

The MESSENGER

MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY FAMILY



What is Marriage? See page 12

SUMMER 2015

The MESSENGER

MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY FAMILY

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The MESSENGER

MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY FAMILY

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Provincial Perspective

Dear Family,

Many wonderful things are happening! We are currently in the Year of Consecrated Life. In the Holy Father's Apostolic Letter, *To All Consecrated People on the Occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life*, he exhorts us to look to the past with gratitude and to live the present with passion. Knowing the many difficulties religious communities are facing, we must still embrace the future with hope.

Respect for marriage and family life are also being challenged by society. The World Meeting of Families will be held in Philadelphia in September 2015. Sponsored by the Holy See's Pontifical Council for the Family, each meeting has a theme for understanding the great depth of meaning and importance of family life for the well-being of cultures around the world. This year's theme is **Love is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive!**

God is not inaccessible and remote. We believe God reveals Himself in Jesus Christ who was born in a family, the Holy Family. He is the source of the hope, faith, and joy that animates family life. He is the infinite reason for trusting the wisdom of the teachings of the Catholic Church, His Church.

I encourage you to relax and spend quiet time listening to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. The joy and happiness we experience in family celebrations should move us to reflect on God's holy presence in our lives.

I pray that God will bless your summer with an abundance of His graces.

Sincerely in the Holy Family, I am

Fr. Phil Sosa, M.S.F.

Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F.
Provincial Superior



Very Rev. Philip Sosa, M.S.F.

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An Invitation

The Family Forever Society

by Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F.

What is the Family Forever Society? It's very simple! Members of this special society are people who have remembered the Missionaries of the Holy Family in their wills or estate plans. Their bequests are called Legacy Gifts.

While most Legacy Gifts are made with the intention of the Missionaries of the Holy Family receiving benefits in the future, some Legacy Gifts are realized in the present. Gifts of securities or stock, real estate, and other tangible property are usually transferred before December 31 of any year so the benefactor can realize tax breaks for charitable donations.

Most Legacy Gifts are used as principal for our Retirement Trust Fund. While we do have a modest trust fund to help cover the rising cost of healthcare needed by the elderly and disabled members of our religious community, it is currently under funded.

Please consider joining our Family Forever Society. To receive a free booklet on preparing your will, please send your request to me using the envelope in the middle of this magazine, or call me at 1-888-484-9945. If you are remembering us in your will, please remember us as: *Congregation of the Missionaries of the Holy Family - North American Province.*

Our Holy Family priests and brothers will always hold you and your loved ones in prayer. Isn't that what a Family is supposed to do? Thank you and God bless you... *forever.*



Forever Yours in the Holy Family,

Fr. Phil Sosa, M.S.F.

Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F.
Provincial Superior, North American Province



HOLY FAMILY LIFE

Swimming with Crocodiles

by Father Peter Prasetyo, M.S.F.

Editor's Note: Father Peter Prasetyo, M.S.F. is a priest of the Missionaries of the Holy Family from the Java Province of Indonesia. He arrived in Saint Louis, Missouri on December 10, 2014 to learn English and serve in the North American Province. He graciously answered some questions about his fascinating life.

Where were you born?

My name is Petrus "Peter" Yuwono Hendro Prasetyo. I was born on March 14, 1980 in the city of Sukoharjo, in the Central Java Province of Indonesia. I was ordained as a Priest of Jesus Christ on July 15, 2008 by Bishop Ignatius Suharyo (now archbishop) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.



How many siblings do you have?

My father, Fredericus Samidi, is a teacher, and he is already retired. My mother, Fredeswinda Sumarti, is a housewife. I have two sisters and two brothers.

My oldest sister is Fransisca Atik Krismarsiaty, and she is a teacher. Her husband is Andreas Rundi, and he is also a teacher. They have three children: FX Fajar Indra Nugrahanta, Andre Rama Renauld Hans Odoric, and Skolastica Marella

Devina Indriani.

My older brother is Hugo Prasetyo Nugroho Hari Wibowo, and he is an entrepreneur. He married Veronica SH who worked at a garment fac-



Father Peter's extended family at his little brother's wedding in Indonesia.

tory. They have one son named Robertus Bagas Sunu Prasetyo.

My second sister (also older than me) is Fredeswinda Suryani. She's works in accounting, and she is married to Stefanus Sigit Adi Prasetya. Her husband is an employee in a private company. They have three children: Yohana Jennifer Melisa Prasetya, Agnes Monica Florecita Prasetya, and Dominicus Alfredo Orman Arka Prasetya.

My little brother is Yohanes Ari Karyanto. He works in a mining company. He married Margaretha Maria Alacoque who is working in a research and development laboratory. They do not have any children yet.



Father Peter as a seminarian.
He is in the middle. Oh my!

At the same time, I was also accepted by the Seminary Berthinianum to be a postulant of the Missionaries of the Holy Family. I needed to make a decision, so I prayed the "Novena 3 Salam

Maria" or Novena of Three Hail Mary(s).

After time in prayer, I decided to decline the opportunity to become a university student, and I joined the Seminary Berthinianum in Salatiga.



A First Communion group in Papua New Guinea.

Where did you go to school as a child?

I went to a public elementary school in Sukoharjo. Then I attended Regina Pacis Catholic Junior High School and Pangudi Luhur Saint Josef High School. After finishing high school, I received a scholarship to attend Atmajaya Catholic University.

