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WEEKLY

POST CHRISTMAS BLUES

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THE MAGI: MEN WITH A RESTLESS HEART | FATHER PETER JOHN CAMERON, O.P.

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Don't Dismiss Catholic Schools out of hand — I've seen them pass on the faith

My daughter's primary school is
brilliant at upholding a Catholic ethos

Our eldest daughter started at our parish's Catholic primary school — let us call it "St Gemma Galgani's" — in September. I can honestly say that, Catholicity-wise (and indeed, in other ways too), I've been hugely impressed.

Prayer is a significant, but wholly ordinary, part of the school day, right from the register: "Good morning, Bernard, and God bless you"; "Good morning, Mrs X, and God bless you". In fact, early into her time there, I asked our daughter if they prayed much. Not much at all, she told me — just in the mornings, at Mass, before lunch, and at home time.

Mass is a regular occurrence, either at the school itself (outside in the Marian prayer garden, if weather permits), or in the parish church. The latter option, incidentally, poses significant logistical issues in getting over 200 kids across town in a safe and timely fashion. But they do it extremely often. (The Year 6 pupils each hold hands with one of the little ones to walk over: a charming witness to the town community in itself). I've heard more sung Latin at one of these school Masses than I dare say some parishes have heard in a good forty years.

Most impressive about St Gemma Galgani's, though, is the catechesis that the children receive. Last term, for example, our

daughter came home to tell me that they'd been asked to draw a picture of God and his children. "And what did you draw?", I asked. "I drew Jesus, and some children," came the reply.

Even more strikingly, at bedtime prayers yesterday came "... and we pray that God's thorns in his head stop hurting him". No soft-peddling of the Easter story to those four and five-year-olds, evidently. And a pithy account of the christological communicatio idiomatum to make even St Melito of Sardis himself proud, to boot.

Obviously, the teaching staff — and in this case, I think the headteacher especially — play a critical role here, but they are by no means the only ones. Our daughter — a girl not wholly devoid of brook-no-opposition-determination, it must be said — has taken Lent this year with remarkable fortitude. (One not, ahem, wholly characteristic of all family members.)

Taking pity on her stoic refusals of chocolate-y desserts in favour of fruit, the kitchen staff have taken — as if they didn't have enough to already — to baking her special biscuits on such occasions.

Maybe we're lucky. Perhaps we have simply hit the Catholic identity jackpot. But I suspect that the phenomenon extends much further than our little, unglamorous corner of north Oxfordshire. So, on this last day of term, do spare a bedtime prayer for our

Catholic schools.

Dr. Stephen Bullivant is Senior Lecturer in Theology and Ethics at St Mary's University, England. A former atheist, he studied philosophy and theology at Oxford University, and converted to Catholicism while completing his doctorate on Vatican II and the salvation of unbelievers. In 2010, he was the first non-American to receive the "LaCugna Award for New Scholars" from the Catholic Theological Society of America.





Post Christmas Blues

I don't know about you, but I'm kind of tired. I am guessing that it is a result of the post-Christmas season let-down. This was the busiest Christmastide for me in a long time, but that is not a complaint; I was busy, as so many of us are at that time of year, but, for me at least, I can honestly say that

it was all good. From December 15th through New Year's Day night I had one commitment or another. Whether it was for a dinner or gathering, all of them were the result of an invitation. And while I may be tired now, and there were times that I pondered saying "no," I am glad that I offered a "yes."

The Scripture readings for this weekend are about invitation: God calling Samuel and the Lord Jesus calling his disciples. In the Gospel, the invitation is clear. The would-be disciples of Jesus asked where he was staying and he responds "come and see." We know that this statement is not nearly as simple as it seems because this invitation was about far more than seeing where the Lord was dwelling; Jesus was inviting Andrew and the other unnamed disciple to a new and different life. They would come to understand the gravity of this invitation in short time since it was Andrew who in turn brought his brother Simon to the Lord simply stating "we have found the Messiah." Samuel's calling was not as clear as it was for Andrew and the other disciples. Samuel hears a call but he simply assumes that it is from his mentor Eli. The calling persists, God does not relent, and Samuel, through Eli's help, comes to understand from whom the call is coming. While it took time for Samuel to understand that it was the Lord who was calling, nonetheless he gives the disciples perfect response: "speak, for your servant is listening."

