

How to Balance, Career, Catholicism, and Kids

Objective

To give ourselves a break for not being “perfect” in any of these areas alone and begin to see ourselves as an integrated whole that is far greater than the sum of its parts.

And as a reminder...Teddy Roosevelt said it so well:

“It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself for a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat.”

Song Suggestion: The Summons

Bible & Catechism Readings

Matthew 1:18-25

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was **pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant** through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Catechism 2427:

Human work proceeds directly from persons created in the image of God and called to prolong the work of creation by subduing the earth, both with and for one another. Hence work is a duty: “If any one will not work, let him not eat.” Work honors the Creator’s gifts and the talents received from him

Catechism 2428:

In work, the person exercises and fulfills in part the potential inscribed in his nature. The primordial value of labor stems from man himself, its author and its beneficiary. Work is for man, not man for work. Everyone should be able to draw from work the means of providing for his life and that of his family, and of serving the human community

Vignette

In his early to mid-thirties, he found himself floundering with how to integrate his identity as worker/provider, faith head, and father. These roles all seemed mutually exclusive and that to honor

one would shortchange the others. This dilemma persisted until he stumbled upon the epiphany story of Thomas Merton.

“In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all these people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious self-isolation in a special world. . . .

This sense of liberation from an illusory difference was such a relief and such a joy to me that I almost laughed out loud. . . . I have the immense joy of being man, a member of a race in which God Himself became incarnate. As if the sorrows and stupidities of the human condition could overwhelm me, now that I realize what we all are. And if only everybody could realize this! But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun.”

What he realized after reading this miraculous story was that all the roles he thought he had to play were really indistinguishable from one another. He began to see himself as a tapestry and that the beauty of a tapestry can only be understood by standing back and seeing how the individual threads make up the whole.

Digging further into Thomas Merton he arrived at his conclusion:

“My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.”

Questions for Large/Small Group

How can you reframe a perceived failure in these 3 areas as a period when you were being sharpened?

How do you think you are viewed by your family, friends, and co-workers as it relates to balance?

Who is God calling you to BE today versus yesterday?

Can you have it all?

Action Plan:

1. Make a promise to yourself to read something, anything about God's plan as it relates to the male journey.
 - a. My favorite book of all time on this topic is, "The Way of the Wild Heart" by John Eldridge (as recommended to me by Anthony Your)

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