



A LETTER ▶ FROM RALPH MARTIN

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Dear Temples of the Holy Spirit!

That's pretty radical, isn't it? God living in us. And yet He does!

The attempts to impose an anti-Christian worldview on the world continues aggressively, and we all need to continue drawing near to the Lord and being fortified by his Word and sacraments in order to be able to resist in peace and with confidence. But this month, rather than elaborate on what we are facing in that regard—we've done a lot of that in our YouTube videos (www.youtube.com/renewalministriesrm) and in our newsletter, and I'm sure we'll return to these themes again when appropriate—I'd like to give you a brief overview of all the good the Lord continues to do through our simple efforts, made possible by your support.

As I write this, we've just finished a virtual National Theology on Tap on the theme of my new book *A Church in Crisis: Pathways Forward*, featuring myself, Helen Alvaré, Archbishop Charles Chaput, and interviewer Pete Burak. While sharing a similar core understanding of the situation within the Church today, I thought we each brought a unique insight to the discussion. id, our young adult ministry, has posted the video of this blessed evening on its YouTube Channel, www.youtube.com/user/id916.

Just before Lent, id started a five-day *Still Small Voice Challenge*, which almost two-thousand people signed up to participate in. id continues to push forward with creative ways of supporting its chapters through on-line methodology. And Be Love Revolution, our outreach to high school girls, and Zion, our outreach to high school boys, are looking for ways in which our important summer camps can still take place.

In late February, we hosted our annual Lift Jesus Higher Rally in Ann Arbor, Michigan, due to Covid travel restrictions. The event typically takes place in Toronto, Ontario. We are so grateful for assistance from our Canadian Lift Jesus Higher team, and that we could share the message from our amazing lineup of speakers with the entire world via the Internet! If you missed it, you can access the talks on our YouTube channel.

By the time you get this, we also will have concluded our Lenten Mission, which followed-up on our Advent mission that over 5,500 people registered for and which has been viewed by over 100,000 people. (You can access the Advent Mission at www.renewalministries.net/advent-mission and the Lenten Mission at www.renewalministries.net/lentmission. Both missions also can be viewed at our YouTube channel.) Speaking of our YouTube videos, some of them are now reaching more than 200,000 views and one of them is about to reach 300,000—a very unexpected and wonderful “silver lining” of our inability to travel for so many months.

I also had the privilege of giving a virtual morning of reflection to the Community of the Friars of the Renewal, the order founded by Fr. Benedict Groeschel and others, which gives such a wonderful witness to the true charism of St. Francis of Assisi.

And I have been blessed to do some live events as well, both of which were in Texas. I went down to Houston to record three talks for *That Man is You*, an amazing ministry for men that is present in more than seven-hundred parishes. And a few weeks later, I went to Austin to give three talks to over 140 priests at a conference organized by Scott Hahn and the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology.

“The world has chosen to organize itself without God, to live without God, to think about itself without God. It is in the process of making a terrible experiment with this transhumanism. Wherever God is not, hell is there. It is simply a matter of God or nothing.”

//CARDINAL
ROBERT SARAH

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➤ Ralph speaks with That Man is You (TMIY) Vice President Mark Hartfiel while recording talks for TMIY, a men's ministry that serves more than seven-hundred parishes.

➤ Ralph gave three talks to over 140 priests at a conference in Austin, Texas, organized by Scott Hahn and the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology.



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My new book has kept me very busy as well. I've given more than forty-seven interviews about it, and EWTN has asked me to do a five-part television series on the themes of the book, which I'll probably be recording this month. Also, I'm getting very encouraging reports from lots of people, including a good number of priests and bishops, about how the book is helping them get clear about what's going on in the Church and the world today, and how it is increasing their confidence and courage in navigating it. One of our generous donors even gave us funds to distribute the book to many of the world's English-speaking bishops. Just a few days ago, I got this message from an American bishop:

What an inspiring work that articulates so well much of my own thoughts and deep concerns! Your words challenge me and, in all honesty, give me a dose of courage and of hope for my own Episcopal Ministry. I am especially grateful for your gift inasmuch as I purchased a copy a few weeks ago which is now all marked up with plenty of underlining, highlighting and worn pages. Your work is truly a much-needed gift to the Church. Thank you and God bless you and your ministry!