Like Andrew and Samuel, we are all being called by the Lord, but do not think that the call is just for one moment in time. The Lord's call is continuous and unrelenting, and it demands the same response in kind. This is one of the many challenges that we face in our daily discipleship: our invitation to follow the Lord, our invitation to deeper life and love with him demands a daily response in faith and love, not one that is lukewarm and non-committal. Have you ever invited someone to your home or to an event, one that you had poured much love, energy, time, your whole self into only to get a lack luster response, or a response that is almost one of inconvenience? The life that God is inviting us to is one in which he has poured the total gift of himself into, not for his own need or gratification, but for our ultimate good. All too often our response is non-committal, cautious, half-hearted, or even an outright refusal by some.

Is answering the Lord's without challenge? No, and we see that demonstrated in the lives of Andrew and Samuel as well as in our own lives. Nevertheless, the invitation remains. What is holding us back from making a total yes to the Lord's invitation: false priorities, uncertainty, fear? Will answering the Lord's call mean that your life will not always be easy? Yes. Will answering the Lord's call mean that your life is not about you? Yes. Will answering the Lord's call involve dying to yourself? Yes. Will answering the Lord's call offer you something that the world cannot? Oh yes...eternal life with him. Let us seek the grace to make that daily "yes" to the Lord's invitation to follow him, to walk in his light, and to live in his love.

Father Christopher House is the Rector-Pastor of the Cathedral and serves in various leadership roles within the diocesan curia, specifically Chancellor and Vicar Judicial.



M A S S I N T E N T I O N S F O R T H E U P C O M I N G W E E K

Monday 15 January

7AM - John Sestak (Mary Sestak)

5:15PM - NO MASS

Tuesday 16 January

7AM - Special Intention for Poor Souls (Holy Angels Parish)

5:15PM - Regina Donelan (Lou Ann Mack)

Wednesday 17 January

7AM - Special Intention for Poor Souls (Holy Angels Parish)

5:15PM - Mamie Unser (Sam Montalbano)

Thursday 18 January

7AM - Regina Donelan (Thomas Bland)

5:15PM - Barbara McGee (Family)

Friday 19 January

7AM - Catherine Staab (Deacon Larry and Bev Smith)

5:15PM - Marie Faulkner (Linda Pierceall)

Saturday 20 January

8AM - Joseph McGrath (Barb McGrath)

4PM - Catherine Staab (4PM Cathedral Ushers)

Sunday 21 January

7AM - John Montgomery (John Busciacco)

10AM - For the People

5PM - Lawrence Bussard (Fr. Tolton KofC 16126)



A Stewardship “Epiphany” in 2018

What would you consider a *serious* commitment? We might think of a serious commitment as one that is legally binding or made in writing. Many of us might not consider our “New Year’s Resolutions” *serious commitments*. Maybe that is the reason we see many of them on our lists

year after year, or maybe that is just me... Many Parishes conduct a “stewardship” campaign, which asks parishioners to share (in writing) their time, talents, and treasures to the Parish over the course of the year. While we did not do that at the Cathedral this past fall, the Cathedral has done that in the past. I am not sure what the response was then, but I tend to take stewardship practices more seriously having written them down. In that spirit, maybe this is a good opportunity to write down how we can be a practicing steward. Let’s see what a stewardship way of life looks like in 2018. What gifts of stewardship can we give to Jesus, just as the Magi did?