Why did you become a missionary priest?

When I was kid, I often met with a Holy Family priest, a Dutch missionary who served in my parish. I was moved by his spirit of service, love, affection, and kindness, and this attracted me to the priesthood. I told my dad about this desire, and he gladly guided me to my vocation. My father is my hero.

When I was a child, I loved hiking and camping. Once, I saw the needs of people in an isolated forest, and I wanted to be a missionary to help fill the spiritual void due to a lack of priests. I chose the Missionaries of the Holy Family because of the combination of their family charism and missionary spirit.



How did you survive in the jungles of Papua New Guinea?

I survived because I loved the people. Even though the priests suffered physically, when we served the people well, we felt a joy beyond words!

Our happiness was not dependent on material comforts. We were fulfilled by serving, providing the Eucharist, and being shepherds to the people. I wanted to return to Papua New Guinea, but my superior had other plans for me.

Why are the poor the happiest of all people?

The poor are not obstacles, but it can be a challenge to serve them with a pure heart. True happiness is to be

with them. The poor have authentic faith in God. They cannot repay us for our ministry, but, if they could, our services would be of no value. *“Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.”* (Matthew 10:8)

How did you avoid being eaten by crocodiles?

We served a large geographical area in Papua New Guinea with a lack of transportation. The only way to reach the entire territory was by foot, sometimes by walking for 12 hours. On long trips, we would be accompanied by young men who knew the land. They would show us the way through the middle of the heavy forest. Sometimes we had to swim across rivers filled with crocodiles.

The young men would trick the crocodiles by going downstream away from



Father Peter on a motorcycle in Papua New Guinea.

us, and then they would begin splashing the water. This would distract the crocodiles long enough for us to swim across the river.

What is your impression of the United States?

I realize that Indonesia has a reputation for terrorism, and that is why it was so difficult to get a Visa. I was determined to serve here even though there were many obstacles to overcome.

Initially, I was impressed because there are many Catholic churches. However, the overall number of Catholics who attend Mass is very small, and this makes me sad. Priests and people who are active in the Church, though, have




Father Peter (today) at Saint Wenceslaus Parish in Saint Louis, Missouri.

great enthusiasm and high expectations.

In Indonesia, it is very difficult to get a license to build a church. Even so, every week there are so many Catholics at Mass that they are jostling each other in the Communion lines!

If God said that He would grant you one

wish, what would it be?

I would ask the Lord to open the hearts of all Catholics, especially young people in America, to actively practice their Faith and to be involved in Church activities. God bless your family! 

Do You Want More Holy Priests?

Join the *Holy Family Circle* and help foster vocations to the priesthood and brotherhood. Find your level of joyful giving below, complete the contact information, and mail this form, or a copy of it, in the envelope in the middle of the magazine. Thank you and God bless you!

Giving Level	Associate..... up to \$49 per month	Patriarch/Matriarch
Examples:	Samaritan\$50 per month	\$10,000 annual gift
	Companion \$100 per month	
	Disciple.....\$300 per month	
	Apostle.....\$600 per month	

My Contact Information:

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

My Level of Joyful Giving per month: _____



YOUTHFUL OUTLOOK

Catholic Family Land

by Youth for Christ



If I told you there was a place where you could go during the summer to grow mentally, morally, and physically -- all while playing your favorite sport, meeting new friends, and growing stronger in your faith -- you'd think I'm crazy. The crazy thing is, there actually is such a place, and it's in Bloomingdale, Ohio.

It's quite a trip for us, about eight hours from our home, but we make it fun. We usually get a hotel in Ohio Friday night because it all begins Saturday. You're probably wondering, *"What is this place?"* It's called Catholic Family Land, and it is run by the Apostolate for Family Consecration.

I know, I know, it's a really corny name. The first thing that comes to your mind is probably some weird amusement park with rides like "The Jesus and Mary-go-round" or the "Rosary roller coaster," but it's really not like that at all. It's one of the coolest places you'll ever experience.

When I went for the first time, I was five years old, and I didn't really like it, mostly because I didn't know anybody. Once I started making friends, it got better every year. They have three waterslides (one is 900 feet long!), two swimming pools, a basketball court, a tennis court, a baseball field, a soccer field, a huge auditorium, a massive

jungle gym, horses, over 80 cabins, a snack shack, and two sand volleyball courts.

When we arrive Saturday afternoon, we get all of our stuff unpacked into our cabin, and then go to opening Mass at 6:00 p.m. There are young adult programs for ages 13 – 24 called **Marads**, short for St. Maria Goretti, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, and St. Dominic Savio.

Sunday is a beautiful Mass that lasts about two hours, and then there's free time for families to enjoy themselves. Monday through Friday there is Daily Mass and programs for kids, teens, and adults from 10 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Monday night is the Bonfire Rosary, where we have a huge bonfire and roast S'mores on long sticks. Tuesday is the famous volleyball tour-



ament, and many would say it is the biggest event of the week. On Wednesday is the basketball tournament, the baseball tournament, and the chess tournament.

Thursday is the last full day, and


Thursday night is Banner Night, where the new families make a banner and present it to the 800+ people in attendance. Friday is Closing Mass, then everyone packs up, says their goodbyes, and leaves



for home. It's usually pretty depressing when the week is over, but it's exciting at the same time because everyone leaves on a spiritual high, and they can't wait for next year!

