



Catholic Social Workers National Association

January 2008

Letter from the Director of Member Services:

As I begin my term as the Director of Member Services for the Catholic Social Workers National Association, I wanted to take the opportunity to introduce myself to you, the members. First, let me just say I am honored that God our Father has given me the opportunity to serve Him and I am also honored to be chosen by the association to serve you. I am also very excited that I can provide a service to others which brings together two important parts of my life: my Catholic faith and my role as a social worker. In order for me to serve you best, I feel you need to know who I am, my goals and my expectations for myself and CSWNA.

After being graduated from Franciscan University of Steubenville, I had the opportunity to be a case manager for a local mental health agency for seven years. I was recently graduated from Roberts Wesleyan College with a Master's degree in Social Work and took on a job as an Intensive Family Therapist. I currently live in Livonia, NY (near Rochester, NY) and I am an active member of St Peter's Parish in the Diocese of Buffalo, NY. Each day I continuously become the luckiest man alive as I wake up to the two amazing ladies in my life: my wife, Amanda and my four-year-old daughter, Gabrielle.

In taking on this position, I have many plans to bring in new members to CSWNA. I already have trips planned to Orlando and New Orleans to attend conferences and promote the association, our goals and mission. I am working on making connections with various colleges and universities that have social work programs to introduce the current and



graduating students to our mission and purpose to continual growth of CSWNA. I would like to develop a relationship

with organizations around the country that hold the values of CSWNA, such as Catholic Charities, to obtain members as well as corporate sponsorships. My goal is to welcome as many new members as possible during my time as director; however, it is my desire that we obtain members who work for and who are committed to the mission statement and code of ethics of CSWNA. Even though I have numerous plans and goals, I cannot do it myself. This leads me to a request for you, the members of CSWNA. First, please help me to get to know you. I love getting to know new people. Second, if you see opportunities for the association to gain new members, please let me know. I will constantly be looking for conferences, gatherings and other opportunities to spread the word. Lastly, please pray for CSWNA and for me as I serve you. I believe God has put me in this position for a reason and I plan to use it to honor Him as I consecrate my time to Our Lady. Please pray His Will be done.

Feel free to contact me anytime with information, questions or concerns at my email: DoMSCSWNA@catholic.org

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What are angels?



An angel is a pure spirit created by God. The Old Testament theology included the belief in angels: the name applied to certain spiritual beings or intelligences of heavenly residence, employed by God as the ministers of His will.

The English word "angel" comes from the Greek *angelos*, which means 'messenger'. In the Old Testament, with two exceptions, the Hebrew word for "angel" is *malak*, also meaning 'messenger'. The prophet Malachi took his name from this word. He was himself a messenger, and he prophesied about the coming of "the messenger of the covenant", Jesus Christ (Malachi 3:1).

Although the word "angel" in the Bible, meaning a messenger, nearly always applies to heavenly beings, it can occasionally apply to human messengers. Malachi himself said a priest was a messenger (*malak*) of the LORD of hosts (Malachi 2:7), and in the Book of Revelation the elders of the seven churches of Asia were called angels (1:20; 2:1 etc.). But when we meet messengers doing

supernatural things, there is no doubt they are heavenly beings - God's messengers, working for Him and for the ultimate benefit of mankind.

Why did God Create Angels?

The Creator Himself is so powerful and glorious that He cannot be approached in person by human beings. He alone "hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto: whom no man hath seen, nor can see (1 Timothy 6:16). Angels do not have man's shortcomings, and can therefore act for God and represent Him when communicating with men and women. They bridge the huge gap between the holiness and perfection of God in heaven and the shortcomings of dying people on this planet. Angels were made immortal (that is, never to die). Their eternal quality was spoken of by Jesus when he said:

"They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God. being the children of the resurrection." (Luke 20:35,36)

Jesus was saying that, in the same way as the angels (the children or "sons" of God) live for ever and are of one gender, so those who will be called the "sons" and "daughters" of God when Jesus returns will also live for ever and will not marry. (www.catholic.org)

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St. Vincent
HEALTH



If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two-
If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you'd do.

Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an Honored Guest.
And all the food you'd serve to Him would be the very best.

And you would keep assuring Him you're glad to have Him there-
That serving Him in your own home is joy beyond compare.

But--when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door
With arms outstretched in welcome to your Heavenly Visitor?

Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in?
Or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they'd been?

Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn't heard?
And wish you hadn't uttered that last, loud, hasty word?

Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out?
Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about?

And I wonder--if the Saviour spent a day or two with you,
Would you go right on doing the things you always do?

