



Fraternity of Fatherhood

A Spiritual Fraternity for All Men

Volume 4

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Families Without Fathers

By: Harley Talkington



For nearly a month this past summer I was blest to teach 12 children in Bangalore, India. These kids came to the home of a woman with whom I became acquainted while we were staying with our daughter's family there. The kids came after school for an hour every day to learn English. I have been a teacher for 37 years and their enthusiasm, curiosity and respect made them an absolute joy for me to work with! I learned from Vidya, the woman who hosted this afterschool time, that many of these students came from families where the mothers had taken on the sole responsibility of providing for their children. The fathers are absent or even a negative influence on the family. This is quite typical for many of the world's poor. The women frequently take on an enterprise trying to eek out a living while simultaneously establishing high expectations for their children. They know the extremely competitive academic environment these children will find for themselves at the high school level and beyond. They also want to see an end of the cycle from which they themselves are trying to emerge. *...(continued page 2)*

“What is important for us this Christmas is to find within our hearts a spark that we should keep working at. Each of us can desire to seek the Lord in our little ways.



Let us try to be creative. Try to spend much time with Mary and Joseph asking them to form your heart so it may grow in this desire to seek the Lord.” Fr. Pinto 2011

Families Without Fathers —(continued from page 1)

Will they make it? Will their children make it? When I asked them about their aspirations, most of these children confidently spoke of becoming doctors, teachers, or policemen/women.

Back at home this fall I took a class of 6th grade students to Outdoor School where the kids learn about the wonders of the world around them by literally being in it, getting their hands dirty, hiking, enjoying the beautiful Sandy River and for one week living uniquely in a cabin with other students from other schools. My students were in cabins with kids from poorer sections of Portland.



Many of the kids from Portland schools, like the Indian boys and girls, came from families where no father was consistently, physically, emotionally and spiritually present. This impacted the week for everyone. Their teacher was beset with problem-solving one issue after another. Some students from her class were defiant and disruptive. Several, in fact, were sent home before the end of our week.

There was so much chaos in their daily home lives that the structure of this new learning opportunity, even away from home, given a fresh start, was just too much for them. Single mothers clearly were in over their heads trying to raise their children on their own.

"I wonder about how different all of this could be if these fathers were the leaders in their families ."

These two groups of students, the Indians and our own American students may be different culturally, but they all face the same challenge: fatherless families. I wonder about how different all of this could be if these fathers were the leaders in their families - emotionally, financially and spiritually. I pray for all of them that they can indeed find ways to be successful in their lives.

As fathers, we shape the world of our children. Most of us have not had to face or even glimpse the hardships that these children live in every day. May we strive to be the best fathers we can be to our own children and even those who come to us, looking for a father. We know what a special place Jesus held for them. May we join him in saying, "Let the children come to me" - Matthew 19:14.

The Day I Became "That Church Person"

By: Russ Pachl

I was raised as a cradle Catholic from a family who regularly prayed the family Rosary together on a frequent basis. I can't say that I was poorly catechized as much as I probably had very good catechism teachers, I may just not have paid very close attention. My parents insisted that as long as we lived under their roof, every one of their children were expected to attend weekly Mass. That quickly changed once I moved out.

I was married to my first wife at the ripe old age of 20. We had dated for a few years, but found ourselves pregnant with our first child so we moved up our plans to get married. After a short visit with my parish Priest at that time, we learned from Father that he would not marry us at that time in the Church. We would need to take, what I thought at the time, was a lengthy marriage class before he would marry us in the Church. So I left that meeting upset with Father and the Church. I look back now and wonder at his wisdom and his devoted obedience to the Church. You see, my mother and father were very involved in the parish at this time, and I tried to pull that string to get Father to make an exception this one time, but he would not budge.

So we were married outside of the Church in a civil ceremony. We were blessed with another child, but not having the Church in our lives, we only graced the inside of a church on a very rare occasion. I wouldn't even call us C&E Catholics. You know those who make it to Mass on Christmas and Easter. We were, "hey it's Sunday, maybe we should go to church", and then something else would come up and we would miss yet again another Mass.