The Magi did not seek out Jesus to gawk at Him, they sought to worship the newborn Lord. Part of that worship included offering gifts. I read an article from a priest years ago (I am embarrassed that I forgot his name, but his message stuck with me) that mentioned the three gifts offered to Jesus from the Magi: gold, frankincense, and myrrh and how they related to gifts of stewardship. He explained that we can find symbolic meanings of stewardship behind these gifts. For gold, we might see this in relationship to *treasure*, which seems the most obvious out of the three. Frankincense is an ingredient in the incense used at Mass, which then can represent the *time* we offer in worship and prayer with God. Finally, he went on to mention that it takes effort and knowledge to transform and create perfumes, myrrh is a fitting symbol for the gift of *talent*. All of these gifts that the Magi presented to Jesus represent gifts of time, talent, and treasure we can share with the Cathedral.

Some of you reading this might not be a parishioner of the Cathedral, which is no surprise being the spiritual home for the

Diocese. Rather you are a parishioner or not, each of us has a role to play in stewardship at the Cathedral.

- Your choice to worship with us each Sunday or as often as possible is an example of your commitment to stewardship of *time*.
- Your choice to share your talents, rather through Reading, Music, or a warm welcome to a in-pew neighbor, represents your willingness to share your *talents*.
- Your decision to place a financial gift in the basket to support the Cathedral community, or your online gift, shows care and attention to a shared responsibility of our spiritual home.

Each of us has a role to play. During 2018, you will have the opportunity to share your time, talents, and treasure and we hope you will engage with us in one or all of these stewardship practices. We are a unique place, made up of parishioners, visitors, Catholics, returning Catholics, lapsed or anonymous Catholics, and faithful from all denominations. To provide nourishing Liturgies and sacraments, dynamic faith formation resources, and engaging and welcoming ministries, we need your help. As you reflect on your New Year’s Resolutions for 2018, consider a resolution to be a steward. Like the Magi, take a journey to a deeper relationship with Jesus by practicing a stewardship way of life in 2018.

Katie Price is the Coordinator for Discipleship and Stewardship at the Cathedral. She comes with an extensive background in this field after helping dioceses and parishes across the nation meet their goal of making discipleship a priority in their parishes. If you would like to learn more about the work she is doing, email her at kprice@cathedral.dio.org.



WEEKLY COLLECTION INFORMATION JANUARY 6th and 7th

Envelopes - \$ 5,666.45	Loose - \$ 4,161.69
Maintenance - \$ 894.00	TOTAL: \$ 10,722.14
December EFT: \$ 16,718.00	



“The family is an intermediate institution between individuals and society, and nothing can completely take its place The family is a necessary good for peoples, an indispensable foundation for society, and a great and lifelong treasure for couples.

It is a unique good for children, who are meant to be the fruit of the love, of the total and generous self-giving of their parents.... The family is also a school that enables men and women to grow to the full measure of their humanity.... O God, who in the Holy Family left us a perfect model of family life lived in faith and obedience to your will, help us to be examples of faith and love for your commandments.”

- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI



Giving God Our Full and Undivided Attention

We've all been in the middle of a conversation, telling a story, asking for advice, or sharing how we're doing when we notice the person across from us isn't paying attention. Maybe they're eyeing some odd character who just walked through the door behind us, or they're glancing at their phone in response to a

text alert, or they're simply exhibiting that glazed-over look accompanied with an agreeable, I'm-not-listening-but-am-pretending-to head nod. I'm guilty of this, as I imagine we all are. In many cases, it's not because we don't care, are bored, or necessarily have something better to do. Instead, it often has to do with the understandable reality that it's hard, even at times exceedingly difficult, to give our full attention to something or someone for an extended period of time. And although I think the way we consume information these days, in short, easily-digestible snippets of content at an unending rate, definitely doesn't make things easier in this department, we can't blame it only on technology (yes, we've all heard a thousand times that the digital age is shortening our attention spans).

The reason it's hard to pay attention—to give ourselves fully to the moment before us no matter what we're doing—is because it often requires us to turn away from what we're naturally conditioned to do. It's hard to keep our thoughts reigned in; it requires an act of the will and a firm commitment to staying focused. And with a weakened ability to focus—to be fully attentive to what's in front of us—we hinder our relationships with others, the fruitfulness of our prayer, and even our union with God and the knowledge of his will.

