

Living in the Present Instant

Be docile and pliable in the hands of God. You know what you must do to achieve this.

Keep yourself at peace and in complete repose, never become upset and never trouble yourself about anything, forget the past, live as though the future does not exist, live for Jesus in

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every moment that you are living, or better, live as though you have no life in yourself, but allow Jesus to live in you at His leisure; to walk thus, in all circumstances and in all encounters, without fear or worry as is becoming of Jesus and Mary; never think of yourself voluntarily; abandon the care of your soul to Jesus alone, etc.

It is He who takes the soul by force; it belongs to Him. It is therefore up to Him to take care of it because it is His property.

Do not fear so much the judgement of such a tender Master. Generally speaking, banish all fear and replace this feeling with love; in all of this, act gently, sweetly, steadily, without haste, without anger. Act as if you were dead when the need is there.

Walk in this fashion in all graciousness, abandonment and complete confidence. The time of this exile will end and Jesus will belong to us and we to Him.

Then each of our tribulations will be a crown of glory for us that we will place on the head of Jesus, because all glory is His alone.

“Virtue passes from the heart of a mother to the hearts of her children, who do willingly what they see her do.”

St John Vianney, The Cure of Ars

Splinters from the Cross

Little headaches, little heartaches
Little griefs of every day,
Little trials and vexations,
How they throng around our way!

One great cross, immense and heavy,
So it seems to our weak will,
Might be borne with resignation,
But these many small ones kill.

Yet all life is formed of small things,
Little leaves, make up the trees,
Many tiny drops of water
Blending, make the mighty seas.

Let us not then by impatience
Mar the beauty of the whole
But for love of Jesus bear all
In the silence of our soul.

Asking Him for grace sufficient
To sustain us through each loss,
And to treasure each small offering
As a splinter from His Cross.

THE IMMACULATA



Building a Happy Home by Charlotte Siems

Before having children, many women worry about what kind of mother they will be. Nothing unusual about that, but a difficult childhood instilled in me a fear that I wouldn't know how to have a normal family home life. I worried about how I would handle discipline or how I would treat possible future children. On the other hand, that same childhood experience made me determined to create a marriage and home that was stable, warm and peaceful.

Early in my mothering career I attended a parenting conference and heard the following statement: "The 20 years between 20 and 40 (years of age) are just as long as the 20 years between 40 and 60. What you do in the first 20 years determines how happy you will be in the second 20 years." That idea stuck with me. I determined to live life with the end in mind.

Not knowing how to have a happy home, I set out to learn how. Here are a few things I figured out:

Books don't magically solve problems. Sometimes we deceive ourselves into thinking we're doing something because we read about it and agree with it. Close the book and do what it says.

Surround yourself with what is true and lovely. Protect yourself from ugly input. Don't live in a bleak, cluttered environment. Bring beauty, warmth, and neatness to all of your life. **Be very careful what you allow to enter your mind and eyes.** Constant exposure to beautiful ideas and noble goals will transform your thought life.

We all know that thoughts determine actions, don't we?

Do the things you don't want to do. Do them cheerfully and well. Edith Schaeffer wrote, "Somebody has to get up early, stay up late, do more than the others, if the human garden is to be a thing of beauty." At first glance it doesn't seem fair, but there are hidden and precious rewards for dying to self and serving. Stomping and self-pity cancel the reward points.

Choose your hard things. Do your laundry and put it away. That's hard. Get ready to go somewhere and realize no one has clean clothes to wear. That's hard. You pick.

Take the time. Yes, I know you're busy. Throw a meal on the table and get on to the next thing. No time for a tablecloth and candles and flowers. You'll do that when you have time. But before you know it, the weeks, the months and the years pass, and the children leave home and you never had time.

Lest you think I've sailed through life with clean laundry and beautiful meal tables, I assure you these lessons were hard earned. Many times I felt inadequate to the task. **It was like trying to pour water from a dry bucket.** Creating a happy home life from scratch will take everything you've got and even that won't be enough...

That's why I'm so glad for the strength Jesus gives me. His favour and loving-kindness supply what I don't have. He will gladly do that for you, too, for He knows all about love and building beautiful homes. ..

It turns out that giving your family what you didn't receive, gives it back to you.



Expecting?! Again?! By Leane VanderPutten

Have you had your well-meaning friends or maybe even your mother look at you in bewilderment when you tell them you are expecting...again?

Here is an excerpt from *Motherhood and Family* by Sister Mariel, S.S.S. It really causes you to wonder about the mentality??

