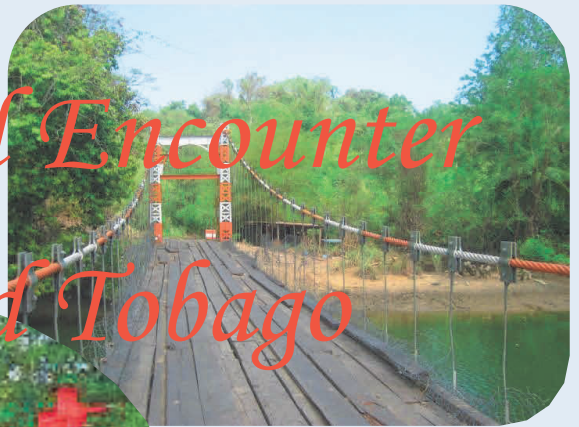
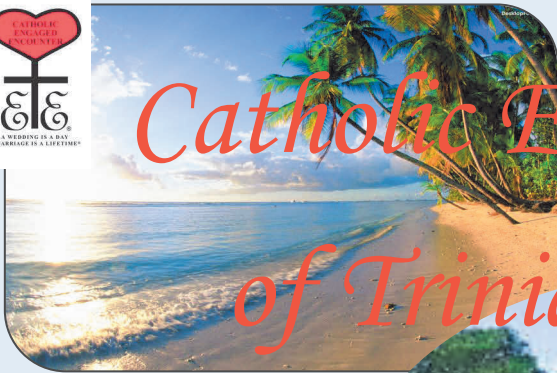




Catholic Engaged Encounter of Trinidad and Tobago



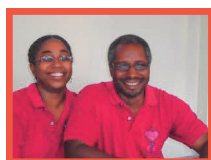
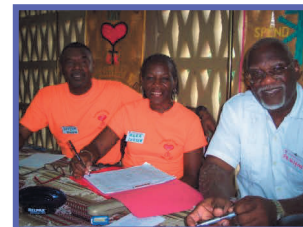
July to September 2013

Fellow parents, this is an opportune time to spend quality time with your family. Our six children, now grown men and women, reminisce about their family outings each time they view family photos. One can sense the excitement in their voices as they relate stories about Store Bay, in Tobago, one of their favourite spots. Now that they have their own families, they do the same as was done for them.

Your children will treasure the vacation time spent as a family. Do not deny them a golden opportunity to bond and wallow in each other's company.

Enjoy your vacation and may God Bless you and your family.

Lester and Aura Victor and Fr. Wilfred John
Caribbean Coordinators of Catholic Engaged Encounter



Greetings friends,

In this issue of our magazine, we ask that we examine our unavoidable Christian call of service to God, our spouses/families and to our communities.

Also, at this time, many of us are taking some sort of vacation or time off from our regular activities, so we look the importance of vacations and family time/life (hence our cover !). We wish you all an enjoyable, safe and renewing experience!

God Bless, Anthony and Angela Mitchell, Coordinators CEE , Trinidad and Tobago

Brothers and sisters,



If we call ourselves Christians, we are called to serve in one way or another. Service is about seeking the well being of the other, and is the very basis of marriage and family life. Our service should always be done in a spirit of love , humility and joy, regardless of whether we are acknowledged or not. Let us rededicate ourselves to serve as Jesus did, asking the Holy Spirit to enable and guide us. God Bless you all.

Fr. Derek Anton, Spiritual Director CEETT



Couples at the Recall session (47 couples in all) held on Sunday 23rd June, 2013 at the Regional Seminary

Theme: Two by Two, sharing your sacramental love with others

The “Spiritual Fruitfulness” of the Family

God’s own word tells us that “God is love” (1 Jn 8) and our own experience confirms this. Jesus, the Son of God, tells us that he “came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mt 20:28)

The Son of God comes in loving service and he asks us to follow his example. The night before he goes to his death Jesus washes the feet of his disciples and says to them: “I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you.” (Jn 13:15) Love expresses itself in selfless, loving service to others.

Man and woman accept a life of service when they enter into marriage. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, states that the sacraments of “Holy Orders and Matrimony, are directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so. They confer a particular mission in the Church and serve to build up the People of God.” (CCC #1534)

“Service is the rent we pay for being. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time.”
~ Marian Wright Edelman ~

To begin with, the husband seeks the well-being of his wife even before that of himself, and she seeks his well-being before hers. The greatest good that anyone can desire is the good of eternal salvation. How many husbands and wives see their role as being, ultimately, in the service of ensuring that their spouses reach heaven?