Without this basis and centering our lives around the secular, you probably guessed it, our marriage lasted seven years. I will save you the details of the reasons and the divorce ordeal. But I found myself, newly divorced and a father of two. Their mother and I shared custody of our two children. 1 week with me and 1 week with their mom. I really struggled through our divorce and for some reason I found myself drawn back to Mass. It was one place where I could go and at least for 1 hour, not think about my problems and the situation, but on something else. It was like my mind could relax for at least one hour.

But when I left Mass, I as living a double life. I became a cafeteria Catholic. I would pick and justify my actions based on the "don't judge me, I won't judge you" belief. A bunch of old guys in Rome can't tell me what is right or wrong that is for me to decide. It pains me now to say this, but I went to Mass to be seen, to receive my token to heaven, and then I could go on my merry way. I lived one way when I had my daughters with me and another when they were at their mothers. ...*(continued page 5)*



Portland, Oregon Men

....Our Fraternity meets every second Saturday of the month at St. Mary's Cathedral for 7:30AM Mass followed by our breakfast meeting at the Kingston Grill. We conclude at 9:30AM.

Our group consists of single and married men. Right now we are studying the "Carry Your Family In Your Heart" Fatherhood Guidelines. Contact Brendan 503-358-4963.

(mcvickerfamily@comcast.net)

Come join us!



A Fraternity for All Men

The Fraternity of Fatherhood is for men of all ages. Our desire is to serve the Lord in all areas of our lives and to especially model our gift and responsibilities as fathers after the example of God the Father and His goodness. We support men; meeting them where they are. We engage in one-on-one friendships and provide opportunities for group activity, support and formation.

We entrust the Fatherhood Fraternity to the patronage of Saint Joseph.

Our Mission

To serve as men dedicated to the Lord in all aspects of our lives. To encourage and support men / fathers throughout the world in their gift and responsibilities as fathers. To encourage and support fathers "to respond" to their vocation, to protect and remain strong carrying their families in their hearts. Our desire is to be united to The Lord and fulfill our holy mission as fathers.

What is it we hope to do?

Bring men / fathers, closer to God by inviting them to learn their faith, challenging them to live their faith and encouraging them to love and share their faith. In addition, we invite those not married as this is a time to discern their vocation and calling in the Church.

As Fraternity of Fatherhood members, we are committed to grow and be formed spirituality, to support each other, to be active and supportive in our parishes. We are committed to learn who we are as Catholic men, to be discovered through our life experiences, prayer, studying Scripture and the documents of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, obedience to the Holy Roman Pontiff, our Roman Catholic Bishops and our parish Pastors. The formation of "Fatherhood" takes place in our hearts. Being a father means understanding that it is a call. When Fatherhood is received as a gift, it is accepted in humility and gratitude. Humility comes from the fact that we are weak. The pressures of the world are strong and flesh seems to have its way. Gratitude comes from the fact that the Lord is our Shepherd and He is with us always. With Him all things are possible.

The Day I Became “That Church Person” —(continued from page 3)

This double life I lived was what I called my war on women. I always chuckled during the last couple of election seasons that term was thrown around very often. What they were discussing in those elections was not a war on women, what I was doing was. I shared this with one of my very liberal sisters. I asked her why a guy who lied, deceived, manipulated, or took advantage of any situation necessary to only view woman as an object to be conquered was not a war on woman. Any guy who would sit at a bar with a beer, while he gave a dollar, \$1!, to a woman to take off her clothes on a stage in front of a bunch of men is not a war on women? I find it odd that many view that as acceptable.

I lived this life for several years. One person on the outside, but something totally different on the inside. Just when you think you have life figured out, life gets real. Through a series of events I found myself looking for a new career opportunity. My dad suggested I come to a Knights of Columbus meeting to network. The only reason I was a Knight was a few years prior to that my dad insisted I join the order. So I started to attend the meetings. Again, not for any charitable reasons, but for purely selfish reasons of finding a new job.

My dad then suggested that as long as I was coming to the meetings, why didn't I make myself useful and do something. I love my dad and miss him dearly. Through the Knights, he truly became one, next to my brother in law, one of my best friends in life.

Do something, okay, here goes Mr. Selfish again. I'll round up a bunch of under privileged kids, put them on a bus and take them up to Seattle to a Mariners baseball game. I can watch a good game, have a beer and a dog and if I have to keep an eye on some kids, oh well, but think how good I'll look to others for doing this wonderful deed and I'm sure this story will come in handy sometime.