After Bishop Thomas Olmsted, of Phoenix, Arizona, read the book, he ordered six more copies for all of his vicars and offered an endorsement:

In our turbulent times, A Church in Crisis helps us to understand the cultural and ecclesial roots of the current confusion in which the Lord has asked us to be His disciples and witnesses to His Kingdom. Having suffered from that confusion and contributed to it as well, I am grateful for the analysis and insights, as well as the pathway to renewal traced by Dr. Martin. This book can help us all to be more humble and faithful servants of the Gospel.

From another American bishop:

Over the past few weeks, I have read your recent book and deeply appreciate the depth of love you have for the Triune God and for the Church, which is the visible sacrament of salvation for all people in the world. Your passion is real and it comes from the Lord. I continue to admire and to be inspired by the way you have made your entire life and your marriage available to the Lord for mission.

From Cardinal Paul Cordes in Rome:

This is really a masterpiece of scientific thoroughness and apostolic zeal. I hope this book reaches many readers.

And, of course, the new season of *The Choices We Face* launched last month and continues to inspire many.

Also, *The Fulfillment of All Desire* continues to make its way around the world, helping many embark on a path to holiness. Previously, a Brazilian publisher translated the book into Portuguese for Brazil, and more recently, a publisher in Portugal published another edition for Portugal, since there are cultural and linguistic differences between the two countries that impact translation. (We actually have a limited number of the Brazilian editions of *The Fulfillment of All Desire* available in our online store, here: www.renewalministries.net/FADBrazil.)

Portuguese translations of
The Fulfillment of All Desire for
Portugal & Brazil



Peter Herbeck has been very busy fulfilling many requests to appear on radio programs, podcasts, and Zoom video events, keeping in touch with our country coordinators through Zoom, and giving counsel and support to leaders who appreciate having a “big brother” to stand with them. He continues to produce his daily radio program and often appears on the popular *Kresta in the Afternoon* as a featured guest. He also released a new booklet last month, *Fear God and Give Him Glory*, which can be found in the reply card to this newsletter, as well as Renewal Ministries’ online store (www.renewalministries.net/store).

Sr. Ann Shields continues to record her daily *Food for the Journey* radio programs, which remain the most visited part of our website!

And we continue to be backed by a wonderful staff, who help make all this happen.

No matter what is happening in the Church or the world, we all have our own field of responsibility and mission, indeed, to bloom where we're planted. Let us love God and the people in our life and offer our suffering in union with the suffering of Jesus for reparation for sin and the conversion of sinners.

Thank you for your prayer support and financial support, which continue to make so much possible. As you can see on the rest of this page, letters of thanksgiving continue to arrive at an amazing rate, in gratitude for all that is possible through your generosity.

In Christ,

Ralph

THE FRUIT OF YOUR SUPPORT

"Renewal Ministries' website has been of great help to me. When I feel completely hopeless, discouraged, and lost, I read your material and listen to your podcasts and videos, from which I draw strength."

"I'm learning so much from your ministry and the great talks by Ralph and Peter. I want to thank them also for outreach to priests throughout the world. We need more Spirit-filled priests to lead us. Praise God for these retreats and teachings!"

"Renewal Ministries is the voice of truth in the whirlwind of confusion. Thanks for being our steady guide."

"My wife and I listen to *Food for the Journey*. It has renewed and strengthened our faith and has been a blessing in our life and our faith journey. There are so many vicissitudes of this world that can distract us from God's love and mercy; *Food for the Journey* has helped keep our eyes on Jesus."

"No one could have said it better. Your message was so honest, respectful and clear. You gave peace to a lot of people, by supporting and encouraging all of us to continue to walk in the ways of the Lord in our faith, and to pray, read Scripture, and keep on being faithful. Great balance and peace."