Christian parents serve life through having and educating children. That education must of necessity include the Gospel message, and to get the children to know, love and serve God. Pope John Paul II has said in his Apostolic Exhortation on “The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World” (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981), that “...fruitful married love expresses itself in serving life in many ways. Of these ways, begetting and educating children are the most immediate, specific and irreplaceable.”

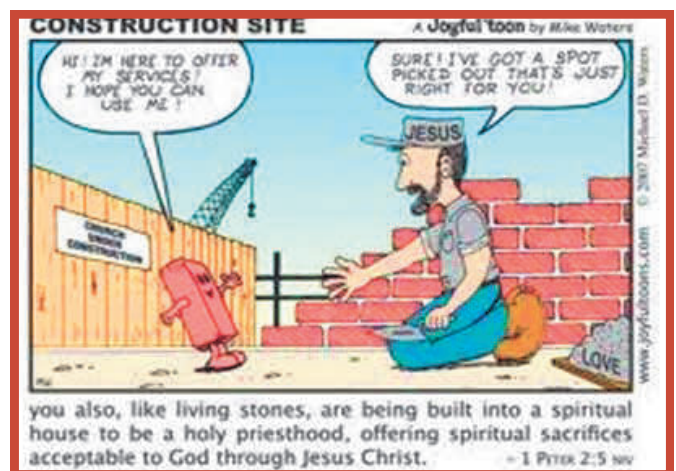
However, he does not stop there, as he continues: “In fact, every act of true love towards a human being bears witness to and perfects the spiritual fecundity (fruitfulness) of the family, since it is an act of obedience to the deep inner dynamism of love as self-giving to others.” (FC, 41. Emphasis added.)

“I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.”
Rabindranath Tagore

He speaks of service to children of other families: “Christian families...will respond generously to the children of other families, giving them support and love...” and even that they “...will be able to show greater readiness to adopt and foster children who have lost their parents or have been abandoned by them.” He also speaks of service to those in need in society, saying: “(a) vast field of activity lies open to families...” and he mentions the situation affecting “...the elderly, the sick, the disabled, drug addicts, ex-prisoners, etc.” He makes the case that “(t)his broadens enormously the horizons of the parenthood of Christian families: these and many other urgent needs of our time are a challenge to their spiritually fruitful love. With families and through them, the Lord Jesus continues to ‘have compassion’ on the multitudes.” (FC, 41. Emphasis added.)

He talks further about service to society: “The family has vital and organic links with society, since it is its foundation and nourishes it continually through its role of service to life...” and “... far from being closed in on itself, the family is by nature and vocation open to other families and to society, and undertakes its social role.” (FC, 42) (emphasis added)

At the beginning of his Exhortation, John Paul II acknowledges that the well-being of society and the good of the Church are intimately tied to the good of the family (cf. FC, 3). At the end he underscores the need to affirm family life: “Christians also have the mission of *proclaiming with joy and conviction the Good News about the family*, for the family absolutely needs to hear ever anew and to understand ever more deeply the authentic words that reveal its identity, its inner resources and the importance of its mission in the City of God and in that of man.” (FC, 86) (cont’d on page 4)



cont'd from page 3

There is great need for service in the Church in the work of assisting and supporting those who are preparing for marriage, and those who may be experiencing difficulties in marriage and family life. Who better to join in that service but those married couples who, despite their own difficulties, are experiencing the joys of marriage and family life? They should be willing to share their good news and themselves with other families.

Is it not time that we start thinking about increasing the "spiritual fruitfulness" of our marriages? And remember, as John Paul II said: *"The future of humanity passes by way of the family."* It is therefore indispensable and urgent that every person of good will should endeavor to save and foster the values and requirements of the family." (FC, 86)



Fr. Derek Anton is the parish priest of Cunapo St. Francis R.C. Church, Sangre Grande. He is the spiritual Director of Catholic Engaged Encounter of Trinidad and Tobago

"At the end of life we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made, how many great things we have done.

We will be judged by "I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless, and you took me in."