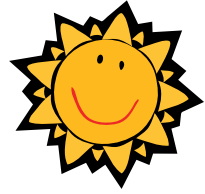
Some of the awesome experiences that my family and I especially enjoy at Catholic Family Land include playing in the volleyball tournament, making new friends with Catholic families just like us, seeing lives change on Wednesday night in Eucharistic Adoration, and, most of all, growing closer as a family.

We have been going to Catholic Family Land for 11 years now, and it gets better every year. Please consider joining us this summer with your family. For more information, call 1-800-773-2645, send an e-mail to info@afc.org, or visit the website at www.afc.org.

God bless your family! 

Thursday -
Sunday,
August 6 - 9,
2015

The Apostolate for Family Consecration & The Missionaries of the Holy Family



Invite Your Family for a Family Fest Missouri Weekend at Eagle Hurst Ranch!



Eagle Hurst Ranch ♦ 240 Eagle Hurst Road ♦ Steelville, MO 65565
www.eaglehurstranch.com

Daily Mass, Rosary & Divine Mercy Chaplet

~ Camp Pastor ~

Father James Wasser, M.S.F., of the
Missionaries of the Holy Family

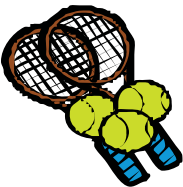
~ Young Adult Ministry ~

Jamie Garza of
The New Catholic Evangelization



~ Family-Friendly Rates ~

- 1.) **\$20 per adult** (ages 16 & up) and **\$5 per child** (ages 3-15):
\$100 maximum family fee.
- 2.) **Meals:** Feel free to bring your own food and snacks. There is plenty of refrigeration space, however, cooking facilities are minimal. A large BBQ area is available. You may purchase buffet-style meals for \$8.50 per adult per meal and \$5 per child per meal.
- 3.) **Lodging:** Camping/RVs, etc. – no charge (no hookups available). Cabin rental is \$75 per night, and there are 30 air-conditioned cabins with refrigerator (1 or 2 bedroom cabins).



~ Family Activities ~

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For more information, call (636) 931-3503.

For reservations, call (314) 638-3382 or (800) 257-2624.

(No registration fees; donations accepted.)





A PROFILE OF SERVICE



Eternal Rest Grant Unto Him, O Lord

Father John Carl Lombardi, M.S.F.

March 16, 1937 – April 4, 2015

Fortified with the Sacraments of Holy Mother Church, Father John Lombardi, M.S.F., age 78, died on Holy Saturday, April 4, 2015 in San Antonio, Texas. He was laid to rest at Holy Cross Cemetery in San Antonio.

He was born on March 16, 1937 in Brooklyn, New York to John Paul Lombardi and Sadie Federico. He is survived by a younger brother, Carl Lombardi of Ridge, New York.

Father John was a belated vocation due to his concern of caring for his ill parents. Before acceptance as a religious candidate in 1993, he worked in various retail jobs.

He was admitted into the M.S.F. Novitiate Program on August 14, 1995, and he made his First Profession of Vows on August 15, 1996. He attended

the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, and was ordained a transitional deacon on October 22, 1999 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Seguin, Texas.

He served as deacon at Our Lady of Guadalupe until his ordination to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ on June 10, 2000. Father John was then assigned to Saint Wenceslaus Parish in Saint Louis, Missouri, where he served as parochial vicar until November 2009.

Due to illness, he became a resident of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Saint Louis. Because of the hard winters, however, he was relocated to Padua Place Nursing Home in San Antonio in November 2011.

Father John loved to write on the subject of apologetics, and he was a "Dear

Father" columnist for the *St. Louis Review* and *Today's Catholic* archdiocesan newspapers, as well as *The Messenger* magazine published by the Missionaries of the Holy Family.


He had a great devotion to Our Blessed Mother, as well as Saint Anthony of Padua and Thérèse of Lisieux (The Little Flower). Father John routinely offered up prayers to these great saints on behalf of friends, relatives, fellow confreres, and parishioners.

Just seven months after his ordination to the priesthood, Father John had kidney failure. Because of this, he had to undergo dialysis three times a week for the remainder of his life. Yet he endured all his sufferings with great courage, knowing that suffering, if united to Jesus Christ, can be a powerful prayer of intercession

and draw us closer to God. (Colossians 1:24-29)

It is significant that Father John died on Holy Saturday. On that day, his Good Friday of pain and suffering finally came to an end, and he began his entrance into eternal happiness.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen. May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Memorials: Using the return envelope found in the middle of this magazine, please send any contributions in Memoriam of Father John Lombardi, M.S.F., or make an online gift at our website, www.MSF-America.org. Thank you for your generosity. 

Men of God: Priests Forever

In this Year of Our Lord 2015, four priests of the Missionaries of the Holy Family are celebrating anniversaries of their ordination to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ.



Fr. Leo Gariazzo, M.S.F.
50 years



Fr. Richard Oberstar, M.S.F.
50 years



Fr. James Beegan, M.S.F.
15 years



Fr. Francois Rakotovoavy, M.S.F.
15 years

We thank God for our priests, and we beseech Him to send us many more. If you would like to send a Tribute Gift in honor of one or more of these Men of God, please use the envelope found in the middle of this magazine. Thank you and God bless your family!



