



# THE VISITATION

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## Dignity of Fatherhood

by Keith Michael Estrada

*The dignity of fatherhood is bound to the dignity of motherhood, and together find their source and worth in God's paternity and maternity (cf. Amoris Laetitia, 172).*

Let us focus, however, on what is unique to fatherhood - on what embellishes this dignified calling.

*A father's dignity and responsibility stemming from his fatherhood consists in a lifelong commitment to working with and for the mother of the couple's child(ren), being available for both mother-wife and their child(ren), complementing and aiding in the embrace, protection, nourishment, and education offered by the mother-wife;*

*always serving, never dominating - encouraging virtuous autonomy, and providing a model of unqualified love for and with his wife (cf. Amoris Laetitia, 177, 208).*

To the end of fatherhood - coupled with motherhood - is patiently raising children towards a life of otherworldliness, for life in the otherworld. The dignity of fatherhood is exemplified in the freedom of choice to patiently wait, alongside the mother who knows, educates, nourishes, and loves the child within her, and to perpetually serve - sometimes out of sight or without sensing

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## ...and female He created them

by Venus Wozniak

My dad was the first who introduced society's difficulties with womanhood. I was a budding tween, around 12 years old, and I had a certain curiosity for teen romance novels. I would spend my allowance on them and consume them in no time. At least once or twice I was confronted with the realization that upon one of my books going missing that it was my dad who was "misplacing them." "Dad, why are you hiding my romance novels?" "Venus, you are a smart girl, don't get caught up in romance, that's what society wants you to get stuck in. Society doesn't want you to use your brains. You should read

science and math." All of me was defiant. Who cares what society says, I just like romance novels. But I am smart and I will show them!

There was this strange struggle going on in me. Why isn't it okay to be romantic, feminine and smart? There is no doubt that my dad meant well. He too was a victim of what the culture tells him about overly feminine, romance hungry women.

Fast forward, 17 years later - after thirty-six plus hours of labor, our daughter was born - Gracie Day Wozniak. What an earth-shattering moment! People tell you everything will change



when your first child comes into the world. You nod in agreement not really knowing what they mean, and then you experience it. The birth experience was the most empowering moment in my life, hands-down. There was this undeniable feeling that welled up in me - I was made for this. If I can give birth, I can do anything.

These two experiences juxtaposed demonstrate wariness of what is perceived as feminine with a God-given power to bring life into the world - the very essence of woman.

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Women everywhere could tell us similar stories - stories of the indignity that plagues womanhood and stories of empowerment through womanhood and motherhood. These stories form

us. But the story that is at the core of each one of us, woman or man, is the story of how we were brought into the world; not our birth - but our creation. *God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27).*

Those of us in pro-life justice circles know this passage well because we use it frequently; it is the crux of Catholic Social Teaching. Because we were created *in the image and likeness of God* we are amazing, unique, priceless, unconditionally loved creatures. But wait, let's move to the second part of the sentence; *male and female he created them*. We tend to skip this part. If we were indeed created in the

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## *Nativity House Summer Update & Events*

### **Seeking Full-Time Intern**

Full time interns serve 40 hours a week working directly with our guest mothers, coordinating volunteer groups, working with the CSA, living and praying in intentional community. This volunteer program includes housing, meals and a monthly stipend.

Do you know anyone who would be interested?  
Help us spread the word!

### **Farm Craft Mondays**

Come and get crafty at Nativity House! Mondays, 7-9pm  
RSVP to [venus@nativity-house.org](mailto:venus@nativity-house.org)

June 13 - Soap & Rock Felting  
June 20 - Marbelizing Paper  
June 27 - Basket Weaving  
July 11 - Soap & Rock Felting  
July 18 - Marbelizing Paper  
Aug 8 - Basket Weaving  
Aug 15 - Assembly of Items, preparing to sell

### **Volunteer Days**

We will be working on various projects, trail blazing, arbor building, barn raising, and mulch spreading.

At 6pm we will clean up, grill up some good food and relax around the bonfire.

Join us Saturdays, June 25 & July 9 from 3-6 pm

### **Nativity House CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)**

Curious about farm life? Always wanted to grow your own organic food? We would love to have you join us for a day in the garden with our 8 local families.

Every Thursday 6-8pm and Saturday 9-11am all summer long.  
No need to RSVP - just come!