"I am so happy that Renewal Ministries is providing hope for those living in these difficult times where discouragement is so prevalent. Seeing things coming apart that we have built in the past does affect how we see the future. Reminding us that our heavenly home is what we live for is very much needed at this time."

"Your book has, with the grace of God, opened my heart to see the Lord as the only one who can save my son, and that I needed to tell him so. It was tough, but it is done. I pray now that it will hit its mark. Your witness to loving and responsible evangelism helped me to do it."

"I just listened to the video *After the Election: Now What?* Thank you for your words of encouragement, because the heaviness of the state of our country and culture was weighing me down so much, I was finding it a hard cross to bear. To hear your acknowledgment of the gravity of our situation with such clarity was so helpful in this age of utter confusion and chaos. Your words of strength and encouragement could not have been more perfectly timed."

"I have been so encouraged by Ralph's talks. I felt like I got 'meat.' I felt connected with others who want to grow in their faith with this (Advent Mission) program. I'm hoping you can see some way to continue a formation program in the future like this one! I'm looking forward to Lent!"

"I participated in a nine-month weekly class by my pastor on *The Fulfillment of All Desire*. Your book is exceptional and opened my eyes. Thank you."

You're Invited to RENEWAL MINISTRIES' ANNUAL GATHERING

SEEK FIRST THE

Kingdom

APRIL 17, 2021
(VIRTUAL EVENT)

JOIN US VIA LIVESTREAM FOR:

- » inspiring talks from Ralph Martin and Peter Herbeck
- » praise and worship
- » prayer for healing
- » and more!

at our LIVE online Gathering on April 17 from **7-9:30 p.m. ET**. The theme, *Seek First the Kingdom*, is a command with a promise from the Lord. This event is aimed at helping us internalize those words of Jesus so we can be not afraid and bear fruit in today's world.

For details and registration, visit:
RenewalMinistries.net/gathering

"God bless you for your beautiful work and witnessing of Christ's love and the real truth of our faith! There are very few places where you can get the real truth, and I can always count on that with Renewal Ministries."

"Ralph and Peter are the best! My wife and I love their straightforward teaching/preaching and analysis of all the craziness going on in our society. Listening to them helps us stay grounded in Jesus Christ and open ourselves to the power of the Holy Spirit."

RAISING UP LEADERS

Equipping young adults to step into leadership, experience authentic community, and be inspired for mission

BY PETE BURAK | id DIRECTOR

id is already seeing fruit bloom from seeds we began to plant shortly before the initial Covid-19 shutdown. At that time, we had just finished piloting a twelve-week Spirit-Filled Leaders course with seventeen young adults from Ann Arbor, Michigan. Our goal for the program was to better serve our chapters by regularly raising up and equipping young adults to step into leadership, experience authentic community, and be inspired for mission. We had realized that in order to bear the fruit we have been striving for—"fruit that will last" (Jn 15:16)—we needed to go beyond content and focus more on the people delivering the Gospel message. We wanted to help young adults receive God's vision and accomplish it, by increasing the Holy Spirit's presence in their hearts and kingdom-building gifts in their lives.

Participants learned the content through a series of talks and interaction with each other, under the mentorship of the id team. They walked away eager to build discipleship communities, and we couldn't wait to share our experiences with other chapters.

As one participant explained, "I have been leading young adult ministries for years, and I have my master's degree in education leadership. I never learned the Catholic perspective of leading and connecting it to how Jesus leads. It brought a whole new perspective to leadership that I needed to hear."

When March 2020 hit, however, our plans to continue the in-person courses came to a halt. After a couple of weeks of prayer, we knew we needed to make some pivots, since the Gospel cannot and should not be constrained by a pandemic! We reworked the twelve-

week program into a six-week Spirit-Filled Leaders Intensive Course (SFLi) that utilized video talks, application activities (a "daily activation"), large group Zoom meetings to answer questions, and a designated Slack channel to foster discussion and deeper connection. Eighty young adults participated in the first SFLi, and it was obvious that the Lord was in it—so much so that we made a few tweaks and then quickly launched our second SFLi with seventy participants. The feedback from both was overwhelmingly positive:

The foundation of daily prayer, Scripture, and examination of conscience, combined with daily lessons and videos, rooted me in a routine that helped me learn to quiet my heart and listen to Him speak. Through this course, the Lord provided so much more than I ever could have imagined. He wants to do wonderful things with us, we just need to let go and take the first step.

