

Single Parent Families: The Need For Communion

One of the difficult things to cope with once a marriage breaks up is the new reality that is presented to children, their parents, their relatives, and in their Church family. How does the family function without mom and dad being together? We all know life goes on and we all find ways to cope. There are tons of books written about divorce and how to help families cope with marital break up. So this won't be a "how to cope" note.

Someone responded to my reflection from last week sharing the struggle with "fitting into" the parish after the divorce. He or she felt a loss of belonging once he or she became a single parent. I don't know how common this is among single parents. But I do know at the other end, the sadness I felt when couples I knew got divorced, especially when they appeared to be strong and united in their faith. I felt as if I had to do this awkward dance. How does one stay balanced without taking sides, or maybe does one take sides?

The fact a couple is no longer one but two is a difficult change to cope with, especially for children. So can a parish do anything to help someone like the person I mentioned to better connect him or her to the parish? This is hard to answer. Some type of grieving process needs to go on before one can connect again (assuming that is possible). It seems that if one has not grieved the break up of the marriage, one will not be able to connect or feel as if one belongs to a community until that grieving process has happened. In other words, parish members can try, and try again, but nothing will work unless the person seeking connection is ready for it. As for the person who wrote to me, connection was something he or she was seeking.

Secondly, I mentioned the "awkward dance" I felt I had to do with couples when they divorced. It makes no sense behaving like everything is fine when it is not. Perhaps if we could give ourselves permission to discuss this awkwardness with someone who is going through a divorce, it might help to have a more meaningful conversation. We may find the feeling is mutual. If we can learn to speak with each other with care and concern and without criticism, maybe some good things can come out of this. Once again, thanks to all those single parents who are walking on this journey — one for which they did not ask. May the Lord give them the strength to carry the Cross they have been given.

The blessing of the Lord be upon you,
The unworthy +Paul

Erin Moulton begins role as Youth Communications Liaison for Midwest Diocese

At its 2018 Diocesan Assembly, the Diocese of the Midwest committed funds for youth programming throughout the diocese. Thanks to this commitment, this February Erin Moulton begins work as Youth Communications Liaison for the Diocese of the Midwest. Erin will be working with His Grace, Bishop Paul and Priest Benjamin Tucci to improve communication within the diocese about youth programs, resources, and events.

Erin and her husband, Christian, are parishioners at Holy Trinity Church, Overland Park, KS, where she teaches Church school. They have four sons, ages 17, 13, 8, and 6. Erin has a deep love for Orthodox youth work, which began at the age of 13, when she was first asked to help teach a preschool Church school class at her home parish, Saint John Antiochian Orthodox Church, Memphis, TN. She has taught at various parishes in Tennessee, Missouri, and Kansas for over 25 years. She also has led the North American Student Board for Orthodox Christian Fellowship as a college student in the 1990s and she worked as an Orthodox youth leader for several years in Memphis. Currently, she is helping to design a six-year Church school curriculum and organizes special youth events at Holy Trinity.

While family and parish life keep her busy most of the time, Erin holds a PhD in Slavic Linguistics from the University of Kansas and has also studied at Washington University in Saint Louis, MO and in Saint Petersburg, Russia. She works professionally as an editor in the field of international compliance and serves as board president of Orthodox Christian Translation Society. She is looking forward to getting to know many of the youth workers and clergy in the Midwest Diocese.

DANBURY FOOD PANTRY - MARCH

Suggested donation of peanut butter & jelly (and other non-perishable goods) will be collected through March 10.

February donations will be delivered to the food pantry Thursday March 14.

GOD WAS LISTENING “FAITH, HOPE & LOVE” A FILM BY GREEK FILMMAKER ROBERT KRANTZ

Some Cast appearing in the movie: Robert Krantz, Peta Murgatroyd (dancing w/ the stars); Ed Asner (Mary Tyler Moore show); Michael Richards (Kramer from Seinfeld); Corbin Bernsen (LA Law); Maks Chmerkovkiy (dancing w/ the stars)

Story Line: Jimmy Hope’s wife passed away a couple of years ago and he is struggling to raise his two daughters, as a single parent. Faith Turley is recently divorced and her dance studio is in jeopardy of being shut down. Needing to raise funds to save her studio, Faith enters a “Pro and a Schmo” dance contest and now must find a partner. Demetra, one of Jimmy’s daughters, prays every night that her dad will partner with Faith in the dance contest. God heard her prayers. Jimmy & faith become dance partners and over the next few months, on and off the dance floor, Faith teaches Jimmy to have hope again, he helps her to have faith once more, and together they learn how to love again.

Watch the movie trailer-type in bit.ly/FHL_Trailer_G
This movie opens up on March 15-17 in:
Clearwater, FL.; The Villages, FL, ; Park Ridge, IL;
Schererville, IN,; Orland Park, IL.; Jacksonville, FL.:
Valley View, OH. Just to name a few.

Christian Cinema Film review: “This engaging Romantic Comedy Krantz has created has more layers than a theatrical blockbuster. Krantz has wrapped up deeper meanings, real life situations, and faith filled moments into a beautiful package waiting to be unwrapped.”

PRAYER FOR THIS SUNDAY

O loving Father, I have departed far from You, but forsake me not, neither reject me from Your Kingdom. The evil enemy has stripped me and taken all my wealth. I have wasted, like the Prodigal, the grace given to my soul. But now I have arisen and returned, and to You I cry out: Make me as one of Your hired servants. O Christ, for my sake on the Cross You stretched out Your sinless hands, to rescue me from the Evil One, and to clothe me once again with a pure garment. O loving Lord, glory to You!

MEDITATION

There is a principal in spiritual life which is unchanging: the more a person exercises his or her freedom in the right way, with love and sharing, forgiveness and reconciliation, the more a person becomes free. But the more a person exercises his or her freedom in the wrong way, with selfishness and arbitrariness, insensitivity and carelessness, the more a person becomes enslaved to self, the world, and human conditions. True freedom is with God who alone can liberate us from bondage of our own will given to sinful inclinations and ways. “Where the spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom” (2 Cor. 3:17). True freedom is with Christ whose saving truths set us free. “If the Son of sets you free, then you will be really free” (Jn. 8:36)

MEDITATION

The far-off country where the prodigal wandered is the figure of a world in which the activities of human beings, even their duties, are disconnected or antagonistic to each other...a world of incoherent pursuits, of illusory strivings, of craving for foods that satisfy not and drinks which quench not our thirst, a world where nothing ultimately makes sense, engulfed as it is in untruth, deceit and sin.

...There is no cure for the evils of our age unless we return to God, since the world in which we live is not a normal world, but a waste land...St. Ambrose comments: He who separates himself from Christ is in exile from the fatherland and becomes a subject of the World. But we are not aliens and foreigners; we are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God: we were some time afar off, but we were made near by the blood of Christ.

George Barrois, Scripture Readings in Orthodox Worship, p. 25

ST. MARY’S PERCH & SHRIMP FISH FRY

From February 22 to March 8 from 4-7pm serving every other Friday. Local artist Rose Haninger will be displaying her “Marblehead Art” of local people and places of Marblehead, Lakeside & Danbury township including local churches.