



A letter from the pastor...

Dear Parishioners:

Our Catholic young people are leaving the Church at an alarming rate. There are a myriad of reasons why some choose to leave, many citing agnosticism. The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) reports that a very large number of millennials (Those born between the years of 1984-1997) have not had the benefit of a strong religious education whether in a Catholic school, parish religious education program, youth ministry, or college. *“Forty-two percent of millennial Catholics have never been enrolled in a Catholic school, parish-based religious education, nor in a youth or young adult ministry program. Post-Vatican II (1965) generation Catholics are almost equally likely to have never had this early formation (38 percent).”*

Catholics have been leaving the Church for two millennia, and we should not be surprised. But at the same time, we must not eagerly surrender and remain silent. St. Peter says, “...Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope. (1 Peter 3:15). Our children especially need education in the faith whether in a Catholic school, CCE program or a strong consistent home study.

Several young adults in the study commented on their conflicts between the Bible and science. When we take a bit of time and study the matter, there is not a conflict because science and faith do not look at the world with the same eyes. Science attempts to explain how the world works, not how it ought to work or even why there is a world at all. There are different kinds of truth and different sciences that work to find that truth. I encourage you to view two videos this week. The first is a TED Talk done by Alexander Tsiaras, a mathematician, who was working on a project surrounding fetal development. He found himself amazed at the wonder of two cells, the sperm and the egg, coming together into one cell and its dividing and unfolding into what is us. Just how does that one cell contain the information to grow into you or me? The video and his commentary is mesmerizing — <https://youtu.be/fKyljukBE70>

The second video is very different. Elizabeth Lev works at the Vatican Museums. She has a TED Talk you can find on YouTube, *The Untold Story of the Sistine Chapel* (https://youtu.be/r_MmQ330d_o), which explains in broad strokes, Michelangelo’s monumental accomplishment. We owe it to our children to expose them to the beauty of art and music the Catholic Church has produced.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky writes that the world will be saved by beauty and I believe there is wisdom in that sentiment. Beauty can reach beyond mere conversation and opens another vista for God to reveal himself. Natural beauty is breathtakingly eloquent in revealing the creator’s care for this world that we have received. Let us help our children see how God has created something so grand we can only look in marvel. Help them see in the lives of the saints, magnificent hearts and souls who brought comfort to the dying, the outcasts, the nobodies, and the people no one would touch.

Expose the younger generations regularly to the rich tradition of music that touches the soul. I think this part works best when it’s done when they are still young. By the time the teen years have set in many have decided they do not like anything classical. If exposed early in life, they may come back to the beauty of music. [Note: I am an eternal optimist about some things. No, I will not change about this.]

Tell children early about the wonderful Catholics you have known — parents, grandparents, a priest or nun you have known, the saints, etc. Tell them of the great deeds of heroism some priests have exhibited during war. The newest is Capt. Emil J. Kapaun, U.S. Army (Korean War). Let them know of the terrible times of anti-Catholicism in this country and how so many battled the wind of ignorance and bigotry.

Our family album for the Church is wonderful. I believe that when we open this beauty to our children they will be less likely to decide to leave. The Catholic family tree has roots that go back to Jesus the Christ and even today feeds the tree of life. We may not prevent every young adult from leaving the faith. But let us not go down without a fight because each of them is worth the battle. Eternity could be at stake in some cases and we cannot sit idly by.

People fight for what is important to them. Our faith should be at the very top of the list. Our Catholic faith is a gift from God, and every gift from God is worth fighting for.

Pace – bene,

Msgr. William L. Young, III | Pastor