The challenge to begin each day by calling on the Holy Spirit was a new feature to my prayer life. I had never begun my day asking Him to move in my life, unless I knew it was going to be a particularly difficult day. I've grown in the expectation that He wants to move in every part of my life, the apparently mundane and ordinary moments of life as a stay-at-home mom, and not just the moments that I find particularly difficult or "extra important."

One of our chapters in London, Ontario, Canada, utilized the SFLi to build leaders while the community remained isolated in quarantine. One of them wrote to us about how the Holy Spirit united them in new and more powerful ways even over Zoom:

Last night we had such a powerful night at our SFLi meeting. We set aside twenty minutes for praise and worship; however, the Lord kept speaking to us, so we went for double the time and then some. At the end of the meeting, people didn't want to leave. I am so blown away by how powerful our times together are even though they are virtual. So, so blessed. . . The young adults are so engaged, it's wonderful. Thank you for all the work that id does, because we are reaping the benefits of your labour.

Praise God! We are so grateful for the Holy Spirit's inspiration in leading us to jump in and try something new. More SFLi courses will be launching soon, they are open to all ages, and you can apply at www.spiritfilledleadership.com.

The world needs disciples, and disciples need Spirit-filled leaders!

For a first-person reflection on the SFLi course, check out Renewal Ministries' Missions and Conference Administrator Kathleen Kittle's article "My Biggest Take-Away," on the next page!

My Biggest Take-Away

By Kathleen Kittle // *Renewal Ministries' Missions and Conference Administrator*

My biggest take-away from the Spirit-filled Leader's Intensive (SFLi) was the realization that **I need to spend more time in silence and solitude with the Lord.** There is no other way to deepen my relationship with God and mature as a disciple and a Spirit-filled leader, other than retreating into silence and solitude. Pete Burak explained,

"The posture of a leader must be to go to God every single day to see what He has to say, knowing that He will speak to you if you ask."

This affirmed for me what the Lord had been putting on my heart and saying to me throughout the months of shutdown due to the pandemic:

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5).

During the course, Rachel Herbeck also shared this quote from Henri Nouwen,

"Solitude is the furnace of transformation and Jesus himself entered into the 'furnace' on a regular basis."

That means I also need to spend time daily in Scripture, meditating on his Word, and praying, seeking, and listening. Yes, serving, ministering, leading, planning, facilitating, and helping are all important, but they cannot replace simply *abiding* in the Lord.

The fruit of abiding in the Lord is tremendous! Growing closer to the Lord in this way has better enabled me to lead and walk with others in my ministry work and my work with Renewal Ministries, by deepening my conviction, confidence, joy, and boldness.

An additional related insight for me was the caution to not replace silence and solitude with consuming other people's content. We must be watchful of the tendency to "live off of other people's spirituality" to the point where we rob ourselves of our own relationship with God.

I also learned that an inability to quell the distractions and be silent with the Lord robs us of the opportunity to be present to ourselves and to God. My prayer is now, "Lord, show me who You are . . . and show me who I am."

id THE STILL SMALL VOICE CHALLENGE

id also recently hosted the *Still Small Voice Challenge*. The goal in this five-day challenge was to help participants enter into deeper union with God by unpacking the essential elements of life-giving prayer and the practical things necessary to live in consistent communication with God. Over two-thousand people registered, and the response was overwhelmingly positive:

“Thank you for this five-day challenge. I have been fed and nourished. Now, I am ready to get my work clothes on. Lord, I am ready to go where you want me to go. Please show me the way.”

