



Newsletter – January 2023

CFSM Singapore

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THE ABSENT FATHER

SEE

In the Book of Genesis, Adam and Eve was chosen by God to be united as family. Adam was the father of Cain, Abel and Seth. In the Holy Family, Joseph was the head of the family and the adoptive father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his book, *St Joseph, The Man Jesus Called Father*, Dr George Kaitholil, SSP, said that “The Catholic Church urges fathers to cultivate a strong devotion to St Joseph, whom God chose to care for his Son. The Church urges believers to teach their sons through the example of St Joseph about the virtues of fatherhood”. The author further states that “A man really becomes father not merely by generating a child, but by providing material and spiritual resources for the welfare and development of the child in the best possible way”.

What happens, then, when the father is absent in the family? Here are some reasons why the father is absent:

1. Divorce or Judicial Separation

Though the Court grants the order for divorce or judicial separation, the Court recognizes the importance of a father in the family and thus grants custodial and access rights to the father to see his child/children. However, we will not be wrong in saying that most of the time the father is absent in the family.

2. Feeling Unworthy

Some writers have said that sometimes some fathers want to be the “perfect father”, but they abandon their family when they feel that they are “inadequate” and this feeling becomes overwhelming. They feel ashamed. Sometimes, it is because of their inability to provide the best to the family. However, they do realize that leaving the family can be a difficult decision to make.

3. “Deadbeat Fathers”

Due to the struggles with alcoholism, drugs, addiction and criminal offences, these fathers consider themselves not suitable fathers for their children. Here again is the feeling of unworthiness and inadequacy. They feel that they are failures in life.

4. Financial Obligations

Some fathers feel that they are there to only provide the finance for the well-being of the family. They fail to realize what it means to be a father and what their role entails.

5. Starting Over

There many fathers who feel that they have married the wrong person and wants to start all over again. These fathers can have many regrets and feel that they must move on and not remain rooted in an unhappy relationship.

In the website, dadsforlife.sg it is stated that in Singapore **“Because single-parent families are often female-headed, a growing number of children grow up with non-resident fathers. The 2009 Fatherhood Public Perception Survey cited earlier found that among divorced, separated, or widowed parents with children aged 15 years or younger, 65% of the time, children lived with their mothers, while only 20% of the time, children lived with the fathers.”**

Across America, there are approximately 18.3 million children who live without a father in the home, comprising 1 in 4 US children. (Kramer, 2021)

Many statistics have shown that dire consequences happen to families with absent fathers. Some of them relating to children are:

1. Low self-esteem and feeling abandoned
2. Behavioural problems
3. Truancy and poor academic performance
4. Delinquency and youth crime
5. Promiscuity and teenage pregnancy
6. Mental disorders
7. Physical health problems
8. Mortality rate i.e. lower life expectancy

Thus, the reader will know that this is a serious challenge to the family unit. We pray that all children will have a father like St Joseph in families that emulate the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

JUDGE

Personal Reflection

1. Am I grateful for my father’s love for me and my family?
2. If my father leaves my family, how would I feel about it?
3. What can I do as a son or daughter to maintain family harmony?

Christian Reflection

1. What does the Bible say about the role of a father in the family?
2. What does Jesus say about fathers? Anything specific?
3. How does the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church and the Vatican documents help us, fathers, to overcome the challenges we face as fathers?

ACT

1. Being a father what can I do to overcome any feeling of inadequacy as a father in my family?
2. What can I do to support fathers among my relatives, friends, parish and society?
3. What is the role of our Movement in the above reality? What have we done so far?

(Article by Gabriel)

“To be wise you must first have reverence for the Lord. If you know the Holy One, you have understanding .” Proverbs 9:10

NEWS



CFSM Leader's Retreat Friday 13 Jan 2023 to Sunday 15 Jan 2023

CFSM Exco will be attending all three days starting at 8pm on Friday to Sunday 5pm (Not stay-in)

On Friday 13 Jan at OLPS, St Paul's room, 2nd Level

Saturday 14 Jan to Sunday 15 Jan at St Francis Xavier Seminary at Upper Bukit Timah, St Gregory's room

CFSM Base Group Leaders are invited on Saturday 14 Jan (10am-6pm)