



FAITH: A *FRESH TAKE*



May 19, 2016



MEMORIAL DAY: This year Memorial Day is May 30th, a time set aside to honor those who died while serving their country. Please pray for all in the military, both living and deceased.

Always More to Give Than We Think

In the great movie, "Schindler's List," there's a scene near the end that speaks poignantly to the heart of anyone who wants to do good in the world.

The 1993 film tells the story of Oskar Schindler, a German businessman who, at the beginning of World War II, moves to Poland to make his fortune in the war-time industrial boom. He even becomes a member of the Nazi party, not for ideological reasons, but to grease the wheels for his business.

He's allotted Jewish workers, basically slave labor on their way to death in the camps, which enables him to make even greater profits. But in one of history's great conversion stories, Schindler begins to see the humanity of his Jewish labor force, and, at risk to his own life, begins to use his business to harbor them. He essentially commits his large fortune to bribing officials and buying his employees' lives as he secretly defies the Nazis. To be on Schindler's employment list is to escape extermination.

"The list," said one of the workers, "is life."

At the movie's end, we see Schindler as the Allied forces close in, escaping his factory as his workers are liberated. He fingers a diamond ring and cries bitter tears. With that ring, he laments, he could have saved another life or two.

Few of us will find ourselves in the moral predicament that Schindler faced. He literally knew that he could buy the lives of his Jewish workers. In our troubled world, the suffering refugee or the homeless man doesn't come with a precise price tag. And yet, each of us questions whether we do enough.

Many charities, in what is probably a great marketing device, will tell you



just what you can get for your donation. So many dollars feeds a family for a day, or pays a foreign student's school tuition for a month. So much money can buy so many life-saving immunizations. As we write our check, how many of us feel a certain pang? Should I, could I, do more?

We have so much, by the world's standards. How much should we give?

Christian stewardship calls us to recognize that everything we have is a gift from God, and we yearn to return this generosity. Stewardship is also about much beyond money. Like Schindler, we must find ourselves experiencing a change of heart. Ultimately, stewardship is about conversion to a new way of life.

Still, few of us will shed our clothes in the public square like Francis of Assisi and become a beggar for God. We all face choices each day. When people asked a deacon friend of mine questions about how much they should give, he would always reply with a simple but very challenging answer: Give more.

Two things are important for Catholic stewardship: First, our giving of time and talent should be planned and budgeted, and should come off the top, not from what's leftover at the end of the month or year. Second, our giving should be sacrificial – from our essence, not just from our surplus.

We may think we're on a tight budget – who doesn't? But if I look closely at my spending or evaluate my use of time, I see many places I could trim fat to give more.

If you've never seen "Schindler's List," the movie still resonates more than 20 years after its release, as does the 1982 book by Thomas Keneally on which the movie is based. Both make us wonder, what would I have done? And more important, can I do more?

— Effie Calderola

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

Finding Guidance Always There

When my son turned one and was just attempting to walk, I noticed that he often looked to his sister, 22 months

his senior, for guidance. He watched her intently, wanting to mimic her words, her gestures and most of all, her ability to walk.

Now that the two of them are both in their teenage years, my son may not admit it, but he still looks to his sister for that same guidance. He watches how she drives now that he has his permit, although he is quick to point out any errors. He has been keenly observing how she is preparing for college and has even started brainstorming potential majors for himself.

We look to our siblings, our family and our friends for guidance on a daily basis, even if we don't open our mouths to ask for help. And, our children are looking at us for an example of how to live their lives, develop their faith and treat others.

What I have learned through the years is that there is often a fine line between providing too much guidance and allowing your child to find his or her way. As a teacher and a journalist, deep down I have always wanted my children to love writing and reading as much as I do so we could share in these experiences. But, beyond one

— Shannon Philpott

brief summer in which they both wanted to write and illustrate their own books, neither one showed much interest in either for years.

I never pushed the issue even though both of my children excel in writing, resisted the urge to push my goals on them and have let them be themselves. I want them to make choices based on their own values and beliefs they have so keenly developed throughout the years. And years later, I want them to look back on their life and career choices and feel confident that they made their own decisions without pressure from others.

Realistically, though, we rarely make decisions without guidance. Whether it is that gut feeling that holds us back or throws up a red alert or an inspiring mentor who we desire to emulate, we have influences all around us as we make decisions about our past, present and future.

We also have our faith family and our Catholic education as a foundation for guidance. If we choose to tap into this guidance and encourage our children to look to it as well, then what we eventually realize is that God's guidance has always been there and always will be.

— 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.



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

Pope Francis holds a candle as he visits the "Chicco" community, part of the L'Arche movement, in Ciampino, Italy, May 13. The visit was one of the pope's monthly acts of charity during the Holy Year of Mercy. The pope spent the afternoon with 18 people who have developmental disabilities.

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 with questions, suggestions or for more information.

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