### **Farm To Table Celebration**

Saturday, August 20  
4pm - 10pm

Join us for a celebration of locally farmed food, live music, games, art, silent auction, a scavenger hunt for the kids.

Dinner will be served family style beginning at 5pm.  
More details to follow!

For more updates follow us on Facebook and Instagram!

## *About The Visitation*

This newspaper, *The Visitation*, is a publication on topics of social justice, spirituality and theology. It is published four times a year by the Nativity House. Submissions are accepted from readers everywhere.

To contact us, email us at:

[newspaper@nativity-house.org](mailto:newspaper@nativity-house.org)

Past issues are online at:

<http://www.nativity-house.org>

## *About Nativity House*

Nativity House serves as a shelter for first-time mothers in need of residence in the southwest Chicago suburbs. The Nativity House operates an on-site community supported farm (CSA) that provides nourishment for the Nativity House and the greater community. Overall, we envision a healing environment focused on the dignity of each person, the dignity of work and stewardship of the earth.

Nativity House is administered by a board of directors and an advisory committee of individuals with a broad range of experience. Nativity House has formed positive relationships with relevant local organizations that are extremely helpful in carrying out the mission of the house. Nativity House was recognized as a public charity in August, 2011.

To connect with us, please email Venus Wozniak at:

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We extend the sincerest thanks to all.

## Fatherhood

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appreciation, but always in love.

*The father and mother, with their child(ren), constitute the family; the communion of the family is the image of God (cf. Amoris Laetitia, 71). The practical roles played by fathers can vary by culture or the individual needs of a family.*

What is essential is that the father accompany the mother in the liturgy of selfless manual labor, of service to one another and to the wider community.

*"The very simple idea, that cannot be repeated too often, is that all the manual labor of Christian parents to support their children, even in its smallest details, is a love of Christ... their manual labor is liturgical and the glorification of God" (see Dom Rembert Sorg, OSB's Towards a Benedictine Theology of Manual Labor).*

Whatever fathers do, with and for mothers, towards raising their children - as we have said - may, in practice, vary from culture to culture, or family to family.

What fathers do, essentially, rather, what fathers are called to do in responding to the vocation and dignity of fatherhood, seems universal and simple: to hear and joyfully accept the invitation to loving service and accompaniment extending from the ministrations of the mother-spouse.

Fatherhood is a gift - and yet, so many men, and some women, reject it or run away from it.

This gift is an opportunity to be present and serve with and for the mother-wife and their child(ren).

Domination, oppression, worldliness, machismo, neglect, selfishness, infidelity, etc.: these damage the ability of a father to

love his wife and their child(ren) and threaten the communion that is the family.

The father-husband has much to learn from the mother-wife. The wife-mother has much to teach the husband-father. The patience and initiative required in this communion of spouse-parents demands perpetual renewal of the spirit of love expressed in the vows made on the wedding day, and a constant invoking of the Holy Spirit.

Let us turn to a more direct way of speaking, here, even though we remain limited to particular generalities.

Dear Fathers: Love. Whether or not you have paid employment, you're still a father. You work for your wife and your children. This can be liturgical. Joyfully accept the gift of fatherhood. Always serve and accommodate for the needs and desires of your life and children. Change diapers, feed, cook, clothe, bathe, read to, forgive, pray with, be present for and spend time with your children. Learn how to do these things. If there is time for anything, these take priority above all else. Do not neglect the chance to be present with and complement the service of your wife in her motherhood.

Let no mother come to feel as if she has been 'condemned' to motherhood while fathers go out to drink and play, or sit in front of games, televisions, or other distractions to "rest" from work. All you do in love is with and for your wife, and for your children, to the glory of God.

What good is a father who can be but isn't present, helpful, joyful, or generous? No one is asking you to be the ideal father, but work towards the ideal, the

perfect. To deny the responsibilities of fatherhood is to turn one's back on God, who can be heard in the child's cry for help, attention, nourishment, and a father. Do not make God in your child an orphan or in your wife, a widow.

Dearest Mothers: You do so much and are so patient, and yet, you are often unappreciated and without the help of your co-parent. Teach us to love as you love, teach us fathers how to manifest the maternal love you have for our children. You are not 'condemned' to motherhood, even though our foolishness, absence, or lack of attention may convey such a horrible message. Perhaps the father of your child is like me, practically useless per my ignorance and lack of initiative on such basic tasks of parenting.