~Mother Teresa ~

Excerpt from "Accepting Our Calling"

by Pastor Felix Tingson

We are commanded to serve God-if we are disciples. Jesus says "Your attitude must be like my own, for I, the Messiah, did not come to be served, but to serve and to give my life" (Matt. 20:28). Beloved, for Christians, service is not optional, something to be tacked onto our schedules if we can spare the time. It is the heart of the Christian life. Jesus came "to serve" and "to give" - and those two verbs should define your life on earth. Mother Theresa said, "Holy living consists in doing God's work with a smile."

Serving is the opposite of our natural inclination. Most of the time we are more interested in "serve us" than service. We say, "I'm looking for a church that meets my needs and blesses me," not "I'm looking for a place to serve and be a blessing." The mature follower of Jesus stops asking, "Who is going to meet my needs?" and starts asking, "Whose needs can I meet"

God wants to use you to make a difference in His world. He wants to work through you. What matters is not the duration of your life, but the donation of it. Not how long you lived, but how you lived. If you are not involved in any service or ministry, what excuse have you been using? Dr. Thomas, our guest speaker during the Asian Conference in Hawaii said, "Abraham was old, Jacob was insecure, Leah was unattractive, Joseph was abused, Moses stuttered, Gideon was poor, Samson was co-dependent, Rahab was immoral, David had an affair and all kinds of family problems, Elijah was suicidal, Jeremiah was depressed, Jonah was reluctant, Naomi was a widow, John the Baptist was eccentric to say the least, Peter was impulsive, and hot-tempered, Martha worried a lot, the Samaritan woman had several failed marriages, Zacchaeus was unpopular, Thomas had doubts, Paul had poor health, and Timothy was timid. That is quite a variety of misfits. But God used each of them in His service. He will use you, too, if you stop making excuses."

<http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/spiritual-growth-for-kids/blessing-your-child/dont-leave-the-blessing-to-chance.aspx>



"Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

~Martin Luther King Jr.~

Become a Lake

Author Unknown

An aging master grew tired of his apprentice's complaints. One morning, he sent him to get some salt. When the apprentice returned, the master told him to mix a handful of salt in a glass of water and then drink it. "How does it taste?" the master asked.

"Bitter," said the apprentice.

The master chuckled and then asked the young man to take the same handful of salt and put it in the lake. The two walked in silence to the nearby lake and once the apprentice swirled his handful of salt in the water, the old man said, "Now drink from the lake."

As the water dripped down the young man's chin, the master asked, "How does it taste?" "Fresh," remarked the apprentice.

"Do you taste the salt?" asked the master.

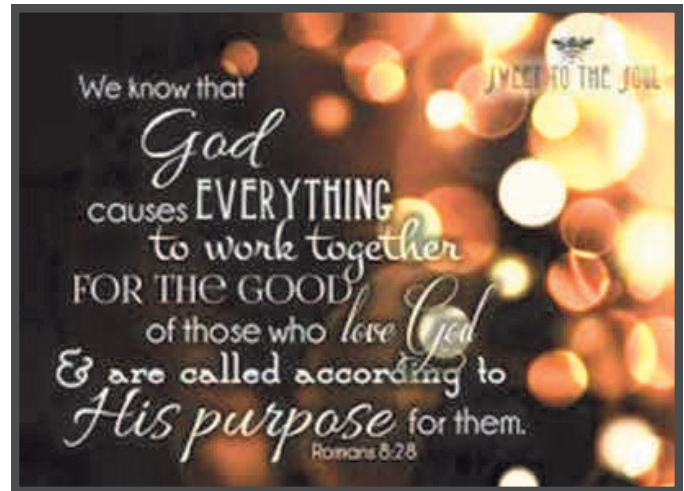
"No," said the young man. At this the master sat beside this serious young man, and explained softly,

"The pain of life is pure salt; no more, no less. The amount of pain in life remains exactly the same. However, the amount of bitterness we taste depends on the container we put the pain in. So when you are in pain, the only thing you can do is to enlarge your sense of things. Stop being a glass. Become a lake."

<http://www.verybestquotes.com/the-pain-of-life-is-pure-salt-inspirational-story/>

"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

~Albert Schweitzer~



Sweetheart, Hold My Hand

Little Boy and his mother were crossing a bridge.

The mother was kind of scared so she asked her little one,

'Sweetheart, please hold my hand so that you don't fall into the river.'

The little Boy said, 'No, Mom. You hold my hand.'

'What's the difference?' Asked the puzzled Mother..