So we round up these kids, and three of them are brothers. Single mom, dad no where to be found. The oldest brother was angry at the world and he didn't want to talk to anyone. The middle brother was indifferent. The youngest boy was this rotund, happy go lucky type of kid. On the way home I sat next to the youngest boy. We talked about a lot of things. I asked him several questions. Then I asked him the question “What do you want to be when you grow up?” He replied, “I want to be a Church person like you and do good things for people”

A lot of people said a lot of things to me in those years, but those words coming from that young man hit me like a ton of bricks. Took me a few minutes to gather myself and continue the conversation. When I got home that night, those words were just ringing through my head.

When you join the Knights, you are given a Rosary and asked to pray it as often as possible. Mine was laying in a box on my dresser. I picked it up. Now I used to pray the Rosary as kid with my family very often, but that night I had no idea where to start. Luckily through the foresight of Father Michael J. McGivney, he must have known there would be guys like me. When you are given this Rosary from the Knights, you are also given a little booklet on how to pray it. So that night, there I started.

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...(continued page 6)

The Day I Became "That Church Person" —(continued from page 5)

Those words from one young man, lead me to the Rosary. That has lead me to a life where I am married to a beautiful, wonderful woman, have been blessed with two more beautiful children, three grandchildren. But more importantly have accepted the entire teaching of our Catholic Church. I went from a contraception user to an advocate for NFP, went from not realizing the importance and beauty of the Mass to now yearning that, because of work schedule, not being able to attend on a daily basis.

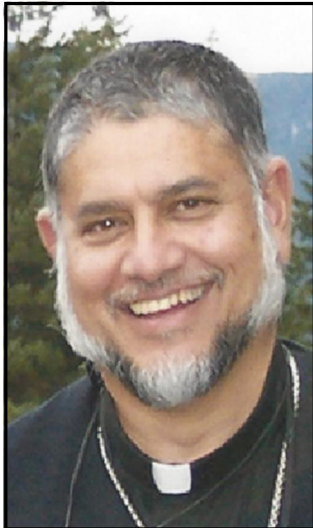
Life is not perfect and easy. I struggle to introduce my two older children to the beauty of the Church. Because I was not as disciplined in their upbringing in the Church, they are more easily swayed by the secular world as they have grown older. But I know I have the Rosary to help bring them back.

I sometimes think that through the prayers of my parents, I was brought back to the Church. And I know with my children, I always have the Rosary and who knows maybe my two older children will one day be on a bus asking questions to the young person sitting next to them.....

No I don't remember the name of that young man, and I never was in touch with him again. I do have pictures from that day and periodically look at his smiling face and pray that he too became a Church person and is doing good things for other people.

From 2009 Christmas Letter

By: Fr. Santan Pinto



"In my life I have found that making others happy and sharing the joy that I have with others makes me happy. It is important that the light that shines from the Lord at this holy season of Christmas shines into the lives of others. Many are living in darkness and the only light they can see is yours. Let the light of the Lord shine in the lives of those you meet. I know that many expect gifts at this time and yes it is a good idea of share gifts with others. But it is important that you give them the greatest gift of all – the very person of Jesus".

"There are many who think that they know the Lord but they are afraid of coming close to Him. This is the reason why Jesus comes to us as a little child so that we can fall in love with this little One! I pray that we all make it a point to bring Jesus to all those that we meet. We can do this by spending time with the people that we meet. Most of the people that I come across in life are lonely and are looking for friendship, companionship and possess a deep desire to be part of a family. Spending time with them during this holy season will show them your love expressed in deeds and not just in words. During the time you spend with these people make as many spiritual communions that you can make. By doing this you will be bringing the very real presence of Jesus in your life, so that you can then share this gift with the one you are visiting".

"A very happy Christmas to you and your family! I pray that the coming year will be filled with countless blessings for you and all those you meet".

With my priestly blessings,

Fr. Santan Pinto

Fraternity of Fatherhood—Group locations & Area Coordinators

Fr. Pinto has encouraged us to grow and expand the Fraternity of Fatherhood all over the world. He has granted us his permission, his blessing and he guides us spiritually. It is with this confidence that we now move forward with humility, obedience and docile hearts. If you are interested in joining a Fraternity of Fatherhood group or if you would like to start a group in your city contact Ray Emnace, Mike Allison, Stacey Hill or Brendan McVicker.