Please keep forgiving and being patient with us, accompanying us, in turn, as we learn how to be better parents.

Dearest Mothers and

Children: Pray for us. Forgive us. We try to be there. We want (to want) to be the best fathers we can be. Hold us to the ideal that is expressed in the dignity of fatherhood, even if our failures as fathers would seem to distort the dignity of fatherhood. Remember that God - who the Servant of God John Paul I referred to as our father and mother - is always with you and us, and wants us to be free, in love, working to manifest his glory.

May we be aided by the Holy Family in modeling the communion of the Holy Trinity, to whom all love, honor, and glory belong forever!



*Keith is a husband and father, is unemployed, reads and writes on philosophy and theology on his blog "Proper Nomenclature" hosted by Patheos at keithmichaelestrada.com, and can be reached via keithmestrada@gmail.com.*

image of God  
born of God's breath  
vessel of divine love  
after his likeness  
dwelling of God  
capacity for the infinite  
eternally known  
chosen of God  
home of Infinite Majesty  
abiding in the Son  
called from eternity  
life in the Lord  
temple of the Holy Spirit  
branch of Christ  
receptacle of the Most High  
wellspring of living water  
heir of the Kingdom  
the glory of God  
abode of the Trinity

God sings this litany  
eternally in his Word  
This is who you are

a litany of the Person \* anonymous trappist monk

# Pope Francis' Commission on Women Deacons and the Need for Clarity

by Sarah Reznicek

In a recent meeting with the International Union of Superiors General, Pope Francis was asked if he would establish an official commission to study the question of women deacons to which he replied, *"I accept. It would be useful for the Church to clarify this question."* A flood of coverage has since inundated the media, and it can be difficult to navigate the confusing and sometimes even erroneous reports. This article is an effort to help clear the waters, which are so often muddied and murky by the media frenzy.

The first point to make very clear is that, in no way, do Pope Francis' recent comments signal a movement of the Church to ordain women priests. The Church has always taught, and Pope Francis has reiterated *"the reservation of the priesthood to males, as a sign of Christ the Spouse who gives himself in the Eucharist, is not a question open to discussion"* (Evangelii Gaudium 104).

## What is a deacon?

The question of women priesthood aside, it is also important to have a clear understanding of the diaconate and the role of the deacon in the Church. A deacon may preach and assist at Mass, perform baptisms, and preside at weddings and funerals. Unlike the priest, however, a deacon may not celebrate the Eucharist.

Previously in the practice of the Church, the role of deacon was reserved solely for men on their way to the priesthood. This is called the transitional diaconate. While men are still ordained as transitional deacons as the first step on their way to

ordination to the priesthood, the church also ordains men to the permanent diaconate. This is a practice which was restored after the Second Vatican Council, but which has its roots in the early Church (see Acts 6). Men ordained to the permanent diaconate may be married and perform the same role as transitional deacons; however, they may not progress to the order of the priesthood.

## Are there women deacons in the Bible?

Proponents of women's ordination to the diaconate argue that there is historical and even biblical evidence to support it. Indeed, in St. Paul's letter to the Romans, a woman, Phoebe, is referred to in Greek as a *diakonos* (Rom 16:1). This word translates to English as "deacon" or "deaconess." A closer examination of this word, however, reveals that it has a variety of meanings throughout Sacred Scripture, and is not limited to our modern understanding of the diaconate outlined afore. *Diakonos* can mean "servant" or "minister" in a general sense. For example, the word is used in John's Gospel in reference to the servants who filled the stone jars at the Wedding Feast at Cana (Jn 2:5). Another example is in the Gospel of Matthew: *Jesus says, "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant (diakonos)"* (Mt. 23:11). St. Jerome translates the *diakonos* into Latin referring to Phoebe as a "minister of the Church."

## The role of the deaconesses in the ancient Church

At the gathering of women religious in Rome, one sister

addressed the Pope with this question: *"What prevents the Church from including women among permanent deacons, like in the ancient Church?"* In answering her question, the Pope referenced conversations he had with a Syrian theologian who was an expert on the topic of the permanent diaconate. Pope Francis stated, *"It seems that the role of the deaconesses was to help in the baptism of women ...for the sake of decorum and to anoint the body of a woman in baptism."* (In the early church catechumens, or converts to the Catholic faith, were baptized naked fully immersed into the baptismal waters. For reasons of modesty, a female would assist in the baptism of the women catechumens).