“This challenge has truly been a gift! Some of the messages have made my heart absolutely flutter in joy of how much God loves me. I have been evangelizing (which I didn't have the courage to do before) and sending the videos to others. God has plans and paths for us that we cannot even imagine, and yet we limit Him. My Bible, journal, and time in prayer are approached with excitement now. This has felt like a lifeline back to where I am supposed to be!”

id launched another Spirit-Filled Leaders Intensive (SFLi) course after the *Still Small Voice Challenge*, with the hope that, together, they would yield even greater transformation in participants' lives. Below, we share abridged content from Day Four of the Challenge, in which Pete Burak shares a message that encapsulates the purpose of the SFLi:

HOW DOES ABIDING WITH THE LORD PREPARE US TO BEAR FRUIT FOR HIS KINGDOM?

In *The Way of the Heart*, Henri Nouwen explains that if there is an uneasiness in us, or a lack of stability, one reason is because we don't take time every day to be, to rest. We must have our work informed by rest, as opposed to having our rest informed by our work. We should launch into doing out of stillness, silence, and being.

As Nouwen states, being alone with God in contemplation is what enables us to receive his vision for who we really are. And then that vision informs what we are called to do.

Nouwen asks why a desert experience is so important, why so many great heroes of the Bible are drawn into a time of solitude and silence that precedes their mission. The classic example of this is Jesus in the desert. He is baptized, an identity is publicly bestowed upon Him, and He returns to the desert to be alone with God for forty days. Jesus probably didn't need that alone time, but He modelled for us the importance of everyone having a desert in their lives, a regular rhythm of withdrawing from the world, saying no to the noise, and entering into prayer.

We must be stripped of who we are, put down everything, and just be alone before the Lord, in order to let his vision become our vision.

Solitude is not a place where we go to work on ourselves. Solitude helps us put aside anything that is not God, and receive from Him. Solitude is a place of conversion, a place where the old self dies and the new self is born. Solitude allows the core of who we are to be formed into the image of the Son.

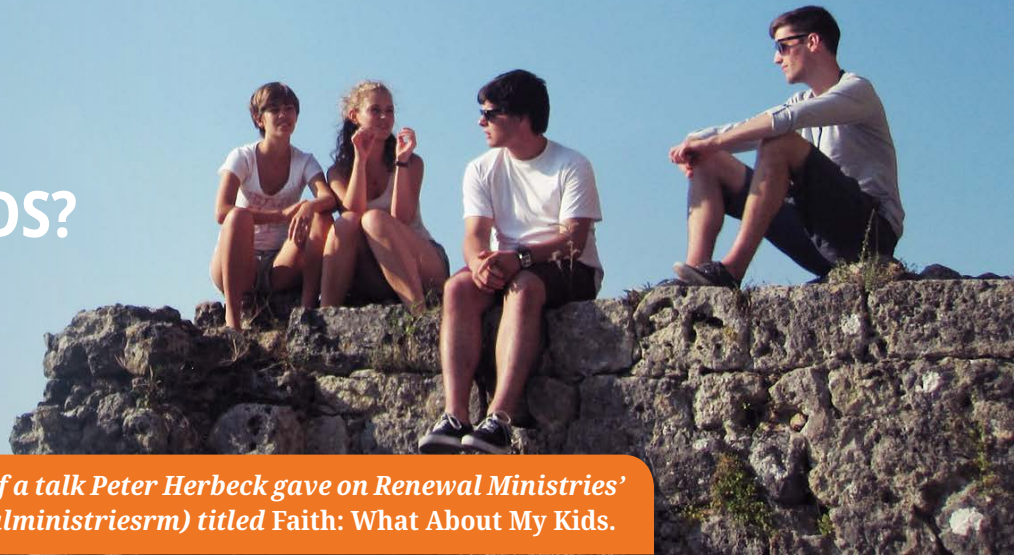
One of the key fruits of solitude is compassion. In solitude, we don't actually move away from people. We move closer to them, because of compassion.

In *The Power of Silence*, Cardinal Robert Sarah explains that the Lord does his best work in a certain silence. Cardinal Sarah writes that, in the story of Martha and Mary, Jesus is saying that the silence of sitting and listening at his feet produces the fruit that can then inform and fill our activities. Jesus isn't telling Martha not to feed people; He is speaking to her anxiety about the work. He is saying that we need to make sure we have first been silent with Him, before we go and do.