'There's a big difference,' replied the little Boy. 'If I hold your hand and something happens to me, chances are that I may let your hand go. But if you hold my hand, I know for sure that no matter what happens, you will never let my hand go.'

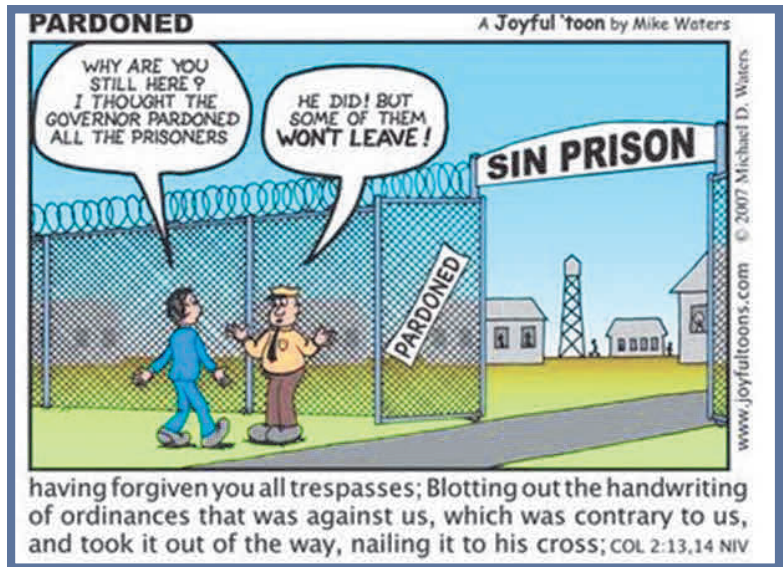
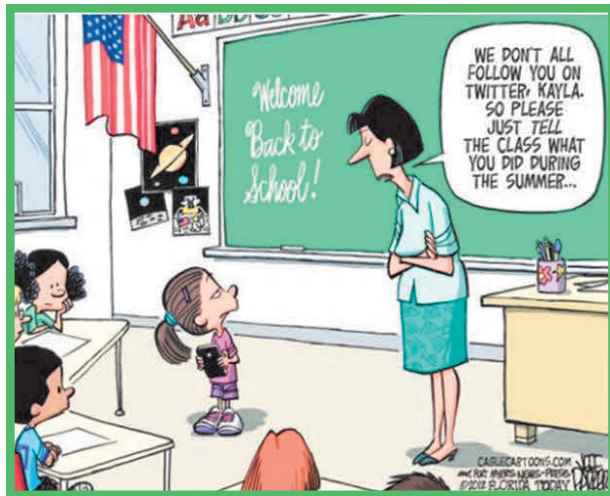
In any relationship, the essence of trust is not in its bind, but in its bond.

So hold the hand of the person who loves you rather than expecting them to hold yours...

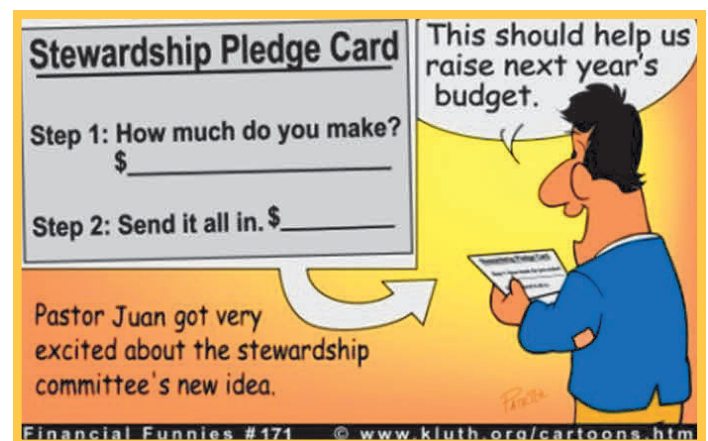
Author Unknown <http://www.verybestquotes.com/mother-son-relationship-short-story-you-hold-my-hand/>

"Helping, fixing, and serving represent three different ways of seeing life. When you help, you see life as weak. when you fix, you see life as broken. When you serve, you see life as whole. Fixing and helping may be the work of the ego, and service the work of the soul."

