



# FAITH: A *FRESH TAKE*



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CNS/PAUL HARING

Pope Francis greets a man while meeting the disabled during his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican April 20.

## A Farewell Loaded with Lessons

I've been writing for the "Coming of Age" column since I graduated college in 2002. That's a lot of words. The



problem with time is that it passes in the blink of an eye: One moment you're crossing the stage at graduation with your cap and gown and the next you're wondering why the past 14 years went by in what feels like

five seconds.

Sometimes, it feels unreal to say that it has been 20 years since I sat in homeroom or sat up entirely too late editing "The Warrior," our high school newspaper. It all feels as if it happened 10 minutes ago.

The problem with time is that it marches on and there's nothing you can do about it. Time carries you along even if you're tired, out of breath or don't want to go. Modern life is blessed with an abundance of choices, except for this one in particular: We're all going to get older. That also means that we're all going to become different and we are all going to change.

But there are a few things that will remain the same and there are quite a few lessons I learned during my time writing for "Coming of Age."

Here's a list of what I've learned: Be kind to one another and to yourself. Don't bully others (in the classroom or in the office). Remember that everyone, no matter how prickly or different, is just like you. Treat everyone how you would like to be treated. When people force you to choose a side, and they will, don't bully others. If you are kind to yourself, others will be kind to you.

I've also learned to chase happiness – for others. Our society talks a lot about the pursuit of happiness but forgets to tell us that you don't always

find it in the things you do solely for yourself. You find it in the way you help others have fantastic, happy lives. Happiness is catching. Spread it around!

Chase real success, not fake success. Real success looks very different than what the world would have you believe. Fast cars, big mansions, sexy jobs, diamonds and high regard – some people who "have it all" still find themselves desperately wanting more. True success can't be bought. Only you can look inside yourself and to God and define what success means.

You will always keep learning and you should always keep learning. Lessons don't stop the day you leave the classroom. They're everywhere. I've learned countless things from my bosses, editors, the homeless people outside of the library, a guy at the Dairy Queen, my niece and my nephew, my pastor, my readers, the guy at the doughnut shop. Pay attention and you'll never go unfulfilled.

This is my last "Coming of Age" column before I pass the space on to a new writer. Most of my first readers are probably raising kids of their own, and it's just about time that this member of Generation X leave the column to a new millennial voice. I have learned much more from writing this column than I possibly could have imagined. I want to thank my readers over the years for teaching me more than I ever hoped possible.

Life can be scary. The passage of time can be daunting and looking out into the great unknown can be frightening. But stay bright, stay hopeful, stay faithful and no matter where life takes you, always, always remember what it's like to be a person who is "coming of age," looking at the world with new eyes and bright new ideas.

— Karen Osborne

(This column is part of the CNS columns package.)

## Let Go and Let God

The popular song "Let It Go" from the movie "Frozen" is likely stuck in the heads of both young fans of Elsa



and parents as well. The phrase has taken the world by storm and is used in online memes, viral videos and inspirational public service announcements. As catchy as the tune is, the meaning behind it may

often seem dismissive to people who are harboring hate, anger and bitterness. In fact, telling someone to "let it go" can be just as infuriating as telling someone to "calm down."

However, inspiring yourself to let go and let God on your own terms can lead you to a state of renewal and healing that allows you to move on and make a difference.

The sad reality is that not all experiences we have in life are positive. Many people suffer indescribable tragedies and loss. Others find themselves mourning the loss of a relationship, a child who has moved out of the nest or a friendship that fizzled over the years.

I, myself, have experienced loss in many ways. My children have as well. One of the most challenging aspects of parenting is realizing that you cannot protect your children from every heartbreak or disappointment in life. You have two choices: You can hold on to the bitterness and let it destroy your

inner peace or you can let it go and let God.

I know firsthand the significant difference between these two choices. I have witnessed people I love and care for spend countless days, months and years holding on to anger or brainstorming strategies to get revenge. I have witnessed friends obsessively check social media accounts of people who have hurt them, desperately seeking an answer or closure.

I, too, have spent too much time wondering how my life would have been different if I had taken another path, surrounded myself with more genuine, faith-filled people and made different decisions during my journey to adulthood.

What I have realized is that healing from anger and bitterness does not come to fruition with an apology from someone who has wronged you. Closure does not pop up in the form of a Tweet or a Facebook post. Closure may not even be a possibility until you can rely on your faith to take over.

You can choose to let it go, you can choose to put your worries in God's hands and you can choose to move forward. It won't be easy, but I can't imagine a better companion along for the ride.

— Shannon Philpott

*Shannon Philpott is a freelance writer and college journalism instructor, but most of all a mother of two teens. You can see her work at [www.shannonphilpott.com](http://www.shannonphilpott.com).*



CNS/PAUL HARING

Syrian refugees Nour and her son Riad, 2, who flew to Rome with her husband, Hasan, on Pope Francis' flight from the Greek island of Lesbos, are pictured in Rome April 18. The pope brought 12 Syrian refugees back with him from a refugee camp in Lesbos.

### Fresh Take: a way to look at faith from a different perspective

This is an online-only page dedicated to young adult Catholics, their interests, their needs, their challenges and their faith.

We want to give young adults something to "chew on," to think about when they're looking for something more than an on-line horoscope or the

latest star news.

This page offers columns we believe will interest our young adults. Let us know.

Email us at [cathnews@bellevillemessenger.org](mailto:cathnews@bellevillemessenger.org) with questions, suggestions or for more information.

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