The Pope mentioned that another role of deaconesses was to determine the authenticity of claims of domestic abuse: *"when there was a judgment on a marriage because a husband hit his wife...deaconesses were responsible for inspecting the bruises left on the woman's body from her husband's blows."* Still, the Pope recognized that the role of these early deaconesses, though referenced in the Council of Chalcedon in 451, remains somewhat obscure. *"What were these deaconesses? Were they ordained or not?"* Thus, he agreed it would be helpful to establish a commission to research these questions further.

## What is the Church's present understanding?

The Church has taught definitively and conclusively that only men may be ordained to the priesthood. On the other

hand, no definitive and conclusive statement from the Church has been made that reserves the diaconate to males, though in practice the diaconate has been reserved to men.

Some theologians argue that the order of diaconate is distinct, and a "separate vocation" from the priestly order, and therefore the Church's teaching in regards to the reservation of the priesthood to men does not apply to the diaconate. Though the matter has been debated historically, the Church's present understanding is that the diaconate belongs to the sacrament of Holy Orders. According to the Catechism, *"Catholic doctrine teaches that the degrees of priestly participation (episcopate and presbyterate) and the degree of service (diaconate) are all three conferred by a sacramental act called 'ordination,' that is, by the sacrament of Holy Orders"* (1554). Thus, women have not been ordained to the diaconate because it is understood as a degree of the sacrament of Holy Orders, and *"only a baptized man validly receives sacred ordination"* (Code of Canon Law 1024). The Church has not yet confirmed this practice as infallible teaching.

Could the Church one day revise part of its teaching and allow women to be ordained to the diaconate? This is one of the questions at the forefront of this ongoing conversation and a question that the commission would undoubtedly be tasked with clarifying.



*Sarah is an intern at the Nativity House and Director of Religious Education for St. Jude Parish in Joliet IL.*

## Examining forming conscience

by Theresa Marten

There is no denying the influence of Pope Francis in the secular and religious world. People of all backgrounds are drawn to his simplicity and merciful message.

Just as this year of mercy has brought attention to a more pastoral approach to issues plaguing the Church, the Pope's latest Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, brings attention to the role of conscience.

His consistent petition for mercy is his way of invoking a deeper forming of conscience for all believers and non-believers. A call to mercy is a call to stop complacency and examine our guilty conscience as a global community and as an individual.

Pope Francis writes, "A sincere reflection can strengthen trust in the mercy of God which is not denied anyone." What we are speaking of is a process of accompaniment and discernment which "guides the faithful to an awareness of their situation before God (*Amoris Laetitia*, 300).

No matter what we are wrestling with, who to vote for, family issues, personal tragedies or how to live out the Gospel, God is listening, and we can trust that we are not alone.

Pope Francis does insist that the Church plays a role in the formation of conscience. With pastoral accompaniment, people can be led as well as be agents in their moral decisions. Francis wisely comments, "We have been called to form consciences, not to replace them" (*Amoris Laetitia*, 37).

For me, this says that the Church is responsible for staying rooted in truth and love by walking with followers as they

look at moral, social, and spiritual implications of their actions. In this way, we can cooperate with God, and use the free will that which was given.

It is uncomfortable at times to examine our conscience, let alone actively form it. So how is it that we can form our conscience and do so "correctly"?

