

Some Advice from a Parishioner:

For the last few years I have published an anonymous letter I receive from a parishioner during Lent in 2005. Usually I toss anonymous letters right away but this one escaped that fatal ending.



Msgr. Bugarin,

I was very moved by your homily on Sunday, February 13, 2005, regarding Hell, Satan, and the response of faithful people to temptation. I am the father of an adult son and daughter, and it pains me to think of the mistakes my wife and I made in raising our children.

We thought we had a clever, well thought out solution to the dangers and evils of the world, but instead we were victims of our over estimation of our own perceived abilities and power. In so doing we neglected the saving power and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the intercessory power of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Knowing the evils and temptations of our world, my wife and I sought to shield our children through endless activity. Like many other parents, we got our son involved in hockey and our daughter in dance; our goal was to keep our children busy and thus not give them a chance to get in trouble. However, I now realize that in engaging in a futile attempt to shield our children from battle with the Devil we were instead merely failing to equip our children for their inevitable battles with Satan. We attempted a human solution to a spiritual problem, and our human limitations and inadequacies resulted in failure. We failed to fill our children with Christ, and instead left a vacuum too easily exploited by Satan.

In focusing our children on endless activity we created selfish, self-centered children. By failing to involve them in Catholic charitable works we taught them to believe they were the centers of their own universes. We replaced rosaries, adoration and bible study with ice time, games and recitals. We missed Sunday masses for tournaments and catechism for performances, and we rationalized it by asserting that it was 'for the best.' How wrong we were.

Today, both of our children have left the Church. Our daughter is living with a man and has had an abortion; our son has experimented with drugs and regards the Church with contempt and cynicism. Our first priority should have been to pass on the faith and to teach trust in the Lord; instead, we relied on our human intellect and put our faith in schemes of this world.

If I could only go back in time I'd make every Sunday mass as a family, lead my family in a weekly rosary, take my children to pray in front of an abortion clinic, lead them in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, and help them volunteer at a soup kitchen. For despite our best efforts and intentions there still were times my children were alone and lonely, tired and weak, hungry and desirous. I failed to anticipate and prepare my children for those inevitable times of temptation, and the Devil had been patiently waiting.

Father, please print my letter in the church paper. If it will serve as a warning to at least one family it may help them to avoid the pain and regret my wife and I have experienced.

An Anonymous St. Joan of Arc Parishioner.