It's well known that the ability to pay attention—or to live in the moment—can increase happiness. An article from the Harvard Gazette, "Wandering Mind Not a Happy Mind," claims that "people spend 46.9 percent of their waking hours thinking about something other than what they're doing, and this mind-wandering typically makes them unhappy." The article examines the research conducted by Harvard psychologists Matthew A. Killingsworth and Daniel T. Gilbert, which according to them, provides some illuminating insights on the peril of roaming thoughts. 'Mind-wandering is an excellent predictor of people's happiness,' Killingsworth says. 'In fact, how often our minds leave the present and where they tend to go is a better predictor of our happiness than the activities in which we are engaged.'

This has been well documented by other studies as well, which is why fashionable terms and phrases like "living in the moment" and "mindfulness" have come to the cultural fore. Yet, aside from the psychological and emotional benefits of living in the present, of paying attention, what are its consequences for the spiritual life?

Simone Weil, the brilliant French philosopher and Christian mystic, wrote an essay with the lengthy title, *Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God*. The essay expounds on the hidden spiritual benefits of focused study

in academics. While the essay was specifically intended for students and their commitment to study, the crux of it can be applied to any type of work or activity with which we are called to give our full, undivided attention. In the essay, Weil explains that the attention students give toward unveiling some aspect of academic truth—whether it's solving a math problem or grasping a theoretical proof—strengthens their ability to commune with God in prayer. "If we concentrate our attention on trying to solve a problem of geometry, and if at the end of an hour we are no nearer to doing so than at the beginning, we have nevertheless been making progress each minute of that hour in another more mysterious dimension. Without our knowing or feeling it, this apparently barren effort has brought more light into the soul."

And so, whether we are solving a math problem, crafting an email to a coworker, listening intently to a friend, or cleaning a bathroom, by giving whatever the activity is our full attention—and therefore living within that moment—we widen our capacity to hear God's voice in prayer. "It is the orientation of all the attention of which the soul is capable towards God. The quality of attention counts for much in the quality of the prayer. Warmth of heart cannot make up for it." — Simone Weil, *Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God*

Of course, all is grace, and our prayer is always first a response to God's grace. God is ultimately the one who allows us to commune with him, for as we know, we do not know how to pray as we ought. Yet, we are still called to respond to his outpouring of grace—to his request to be in relationship with him. And we respond by offering the full use of our natural faculties to God and trusting in him to make up in us what we are lacking. If we don't give God our full attention in our prayer, or in anything else we do which can be offered up to God, we're only responding half-heartedly to his grace. We are still human though, and we'll get distracted, find ourselves wandering in thought, and forget that we were smack dab in the middle of a Hail Mary. But, we try as best we can, and that's all that God asks of us. The more we practice focusing our attention on the ordinary tasks that make up our day, the more we'll be able to keep our attention fixed on the extraordinary task of listening to God in prayer. "The most potent and acceptable prayer is the prayer that leaves the best effects. I don't mean it must immediately fill the soul with desire . . . The best effects [are] those that are followed up by actions—when the soul not only desires the honor of God, but really strives for it." — St. Teresa of Avila

Herein is the beauty of the Christian life, and the implication of the command to "pray always"—everything we do can be offered up to God. And so the more attention and effort we give to anything we offer up to God, naturally, the more beautiful it is to him. This is why he asks for us to do one thing at a time, to live in the moment that he has gifted us with. "Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil."

Our imaginations are great gifts, and the ability to re-live the past and fashion the future in our minds can be used to do great things. Yet, it can also keep us blind to the presence of God if we're not careful. God does not reign in an anxiety-haunted vision of a hypothetical future, nor is he lurking in a past landscape saturated with regret. God is present to us in the present—in this exact instance of our existence.

Continued on Page 6...