“Lucy Smith is happily married to Jack and her mother likes him. Family relationships and attitudes have always been fair enough—until Lucy announced that her sixth baby was expected in due time.

“Oh, Lucille! Not again—so soon! Really...!”

Is it really respectable, Lucille, to have a sixth when the Joneses never have more than three?

Lucy, in consternation, wonders what in heaven’s name her mother thinks she should have done to keep up, or down, with the Joneses. And how will she take the advent of the seventh, eighth, and if-God-wills-it ninth grandchild? Mother never refers now to the coming baby any more cheerfully than she would speak of a coming World War III. But what would she have her daughter do? The nursery jingle comes to mind:

“Mother, may I go out to swim?” “Why, yes, my darling daughter. Just hang your clothes on a hickory limb. But don’t go near the water.”

Mother, may I go out to swim in the ocean of God’s Love, trusting in His divine care, letting Him bear me up on the waves of His all-wise providence?

Why, yes, my darling daughter. By all means keep up the appearances. Make your Easter Duty and what-not. Get yourself and the children to Mass on Sundays and all that. But at the same time remember God helps those who help themselves. You simply have to give some consideration to the world and what it expects of you. Don’t sin exactly; but don’t go off the deep end

on religion either. There is a happy medium, a nice compromise, somewhere. Find it.”

There are so many good Catholic mothers out there battling this scene and I have felt truly sorry for them. You know, it is hard enough to be open to life when you are feeling overwhelmed...to want to do God’s will in spite of your natural inclination to give it a rest. And then you have those *well-meaning* people in your life that Sister talks about. It would be one thing if it was just some worldly person off the street, but when it is those who are close to you...ouch!

You try to reassure them confidently that you know what you are doing...as the toddler is crying in your arms, your four year old is pulling on your skirt and the boys are wrestling in the background. Your hair is unkempt and you have circles under your eyes. You eke out a smile and tell them that you are very excited about it....but it comes out kind of lame....probably because you feel like bending over the rose bush and throwing up... morning sickness, you know!

These people walk away asking themselves, “**What is wrong with them?** Don’t they know any natural ways to prevent this? Their lives are pandemonium already!”

And you look onward as they are getting into their nice new cars, going back to their homes to do....pretty much whatever they wish....sigh.

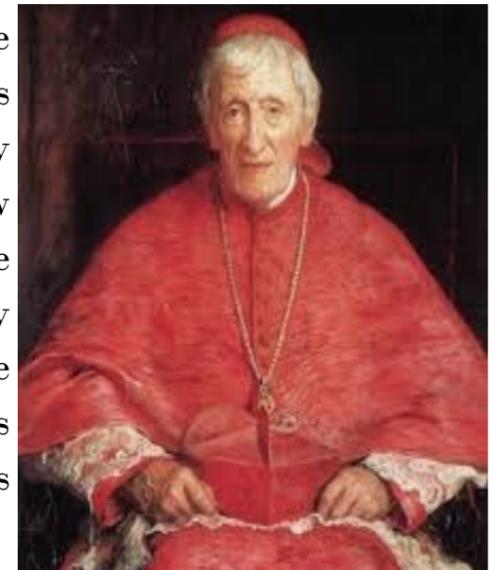
Mothers....take heart!!! Your rewards will be so great for the sacrifices you are making! God is not outdone in generosity!

It will pay off.

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A Meditation by Cardinal John Henry Newman

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments. Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is about.



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We already know the spiritual benefits of being open to life or we wouldn’t be doing it. But there are many *natural* benefits too that God gives to mothers of large families.

One day, you will be able to have some of that freedom that you wish for now....and you will know you have earned it, which will make it very sweet! You might even be able to take a nap....*gasp! Imagine that!* You will have your built-in babysitters, cooks and house cleaners. Your girls will be your friends (most of the time) and your boys will be...well, **boys** (hopefully they’ll cut the lawn for you and maybe even take out the trash!) Mine were usually working with their dad at an early age! And you will have so much more than

that!! What can ever replace family....the joys and the love that goes along with it!? All the sacrifices that you have experienced will be part of your strong bonding together! You will suffer, laugh and celebrate together!

Such consolations will await you and you will look with pity at those who have the typical 2 kids *through their own choice*. They had no idea how to raise the kids and so they grow old and lonely as their kids quickly move on. Eventually these parents are put in a home because they are a **burden**....shudder.

So chin up, mothers! All good things come with pain and suffering...**PAIN IS GAIN!** Keep up the good work! God will reward you immensely!

