

Reflections of the Rector



Dear brothers and sisters,

Somehow it seems that the numbers I presented to you last month were a surprise to almost everyone. Perhaps we have not done a good job at communicating the dire situation of our parishes, although I believe that we have all seen how Mass attendance has been going down for the last few years.

There is another sad number, though, that I believe we are more familiar with. That is the number of active priests, and its downward trajectory. We have heard about some churches closing throughout our diocese. In our own parish, we have experience the merger of three former individual parishes into a single one. In all of these cases, blame has been laid solely on the lack of priests; but that is not completely right. We do not have enough priests for all our parishes, but that is because our churches are dying. Priests come from our parishes, from our families, and when the number of Baptisms goes down 50%, when families stop coming to church, where would our priests come from?

According to numbers published by The Lumen, the number of priests in our diocese has gone from 166 in 1980, to 146 in 1990, to 109 in 2000, to 71 in 2010, to finally 48 this year. Again, no surprise here. When we have fewer Baptisms, when we have fewer people in our pews, when we have fewer children attending Religious Education and other programs in our parishes, we cannot be surprised when we do not have young men discerning a vocation to the priesthood in seminary.

Here in the parish, we have been blessed to have been the cradle of many priestly vocations, but that stopped a few years ago. If the information I have is correct, the last man from our parish to be ordained to the priesthood was Fr. Miles Barrett in 1982. That's almost 40 years ago!

And, please, don't think that I think less of vocations to the religious life and to married life. They are both very important. In fact, as I said earlier, our priests come from our families, so we need more couples getting married and forming families, good Catholic families.

Promoting vocations to the priesthood is one of my pastoral priorities, but not at the expense of promoting other vocations. On the contrary, it is because of it that I also want to see our families more involved in the parish.

My brothers and sisters, in the words of St. John Paul II, "There can be no Eucharist without the priesthood, just as there can be no priesthood without the Eucharist." Please help me make of our parish a fertile ground for vocations to the priesthood.

In Christ,

Fr. David Esquiliano



PRIESTS

1980:	1990:	2000:	2010:	2020:
166	146	109	71	48

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The Financial Corner

<u>INCOME</u>		Jun-20
Weekly Offerings	\$	31,365.50
Loose Offerings	\$	56.00
Programming Support	\$	7,208.33
Other Income	\$	8,160.03
Total Parish Income	\$	46,789.86
<u>EXPENSE</u>		
Salaries and Wages	\$	37,635.89
Administrative Expenses	\$	8,078.19
Ministry Expenses	\$	2,228.21
Utility Bills & Repairs	\$	22,256.97
Assessments	\$	87,705.00
Other Expenses	\$	100,314.12
Total Expenses	\$	258,218.38
Net Income	\$	(211,428.52)
BHCS Assessment Unpaid	\$	100,000.00

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Faith and Sacramental Formation

Children Are at Increased Risk for Abuse When Stressors Abound

By Robert Hugh Farley, M.S.

Introduction. On March 20, 2020, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) issued a press release that stated, in part: "Hundreds of millions of children around the world will likely face increasing threats to their safety and wellbeing – including mistreatment, gender-based violence, exploitation, social exclusion and separation from caregivers – because of actions taken to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. UNICEF is urging governments to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children amidst the intensifying socioeconomic fallout from the disease. In a matter of months, COVID-19 has upended the lives of children and families across the globe. School closures and movement restrictions are disrupting children's routines and support systems. They are also adding new stressors on caregivers..."

Background. The stressors referred to in the UNICEF press release are a result of the societal and economic changes from the COVID-19 or "coronavirus" pandemic. "Stress or stressors have also been identified as a precursor or causation factor in cases of physical child abuse or child abuse homicide."¹ It has been clearly established by professionals that an event or triggering mechanism precedes physical child abuse, child abuse homicide and other types of abuse. Often stress will cause a parent or caretaker to become overwhelmed and then overreact to an occurrence while interacting with a child, ultimately resulting in abuse.

What exactly is stress? Stress is defined by Merriam Webster as a physical, chemical or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Now and then, everyone experiences stress. A stressor may be a one-time event, a short-time occurrence or an ongoing situation. Stress affects everybody differently. Some people are able to cope and recover from a stressful event or situation more easily than others. Stress may be exhibited through anger, irritability or restlessness.

Increased stress. Parents and caretakers are understandably stressed over how to protect their families from contracting the coronavirus. As if this isn't enough to bear, there have also been concerns for public welfare, resulting in official responses to the current pandemic that have ranged from school closings, social distancing, sheltering in place orders, work from home requirements, etc., which, along with the effects of the virus itself, have culminated in the closing of some jobs, furloughed positions, and being laid off. Schools that may have been providing children with two meals a day, at no charge, may be unable to provide that service. The shift with workplace responses has also increased stress in the home for children, too. Children living in otherwise happy families, may now be dealing with a tense parent (or parents), who, in some cases, are out-of-work or simply unaccustomed to providing around-the-clock care. Children may be acting differently than usual, because they also do not have the same physical, emotional and spiritual outlets.

