

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



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Mom.com

In two weeks we will celebrate Mother's Day. Next weekend and Mother's Day we will have a little 96 page book for active moms called, *Moms@myspiritualgrowth.com—meditations & Cool Websites for Active Moms* by Catherine O'Connell-Cahill, mother of two children. This little book offers 90 reflections each of which could be read in a minute or less and a connecting website. Here are three samples from the book.

Sample #1: Works of Mercy, Take #2

The seven corporal works of mercy that we looked at earlier involve caring for the body. But a mother's job also encompasses the seven spiritual works of mercy. You'll find one on each of the next seven pages, starting with "Admonishing sinners."

Even though we don't ordinarily think of our children as "sinners," even in the early years we help them to create lifelong habits of looking honestly at their own behavior, sizing up their motives, and taking responsibility when they're in the wrong.

Much as we might prefer to be our children's friend, that's not our job. We do better when we guide them and lead by example. One important part of our role is to put firm boundaries around what is unacceptable behavior and then to stick to them. Our kids don't need us to be indulgent. Forgiving, yes. Anything goes, no.

So take heart the next time you have to call your son on his dishonesty or reprimand your daughter for speaking disrespectfully to you. If you didn't do that, you wouldn't be doing your job.

We do not always like what is good for us in this world.

-Eleanor Roosevelt

<http://members.fortunecity.com/moviemom/list.htm>

Are you yearning to show your kids some portraits of strong mothers in the movies? Neil Minow, the "Movie Mom," lists great family movies, many of them oldies. Also see Minow's current reviews at <http://movies.yahoo.com/moviemom/>

Sample #2: Put Your Eye on Peggy

A friend, Kate Byrne, writes in *Commonweal* of the day her young daughter Peggy, one of five children, tried to get her mother's attention during the hour before dinner. Mom, busy stirring pots and setting the table and who knows what else, gave her a distracted, "Really?"

and a noncommittal, "Uh-Huh," her eyes everywhere but on the girl. Finally, Peggy had had enough. "Put your eye on Peggy!" she demanded.

This story dates from fifty years ago, back when moms were supposedly "less busy," and their lives were not so crammed with activities and responsibilities. (I wager Kate might disagree with that sentiment.) Apparently the challenge of being a good listener knows no season.

To "put our eye on" the person speaking is one simple way to be a better listener today. It lets our children and other folks know that our minds—as well as our eyes—are on what they're telling us. While we might be able to "multitask" with the best of them—making dinner, talking on the phone, supervising homework—what our kids most need is for us to "monotask" instead.

If that's impossible at the moment, says Kate, at least give your son or daughter "the assurance you'd grant any other important client. Tell her, 'I'm sorry,' and 'I'll get back to you as soon as I can.'"

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry; do not hold your peace at my tears.

-Psalm 39:12

<http://family.samhsa.gov/talk/listen.aspx>

Look at this site for the practical piece, "You Never listen to me" with good links on listening.

Sample #3: Constructive Criticism

Some days it seems we spend more time correcting our children than anything else. "Get your feet off the furniture." "Don't burp at the table." "I'm sure you can work a bit harder on this essay." "Please don't leave your dirty socks on the floor for someone else to pick up." Like it or not, constructive criticism is one of our jobs as mothers. The trick is to do it out of love, not out of anger and frustration.

"If you're critical without being loving," says Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I., "you're destructive. If you're loving without being critical, you're weak. Your loved ones...need you to be loving and critical at the same time."

God, help me to stand up and be the parent I need to be.

No matter how old a mother is, she watches her middle-aged children for signs of improvement.

-Florida Scott-Maxwell

www.nmha.org/children/

The National Mental Health Association has a number of brief, helpful articles for parents on numerous issues facing children.

Many of you have daughters with young children living elsewhere or living in the area who do not go to church. Consider using this book as a Mother's Day Gift to sow some spiritual seeds. If you wish to order the book yourself contact Acta Publications 1-800-397-2282.

Miscellaneous Bits and Pieces

The following are a few miscellaneous bits and pieces worth reflecting on. I really love this first one:

Granny's Glasses

A little boy said to his playmate, "When I get older, I want to wear glasses just like Granny's because she can see so much more than most people. She can see the good in a person when everyone else sees a bad side. She can see what a person meant to do even if he or she didn't do it. I asked her one day how she could see the good, and she said it was the way she learned to look at things as she got older. And when I get older, I want a pair of glasses just like Granny's so I can see the good, too."

How different our world would be if we all wore a pair of Granny's glasses! If I would look for the good in you, and you would look for the good in me, our lives would be so much more pleasant. At times, we are like the buzzard that seeks out what is rotten and ugly, when we should be like the hummingbird that looks for what is sweet and beautiful. I dare you to try on a pair of Granny's glasses!

God is Always Out Searching for His Wayward Children

One of God's most famous wayward children was Augustine of Hippo who lived in the fourth century. For years he lived with a woman and had a child with her. Finally, Augustine did hear and respond to the call of God. His famous mother St. Monica, prayed daily for Augustine's conversion. Augustine's spiritual autobiography is called *Confessions of a Soul*. One of the most famous passages in the book is the following:

*"Late have I loved Thee,
O Beauty so ancient and so new;
late have I loved Thee!*

*For behold you were within me, and I outside;
and I sought you outside and in my unloveliness
fell upon those lovely things that you have made.*

You were with me and I was not with you.

*I was kept from you by those things,
yet had they not been in you,
they would not have been at all.*

*You did call and cry to me and break open my deafness:
and you did send forth your beams and shine upon me,
and I drew in my breath and do now pant for you.*

*I tasted you and now hunger and thirst for you.
You did touch me, and I have burned for your peace."*

Daily Prayers for the People of God

Recently I put together a booklet of *Daily Prayers for the People of God*. The following are three of the prayers:

PRAYERS FOR GUIDANCE

Grant me, Lord, to know what
I ought to know,
To love what I ought to love,
To praise what delights you most,
To value what is precious in your sight,
To hate what is offensive to you.
Do not allow me to judge according
To appearances,
Nor to pass sentence following
The judgment of the ignorant,
But to discern with true judgment
Between things visible and spiritual,
And, above all things,
To seek to know what is the good pleasure
Of your will. Amen

Thomas A Kempis

Lord, take me where you want me to go:
Let me meet who you want me to meet;
Tell me what you want me to say,
And keep me out of your way.

Fr. Mychal Judge

PRAYER TO RADIATE CHRIST

Jesus, help me to spread your fragrance
everywhere I go today:
Flood my soul with your spirit and life;
penetrate and possess my whole being
so utterly that all my life
may only be a radiance of yours.
Shine through me and be so in me
that every soul I come in contact with
may feel your presence in my soul.
Let them look up and see no longer me,
but only Jesus! Amen

John Henry Cardinal Newman

Have a blessed week,