The foundation of our existence needs to be time with God, and then everything else should flow from that.

FAITH: WHAT ABOUT MY KIDS?

BY PETER HERBECK



The following article is an abridged version of a talk Peter Herbeck gave on Renewal Ministries' YouTube Channel (www.youtube.com/renewalministriesrm) titled Faith: What About My Kids.

So many parents and grandparents have shared with me their concerns regarding their children's faith, and the fact that many of them are leaving the faith. It's very troubling and difficult. I want to talk a little about why it's happening and what we can do about it.

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

First of all, we're living through an **epic spiritual conflict**. We're watching the collapse of Christian culture. When I was a kid, our whole small town pretty much shut down on Sundays, because the way of life of the people—whether Catholics, committed Christians, or not—was to respect and honor the Lord's Day. There was a lot of reinforcement to believe in the commandment and to live alongside it. There was a public cost to going against that.

There's a whole different culture arising today, one that could be described as anti-Christian, secular, and post-Christian. At its heart is a whole different worldview. Changes include different approaches to the meaning of things like marriage, the beginning of life, and what it means to be human. People are fighting for these things and aggressively challenging the Church. It's costing people—especially young people who are constantly plugged into this worldview through social media and the entertainment industry, where these values are laying hold of the current culture.

It's costing not only young people, but adults. It's costing us to stand in the faith, to be publicly associated with our faith. People get cancelled today for standing up and speaking

things the Church actually believes in. Young people feel pressure, maybe without even thinking about it, to not be identified with the Church. If we're not disciples, it's really easy to back away—and most young people today aren't disciples. By disciple, I mean someone who has really encountered Christ and made a decision deeply to follow Him, who knows who He is and has committed their lives to Him, and who has a prayer life at some level, with friends they're standing with and getting support from.

Secondly, the **scandals in the Church** over the last two decades have brought a lot of shame on the Church. In some cases, young people have left for the same reason older people have left. They're angry at the Church, and they're angry with the leadership of the Church and how they've handled it.

The third factor relates to where most Catholics are in relation to their faith. Recent studies indicate that seventy percent of Catholics no longer believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.¹ They're missing something completely central to the faith. Another recent study indicates that sixty-six percent of Catholics agreed that Jesus was the first and foremost creature, which means that He was created, unlike what we say in the Creed, which is that He was eternally begotten of the Father.²

The majority of Catholics also believe Jesus was a great teacher, but that He was not God.³ That means a large portion of the population hasn't been evangelized or properly catechized, and is not rooted in the faith intellectually and in its heart, mind, and

soul, which makes it very difficult to resist these viewpoints so contrary to the faith.

HOW TO RESPOND?

Watching our kids walk away from the faith is heartbreaking; it causes us to weep. The second Beatitude says, "Blessed are those who mourn" (Mt 5:4). That's a good thing to mourn for in a healthy way—to cry out to God, in the quiet of your heart or in your own personal prayer.

The Beatitude continues, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Mt 5:4). If you lean into the Lord, He will comfort you in the Holy Spirit, and Our Lady will comfort you as well.



» **We need to let go.** When our children are making decisions as adults, letting go is an exercise in understanding that we don't have control or power over them. Sometimes we're so afraid and anxious, we keep trying to grab on to them. A wonderful woman recently told me, "It's so hard when we get together with my kids, we just argue all the time." She's trying to convince them to stay in the boat, so to speak, of the faith. At a certain point, we have to respect their freedom, as God respects our freedom. It doesn't mean let go of any strategy to help bring them back to the faith, but intense engagements are not very productive. Acknowledge that you don't have control, and then let go of other things as well.