THE HOLY SACRAMENTS

What is Marriage?

by Father Jim Beegan, M.S.F.

What exactly is true marriage?

Most people will probably say that marriage is a civil contract. This contract establishes a partnership between two people, usually involving the right to mutual sexual relations and the procreation and raising of children.

The Catholic Church, however, has a far deeper definition of marriage that is rooted in natural law and divine revelation. According to the Church, God Himself is the author of marriage. Marriage finds both its origin and its strength in Him.

The Church contends that marriage is a sacred agreement, a covenant, solemnly made before God **exclusively by one man and one woman.**

Out of this covenant comes a lifelong relationship designed to benefit husband and wife, including their children. Unlike a contract, the marriage covenant can only be dissolved by the death of one of the spouses. Marriage between two baptized Christians is not

only a covenant, it is also a sacrament.

What is the origin of marriage?

We find the origin of marriage in the *Book of Genesis*, the first book of the Bible. God created Adam, the first man. But Adam needed a partner, someone

who would share his life and with whom he would communicate as an equal. So God created a woman fully equal to Adam in dignity and mental and spiritual endowments. This woman was called Eve, the mother of all the living.

What is divorce?

In Matthew 19:1-12, Jesus deals with divorce. In His time, there was great debate among the Jewish rabbis about this issue. All of them, however, agreed that divorce was sometimes permitted.

After all, had not Moses, the great giver of the Law, allowed divorce? So the Pharisees bring the question to Jesus, hoping to trip him up and embarrass him in the eyes of the people.

Jesus responds by quoting from Genesis, chapters one and two: "*God made*



them male and female. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

He goes on further to say: *"So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, how can any mere human being dare to separate what Almighty God has joined together?"*

Jesus says that Moses merely allowed a temporary dispensation from God's law on marriage. Moses did this because the Israelites were hard of heart and resistant to God's grace and teachings. Jesus the Messiah restores marriage to what God originally intended it to be. It is no longer a mere contract between a man and his wife. It is now a sacred covenant, a sacrament.

What is an annulment?

Sometimes the Church allows the annulment of a marriage. Critics claim that annulments are nothing more than a Catholic version of divorce. But this is not true. An annulment can never dissolve a valid marriage. It simply declares that a truly valid marriage never existed in the first place. Annulments are often referred to as a declaration of nullity.

There are a variety of reasons for a declaration of nullity. For example, one of the spouses could have been a drug addict or a homosexual at the time of marriage and kept this fact hidden. Because this was not known up front, the other marriage partner did not have the necessary knowledge to make a free, mature decision to enter into a

marriage relationship.

What is the present marriage crisis in America?


The words of Jesus certainly need to be heard and heeded by modern day Americans. Since 1986, we are infamously known for the highest divorce rate in the world and the leader of nations in fatherless families.

One of the foremost reasons for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire was widespread divorce. History *will* repeat itself.

Also, there is an ever-increasing number of single-parent households and the rise of unmarried couples living together. The situation for "Catholics," by the way, is no better than that for the general population.

There is an ever-increasing attempt to desecrate marriage by redefining it.

Redefining marriage as anything other than the union of a man and a woman is impossible because marriage has been eternally defined by God. Any declarations, court decisions, or laws at the state or national level to redefine marriage will never be accepted or recognized as valid by the Catholic Church. God has already revealed His divine plan for marriage.

Unless our nation rediscovers its own Christian roots and works to restore the dignity of marriage and family, our future will indeed be bleak. 



UNITED IN CHRIST

Fifty Years and Counting



On Sunday, May 17, 2015, Father Richard Oberstar, M.S.F., a member of the Missionaries of the Holy Family, celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving to God for his 50 years as an ordained Priest of Jesus Christ.

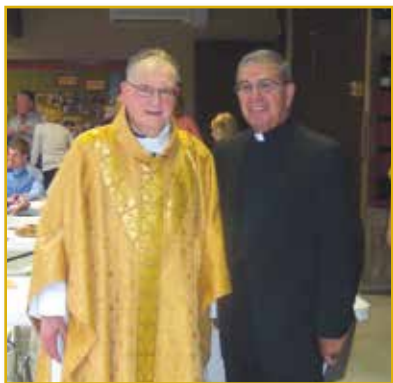
Father Richard is the retired priest-in-residence at Saint Mathias Catholic Church in Fort Ripley, Minnesota. The Mass and dinner was hosted by a parish with larger facilities, Saint Andrew Catholic Church, in the nearby City of Brainerd.

Reflecting on his 50 years as a priest, this is one of Father Richard's fondest memories:

"Shortly after my ordination in 1965, I was assigned to our missions in Mexico. I received a call one day from a woman who lived in one of the local red light districts. One of the prostitutes with whom she worked was dying. The lady who called told me that she would be standing outside in front of the building where the dying person was staying.

The heat was overwhelming. It was 112 degrees! I drove to the location dressed in a white cassock. I went into the building and was led to a woman who was in great anguish and lying on the floor. She did not appear to be coherent enough to confess her sins, but the very fact that she asked for a priest meant that she had the desire to repent. I prayed over her, administered the Sacrament of Anointing, and gave her Last Rites.

She was immediately at peace, and she died shortly thereafter. I was happy to be there for her. And why not? Everyone with a contrite heart deserves a second chance. God bless her soul! May she rest in peace."