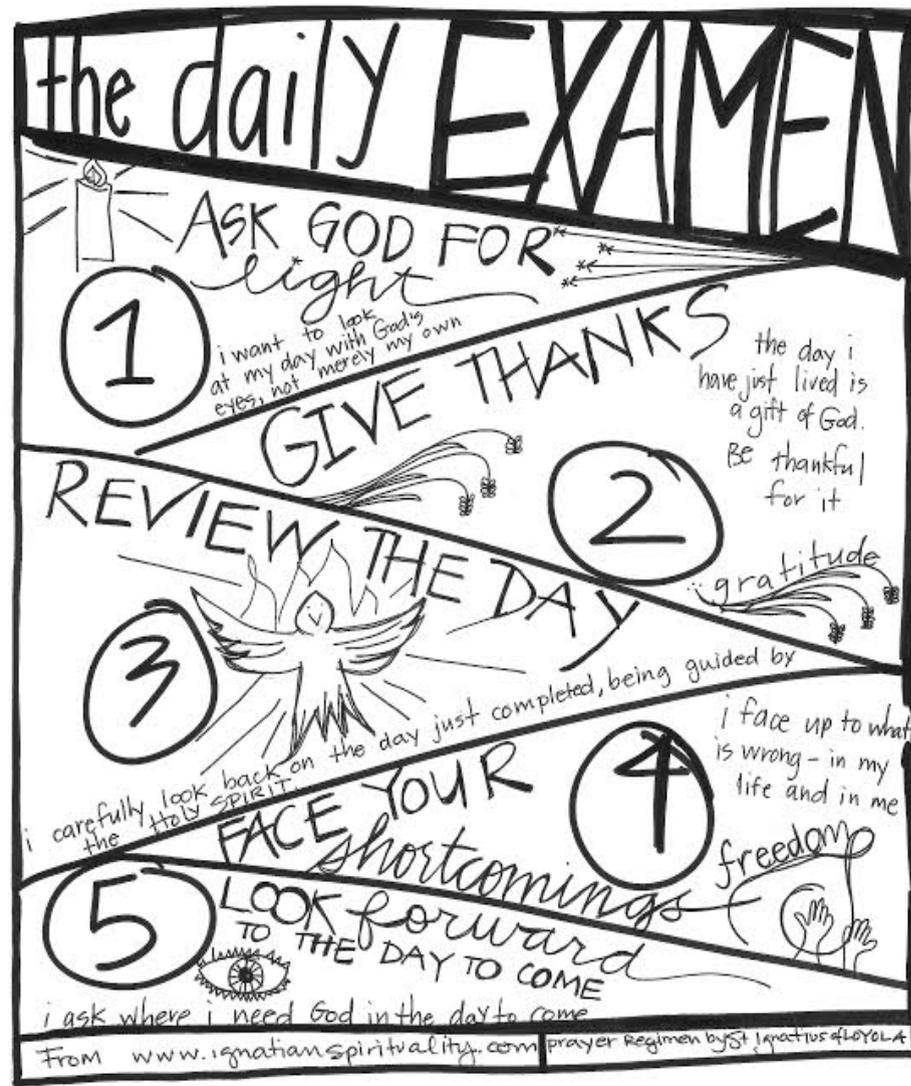
Forming conscience begins with taking time away to acknowledge its presence, and God's presence in us. God is among our very essence, our bones, our minds, and our hearts, waiting for us to tap into the mercy and grace.

Tangible ways to form conscience are through personal meditation, reconciliation, Mass, conversing with a confidante or spiritual advisor, and partaking in honest conversations about moral issues, such as a roundtable discussion at the Nativity House. In these ways, we hold each other and ourselves accountable.

By routinely facing our shortcomings we are humbled. Humility is fundamental. As we realize our limits, our humanity surfaces as well as an appreciation for the mercy of God and others have shown us. But just as God forgives and shows us mercy, we must do the same for ourselves and others.

While facing shortcomings, we also give thanks, highlight our successes and lift up our gifts. Here, we may begin to feel a greater responsibility as a moral agent.

Is this not what Pope Francis and honestly every other pope have repeatedly said in shepherding of the Church? Mercy, forgiveness, and acknowledgment of our role in the injustices that continue to perpetuate.



Just like us, our conscience is susceptible to being in error, to being ignored or misrepresented. In the same way, we are responsible for our conscience and may not use it as an excuse for unethical behavior. If we lie to ourselves or deny that what we or others have been doing is, in fact, wrong, the conscience is pushed away until something occurs that not even we can ignore.

It seems I feel my conscience the most when I have done something wrong as opposed to being correct in judgment. At times, it literally and figuratively wakes me. Conscience brings me away from my present desires to something deeper.

Recently, I have been searching and questioning a Church teaching and how to minister to people who are being affected by it. This stirring has brought me deeper in prayer, to

confiding and discussing with a teacher, and a lot of reading. But we are not expected to know all the answers. Jesus did not respond to every question we have today, but He gave us a foundation. He transformed the law in His era, and we still are growing in understanding of exactly God's intention for us in our time.

We are expected to pray, to meditate, to seek help and to most of all, to try daily. When we do, God will be present either through a small voice, a conversation with a close friend or spiritual adviser, or in God's time. In forming our conscience accountability unfolds and then we are put to the test.