» **Let go of regret.** Many people are mad at themselves, because they think

they didn't properly raise their children in the faith. That may be true, but none of us are perfect. The Lord doesn't want you to stay there. The devil wants you to stay in that place of regret, to be angry and disappointed in yourself. It's the devil's strategy to cause you to lose hope and to live from that negative place. But that's a waste of time. Jesus says that seventy-times-seven times a day, you have the right to come to Him as a child of God and to give Him your sins. If you feel like you need to repent of something, repent. At some point, you might want to talk to your child about it, at a time when it's going to matter to them, when you can express the sadness in your heart, because maybe there was a significant period when you didn't lead them in the way of the Lord. Then, leave that in the Lord's hands.

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» **Let go of anger** Many people are angry at the Church, because they think Church hasn't been much help. Their kids went to Catholic schools, and they lose their faith at the university. That really happens, because there is a lot of confusion, and not disciple-making, in many Catholic institutions today. People say, "I invested so much, and it didn't help. It actually hindered." That's something to have good, righteous anger about, and talking about it to someone in the institution might help you put it behind you. But it's important not to stay in anger. Scripture says don't let the sun go down on your anger (Eph 4:26), don't let it stew in you too long. Identify it, give it to the Lord. If there are people you need to talk to, do so in a way that is helpful to you to settle that issue in your life, because if you hang on to anger, it becomes like a bitter root, and that kills the life of the Spirit in you. It kills the joy, the Spirit working in you, which is really key to being able to help your own children re-engage the faith.

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» **Shift your strategy.** Don't repeatedly express your disappointment to your children. They know what you think, so use your energy wisely. Remember, greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world (1 Jn 4:4). The Lord loves your kids more than you do. He created them for Himself, and He's going to pursue them with everything He

has. Cooperating with the Lord in his plan and purpose for them requires commitment to daily prayer. Request help and prayer from Our Lady and the saints. Each day, say, "Jesus, I trust in You. I entrust my children to You." Pray for them before the Blessed Sacrament and use your energy to be there for them in faith. Don't be only upset and anxious before the Lord; give Him your anxieties and fears. Say, "Lord, I'm coming to You full of anxiety and fear about my kids. I want to give them to You. You said, 'Have no anxiety about anything' (Phil 4:6). I want to live that way. I want to receive your grace and wisdom, and know how to relate to my children." The devil's trying to fill you with anxiety, fear, and anger. Learn how to let go of that and lean into the Lord, Our Lady, and the Holy Spirit.

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» **Pursue Jesus.** Seek his will daily. We will receive the strength we need when we keep the commandments, regularly attend Mass, receive the Sacraments, and spend time in Scripture. Jesus said we're meant to abide in Him and his love (Jn 15:4-5). His perfect love will help cast out the fear in our lives (1 Jn 4:18). Talk to Jesus heart-to-heart, every day. Say, "Lord, I love You. I trust You. Help me, Lord. I give You this child, I give You that grandchild." Trust He is there, He's totally committed to you, and He loves to talk to you. But He also loves that you listen to Him. Bring things to Him, but also make sure you have quiet, so you can listen to Him. Quiet and calm your heart so you can lay hold of his word to you. Read the Scriptures, harvest the promises of God for you, like "I'm with you always to the end of the age" (Mt 28:20). He said, "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Cor 12:9). Ask the Lord to help you find that sufficient grace for the particular challenges within your family.

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» **Talk to Jesus each day.** Cling to his promises: learn them, internalize them, live from them, and then obey Him. Do what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. Our Lady said, "Do whatever He tells you" (Jn 2:5)—but if you're not listening to Him and quietly leaning into Him, you're not going to be able to hear what He's telling you to do, especially regarding how He wants you to engage the mission. He wants you to seek Him

first, because you're called, you're a disciple, and He has a mission for you, no matter what stage in life you are, no matter how limited your time and resources may be.

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» **Give your worries to the Lord.** He wants to make an exchange. Give your worries to Him each day, and then take up the things He wants you to accomplish with the time, talent, and treasure He's given you. Be about the great adventure and mission the Lord has given to you, and don't let the anxieties, fears, and lies of the enemy grind you down so you just want to give up and give in. That's what the enemy wants you to do. Fight that. One great way to fight it is through God's Word.

