



June 2012

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FAULTY
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Faithful Families

It is in the family that we learn what it is to love. Christ calls us not be perfectly happy, but to trust in him and be open to growth and grace.

Jun 2012



This Month...

- Su 3 **Holy Trinity:
Father, Son,
Spirit**
- Tu 5 St Boniface
- Su 10 **Corpus Christi:
Real Food, Real
Drink**
- Mo 13 St Anthony of
Padua
- Fr 15 Sacred Heart of
Jesus
- Sa 16 Immaculate
Heart of Mary
- Su 17 **Ord Time 11:
The Mustard
Seed**
- Fr 22 St Thomas More
- Su 24 **Birth of John
the Baptist**



Families can be wonderfully, and awfully, messy can't they?

By Marilyn Rodrigues

They may be the fundamental unit of society, but there's no question that families can be terribly faulty at times, even the seemingly happiest and most cohesive family.

And yet maybe that is the whole point of a Christian family. That a Christian family is not one which is faultless and whose members are perfectly happy all of the time, but one which counts upon God for help with practical needs and for grace.

My Faulty Family

The word family can conjure up different things for different people, depending on their own experience of family life. For me it brings up an idea of emotional and physical security, and unconditional love and acceptance – along with the conflicting emotions that family life has not always felt that way to me and I even struggle to create that kind of family life today.

Our families are imperfect, some more so than others, but it's encouraging to know that there is no such thing in this life as a perfectly happy family. Every family has its share of struggles or hardship or worry or pain.

For example, our eight year old sometimes behaves like a moody teenager, the almost two year old is yet to put two words together, and my husband and I can get discouraged over money or parenting issues and the lack of time and energy to do all that we need and want to do.

Ordinary Holiness

The Catholic Church holds up for our encouragement some families which have faced challenges to which many of us can relate. The 'official' saintly families were simply ordinary families. None of them looked the same as any other. None of them were perfectly happy. But deep faith in the Gospel is found in all of them. Here are just a few of them.



Just for fun!

You have to feel sorry for Joseph. Whenever anything went wrong... the car broke down, the washing machine overloaded... it was always his fault! After all, Mary was sinless and Jesus was the Son of God. That leaves poor old Joseph to take the blame!

The Martin Family

Zelie, a mother of five with her own small business making lace wrote this to her sister-in-law about her two-week old baby:

“My little one is not at all difficult during the day, but at night she often makes us pay dearly for her good day. Last night I held her until eleven thirty. I was exhausted and couldn’t do it anymore.”

She worried about her business. “It isn’t doing very well...but I think it would be foolish of me to leave it having five children to provide for.”

The couple struggled most with the death of a daughter at four years of age, and had problems with their daughter Leonie. Later they discovered that Leonie had been physically abused and emotionally manipulated by their live-in helper.



Zelie and Louis are the parents of one of the world’s most loved saints, St Therese of the Child Jesus (of Lisieux), and are now beatified themselves.

Source: A Call to a Deeper Love: The family correspondence of the parents of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus 1863-1885. By Saints Zelie & Louis Martin. St Paul’s, New York.

The Molla Family

Gianna Beretta Molla, a paediatrician, and her husband Pietro, an engineer, together had four children before Gianna died aged 39 from a secondary infection after surgery to remove a large tumour from her uterus.

Refusing to have an abortion after the tumour was discovered early in her last pregnancy, she asked her doctors, if they were forced to choose between saving either her or the baby, to save the baby.

She considered her work in medicine as her Christian mission and enjoyed a full and balanced life, skiing and theatre, fashion and concerts.

She depended on prayer and the Eucharist, and showed joy in daily life as a mother with three young children while working part time in her general practice.



Canonised in 2004, St Gianna is considered a patron saint of the unborn. The child she saved, also named Gianna, is in her 50s and believes that both her parents are saints.

Sts Monica & Augustine

In his ***Confessions***, St Augustine recalls his tumultuous relationship with his mother as a rebellious young man and the difficult marriage she endured.

He also recalls the feeling of being emotionally suffocated by his mother. He secretly took a ship away from her to Rome one night, "leaving her to her tears and her prayers."

It was through that painful separation that her prayers for her son were eventually answered. While in Rome Augustine met St Ambrose and began his slow and winding journey towards Catholicism's most famous conversion. He reconciled with his mother and she died at peace a year later.



St Augustine felt smothered by his mother's (St Monica's) religious devotion.

Saint Augustine, *Confessions*. Penguin Books, London.

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Family Prayer Bookmark

Pope John Paul II had a great love for families and composed this prayer for them. With these options for decorating a bookmark, you will have a colourful reminder to pray for your family. Click on the button to download the template.



Bedtime Blessing

Check out the CathFamily website for a beautiful blessing to give your children before they go to sleep.



FAULTY

A Faithful Marriage

Francine & Byron Pirola

Contrary to popular belief, marriage is not meant to make us happy; it's meant to make us **holy**. As a vocation, marriage is a pathway to holiness where each spouse accompanies the other through the joys and sorrows of life, helping them to grow in love and spiritual maturity.

Difficulties in marriage are inevitable. There are times in every marriage where external forces will bring stress into the relationship. These are the high 'growth' periods; though often unpleasant, they are the times when we learn more about ourselves and God's love for us.

The psychology of happiness tells us that happiness is an inside job. In other words, our level of happiness is set by our attitudes and expectations, not by external things such as the job we have, how much money we earn, whether we have the ideal spouse. When we rely on our spouse to provide our happiness, we not only burden them with an impossible task, we also deny ourselves the opportunity for spiritual growth.

Marital Holiness Quiz:

How attuned are you to the 'holiness-growing' opportunities in your marriage?

1. When I feel unhappy or frustrated in my marriage...
 - a. I tend to blame my spouse
 - b. I tend to blame myself
 - c. I offer it up to God and pray for serenity
2. When things are tough between us...
 - a. I think 'I probably married the wrong person'
 - b. I think about how inadequate I am
 - c. I think about how God might want me to respond
3. When things are great between us...
 - a. I tend to see it as my spouse finally getting it right
 - b. I tend to take credit for it myself
 - c. I praise God for the blessing of my spouse
4. When my spouse is being difficult...
 - a. I tend to see him/her as inferior to me
 - b. I think 'I don't deserve this'
 - c. I try to see my spouse through God's eyes

Your Score:

Mostly A's: you tend to project your marital challenges onto your spouse rejecting the opportunity to grow spiritually.

Mostly B's: you tend to rely on yourself to fix things, shutting out God.

Mostly C's: You are well on your way to making God your partner in marriage.



[Smartloving.org](https://www.smartloving.org)

Resources and seminars for couples to enrich and energise their relationship.

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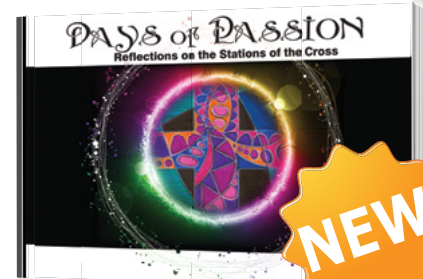
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