she gestures with her hands] to be friends, I want everything to be low. Just try your best.

'I don't want you and my dad to be replaced and meanies again. I want you and my dad to be placed and settled and be friends.

'I'm not trying to be mean. I just want everyone to be friends.

'And if I can be nice, I think all of us can be nice too.

'I'm not trying to be mean - I'm trying to do my best in my heart. Nothing else than that.

'I want my mom, my dad, everyone, to be friends. I want everyone to be smiling.

My heart is something. Everyone else's heart is something too. And if we live in a world where everyone is being mean – everyone's going to be a monster in the future. She later tells her mom: 'I think you can do it. I think you can settle your mean heights down to short heights ... I just want everything to be settled down, nothing else. For everything to be as good as possible. Nothing else.'

At the end of her lecture, her mom tells her, 'Thank you, Tiana,' and they have a hug and kiss.

In this exchange of advice from a 6-year-old we can see the child's moral compass clearly. She wants mom and dad to be "good to each other" and not to fight. She wants their hearts to be at peace and not become monsters.

² <https://www.usmagazine.com/celebrity-news/news/little-girl-wants-divorced-parents-to-be-friends-in-viral-video-watch-2015219/>

Most of us reading this Newsletter know a family member or friend who is divorced. Avoid judging them or gossiping to others about them. Pray for them & their children.

Love in Action

No One Dies Alone-Houston Methodist Hospital

Sitting in the Spiritual Care Department at Methodist Willowbrook Hospital recently was an older man waiting to see senior staff Chaplain Joy Cabrera. He was there to be interviewed for a volunteer program called 'No One Dies Alone'.



I sat next to him and introduced myself. Bill wore a Navy hat and had a cane by his side. He was in his mid-seventies in appearance. As we chit-chatted about the things at the Hospital, I ask him what volunteer position was he being interviewed for?

"I don't want to see anyone die alone. No sir. No one should die alone. I believe the Lord wants me to be with people who are dying and have no one to comfort them in their last hours. I want to do that."

Just as he finished, Chaplain Joy walked over, introduced herself to Bill and they went into the privacy of her office for the interview.

I was not aware of such a wonderful volunteer program at Houston Methodist. I did some research and found out how this wonderful volunteer program got started.



It was started by a nurse in Oregon, Sandra Clarke, who was not able to stay by the bedside of a dying patient. Sandra tells the incredible story of love for a dying patient by his nurse in the article below.

The following article by Sandra Clarke, CCRN, was originally published in the Summer 2002 edition [Vol. 8, No. 3] of Supportive Voice, the official newsletter of Supportive Care of the Dying: A Coalition for Compassionate Care and is reprinted here with permission.

One rainy night at Sacred Heart Medical Center,

Eugene, Ore., I had a brief encounter with a man whose name I cannot recall, a man I shall never forget. He was one of my seven patients, near death and a DNR (Do Not Resuscitate). During my initial rounds, he asked, barely audible, "Will you stay with me?" He was so frail, pale, old and tremulous. I said, "Sure as soon as I check my other patients."

Vital signs, passing meds, chart checks, assessments and bathroom assistance for six other patients took up most of the next hour and a half. When I returned he was dead. I reasoned he was a DNR, no family, very old, end-stage multi-organ disease; now he was gone, and I felt awful. It was okay for him to die, it was his time—but not alone.

I looked around; scores of people were nearby providing state-of-the-art patient care. For this man, state-of-the-art should have been dignity and respect.

Since that night I have on occasion mentioned to peers and administrators my idea for putting together a group of volunteers made up of hospital employees who would be willing to sit with the alone and dying. Usually this is met with "Good idea," and sometimes, "I already give this place enough of my time!" For 16 years my vision quest remained only conversation.

The past 14 years I have worked where No One Dies Alone—the ICU. Speaking with nurses from other ICUs, there seems to be an unwritten universal protocol for the patient who is dying without the presence of friends or family. One's other patients' care will be taken over by nearby nurses. Rituals of passing are acted out:



I've seen nurses quietly singing, holding the hand of the dying, and, in other manners of behavior, showing care and respect while an individual passes on to death. Nurses know the awe of being present at the birth or the death of another human. I believe awe and privilege is an innate human response at these times—the very essence of humanity.

The Houston Methodist Hospital picked up on this program '*No One Dies Alone*' and now has a volunteer group of more than 100 people willing to be at the bedside of patients in the last 48 to 72 hours of life.

Bereavement Services Manager Denice Foose, Catholic Chaplain Corps at Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston says they thought they would be serving the homeless who were in the hospital when they started this program in Houston.

"We have had that, but what it has turned into even more so is people who are isolated for whatever reason from their family and friends. We had one gentlemen who was in his 60s that came in for surgery and unexpectedly things went bad for him. Well his parents lived with him in Nacogdoches, Texas, they were in their 90s, well they couldn't get here."

And there have been other cases where family and friends just aren't able to get to the hospital. That's when a volunteer is offered to the family to sit by the bedside. Foose says it meets a different need for patients and families from other services.

"Most of hospice is making you comfortable medically, this type of thing. The chaplain, the same. They are there to visit with you to provide any type of spiritual need that you have but it's going to be a visit. This really is, we are there from the minute we're called and can line up volunteers through the entire process so they're never alone."

Foose says it also helps nursing staff who have the pressures of caring for a floor-full of patients and may not be able to spend as much time at the bed side as they would like. The Methodist Hospital Bereavement Coordinator Roman Olachia trains the volunteers for 45 minutes.

"Some simple ground rules are to sit equal to the hip of the patient so that when the patient opens their eyes they can see them. They are not right in their face if you will, and they don't have to stress and turn and look and strain in any way, but they can see that person and know that presence is there."



Methodist started another program as a result of this one, where they partner volunteers with long-term patients, such as those who have undergone organ transplants, where maintaining visiting hours have become difficult for family and friends.

Article by: Capella Tucker, Houston Public Radio News.



Pray for the dying.

Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.

St. Paul Ministry, Cypress, TX

INITIALS TO LIVE BY, "PTA"

P = LIVE IN THE PRESENT. NOT IN THE PAST

T = TELL THE TRUTH. SEEK THE TRUTH

A = AVOID CONFLICTS