Would you go right on saying the things you always say?
Would life for you continue as it does from day to day.

Would your family conversation keep up its usual pace?
And would you find it hard each meal to say a table grace?

Would you sing the songs you always sing, and read the books you read,
And let Him know the things on which your mind and spirit feed?

Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you'd planned to go?
Or would you, maybe, change your plans for just a day or so?

Would you be glad to have Him meet your very closest friends?
Or would you hope they'd stay away until His visit ends?

Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on?
Or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone?

It might be interesting to know the things that you would do
If Jesus Christ in person came to spend some time with you.

Jennifer, married to Jim and mother of 4 children under 11, was seeking counseling for feelings of depression and some marital difficulties. I asked her to describe her family life.

"We're just so busy. What with running the kids around to practices and games, and work, and school stuff, we just don't have time to do anything together. And as for Jim (her husband) and I, forget it. We talk about schedules and that sort of thing, but I can't remember the last time we got a chance to pray together or have a really good talk. But my friends are all the same way, at least we're not alone, I guess."

Overcommittent is a plague that is killing the marriages and families of Christians and non-believers alike. It is a disease that is directly rooted in our society's value of the individual. We live in a world that revolves around, "me first" and making sure every person gets plenty of "me time." There are so many choices of so many exciting things to do, parents are afraid of cheating themselves and their children of a host of enriching experiences intended to make sure each individual gets the most out of his or her own life. If we and our kids aren't involved in 4,000 activities--on Wednesday--every person feels as if he or she is missing out and often has no problem complaining about it.

All of this results in families that have too many "I's" in them. My tele-counseling practice is filled with people who take their personal prayer life seriously on the one hand, but live as married singles on the other. Every day, I spend hours with families who would never think of missing mass, but don't so much think of their family as a "domestic church" as a collection of individuals living under the same roof.

There is a saying, "There is no 'I' in TEAM." This saying implies that the only thing that matters is the success of the group, not the individual members. There is something to this notion, but it doesn't apply perfectly to family life. After all, there is an "I" in "FAMILY." Although both are groups of individuals dedicated to important work, there are important differences between a team and a family. A team exists to get a job done. To win the big game. But a family exists to make us human. Each individual member of the family group brings certain gifts to the table and has certain needs that must be met, and the character of the family will largely be defined by the strengths and weaknesses of its individual members. The family that doesn't respect the individual needs and strengths of its members—for instance by trying to look too similarly to some other family--will eventually collapse from trying to be something it's not.

Even so, it is possible for there to be too many "I's" in "FAMIIIIIIILY" and that doesn't work so well either. While a family must respect the personalities of the individuals that make it up, the family also needs to remember that the work of being a family; of learning to love and serve one

another and create a genuine community of love is what turns individual people into authentic human beings.

An analysis of 50 years of research on the importance of rituals and routines in family life (e.g, family meals, meaningful family and couple prayer times, game night, weekly family day, etc.) shows that the presence of regular family rituals and routines is almost more important to the strength of the family and the emotional health of the family members than the actual composition of the family itself. For instance, a family that suffers divorce or the death of a member but maintains high levels of regular rituals and routines will, generally speaking, be healthier than an intact family that does little together. Simple activities like the ones I listed above significantly improve marital satisfaction, decrease risk of depression and other emotional problems in family members, and lower the risk of behavioral and school problems in children.

Genesis tells us, "It is not good for man to be alone." We might do well to remember that God was speaking to families today as much as he was to Adam at the dawn of creation. When families neglect their communal life, they end up living out the most painful kind of solitude—loneliness in the presence of others—and each individual suffers for it.

While it is a wonderful thing to pursue enriching work and activities, and giving back to one's community and Church is a Christian duty, there is no activity more important and no duty more significant to the Christian than the work of learning to serve and living to love. There is no institution more capable of teaching adults and children to do this work than the family. That's what Catholics call the family "a school of love."

Remember what St Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1-3. "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing."

If we win the Employee of the Year award but can't make time to celebrate our spouse's birthday. If we fill our kids' schedules with music lessons, sports, and other "enrichment activities" but don't teach them how to get along well with their siblings and do their chores cheerfully. If our Church bible study group thinks we're the best thing since padded kneelers, but—truth be told-- we just don't enjoy the company of our spouse and kids, then we are failing the Faith in our homes. We are simply mouthing the words of the Creed while we kneel before the altar of the Cult of Individuality.

St. Paul said that the world must be able to look at us and say, "Look at those Christians, see how they love." Now's your big chance to evangelize the culture. This week, sit down with your mate, make whatever cuts are necessary, and carve out the time you need to do something radical--be a family.