

At Home  
IN THE  
Heart  
OF  
God



**FAMILY, JESUS,  
AND THE EUCHARIST**

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# INTRODUCTION

I AM A CATHOLIC AND A PARENT. That means I believe that Jesus is God. And that I never get to watch a ballgame uninterrupted. Or have the house clean for very long. Being a parent means pouring yourself out in love *constantly*.

This short book tries to show the connection between your love as a mom or dad and God's love for us. As Catholic Christians, we see Jesus as the proof of just how intensely God loves us. We recognize this particularly in Jesus' journey through suffering and death to Resurrection and the gift he left us at the Last Supper, the Eucharist.

I will share some practical insights from my journey of life, family, and faith. And together, we'll consider the transformative *good news* that Jesus offers us.

Whatever your level of engagement with Catholic faith (including none), I hope this book will make you smile and think and reflect with gratitude. And maybe explore how a eucharistic lifestyle can be a blessing to you, your parenthood, and your family.

Turn to the next page to read more about the special place you have in God's heart...a heart that desires to feed us with the Eucharist for the journey ahead as adults and as parents.



# Parenthood

## *Generosity and Meaning*

WILL IT MATTER 100 YEARS FROM NOW?

Much of what we do in our lives won't. Heck, a lot won't matter in five months. But here's one thing I guarantee will matter in 100 years: *parenting*.

In fact, every little thing we do to love and care for our children and help them become their full selves will echo forward, rippling out for all eternity! No pressure now, moms and dads, eh?

As someone who is married with two little boys, I can see it. How every day, Danny and Matt are learning and changing. They are watching Kristi and me and picking up ideas and behaviors from us all the time. These are hugely impactful, formative years. Our boys are becoming, moment to moment, who they will be as adults. If they have children, our parenting now will impact their descendants and the course of history. Even if they don't have children, who they are will make the world a better (or worse) place forever.

Parenting is so meaningful and rewarding. And so exhausting! We continually give without asking the cost. It is a lesson in generosity and humility. Parenting stretches us and teaches us how to be adults ourselves!

Parents are the unsung heroes of society. Videos of you cleaning the kitchen will never go viral. No awards are given for bathing your little one or patiently helping with your kids' homework. The sacrifice required in parenting follows Jesus' example at the Last Supper when he washes the feet of his followers and says that we must live in loving service to others.

Trust me when I share that Kristi and I fall short frequently in our parenting. We miss opportunities. We overreact. I fail

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to be as generous as I could be. Kristi might forget to play the long game with the boys at times. I share this to help you avoid the *perfectionism* trap. You fall short, too. And that's okay. Saint Teresa of Calcutta once said, "God does not require that we be successful, only that we be faithful."

Parenting is not about doing everything right all the time. It is about steadfast love. And yes, hopefully succeeding a lot more than we fail...because what we have been called to is really, *really* important. With God's help, our hearts can grow to meet our role and responsibilities.



*How do see your parenting role?*

*As beautiful...impactful...sacrificial...exhausting?*



# Incalculable Love

YOU KNOW HOW YOU LOOK UPON YOUR CHILD? WITH A LOVE BIGGER THAN YOU THOUGHT POSSIBLE. I'm convinced that's how God looks upon us. Parenting is a window into the mind...and heart...of our God! And it's how parents give children their first inkling of who God is and what unconditional love feels like.

I'll always remember an ordinary midwinter evening. Kristi was putting our toddler, Matthew, to bed. Four-year-old Danny was already in his PJs but hanging out near the



kitchen, where I was cleaning up. A folk song called “Daddy’s Chair” (about a father who died) was playing, and I felt a pull on my heart. Now, I pride myself on being “tough dad” and saying “no” a lot to the boys. Usually, they have to earn their treats. But this time I called Dan into the kitchen and broke off and shared a part of the candy cane I was about to have.

Dan looked up and asked, “What’s this for, Dad?” And I said, “Just because.” He put it in his mouth, smiled at me and trotted up the stairs. My heart nearly burst with joy and

love just then. Be attentive to these kinds of moments. Look for opportunities to give and receive extraordinary grace in the most ordinary of living. These moments abound and God is there!

That evening I was able to reveal for my boy the heart of God, who loves us *just because*. And Dan got a taste of this ultimate truth. We are loved not because of our externals or achievements. We are loved and fed by Jesus simply because we are each God’s beloved one, in whom the divine image is reflected.

Is there anything your children can do to make you stop loving them? Of course not. And so it is with our God. God’s faithfulness and the love I have for my family combine to

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inspire a deepening posture of gratitude. I have been given so much!

Parenting is the closest we'll come in this life to seeing the world and loving people as God does. It is a holy role, a calling, a *vocation*! To be our best in this calling, we must lean on God's grace for strength and sustenance. And channel, as much as possible, God's full and perfect love for us, embodied in Jesus, into our children and into the world.



*Spend some time observing your children  
and reflecting on your love for them.*

*Ponder how God's love for you  
is even greater.*