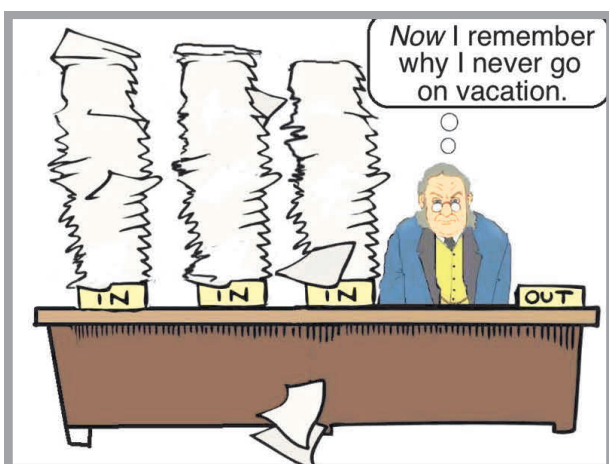
~Rachel Naomi Remen~



Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family: Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.



"The most worth-while thing is to try to put happiness into the lives of others."
~Robert Baden-Powell~



4 Reasons Family Vacations Should Be in Your Budget

Extract from Jana from Daily Money Shot

I'm a huge advocate for family vacations. I don't believe that a family vacation needs to be somewhere elegant or fancy. A simple camping/outdoor/beach trip is just fine. Because no matter where the location or the accommodations, family vacations do these:

- **They provide a chance to unwind as a family.** Let's face it. Day to day life is stressful. Between work, school, activities, doctor appointments, pets, bills and all of the other responsibilities we have, we're all overextended. That overextension can sometimes provide unwanted or unnecessary friction in a family. Taking a vacation, even if just a few days, can give everyone a chance to relax and escape from those responsibilities. In my experience, those few days of relaxation have a pretty long lasting impact.

- **They create lasting memories.** Some of my most vivid memories are the crazy things that happened to me and my family while we were on vacations. And it's fun to relive the experiences via pictures and stories. Because even 25 years down the road, some of the stories will still be funny (even the ones that weren't funny at the time).



- **They provide an opportunity to experience new things together.** Often, as adults, we gear our vacations towards our interests. We think about the places we want to go, the sights we want to see, the food we want to eat. What's nice about this is that we get to share those activities with our kids (who probably have some other agenda). On the other side of that, by planning a kid friendly vacation, we get to experience the trip from the kids' point of view and participate in activities we never thought we would. Either way, we're experiencing new things together.



- **They provide an opportunity to teach kids about saving.** Most people cannot afford to decide to go on vacation and just pay for it on the spot. Most of us need to decide where we want to go, figure out the approximate expense and start saving in advance. What better opportunity to teach our kids the importance of saving for our wants? Saving for a vacation can even turn into a family event. Explain to your kids why you need to save the money and encourage them to participate. For instance, you can have them do extra chores and offer them the choice of keeping the money or putting it into the family vacation savings account (you can also offer to split the money for each). Whatever you choose, use it as a teachable moment.

Family vacations provide so much more than what's listed above. They provide topics for family dinner conversations. They instill a sense of adventure. They provide a way to teach our kids about patience and how to read a calendar. But most importantly, the offer a way for a family to enjoy time together.

<http://www.bucksomeboomer.com/4-reasons-family-vacations-should-be-in-your-budget/>

Vacations are your best chance in the year to get in some real living, to get out of the job-as-life box, off automatic pilot, and rediscover your passions, enthusiasms, friends, family, and the vitality of partaking in the world outside career brainlock. Social scientists have found that leisure experiences increase positive mood, act as a buffer against life's setbacks, and open the door to the best times of our lives.

~John De Graaf (Take back your time)~

Memories of August Vacations

We asked our CEETT family members to tell us how they used to spend their August (Summer) school vacations as children. How things have changed, and how they have stayed the same....

Pam

All five of us children went by our Aunt in Port of Spain so Mommy and Daddy could get a break from us. When we came home in mid-August, Daddy would have purchased our books for September and we would have lessons everyday. Daddy was a teacher. When school reopened and we went to class we were already familiar with the school work.



Knolly's Tunnel, Tabaquite

We would go on outings all over Trinidad with our parents. We used to go by train to Knolly's Tunnel in Tabaquite (a heritage site), the Emperor Valley Zoo in Port of Spain and picnics in the Botanic Gardens.

The end of August was castor oil (laxative) in preparation for September.

