



FAITH: A *FRESH TAKE*



July 14, 2016

Privacy Please, Parents

As a parent, you get accustomed to the lack of privacy when children are young. Years ago, when my children



were toddlers, I yearned to take a shower without someone ripping back the shower curtain or tuck myself away in a corner with a good book without a little face peeking around the corner to show me

“something” her brother had wiped on her arm.

Parenting is messy whether your children are 2 or 22, but privacy is something that we willingly sacrifice because our children’s needs come first. Now that my kiddos are teenagers, I don’t have anyone ripping back the shower curtain, but I do have a 17-year-old daughter who rummages noisily through my closet to find something to wear at 5 a.m. before school. I do have a 16-year-old son who wakes me up at 11:30 p.m. when the WiFi is down or he can’t find a phone charger. I lack privacy now, but in different ways.

However, the ironic part of parenting is that even though we aren’t always afforded the privacy we need, our kids crave it and deserve it. As

much as we want to be involved in every single aspect of their lives, there comes a time (and an age) where their social life, love life or school life no longer belongs to us. Yes, we need to monitor their activities, we need to ensure they are safe and we need to encourage them to make faith-filled, ethical choices, but we don’t have a right to know what they think at every moment of the day.

Hovering over a tween or teenager is often counter-productive. Instead, of gaining a “friend” or building a stronger bond, demanding your child’s attention when he or she needs space is a sure-fire way to push them away, both emotionally and physically.

I don’t like one bit knowing that my children have lives away from me. I don’t like wondering how they act with their friends or what they say about their family when we are not around. But the reality is that it doesn’t really matter if I like it or not. It’s their private life. And, in order to help them become faithful, adult members of society, they need their privacy even if we will never have ours back again.

— 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/JEFFREY DUBINSKY, Reuters

A man prays during a July 17 vigil at St. John the Baptist Church in Zachary, La., for the fatal attack on policemen in Baton Rouge, La. A former Marine dressed in black shot and killed

three Baton Rouge law enforcement officers that day, less than two weeks after a black man was fatally shot by police here in a confrontation that sparked nightly protests nationwide.

How Not to Panic!

Do you know how you react in a crisis?

We can probably recount details of the crises we’ve endured. Natural disasters, episodes of violence, catastrophic health diagnoses — if we live through one or more of these, they are etched into our minds quite vividly. But what about how we reacted during these events, and why does it matter?

In writing my new book, “Don’t Panic!: How to Keep Going When the Going Gets Tough,” I learned a great deal about the individual nature of our reactions during a crisis. Some responses are quite appropriate and help us get through it, sometimes even leading us to safety or to help save others. Other responses can actually be a hindrance to our ability to cope, such as if we allow our fear to turn into a hysteria that freezes us from taking any beneficial action.

I found a brilliant example of the real-life reactions of people during a crisis in an excerpt from Pliny the Younger, a young man who lived through the eruption of Mount Vesuvius and destruction of Pompeii and the surrounding area. Even in August of A.D. 79, people reacted differently — some freezing in place, others fleeing, some praying, some shaking their fist at God and declaring their anger as ashes and toxic debris and gasses descended on them.

Pliny the Younger survived by carefully assessing each route, avoiding the hordes that crowded certain areas. He even managed to save his mother, who had urged him to go without her!

That Pliny the Younger and his mother survived illustrates this possibility for us all in the face of a crisis:

We do not have to be plowed under by something catastrophic, nor do we have to give in to our fear. Even Pliny was fearful as he fled. By understanding how we react in a crisis, we can begin to embrace those reactions that are beneficial and reshape those that are not.

Calmness, for example, is hard for many people to have if life is in upheaval. But if we consciously remember to breathe, pause, pray and take time to understand what is going on, then we have a better chance of getting through it more resiliently.

Of course, in a fast-moving natural disaster, action often needs to be swift. Yet today, with modern technology that can predict at least the potential for problems, knowledge about better safety measures and provisions that we can stock in advance, there is plenty we can do before a crisis hits to give ourselves extra protection and peace of mind.

We can do our thinking ahead and be able to move fast if required.

My first real-life disaster was living through two tornadoes in one night. I was a child, and my parents had already practiced tornado drills with my brother and me, so we knew what to do. They were calm, we prayed together, and I do not remember being afraid at all.

Sometimes, we think that if we react to a crisis by crumbling into a heap of tears, we have failed. Perhaps some of us could react with less drama. But perhaps, too, it’s just an individual way of “emotional deep breathing” that releases powerful tears and fears and leaves us with a better ability to cope.

The more we understand about who we are in a crisis and prepare as best we can, the less we will feel the need to panic!

— Maureen Pratt

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



CNS/LISA JOHNSTON, St. Louis Review

Linyi Cao, a graduate student studying economics at Washington University in St. Louis, hunts for Pokemon Go stops around his neighborhood July 13. He was trying to level up his points so he could join the gym, as the game calls some locations, around the perimeter of the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis.

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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