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» **Listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit will help you know how and when to best communicate with your children, or to do the things on a daily basis that will help them. Listen to his voice. He'll give you little inklings. Let me share story: I wasn't sure where one of my boys was with the faith, and he was about to go back to college. He wasn't interested in having conversations with me. I had been listening to a priest's talks on CD, and I thought my son would like him, so I suggested he check them out on his drive home. My son said OK and threw them in the car. He never said anything about it, but during a visit six months later, he asked if I had any more of those CDs. Of course I did! I gave him some more, and he didn't tell me that he listened to them, or that he liked them. That was the only indicator I had. However, before I first gave them to him, I had been praying in front of the Blessed Sacrament for him, and I felt the Lord say, "Think about offering him these CDs." I didn't push them on him. I just said, "Hey, I thought this guy was pretty good, do you want to give them a listen?" My son is now in a much better place, really following the Lord. I'm grateful. The Lord wants to help you too. Do those things that come from peace and what you're hearing from the Lord, and not from anxiety and from fear, because those are going to cause more friction without bearing fruit.

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» **Love them, unconditionally.** My mom did this really well. Everybody said, “I felt so safe, peaceful, and loved with grandma.” She prayed the rosary two or three times a day, and sometimes she invited the kids. Maybe they weren’t believers at the time, but they’d almost never say no to grandma, because they loved her. She never forced it on them, but she had a welcoming, loving presence. They were on her prayer list every single day, and they experienced her unconditional love. This is how the Lord wants us to move forward: give over the anxiety and fear we’re carrying, and let our love for them be poured out in positive ways. Receive them unconditionally, while always quietly praying and doing spiritual warfare, always asking the help of the Holy Spirit and the guidance and support of the angels and the saints. Don’t let the enemy take away your hope.

» **Never, never give up.** We know how great God is, how much He loves you, and how much your prayers mean to Him. Find a way to get together (even on Zoom) with people from your parish or neighborhood who are experiencing this. Encourage each other. Take up God’s Word and ask, “What’s your favorite promise from the Lord in the Bible?” Build each other up, leaning on the Word of God and his promises. Internalize them, so you can build a community of faith and encouragement.

Share your struggles and concerns about your children and grandchildren. Share some little glory stories you’re experiencing, ways the Lord is helping you move forward. Together, keep your children and grandchildren before the Lord, and don’t let the devil steal your joy or hope.

» **Turn to our Blessed Mother.** She told us three simple, but central, things:

1. **“Let it be done to me according to your word”** (Lk 1:38). Let that be your heart: Lord, I trust in You. I’m not going to let anything stop me from hearing and following You. I thank You for your call in my life, so be it done unto me according to your word.

2. **“My soul magnifies the Lord”** (Lk 1:46). Even through difficult times, Mary declared the victory and the greatness of God. That’s what should come out of our hearts, rather than discouragement or fear. Declare his greatness and his faithfulness to you throughout each day.

3. **“Do whatever He tells you”** (Jn 2:5).

Internalizing and walking in these words will strengthen and help us. Do whatever He tells you about your life. Trust in the Lord’s goodness and ultimate victory. And do whatever He tells you about how to best relate to your own children in love.

ENDNOTES

1. Gregory Smith, “Just one-third of U.S. Catholics agree with their church that Eucharist is body, blood of Christ,” Pew Research Center, August 5, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/05/transubstantiation-eucharist-u-s-catholics>.
2. “The State of Theology,” Ligonier Ministries, Accessed November 19, 2020, <https://thestateoftheology.com/data-explorer/2020/6?AGE=30&MF=14®ION=30&DENSITY=62&EDUCATION=62&INCOME=254&MARITAL=126ÐNICITY=62&RELTRAD=16&EVB=6&ATTENDANCE=254>.
3. “The State of Theology,” Ligonier Ministries.



PLEASE PRAY

- ▶ For healing of divisions within families.
- ▶ That the return of people to in-person Mass attendance would be accompanied by an increased desire for the Lord in the Eucharist and an understanding of his true presence there.
- ▶ For the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.



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