Pat

Family and friends, we went to the beach, mostly Mayaro, Toco or Blanchisseuse. We used to dig chip chip and make chip chip accra and curry chip chip, ingesting a set of sand in the process. At the end of our vacation we would have to go to Mr. Dickson Dispensary to get castor oil.



Chip Chip

Selwyn

I used to work in my father's parlour for most of the vacation. I would go to an aunt in San Juan Hill. We would bathe with rain water in a barrel. We had to go under the pipe in the morning to take the "senna". Your head had to be "cool" while you took the medicine.

Albertina

One of the things of August vacation, the fruit trees in our neighbour's back yard were filled with fruit, green and ripe. We used to be climbing trees and eating fruit, but only the best. Having enjoyed all these fruits by the end of the vacation, mama would ensure that we got a good "clean out" before we went back to school— senna pod and Epson salt (laxative).

From the first week of vacation, my father would have purchased my school books. I spent time reading my books during vacation.



Ricardo

I was sent to my grandmother for the two months. I used to beg and cry for my mother to come for me. Ironically we ended up moving to my grandmother's house permanently. She had an outside pit toilet and I was so scared of using it that I would "not go" for days.



Galera Point, Toco

Vacations are necessities, not luxuries.

~Linda Bloom~

"True leaders understand that leadership is not about them but about those they serve. It is not about exalting themselves but about lifting others up."

~Sheri L. Dew, *Saying It Like It Is*~

Memories of August Vacations cont'd

Carl

I used to go to the country side with my family. My mother is originally from Mayaro, so we went to her beach house in Mayaro spending time with some close friends. During the full moon we used to catch crabs, using crab traps by the hole or running them down as they went to wash their eggs; got a lot of crab bites! We would climb the coconut trees and pick coconuts. After helping the fishermen pull the seine nets, and we would get a free fish from the fishermen. We dug chip chip and sea tattoo which would be cooked by my mother.



Mayaro Beach, Trinidad



Sea tattoo

Lester and Aura

For Lester, he is one of fifteen children, while for Aura, she is one of seven. Holidays were happy times for us both. Lester went fishing and rode "box carts" while Aura rode a donkey and climbed the various fruits trees on the family's cocoa estate. All these activities were experienced with siblings and cousins .



Cocoa houses for drying cocoa

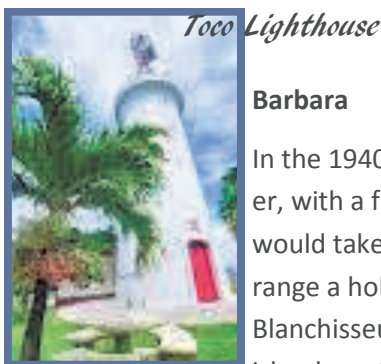


Trinidad and Tobago

Blue Crab

"Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word; always doing the smallest right and doing it all for love."

~Thérèse de Lisieux~



Toco Lighthouse

Barbara

In the 1940's we spent most of our vacation with our mother, with a few days in Barataria with our grandmother; we would take the train to get there. Our father used to arrange a holiday by the sea, sometimes in Toco, Blanchisseuse, and "down de islands". We would go to the islands on the island steamer. We used to stay in a house that didn't have electricity, so we used Coleman lamps. The island steamer would bring down ice on a Wednesday and Saturday and my father would row to the steamer to collect the block ice. One day our daddy would row us around Gasparee island in a pirogue. Our meats were fresh, we carried live chickens to the islands; sometimes they came right back home with us. We ate a lot of canned food, saltfish, corned beef. We never wanted to come home. Our bathing suits were in scraps when we finished. We had no running water. We used to eat crab in any form and fashion - curry crab, crab souse, boiled crab... we did it all.

"Down de islands" off the coast of Trinidad



Angela

We lived in the village of Sangre Grande behind the forest, a stone's throw from the river. My sisters, cousins, pets and I would go on "An Adventure" walking through the forest, crossing the river a few times over bridges, which were just fallen trees trunks. We would watch the caiman alligators sunning themselves on the river banks, look for deer tracks and talk about everything and nothing, looking for wildlife but making way too much noise, so that we hardly ever saw any, as we scared them all away. We played football, cricket, and badminton in the street and were exhausted at the end of each day. We however all dreaded the day in August when my grandmother would bring out her big bottle of "nasty bush medicine" (laxative) was to "clean us out" before school started. Her motto, "if it tastes good, it cannot be good for you", needless to say, that medicine must have been great for us.