One of the concelebrants for Father Richard's Mass of Thanksgiving was Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F., Provincial Superior of the Missionaries of the Holy Family.



Two of Father Richard's sisters, (l to r), are: Jennie Michaloski and Bernadine Gardner. In back is Bernadine's husband Mack.

This is Father Richard's favorite prayer, written by the late Father William D. Dooley, O.P.:

**An Act of Consecration to the
Immaculate Heart of Mary**

Immaculate Heart of Mary, * most perfect receptacle of the fullness of God's grace. * Heart most loved by God and most loving of Him. * Heart most tenderly devoted to our salvation. * Heart made most sorrowful by our sins. * Heart most joyful in our charity. * I consecrate myself entirely to thee.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, * in the fire of love which burns in thee, * may all my sins be consumed and my affections purified. * Let me, by true penitence, * draw out the painful thorns * with which I have pierced thee.

May something of the divine fire of love, * which fills thee, * enter into my heart * so that my service of the Son may be complete. * In lasting devotion to thy Immaculate Heart, * may I be willing to share its sorrows now, * so that seeing thee in Heaven, * I may possess some of the blessed joy * which thy Son imparts to it.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, * I am thine in sorrow and in joy, * in time and in eternity! * Amen.

See more photos on the next page.

St. Mathias Grill, right. St. Mathias Church, below.



The Knights of Columbus presented Father Richard with the "Sword of the Spirit," which is the Word of God (see Ephesians 6:17).



Father Richard praying the *Prayer after Communion* at his Thanksgiving Mass.



Many members of Father Richard's extended family joined him for the celebration.



PARENTS' TIME-OUT

Add a Touch

Contributed by Dr. Ray Guarendi

Dear Dr. Ray,

*We are parents with teenage children. We have known each other for years; we love each other, we are comfortable with each other, but there is little affection. Is this normal? – **Something is Missing***

Of course, lack of affection typically reflects the relationship's overall temperature. As the atmosphere cools, affection slips into hibernation. Then again, sometimes a marriage isn't all that cold. Affection, like compliments, chills from lack of effort.

Poll a hundred couples, and a majority, I anticipate, would prefer more physical warmth. I doubt anyone would complain, *"There is way too much touching, hugging, and kissing between us. It's getting old. I think it's actually hurting our deeper emotional connection."* No matter how much affection embraces our marriage, most of us would welcome more.

An unpopular rule of life states: if you want more of something, you may have to give more of it. An even more unpopular rule of life states: changing oneself is easier than changing someone else. Blending these rules, if you're one who wants more touches, physical or emotional, you might have to reach out first.


Resistance Rationale #1: *"I'm not an affectionate person."* You don't need to be. Smothering your mate with smooches isn't the goal. Every step is meant to be

within anyone's reach.

When a husband says, *"That's not who I am,"* most of the time he's actually saying, *"That's not consistently who I am."* Almost never does he mean, *"Under no circumstances do I ever deviate from my normal pattern."*

If you're not affectionate, do you never touch anyone? How about your mother? A little baby? Your pet cat? No doubt you shake hands. Most likely you exchange some personal signs of friendship. Some touch is acceptable, initiated even, for nearly everyone under chosen circumstances.

Ask yourself, "At one time did I touch more?" If the answer is yes, that raises another question: Which is you, then or now? If you were more expressive then, were you living counter to your personality? Or, did you genuinely feel warm about touching? If so, the old you is the real you. Presently you may not be acting affectionate, but that doesn't mean you're not an affectionate person.

Excerpt from: *Marriage: Small Steps, Big Rewards*, pages 125-129. Copyright © Dr. Ray Guarendi, Servant Books. 



FOREVER YOUNG

“Queen” Esther Ellspermann

An Unclaimed Treasure

In January 2015, a Birthday Mass was celebrated for Miss Esther Ellspermann, a parishioner at Saint Wenceslaus Church in Saint Louis, Missouri, who is 100 years young. She shared with us some details about her wonderful life.

What is your birthdate?

January 13, 1915.

Where were you born?

In the same house where I live now in Saint Louis, Missouri. It was built 149 years ago.

Who was the U.S. president when you were born?

Woodrow Wilson.

Who was the pope when you were born?

Pope Benedict XV (not Pope Benedict the XVI!).

Where were you baptized?

I was baptized in Saint Agnes Church at 1935 Sidney Street. Unfortunately, the parish is now closed.



Esther at the age of 6 in 1921 posing as a gypsy.



Esther at the age of 18 in 1933 working as a playground dancing teacher.

I became a parishioner of Saint Wenceslaus Church when I was in my 20s because the church had an 11:00 a.m. Mass, and I like to sleep late.

How many siblings do you have?

I have four sisters and four brothers; nine of us total. I am the youngest, and, yes, the only one still alive. I am German on both sides of my family. My mom’s maiden name was Mary Wilhelmina Schmitz. She married Mr. John Ellspermann, Jr.

Where did you go to school?

I graduated from Saint Agnes Grade School, Roosevelt High School, and Harris Teachers College which is now Harris-Stowe State University.

What is your favorite memory as a child?

All family gatherings, especially picnics.

Do you have a favorite color?

No, not really. I like all colors, as long as they are bright.

Do you listen to music?

Oh yes, classical music. Classical music is the best.

What was your favorite decade and why?