How can stress translate to abuse? Already-stressed parents may feel more stress and may ultimately make poor decisions. For example, they may feel they have no option but to take a serious risk and leave their children at home, alone, for hours, to work outside of the home, despite safety, neglect or legal concerns, depending on the child's age.

Current risks. The harsh reality is that the increased stress from COVID-19 has already resulted in an increase of minors contacting child protective services and sexual assault hotlines to report all of the types of child abuse, not just physical abuse. We also know that where there is one type of abuse, there is an increased chance that another type is present as well. The National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC) in Huntsville, Alabama, has reported that 90% of children who have been sexually abused know the perpetrator. Boys and girls who are now forced to shelter at home for days and weeks, as the result of the closed schools or distance learning, may be more vulnerable for child sexual abuse, and other types of abuse, by caretakers.

Concerns for trusted adults. Educators are typically on the front line for reporting suspected child abuse to state and county hotlines. With the schools closed, these mandated reporters are unable to identify or communicate about the at-risk children. On March 23, 2020, the FBI issued a press release that said, in part, "Due to school closings as a result of COVID-19, children will potentially have an increased online presence and/or be in a position that puts them at an inadvertent risk. Due to this newly developing environment, the FBI is seeking to warn parents, educators, caregivers, and children about the dangers of online sexual exploitation..." "Screen time" is generally defined as the amount of time spent using a device with a screen such as a smartphone, computer, television, or video game console. Pediatricians generally recommend that parents limit screen time to no more than one or two hours a day for children ages 2 and up unless the parent is present and actively involved. With school closures and families engaged in virtual calls, social media and internet surfing challenges are presented for those parents who have implemented strict screen time rules for their children. Stressed parents, unaccustomed to providing around-the-clock care, or grappling with distance learning, will probably relax the screen time rules for their "bored" children, which can increase the risk of the children being confronted with sexually explicit material via the internet and with people who have bad intentions and seek to abuse children. With the COVID-19 crisis, everyone must take an active role in monitoring child safety in their families, neighborhoods and their communities. Inevitably, there will be children and young people, in the months to come, making disclosures of abuse, to trusted adults, once they feel safe, and when schools are back in session and churches are open. It's possible that the child may make the disclosure to you over your online communication, or that you may pick up on disturbing behavior or warning signs through that online communication. What you see, hear or observe may cause you to suspect one of the types of child abuse—physical abuse, neglect, emotional/psychological abuse or sexual abuse.

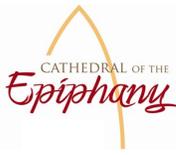
To get help: Parents or caretakers who are in need of support can: Call the National Parent Helpline at 1-855-427-2736, or, Call the National Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-4-A-CHILD or 800-422-4453. Obtain help via online therapy to reduce stressors or find venting and/or coping opportunities. For suspicion, fear or concern of immediate abuse, please call 911.

Your role as a safe adult is extremely important to the children in your life, whether they are in your own home or see you intermittently, or hardly at all.

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In Christ Our Savior,
Santa Fernandez

Director of Faith and Sacramental Formation



Cathedral of the Epiphany

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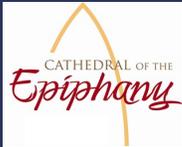
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EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

MONDAY– SUNDAY 24 Hour
Adoration Chapel-Epiphany Center

MASS SCHEDULE

MON.-FRI. 12:00 pm Cathedral *English*
5:30 pm Cathedral *Spanish*
SATURDAY: 4:00 pm St. Boniface *English*
6:00 pm Cathedral *Spanish*
SUNDAY: 8:30 am Cathedral *Latin*
8:30 am St. Joseph *English*
10:00 am Cathedral *English*
10:30 am St. Boniface *Spanish*
12:00 pm Cathedral *Spanish*
12:30 pm St. Joseph *Vietnamese*
1:30 pm Cathedral *Spanish*

MASSES HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION

Anticipated / Vigil
5:30 p.m. St. Boniface (English)
5:30 p.m. Cathedral (Spanish)
On the Day of the Solemnity
7:00 a.m. St. Joseph (English)
12:00 p.m. Cathedral (English)
5:30 p.m. Cathedral (Spanish)

MASS CIVIL HOLIDAYS

9:00am Cathedral (Bilingual)

CONFESSIONS

SUNDAY 8:00a- 8:30a *St Joseph*
MONDAY 4:30p -5:30p *Cathedral*
TUESDAY 4:30p -5:30p *Cathedral*
WEDNESDAY 4:30p-5:30p *Cathedral*
THURSDAY 4:30p-5:30p *Cathedral*
FRIDAY 11:30a -12:00p *Cathedral*
4:30p to 5:30p *Cathedral*
SATURDAY 3:00p to 4:00p *St. Boniface*
5:00p to 6:00p *Cathedral*