Blessing your child

John Trent

As a counselor, I often see the benefits and the heart-breaking results of parental choices. Children long and thirst for parental acceptance — they long for their mother and father to reinforce their worth and bless them.

Meeting your children's need for affirmation doesn't have to be difficult. One way is to do what I call "the blessing." This blessing has five distinct elements to build up your sons and daughters and help them understand their worth in your family and before God. Those five elements are:

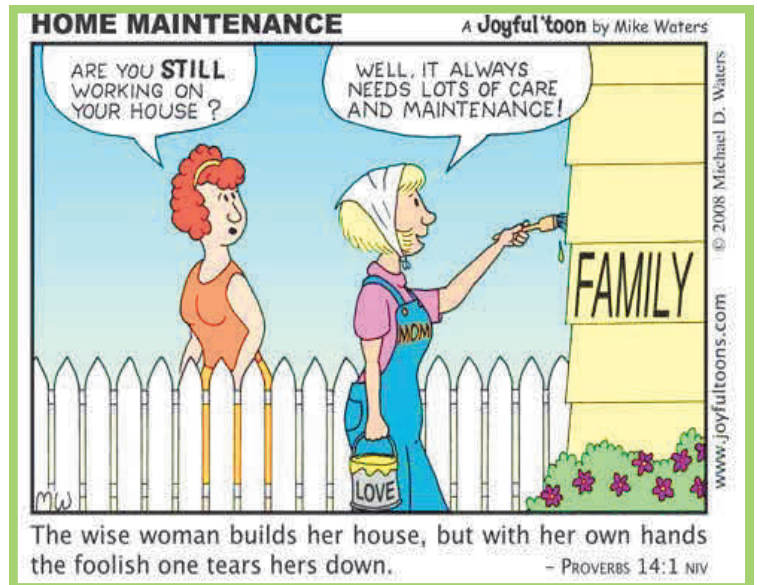
- appropriate and meaningful touch
- words of love and acceptance
- value placed on the child
- acknowledgement of a special future
- genuine commitment

Interpreting it for your child

Although there are five elements to this blessing, each child is unique and will interpret those five elements differently. For some, *appropriate touch* may mean a hug in the morning. My youngest daughter felt affirmed



"We're not supposed to eat the apple because apples have carbs and carbs are evil!"



when my wife or I would sit next to her for an extended period of time, perhaps while reading a story to her.

As your child grows, he or she may require a different type of affirmation. Part of showing children your approval, and their value, is figuring out how to affirm them in a way they can understand.

Blessing preschoolers and kindergartners

Parents can sing a blessing to young children; when our girls were between the ages of 2 and 6, my wife and I would sing a song that we made up for them. It started: "Good morning, good morning, how are you today? The Lord bless you and keep you throughout the day." The song was simple, but it helped our children start each day with words that spoke of our love and God's love for them.

Young children are affirmed and their hearts remain open to God, when they hear words about their parents' and God's love for them daily.

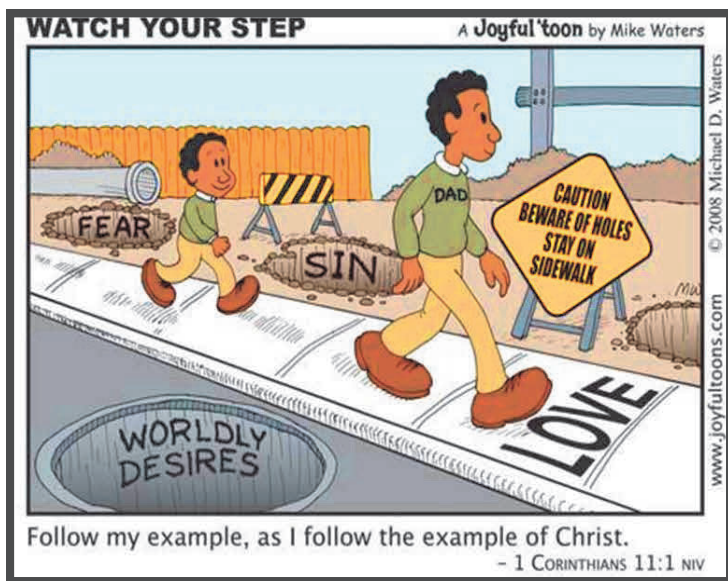
Affirming school-age children

My wife or I would park in front of their school, turn around, take their hands and pray over them and their

cont'd on page 11

"Service which is rendered without joy helps neither the servant nor the served. But all other pleasures and possessions pale into nothingness before service which is rendered in a spirit of joy."