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Fraternity Sacramento Men ...

Meet every third Wednesday
of the month.

We meet at Denny's in
Orangevale at 7:30 pm.

Please contact Mike Allison
with any questions at
email address...

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CARRY YOUR FAMILY IN YOUR HEART - A CALL TO HOLINESS

A husband/father's guide to his vocation and spiritual direction. Each Newsletter focuses on one of the Guidelines or Areas of Growth from the "Carry Your Family In Your Heart" book. These guidelines to our Fatherhood Vocation & Spiritual Formation have been formatted based on the Fatherhood Retreat Guideline Teachings & under Spiritual Direction of Fr. Santan Pinto, S.O.L.T.

GRATEFUL

As a man of God, we see everything in our lives as a gift from God, our faith, our spouse, our children, our job's, friends. In that same attitude we give thanks and are grateful for the many blessings and graces that God has bestowed upon us.

Our first response to all of God's gifts, His consolations, is one of gratitude. Even in our sufferings; the times the sorrows lasted months or years God was with us through it all. Blessed are we if we come to realize that God was with us in difficult times and that He calls us to higher levels of trust, of giving. In our sufferings God has so much to teach us. We are grateful that He comforts us in all our afflictions.

A trap that many of us fall into is that we become obsessed with our gifts. God wants us to have nice things, good jobs, great families but it is easy to credit ourselves for all our successes. We are not saying that we should put on an act of false modesty and discount our God given talents but we need to pay more attention and be grateful to God as the source of all we accomplish.

In our gratefulness for all of God's gifts it is also our responsibility to share our gifts with others. We need to be one of those through whom God works, through whom God gives gifts, through whom God consoles.

"God comforts us in all our afflictions and thus enables us to comfort those who are in trouble, with the same consolation we have received from Him." 2 Cor 1:4

Grandfathers

A Father's Father

"You've kept track of my every toss and turn through the sleepless nights, each tear entered in Your ledger, each ache written in your book."

Psalm 56:8, MSG

Scripture Reading Eph 5:1-4

Be an imitator of Christ. Instead of immorality or any impurity, greed, obscenity, silly or suggestive talk just give thanks to God for His love and dying on cross for us. Remove yourself from any situation other than thanksgiving. God tells us that for sure that no immoral or impure greedy person has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ.

Scripture Reading 1Thes 5:13-18

In all circumstances give thanks for this is the will of God for you in Jesus Christ. Rejoice always and pray unceasingly.

Scripture Reading Luke 5:17-26

How many times do we find ourselves questioning God's mercy for us. God will forgive our sins. We need to give them to God, present our troubles to Him and let Him heal us. Just as the paralytic was brought in front of Jesus, and healed; the same is there for us. Then we give thanks to God for His mercy and through our example of thanksgiving others will follow and be grateful. Maybe then they will also say, "We have seen incredible things today".

Scripture Reading Luke 17:11-19

The ten lepers asked for God's pity and they received. We must also ask and we must also then be grateful for God's help. Will we be like the one that glorified God in thanksgiving or the others that did not give thanks? Be grateful to God daily for what he has given you.

Scripture Reading John 9:24-27

Can we not just accept the goodness that God has given and not constantly challenge why or how? Do we continually question God's love for us and His healing power for us? Do we ask two or three times like the Pharisees looking for an answer that will suit us? God does love you. He does want to heal you emotionally, physically, spiritually, and psychologically. Accept the gift and be grateful.

Scripture Reading Tim 1:12-17

Just like Timothy we can all look back in our lives and say we were a blasphemer, a persecutor, an arrogant man. Just as for Timothy, the grace of God has been abundant for us. God has been there for us. He died on the cross for us. Let us give thanks and be grateful to God for His mercy, for all the gifts He has given us.



POSTAGE

Fraternity of Fatherhood

We entrust the Fatherhood Fraternity to the patronage
of St. Joseph.



St. Joseph ...Pray For Us.



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To submit feedback and/or suggestions for future article topics, please email the editors,

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