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As with everything in life, we only have to look to the source of all wisdom, truth and goodness: Jesus. Jesus was present in all that he did. Can you imagine Jesus sitting down with you at a meal and constantly looking out the window or asking you to repeat what you said, distracted and distant, as if wishing he was somewhere else? Or Jesus crafting a shoddy table, being only semi-competent in his woodworking? No. When he bent down to heal someone he looked into their eyes and spoke comfort to their heart. When he went away to be alone with God, he listened fully to his Father's guiding voice. And on the eve of his Passion, knowing full well that he would be tortured and killed the next day, he remained perfectly present to his disciples, to his friends. He ate with them. He prayed with them. He washed their feet in a spirit of humility and love. Jesus lived presently and gave all of his attention to the work of love before him.

May we commit ourselves to loving God and others with our full attention—trusting that he'll make up for whatever we're lacking with his generous grace and love. "Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you." — St. Augustine

Chris Hazell is the founder of The Call Collective, a blog exploring the intersection between faith, culture and creativity. He holds bachelors' degrees in English and Economics from UCLA and currently works as a Lead Content Strategist for Point Loma Nazarene University. With a passion for sports, good food and drink, deep conversations with friends, funny stories, writing and seeking to know and love Christ, he attributes all of the blessings in his life—health, family and friends—to nothing but God's overabundant grace.

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How to get Kids to Obey

Why is it so hard for so many parents and teachers to get kids to do as they are told?

When was the last time you heard a child referred to as obedient? It's probably been a while. That's too bad, because the best research tells us that obedient children are happy children. And, from my experience as a family psychologist,

the parents of obedient children are happy parents. Since all parents want their children to be happy, the question becomes: How does one get a child to obey? Is there some trick to it?

Well, there are certainly a lot of parents who think so. They believe that proper discipline is a matter of using the right methods, techniques, and strategies — what I call "consequence delivery systems." Parents have been using these behavior modification-based methods since they became popular in the 1960s — seemingly to no avail. Would anyone argue that today's kids are more obedient than kids were several generations ago? I don't think so. The reason these methods and techniques don't work is that proper discipline is not a matter of proper methods. It's a matter of a proper attitude on the part of the parent.

Let me illustrate the point. Let's say that for a week I observe the classroom of a grade school teacher who has the reputation of being the best disciplinarian in her district. She consistently has fewer behavior problems than any of her colleagues. What is she doing? She's making her expectations perfectly clear. Which means, first, she communicates in simple, declarative sentences. She doesn't use fifty words when she could use ten. The more words you use to communicate your expectations, the less confident you sound.

Second, she prefaces her instructions to her students with authoritative phrases like, "I want you to..." and "It's time for you to..." She says, "It's time for you to take out your math books and turn to page 25," as opposed to, "Let's take out our math books and turn to page 25, okay?" Third, this teacher does not explain the motives behind her instructions to her students. Why? Because she knows that explanations invite arguments.

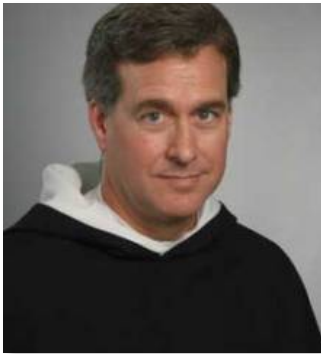
Whenever parents tell me they're dealing with an argumentative child I know that these well-intentioned people are explaining themselves. They tell their child why they want him to pick up his toys, for example. And he argues, because you can always pick apart an explanation. If you don't explain yourself when you give an instruction to a child, then the child, being a child, is almost surely going to ask for one. He's going to ask, "why?" or "why not?" At which point — get ready for a big surprise — your answer should be: "Because I said so."

These very useful four words — and no, they will not cause psychological damage to your kids; quite the contrary — are a simple, but powerful, affirmation of the legitimacy of your authority. Say it calmly. Don't scream it. Nothing good is ever accomplished by a person who screams.

Last, but certainly not least, when giving instructions to a child, do not — let me repeat: do not — bend down to the child's level. Getting a child to do what he or she is told is a matter of looking and acting and talking like you have complete confidence in your authority. Bending down to a child's level does not look authoritative. It looks, in fact, like you're one movement away from being down on your knees in front of a king.