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**Female He made them***...continued from page 1*

image and likeness of God, and we were created male and female, what does that say about God? God, who is beyond our understanding, has both male and female characteristics. God has feminine attributes.

As St. Clare said, "Go forth without fear, for He who created you has made you holy, has always protected you and loves you as a mother. Blessed be you, my God, for having created me."

God, the light of the world, created humans in his image to be light. New life is met with quite a force. From the start of life we are bearers of an undeniable light. God chose woman to be vessel in which this wonder takes place. Woman – that which harnesses the light and brings it into knowing. What a truly marvelous gift!

Let us revel in the words of St. John Paul II:

*The moral and spiritual strength of a woman is joined to her awareness that God entrusts the human being to her in a special way...A woman is strong because of her awareness of this entrusting, strong because of the fact that God "entrusts the human being to her," always and in every way, even in the situations of social discrimination which she may find herself. This awareness and this fundamental vocation speak to women of the dignity which they receive from God himself, and this makes them "strong" and strengthens their vocation. Thus, the "perfect woman" becomes an irreplaceable support and source of spiritual strength for other people, who perceive the great energies of her spirit (Mulieris Dignitatem, 30).*

The potential of bearing humanity equips women with

the ferocious strength of eternal love. We, as women, are called to realize this God-given strength; it is our vocation. This vocation enables women, quite differently than men, "to acknowledge the person, because they see persons with their hearts. They see in others their greatness and limitations; they try to go out and help them" (John Paul II, Letter to Women, 12).

Within our human history this is evidenced time and time again – strong women, with an intense sense of the heart of the person working to better their communities: Harriet Tubman, Dorothy Day, Mother Theresa, Rigoberta Machu, and a whole

*forms of enslavement which, rather than a show of masculine power, are craven acts of cowardice...The verbal, physical, and sexual violence that women endure in some marriages,...the reprehensible genital mutilation of women practiced in some cultures, but also of their lack of equal access to dignified work and roles of decision-making (Amoris Letitia, 54).*

Pope Francis' goes on with examples of how women are made into commodities. Striking that while most pass these injustices off as a means to exhibit power and force, Pope Francis calls these unjust systems acts of cowardice. Lack

was created female she was made in the image and likeness of God? What if she understood that God loves like a father and a mother? What if she understood that in her lies the potential to harness the power of life and eternal love?

Through my womanhood, the gifts entrusted to me through my Baptism and Confirmation, the gifts that are nourished through the Eucharist, I am able to prepare my daughter. I want her to know now that she has been created with special intent – womanhood. Through this womanhood – whether she is called to motherhood or not – she is called to harness the power of eternal love and forever use it for good.

Over sixty years ago, Blessed Paul VI implored:

*The hour is coming, in fact has come, when the vocation of woman is being achieved in its fullness, the hour in which woman acquires in the world an influence, an effect and a power never hitherto achieved. That is why, at this moment when the human race is undergoing so deep a transformation, women impregnated with the spirit of the Gospel can do so much to aid mankind in not falling (The Council's Message to Women, December 1965).*

I implore you now! Parents, we need you! Prepare your daughters. Help them to understand their dignity before they encounter the fear and cowardice of society. Women everywhere, our world needs you. You are especially endowed with the power to harness eternal love and use it for the good of our whole world.



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*"Through this womanhood  
– whether she is called to motherhood or not –  
she is called to harness the power of eternal love  
and forever use it for good."*

host of women saints.

All of this begs the question, why? Why then are women the weaker sex? Why is it a man's world? Why are women continually discriminated against? Why are women hypersexualized, reducing them to mere objects? Why must women fight for rights, over and over again? And when they do achieve equality it seems that they must work all the harder to maintain it. Why are women not valued for the tremendous, marvelous reflections of God that they are?

Pope Francis, in his latest encyclical mentions just a few of the ways that women in current times deal with unjust systems:

*I think particularly of the shameful ill-treatment to which women are sometimes subjected, domestic violence and various*

of bravery. Fear. Fear of what? Fear of the ferocious strength of eternal love.

I have witnessed women afraid of the life they have harnessed. It is the work we do here at Nativity House. Women come to us afraid and alone – completely unaware of the light of life that God has entrusted to them. But the transformation is already taking place and these women, many times, are not even aware of it. Upon giving birth, the ferocious love takes hold and they become the strong mothers that they were created to be.