The 1940s was my favorite. I was in the WAVES from 1942 – 1945, Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service. WAVES was part of the Navy, and I was in the first group of women to work for our Armed Forces. It was an exciting time to be alive!

First, I went to military school in Lexington, Virginia, and then I served in several capacities. I inspected aircraft at the Bureau of Aeronautics in Columbus, Ohio; worked in the Code Room in Philadelphia; assisted at the Naval Hospital in Astoria, Oregon; and met President Harry Truman in Saint Louis at the Naval Air Station at Lambert Field.

My prized memory was my encounter with President Truman. The WAVES at Lambert Field had lined up to meet the President. He shook my hand and

he did so with others, but not all. He seemed to be in a hurry. He was getting ready to leave, and I said, “*Just a moment, Mister President, won’t you shake hands with the other ladies?*”

He came back and exchanged handshakes with all the girls!

What in life is most important to you?

Teaching kids. Before and after WAVES, I worked for Clinton Peabody School. I taught first and second grade students for 39 years. I had the privilege to teach a total of 1,390 children.

One first grader wrote to me 35 years after I was his teacher. His mother saved the letters I had written to her, and he found the letters and enjoyed them so much that he contacted me.

One student would send pussy willows to me every spring because he appreciated the thank you letters I had

written to him. I make it a point to write a thank you letter for every gift received.

When all is said and done, however, my favorite school activity was putting together the All School Christmas Play every year.



Esther at the age of 27 in 1942 in the Armed Forces (WAVES).



Esther at the age of 63 in 1978 with Joshua, her great-great nephew.

How is the world different today than when you were growing up?

It's not safe. When I was a young lady, I could go anywhere alone in Saint Louis, even at night, and I always felt safe. Not anymore.

If you could change the world today, what would be the first thing you would do?

I would end the abortion holocaust. This is a great tragedy.



Esther at the age of 100 in 2015 after her Birthday Mass with Father Jim Wuerth, M.S.F. and fellow Saint Wenceslaus parishioner Miss Jody James.

If God said that He would grant you one wish, what would it be?

That's easy! Eternal salvation.

What is your secret to living to 100?

Try not to worry! I stay active by throwing parties. I love parties.

Have you been single all of your life?

Of course! I am an *Unclaimed Treasure*.



*Thank You & God Bless You,
to everyone who made a financial gift to date in 2015.
We, the priests and brothers of the Missionaries of the Holy Family, extend
our deep gratitude to all our benefactors. You are remembered in our prayers.*

Around The Province...



On April 29, 2015, Mrs. Mary Mattammal was presented with a framed certificate for becoming a Permanent Member of the *Holy Family Prayer Association*. This special event took place during Mass at Saint Wenceslaus Church in Saint Louis, Missouri. Thank you, Mary, for your support of the Missionaries of the Holy Family!



ANSWERING THE CALL

Guess What?

by Deacon Sandy Morales

My name is Deacon Cayetano (Sandy) Morales. I was born January 29, 1939 in New Braunfels, Texas to Librado Morales and Refugia Treviño Morales, into a family of seven sisters and five brothers. I was raised in a very caring and compassionate family, and my mom taught us the Rosary, which we prayed every day.

My education began in the parish school at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, where I learned my prayers in Spanish from a religious sister who lived on the parish campus.

On March 24, 1958, just out of high school, I married my sweetheart, Tomasa (Tommie) Hernandez. We had two children, Larry Lee and Elizabeth Linda. My son works at the Pentagon. My daughter got married out of high school and gave us four grandchildren: Elaina, Tania, Ralph Jr., and Laura.

When my children moved out of the house, my wife and I had the opportunity to attend church more frequently. I met a priest of the Missionaries of the Holy Family, the late

Father Joe Lawless, M.S.F., and he inspired me by his compassion. Another priest, Father Joe Audet, asked me if I would like to help teach

Sunday religious education classes. I was reluctant because I always played golf on Sundays, but I agreed to do so.

I began by filling in for a teacher who taught high school students.

The assignment was just for one Sunday, but the regular teacher did not show up for the following three Sundays.

Guess what? I began to teach the class all the time! I continued teaching the class for the next three years. I felt that teaching the class also helped me to learn more about the life of Jesus Christ, so I eventually began to enjoy the experience. When the coordinator of religious education quit, Father Audet asked me to fill in until he could find a new coordinator, and I agreed to do so.

Guess what? After one year passed, Father Audet named me as the new coordinator!



Later, I became a lector and I helped Father Lawless at our mission church in Hunter, Texas as a Eucharistic Minister. After one year of doing this, Father Audet invited me into his office, and he looked very serious. He told me that I should join the diaconate program at the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

I answered, *“Oh, no; I don’t think so! I like to party when I play golf, and I don’t want to give that up!”*

I resisted for two years, and then my wife told me that it would be a good idea if I went to find out what the diaconate program is all about. I agreed, but I told her, *“It’s no use. They do not want sinners like me! But, to prove to you that they will not choose me, I will go, but only if you go with me.”*

We went to the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio where the interviews were held in front of a panel of four deacons and one priest. They asked a lot of personal questions, and we answered to the best of our knowledge. After an hour, we were dismissed. On the way home, I told my wife, *“I bet they are not going to choose me because I am a sinner. They want good Christian people.”*

Guess what? A few weeks passed, and I received a letter stating that I was accepted into the diaconate program! I said to my wife, *“Oh, no; what did I get myself into?”!*

My wife and I went to classes for

four and a half years. Six months was on the job training, including many retreats, Marriage Encounter, Cursillo, jail ministry, and convalescence home visits.