~Mahatma Gandhi~



day; for a child's friendship with someone or about a test that day. This individualized, quick prayer included *meaningful touch* and linked them with God's *special future* for them that day. When they left the car, they knew our love went with them.

Using words well with teens

For older children, the blessing can become even more powerful — particularly when you use all five elements as a reaction to a teen's struggles or challenges. That's what my mother did for me when I was a high school senior.

I'll never forget sitting at her old kitchen table with my head down, waiting for what I expected would come next: She would echo the words of others: "Why can't you do as well as your brother? You're twins, right?" That day, my teacher said even more than that with his actions.

He had held my senior term paper as if it were covered in mold. Then he had rolled his eyes before handing it back to me. The rest of the class smirked and hooted. On it was a large D, underlined in red pen.

That wasn't my first D, but I'd worked really hard on that paper. And while I did skip my teacher's instruction to include footnotes, he made it clear that I was a loser. I waited for my mom to finish reading my paper.

Finally she spoke. "John, look at me."

She had already read my twin brother's term paper — for which he had earned an A, as always.

"Look at me," she repeated.

I raised my head, just enough for my eyes to meet hers. When I did, she reached across the table and took my hand. My mother was a rheumatoid arthritic, and her hands were twisted and bent. Her grip was incredibly soft, but once she held my hand, I couldn't pull away without hurting her and making her cry. I was stuck.

I felt broken and ashamed.

She said, "John, you should have woken me up, and I could have helped you with the footnotes." When I dropped my head again, she continued, "I don't care what your teacher said or wrote. You do such a good job of using words when you write that I wouldn't be surprised if God used your words someday to help people."

At that moment, she gave me a gift that continues to shape my life today. She used the five elements of the biblical blessing to let me know I had worth:

Meaningful touch — With her grip, she said, "I love you. I believe in you."

Words of love and acceptance — My mother's words were direct, and even when what she said wasn't what I wanted to hear, she spoke with a gentle kindness.

Value placed on the child — She saw the potential in me, and her words spoke of my value.

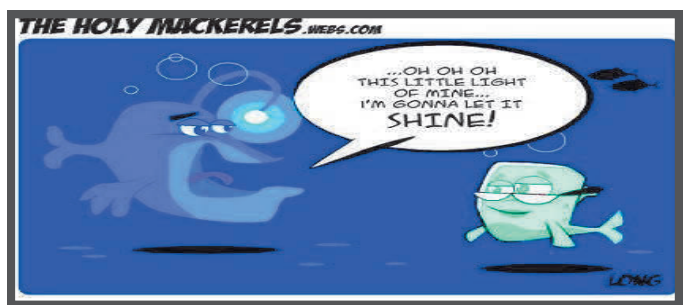
Acknowledgement of a special future — She pointed me toward a future where God might someday use my words to help others.

Genuine commitment — My mom wasn't perfect. She got tired and was frustrated with me at times, but I never doubted her love or commitment to me.

The blessing challenge

Be a part of The Blessing Challenge — that's one million parents choosing to change the lives of children, one child at a time.

TheBlessing.com



Common Sense Parenting Programme

Common Sense Parenting will help you towards building healthy and wholesome family relationships!



Archdiocesan Family Life Commission
ARCHDIOCESE OF PORT OF SPAIN



It is a 6-week, practical, skill based programme which starts in Arima at:

El Patio, Santa Rosa R.C. Church Compound on Sundays from July 14, to August 18. From 3:30pm to 5:30pm.

For programme dates and other details contact the Archdiocesan Family Life Commission (AFLC) at (868)672-4280/4478 or 299-1047

email: familylife.commission@gmail.com or visit the AFLC's website at <http://familylife.rcpos.org>.



MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND

The next Marriage Encounter Weekend is carded for September 2013. For more information contact Nigel /Heather Thomas at wwmett@gmail.com

"Though my work may be menial, though my contribution may be small, I can perform it with dignity and offer it with unselfishness. My talents may not be great, but I can use them to bless the lives of others.... The goodness of the world in which we live is the accumulated goodness of many small and seemingly inconsequential acts."

~Gordon B. Hinckley ~

