

University of Notre Dame
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"Apologia" For A Family

"Seven children! My goodness, you've certainly got your hands full. Oh well, it will be wonderful when they are all grown up!"

Part of the above quotation was delivered in a politely shocking manner; the remainder in a warmly consoling tone. Then the speaker looked blank, as though she uneasily suspected that she couldn't possibly explain anyone's having seven children. But the good mother was too polite to snarl that she had her hands full. Her outlook on her vocation was more wholesome:

"I can't honestly justify having such a large family by the observation that it will be wonderful when they are all grown up. I'm not a bit certain that it will be wonderful... I don't know what they will grow up to be. God chose to bless each one of them with the immense dignity of a free will. Whether they will use this blessing for good or bad, only He knows. I can only pray that my own shortcomings as a mother will not too seriously impede them in the proper use of this fearsome freedom...

"The complete dependence of the babies, the relative dependence of the older children weighs sometimes, like the weight of the world. But I'm keenly aware, too, of what this sense of importance and purpose means to my own happiness. Will it be so wonderful when they no longer need me? If they grow up healthy in soul, mind, and body, it will be a great satisfaction, surely; and I shall be happy for them. But my house and my life may seem appallingly empty. It is a paradox, certainly, that every mother of a large family, no matter how long and laborious her day, how worrisome her children, how poor the family, looks with a certain pity upon her childless neighbor, even though she may envy her neighbor the comparative ease of circumstance her childlessness permits. We would like to share her comforts, but we want the children, too. And if we must choose, we'll keep the children. Once, we've known the heady feeling of being absolutely fundamentally, vitally necessary to someone's existence, there isn't really any choice.

"But they will grow up; they will leave and there will be that awful adjustment to no longer being needed. I will have to grow accustomed to an unwelcome leisure. No wonder my acquaintance looks a little blank. It just isn't possible to explain having seven children by saying it will be wonderful when they grow up. It will be wonderful for them -- but it won't be altogether wonderful for me. The only reason I can think of which would adequately justify having seven children, or any children at all, for that matter, would embarrass my acquaintance, because it would sound so high-minded and so horribly simple. I just haven't the courage to say that I have seven children, not because I wanted them, but because God wanted me to have them; and that I welcome them because by doing so I have given seven more souls an opportunity to earn heaven. The burdens of a large family are such that there just isn't any adequate reason for shouldering them, other than this."

- Dorothy Christin, in the Catholic Messenger.

There, let the Planned Parenthood sorority sink their bicuspid into that bit of tough Catholic philosophy that ennobles and sanctifies all good fathers and mothers!

PRAYERS REQUESTED -- Deceased: mother of Rev. Paul Wendell, CSC; father of Rev. Jerome Lawyer, CSC; Frank Hogan, '14; mother of Herb Giorgio, '33; sister of Rev. Wm. Moloney, CSC; Josephine Ruhling (Morris Inn staff); cousin of Mahony Rivas of Pangborn; Leo Welch, '15; grandfather of Jim Sweeny of Dillon; H. Justin Corcoran, '27; father of Dan Caufield, '52; Rev. Raymond Norris, CSC; Ed Lynaugh, '37; father of Roderick Mette of Lyons; sister-in-law and 3 nieces of Prof. Edward Fisher. Ill: Rev. Norman Johnson, CSC; Rev. Leo Flood, CSC; wife of John Borda, '42; aunt of John (Fisher) and David (Pangborn) Solomon; father of Brother Francis de Paul, CSC.