I was ordained at St. Matthew Catholic Church in San Antonio by Bishop Bernard Popp. I was assigned to Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church on August 10, 1986 by Archbishop Patrick Flores. The following week, I had the honor of performing a wedding for my niece who waited for me to finish my classes. While at this parish, my wife and I joined the Guadalupana Society and the Altar Society. I was also a member of the Holy Name Society, and I have been in the Knights of Columbus for over 20 years.

When Father John Flanagan was the pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, he invited my wife and me to Cuatro Ciénegas, Mexico to do missionary work. We went for 12 days, and I had a great spiritual awakening by working with the humble, Mexican people. From the Cathedral where we were staying, we would travel 10 to 15 miles to small missions and pray with **the people of the Indian villages who would only see a priest once every three months.**

When we arrived at the villages, the people would drop whatever they were doing when Father Flanagan rang the chapel bells. One day alone we did several baptisms and one First Holy Communion. The

families would invite us to eat with them in their adobe homes with dirt floors, but the homes were kept very clean. Father Flanagan told us not to eat too much at any one home because we would usually visit two or three homes a day. If we did not eat what they offered, even if we were not hungry, they would be offended.

One year after being ordained a deacon, I was honored to be asked to be a Eucharistic Minister at Mass with Pope Saint John Paul II when he came to San Antonio, Texas on September 13, 1987. It sent chills through my body because he was my inspiration! We were told to sit right in front of the Popemobile, about five feet away. There were thousands of people at this Mass on a very warm day, and it took us a long time to distribute Communion. It was a blessed experience.

In June 2014, I went on vacation to Rome. I was ecstatic because, when we arrived at Saint Peter's Basilica, I was asked to serve Mass inside one of the chapels. It was an amazing experience, and I thanked God for letting me be His servant. We also went to see Pope Francis. We were very lucky because we were standing in front by the barriers when he passed by in


his Popemobile. He stopped a few feet in front of us and gave us his blessing. It was awesome! I served as a deacon at our Lady of Perpetual Help Church for 23 years, and then I was assigned to Holy Family Parish, also in New Braunfels, on March 6, 2009. I have completed 29 years as a servant of the Lord. My wife passed away on June 21, 2009 at the age of 70.



We were married for 51 years. ***She was a very caring wife and mother, and I loved her very much.***

In addition to my life as a deacon, I was a personnel director and employee relations director for WestPoint Pepperell, Inc. and a sheriff deputy. I also served 21 years in the Army Reserves and retired with the rank of Sergeant First Class. These are just some of the many activities in my life.

Looking back, after first becoming a permanent deacon, I was filled with the Holy Spirit and I wanted to change the world.

Guess what? As it turned out, I was the one who was changed! The call to the diaconate changed my life. I gave up my old sinful ways to become a better person. I am grateful to Jesus Christ, My Savior, for calling me to be His servant. I will continue to serve Him until he calls me home. God love you! 



THE FAMILY FULLY ALIVE



WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

2015 Philadelphia

Family Life is Beautiful!

by Father Eka Yuantoro, M.S.F.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI explained God's love in his encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est* or "God is Love." Based on the history of salvation in the Bible, God reveals His love to people who believe and accept His love.¹ Two points emerge from this. The first is the relationship between our love and the Divine. The second is the purification and growth in maturity of our love for one another.

The theme for the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in September 2015 is *Love is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive!* Why do we talk about love in the modern era? Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco said that families are in crisis and living in dangerous situations. In reality, many

young couples do not get married in the Catholic Church because they are afraid to be faithful to each other.² The Culture of Death has seduced them into loving each other for pleasure only.

In the Catholic Church, marriage is a sacrament. It is holy and sacred because God is present in the marriage. Spouses are not called to success and fame; they are called to be faithful to each other. For this to happen, two things are important. First, they should build a relationship on common interests, emotional intimacy, and dialogue. The second is more important. They should make a commitment to sacrificial love.

Mary Rice Hasson, an attorney and member of the Ethics & Public Policy Center, wrote about marriage

in *Our Sunday Visitor Newsweekly* (February 8, 2015). She explained that commitment, chastity, and mercy are the building blocks for a happy marriage. Commitment is easy to say but tough to live. It requires opening our hearts to sacrificial love and forgiveness.³

Pope Saint John Paul II said that the Culture of Death⁴ has destroyed the fabric of family life. Many families face problems of drugs, addiction, suicide, crime, gangs, human sex trafficking, broken homes, bullying, and domestic violence. However, when family members leave and then try to reconcile, many times they are not accepted. A process of reconciliation is needed in the home that models the Church's Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Some people suffer from poverty, disabilities, illnesses, and loneliness. They long for family. The family is the domestic church, and it should continue the mission of Jesus to heal wounded hearts⁵, to love all members of the family.

