



FROM THE DESK OF FATHER MURASSO

An Open Letter to Our Families

Although two years have passed since the world trade towers came crashing to the ground, we as a nation, and as individuals continue to feel the affects of this catastrophic event each time our personal freedom is in some way infringed upon. September 11, 2001 has left each of us feeling vulnerable and powerless to some degree. This was a devastation like no other, attacking each of us at the core of our very being and robbing us of inner peace and security. This was yet *another* attack on human life, and the dignity of the human person. However, unlike so many other assaults on the person, this attack to our human dignity and freedom came from outside of what we always presumed to be secure boundaries. Thinking that it could not possibly get worse, yet another attack on the dignity of human life occurred. This attack, as unexpected as the first also has had devastating effects not only on its victims but all others who believe in God. The horrific and despicable attack on innocent children perpetrated by a handful of priests left Catholics shocked, outraged and confused. It left priests like myself not only shocked but anguished by the base behaviors of a few priests. I was also outraged, disgusted and offended by what appeared to be a systematic cover-up by the hierarchy of the church. The scandal of September 11, and the scandal surrounding the sexually abusing priests have left a society of good people in need of healing. But unlike the former experience where the attack on human dignity came from an enemy, the sexual misconduct of a few priests comes from ordained men who by their very presence, bear witness to a loving and compassionate God. For this reason the scares that remain from the latter are far more terminal than those left from the former. The crisis that surrounds the sexually abusing priests, has in some way defiled each of us as Christians causing an estrangement at the core of our very being; at the level of *soul*. That tormenting question on the minds of so many faithful Catholics persists, as we all strive to make sense out of our religion and of our personal vocations. True healing can begin when each of us recognizes that the church and our faith in Jesus is far bigger than bishops or priests. True healing begins when we realize that our faith must continue to be rooted in Jesus and the gospel message. Only then can we stop resisting the reasons not to believe, and try desperately once again to trust, to hope, and to find meaning in the worship and celebration of our faith. *Where do we go from here?*

From here we go to Jesus. Families must cultivate the **family soul**. This means:

1. **Come back to church.** Spiritual health is indispensable for family life. Without such a spiritual dimension, the family lacks real purpose and direction and suffers from alienation and depression. Participation

in religious rituals and the adherence to traditions provide families and their members with spiritual resources especially during difficult times. Develop your family's soul by reorganizing your priorities so that God is at the center. Make room in your very busy week for one hour of worship in order to share your faith with others who believe as you do. Worship provides us with the opportunity for sharing our beliefs as well as receiving nourishment and strength from other men and women of faith. Parents participate in a multitude of activities with their children, yet participation at Mass for worship and praise does not receive as high of a priority. Nourishment from God's word, and participation around his eucharistic table helps the family realize that they are part of something bigger, which in turn gives them perspective, hope, optimism and confidence.

2. **Pray as a Family.** Start with the basics, grace before meals. This is very healing especially for younger children. It gives a sense of belonging as well as stability and security. Thanking God for our food, for our family gathering and for our life is a real source of encouragement and healing for the family soul. It also gives to our life its proper perspective. Different faiths employ different models for personal prayer, however, the reading of the New Testament, the word of God is a good place to start. Pick a passage and share its message among family members. Have each member of the family indicate what the passage means for them and how it speaks to their daily lives. Encourage your children to remember their morning and evening prayers. We don't have to be formal or even eloquent in expressing gratitude for another day to be alive and productive.

3. **Focus on Truth.** Concentrate on those aspects of wholesome family life that reinforce vitality, security, harmony, peace, trust, intimacy, growth, and respect. Families need to filter through the raw materials, the conflicting themes and experiences that daily threaten and endanger wholesome family values. **Cultivating the family soul** demands daily vigilance on the part of adults in order to assure and reassure children that their feelings of peace and security will not be compromised. We can no longer risk losing the family soul by depriving ourselves, and our children the spiritual health that results from initiating and maintaining spiritual values. If we are to heal as a nation and as a church we must begin by strengthening the family unit by cultivating its soul through prayer and lives rooted in Jesus.

Offertory Procession: If you or someone in your family would like to bring up the gifts at the Offertory, please see one of the ushers before Mass

SACRED VESSELS

We are in need of several ciboriums for storing hosts in the tabernacle, and for the distribution of communion. Parishioners who are interested in purchasing a ciborium in memory of a loved one should see Father Murasso after one of the masses or contact the parish office. The Donation for the ciboriums is \$650.00 each. This will include the engraving cost.