Why must we wait for the experience of motherhood to harness this power? What if we carried this dignity with us from an early age? What if each little girl understood that because she

**Fatima***...continued from page 7*

light, somewhat like lightening pierced the air. Fearful, they saw standing above the leaves of a low bush, "a lady dressed all in white, more brilliant than the sun, shedding rays of light." The lady spoke to them and said: "Fear not! I will not harm you." "Where are you from?" the children asked. "I am from heaven" the beautiful lady replied.

"What do you want of me?" Lucia asked. "I came to ask you to come here for six consecutive months, on the thirteenth day, at this same hour. I will tell you later who I am and what I want."

On June 13, accompanied by about 50 people, the children were reciting the rosary, when again there was a bright light and our Lady appeared. "What do you want from me?" asked Lucy. "I wish you to come here the 13th of next month; and that you say the Rosary every day." On July 13 our Lady appeared and urged the praying of the rosary every day to "obtain peace in the world and the end of the war" (World War I). The children were also encouraged to pray for the conversion of sinners, and were briefly shown a frightening vision of hell. Our Lady asked that this prayer be recited at the end of each decade of the rosary: "Oh My Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Your Mercy."

In August the children were prevented by the civil authorities to go to the field. Mary appeared to them on the August 19 promising a great miracle in October, adding "many souls go the hell because there is no one who pray for them."

On September 13 about 30,000 people gathered for the apparition and our Lady appeared as the children were praying the Rosary.

70,000 people gathered (including secular press) in a torrential rain on October 13 and the Blessed Mother appeared again as the rosary was being offered. Mary said "I am the Lady of the Rosary" and asked that a chapel be built in her honor. The rain stopped suddenly and many (not all) could look at the miraculous view of the sun, looking straight at it, feeling no discomfort; many saw marvelous colors and some felt the sun seemed to appear as if it would fall from the sky.

The children saw a Lady dressed like the white of the sun with a blue cape and St. Joseph with the Child Jesus. After this they saw the Lord bless the world. Soon all became aware, despite the heavy rains earlier, their clothes were completely dry.

The events of Fatima remind us of the importance of prayer and remaining faithful to God. We feel a new fervor is needed to pray for ourselves, our loved ones and those who have no one to pray for them. And we appreciate anew the great love our Blessed Mother has for us. Our Lady of Fatima, pray for us!



*Joseph has completed graduate level classes at Catholic Theological Union in Washington D.C., lead Bible studies, and served as a team member on several retreats. He enjoys writing commentaries and articles on Catholic life, especially the Saints. A cradle Catholic, Joseph is married and a father of four. Please email him at: JoeMarten179@gmail.com*

## *Easy Essays:* **Blowing the Dynamite**

by Peter Maurin (1877-1949)



**Writing about the Catholic Church, a radical writer says:**

**"Rome will have to do more than to play a waiting game; she will have to use some of the dynamite inherent in her message."**

**To blow the dynamite of a message is the only way to make the message dynamic.**

**If the Catholic Church is not today the dominant social dynamic force, it is because Catholic scholars have failed to blow the dynamite of the Church.**

**Catholic scholars have taken the dynamite of the Church, have wrapped it up in nice phraseology, placed it in an hermetic container and sat on the lid.**

**It is about time to blow the lid off so the Catholic Church may again become the dominant social dynamic force.**



## THE VISITATION

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*In this issue:*

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- *Dignity of Fatherhood*
- *Examining forming our conscience*

## Our Lady of Fatima

by Joseph Marten

*Feast- May 13th*

Our Blessed Mother appeared to three young children in Fatima, Portugal in 1917 (not once, but six times!) Many reading a statement about heavenly visitors being seen by some of our fellow humans will continue reading, not thinking anything out of the ordinary. They have probably heard of the apparitions of Fatima, Lourdes, Guadalupe and perhaps others.