The New Evangelization can be understood as bringing the wounded in from the battlefield of the world to encounter the Divine Physician and His healing. The Church is a place of peace, love, and care during our earthly battles. In the Church, every member yearns to feel safe, cared for, loved,

and respected. Pope Francis invites all people to come back home to the Church as a house of love and eternal truth. Similarly, Jesus invites all people who are weary and burdened to take

His yoke, because He is meek and humble of heart. **(Matthew 11:28-29)**

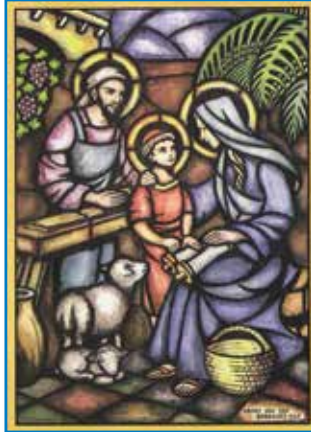
The Church is the family of families, the community of communities. We are the mystical body of Christ. Jesus is the head of the Church, and we are the body of Christ (*Lumen Gentium*, 8).

We are the people of God who believe in Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world, and we are called to proclaim the Good News to people who are living in the shadow of death. In the words of Pope Francis, we should be "*sharing the joy of the Gospel.*"

Holy Family as Model of Family Life

God loves us by giving us an opportunity to live with Him in His kingdom if we are faithful until the end. Jesus is a concrete symbol of God's love, and He is the sacrament of God's love. In the Mystery of the Incarnation, the Word of God became flesh (John 1:14), and He is still with us today (Matthew 1:23). Emmanuel!

Even though we do not have much information about the Holy Family of Nazareth from the New Testament⁶, we can learn from the personalities of



Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. For example, even though Mary was pregnant with a Child who was not biologically his, Joseph still took Mary as his wife (Matthew 1:18-25).

The Holy Family accepted the revelation of God and obeyed the Jewish laws. Mary and Joseph believed Jesus was the Son of God, even when it was difficult to understand what He said to them (Luke 2:50). Mary treasured the life of the Child Jesus in her heart (Luke 2:51). Due to her intercession, Jesus changed water into wine at the Wedding Feast of Cana (John 2:1-11). **Note that even as an adult, Jesus honored and obeyed His parents.**



As a faithful disciple, Mary stood at the foot of the Cross (John 19:25-30).

Mary is seen as queen in chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation, and Saint Paul's teaching of Jesus as the New Adam implies Mary as the New Eve (Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:36-55). Our Blessed Mother can lead us to a new and reborn faith because of her love and belief in Jesus, the Word of God.

We have many movies about the Holy Family, all trying to explain who Jesus is and the roles of Mary and Joseph. I recommend *The Passion of the Christ* by Mel Gibson and *Mary of Nazareth* by Ignatius Productions.


Marriage & Family: Mystical Body of Christ

In his *Theology of the Body*, Saint Pope John Paul II inspires us with a description of the family as the beautiful bones of the Church. Author George Weigel describes John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* as "one of the boldest reconfigurations of Catholic theology in centuries."⁷

In the document *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy and Hope) from the Second Vatican Council, God Himself is the author of marriage (GS 48, 49). In the beginning, God created Adam, then God said that it was not good for the man to be alone (Genesis 2:18). While Adam slept, God took

a rib from Adam and created Eve. God brought her to Adam who exclaimed, "This one, at last, is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." (**Genesis 2:21-25**)

Jesus explains the meaning of marriage in Matthew 19:1-12 and Mark 10:1-12. Marriage is a sacrament that has both divine and human dimensions. Through their union in one flesh (the human dimension), a husband and wife are caught up in the great mystery of God's covenant love for humanity. Saint Paul teaches that Jesus is the head of the Church and we are His body. As Christ loves His Church, so husbands should love their wives. (**Ephesians 5:21-33**)

Families can become holy temples of God, too, because God is always present and lives with them. A family will be strong if every member commits to loving each other sacrificially, as Christ loves us. With determination and the grace of God, Catholic families can shine like stars in the night and the sun during the day. Family life is beautiful. God bless your family! 

References

- 1 Pope Benedict XVI, "Deus Caritas Est," Encyclical Letter, 2006.
- 2 "Our Sunday Visitor Newsweekly," February 8, 2015, page 12.
- 3 Ibid, page 13.

- 4 Chicago Tribune, "John Paul II Condemns Culture of Death," March 31, 1995, by Paul Galloway. This term is also used by Pope John Paul II in the encyclical letter, "Evangelium Vitae."
- 5 USCCB, "Love is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive," a preparatory catechesis for the World Meeting of Families, Philadelphia, 2015, pages 89-100.
- 6 Brown, Raymond E., "An Adult Christ at Christmas," Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1987, pages 10-36.
- 7 West, Christopher, "Theology of the Body for Beginners," Ascension Press, West Chester, PA, 2008, page 1.

Around The Province...



Father Denis Velomana, M.S.F. arrived in Saint Louis, Missouri on December 8, 2014. He is a priest of the Missionaries of the Holy Family from the Madagascar Province in Africa.

He is currently learning English, and he will eventually be assigned to one of our parishes.

Father Denis was born on September 11, 1964, and he was ordained as a Priest of Jesus Christ on April 9, 2000. This is his 15th anniversary as a priest!

He will be featured in the winter issue of *The Messenger*.

Welcome, Father Denis!



THE POETRY CORNER



Jesus

by Mrs. Mary Siess

Parishioner at Saint Wenceslaus Church (Saint Louis, Missouri)

O Dear Jesus, I love you.

O Dear Jesus, love me too.

O Dear Jesus, to eternity.

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