

Are You Talking to Me?

VOCATIONS

The sacrifices that parents today have to make for their children are immense. Families today are faced with many challenges that continue to place strain on their relationships. Economic stress causing most households to be double-income is leading to less quality family time. Additionally, societal problems such as drugs, violence, and sexual addictions are attacking the youth of our culture like never before. With such an environment surrounding them, it's no wonder that most parents want to just insulate their children and place them in a bubble until they're thirty, have successful jobs and are ready to have a family of their own.

But the Gospel impels us as a people of faith not to be reactive, but pro-active when it comes to living our lives. This becomes extremely important in the way that parents speak to (and hopefully pray with) their children about what they are going to do with their lives. The first duty of Christian parents is to help their son or daughter reach heaven....to be a saint!

In our society, it seems as though we have created for ourselves a new idol that families and young people often sacrifice too; the scholar athlete. Parents often rearrange schedules, miss family parties, and even skip Sunday mass to make out of town tournaments, select league games, various recitals, and the occasional academic event, all in an effort to have their child "get ahead" and "have every opportunity". Parents begin crafting their own vision for what their child's life ought to be. And while all these things are good in their own way, they are not the ultimate good. The truth is that the Lord has a plan for every child as well, and when His plan and the parent's plans collide, it is often the heart of the child that suffers.

When a young man or woman feels a potential call to a vocation to priesthood or religious life, consistently one of the top fears that they have is a lack of parental support. Every young man and woman wants to honor their parents and have them be proud of the life that they are living. And if mom and dad are not supportive of a religious vocation because they have sacrificed to have a doctor, or lawyer or professional soccer player in the family, tension arises, relationships become strained, and vocations can be lost.

What is most important is that parents pray to have a consistent generosity of heart when it comes to their children. Parents are stewards, not owners, of their children's lives. God wants Parents to have ongoing and prayerful conversations with their sons and daughters about where they feel God leading them, what His plans might be. As Pope Benedict XVI explains in *Caritas in veritate*, "A vocation is a call that requires a free and responsible answer" (CV, 17). Parents might be called to let go of a particular vision that they had for their child, but if it is replaced by God's vision, then they will see their son or daughter come truly alive, their gifts will flourish, and they will marvel at the saint developing before their eyes.

Q.Am I open to doing God's will?

Q.Am I open to supporting those I love as they try to follow God's will?

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