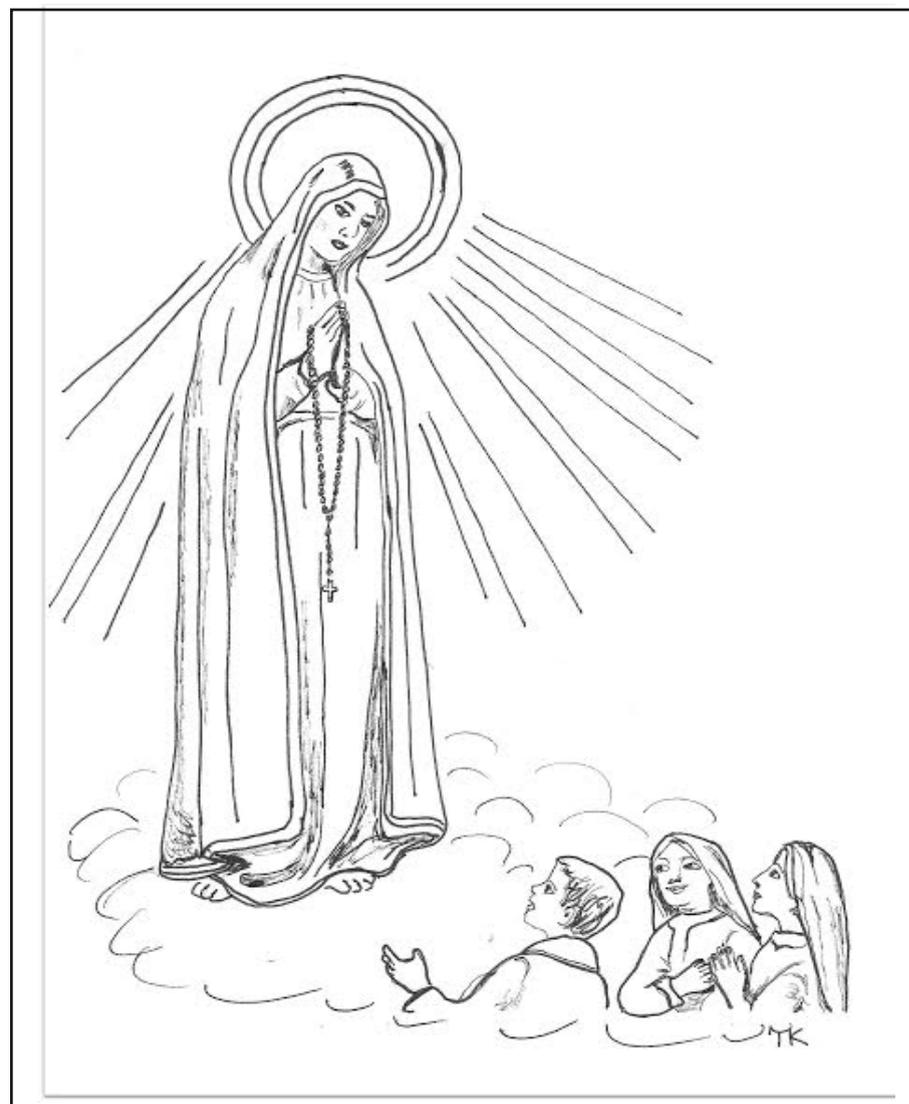
Others hearing about heavenly visitors may be somewhat skeptical. The facts surrounding the appearance of the Mother of Jesus in 1917 however are quite compelling. The statements the children made are very consistent, and upon some reflection, not too surprising - although they are somewhat challenging.

Something interesting is that the children reported seeing an angel about one year earlier, seemingly to prepare the children for the visit of our Lady.

In the spring of 1916 Lucia Dos Santos age 9, and her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto (aged 8 and 9) were tending sheep in the countryside near Fatima. It was an average

spring day when about midday the children felt a strong wind that swayed the trees and a sudden white light enveloped them. In the middle of that light, appeared a cloud in the form of a young man who said to them: "*Fear not! I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me!*" The angel knelt on the ground and bowed very low. The children imitated the angel and repeated his words three times: "*My God, I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love You. I beg pardon of You for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope, and do not love You.*" The angel urged the children to pray and departed.

A few months later during the summer, an angel appeared to the children near the well of Lucia's house. The angel again encouraged prayer and said, "*I am the Guardian Angel of Portugal.*" A third time during autumn, an angel appeared teaching the children this prayer: "*Most Holy Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - I adore you profoundly. I offer you the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles in the world, in reparation for all the outrages, sacrileges and*



*indifferences whereby he is offended. And through the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of Thee the conversion of poor sinners."*

Clearly these were mystical and profound experiences. The themes of each appearance would be seen again the

following year: adoration of God, the need for repentance and prayer and how our Lord is greatly offended by the sins and indifference of humanity.

On Sunday May 13, 1917 the children were tending their flock about a mile from their homes when suddenly a bright shaft of

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