I know — you've read somewhere that you should get down to a child's level when you talk to him. Well, all I can tell you is that there's a lot of really bad parenting advice out there. And that's but one example. Speak to children from an upright position. That causes them to look up to you. And that is a good thing — for them and for you both

John Rosemond is the nation's leading parenting expert and provides common-sense advice for raising your children. John is a nationally syndicated columnist, author and public speaker. He is the author of The Well Behaved Child and The Disease of Americas Children. Reprinted with Permission by Catholic Education Resource Center



The Magi: Men with a Restless Heart

The way the poet
T.S. Eliot imagines
them seems right to me

The Magi lived a life packed with privilege: summer palaces, lounging on terraces, silken girls, sherbet served cool and sweet. Yet, for all its delights, this for

them was not enough. In fact, each pleasure indulged only increased the unignorable gnawing within...the craving for an Infinite Something to satisfy all longing.

Pope Benedict XVI referred to the Magi as "men with a restless heart" who were "driven by a restless quest for God...filled with expectation.... They were looking for something greater.... They wanted to know how we succeed in being human." They were people "inwardly seized by God."

Maybe the Magi prayed like Saint Therese of Lisieux: "Is this pure love truly in my heart? Is my infinite longing not a dream and an illusion? Oh, if it is, then enlighten me! You know that I am seeking the truth." And God answered! He sent the star. Our own distressing restlessness is in fact a grace goading us to follow the Magi's lead. Instead of succumbing to the darkness, we are to search it. Saint Thomas Aquinas encourages us: "We must bear in mind that a fervent desire of divine love will not permit the faithful soul to rest until it finds its Beloved, because a true desire, when fulfilled, delights the soul."

The mystery of the Epiphany celebrates that moment in history when the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared (Ti 3:4), manifested in the flesh (1 Tm 3:16). Even more: this is a saving event that never ends. The Epiphany literally manifests the method by which God unceasingly breaks into our life, shaking us out of our inertia, rekindling castoff desires, and spurring us to a depth of living we thought impossible. God comes to us a surprise.

The Father does not send a teaching, a message, but his Son in the flesh. For "an idea to be suggestive," wrote the author William James, it "must come to an individual with the force of a revelation." It is the Epiphany's "force of revelation" that moves the Magi to leave behind old lives and accede to an idea that, before the appearance of the star, would come off as absurd at best: the King of our life lives now in the world and wants us to be close to him. "For man to be able to enter into real intimacy with him," teaches the Catechism, "God willed both to reveal himself to man and to give him the grace of being able to welcome this revelation in faith" (CCC 35). Epiphany is the offer of that grace.

Gaudium et Spes famously states that Christ incarnate "fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear" (22). This extends even to the murky and repulsive realm of our sin. Saint Romanos the Melodist envisions God coming toward Adam, who wallows in the self-induced darkness caused by his fall. God calls "to the disobedient once again with his holy voice:"

"Adam, where are you? From now on, do not hide from me; I want to see you.

Though you are naked, though you are poor, do not be ashamed, for I have become like you. Though you desired it you did not become a god, but now, by my own will, I have become flesh.

Draw near me then and recognize me, that you may say,

"You have come, you have appeared, the unapproachable Light."

By the light of the Epiphany star we can see God seeing us...and not condemning us. By the light of the Epiphany star we can recognize the presence of the One who himself draws near to fulfill every desire.

From the manger ascends the Savior's silent plea, Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest (Mt 11:28).

"No one has ever created a masterpiece by gazing upon himself. Every masterpiece is born while gazing upon an other" (M. Zundel). So the Magi go to gaze upon the divine Boy, and by so doing are changed. We worship with their wisdom. The Magi "stand before the In-

carnate Truth, bow down and worship it, and place their crowns at its feet, because all the treasures of the world are but a little dust compared to it" (Saint Teresa Benedicta/Edith Stein).

As the Magi return home by a different way, what marvel that they have themselves become blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine like lights in the world (Phil 2:15).

Father Peter John Cameron, O.P. is Editor-in-Chief of Magnificat. He is also a playwright and director, the author of more than a dozen plays and many books
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