

JPIC Corner

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Coordinator's Note

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Adoption of Children

Part of fostering a culture of life is the promotion of adoption as an option. I recently had the opportunity to talk about adoption with a friend who has three adopted children from Central America. She stated that an advantage of adoption is helping to provide unwanted children with a better future. For my friend, adoption is a “win-win” situation. It is a rewarding experience for the children as well as for the parents.

My friend added that her brothers and sister treat her children equally as their nieces and nephews, and their children see them as equal cousins. Likewise, her parents from the outset accepted them as true granddaughters and grandson, no different from their blood related grandchildren.

There are different opinions concerning interracial and intercultural adoptions. My friend is not opposed to these because for her, interracial adoptions show how families can live together regardless of color. Additionally, she has no problems if her children wish to contact their biological parents. Neither does she have problems with her children exploring their Central American heritage.

My friend emphasized, however, that adoption is not for everyone, especially for those who cannot fully accept children as equal to blood relatives. I recall when discussing adoption in the classroom, one of my students mentioned that her aunt did family genealogy and would not include her because she is not blood related. Thanks be to God her adopted parents affirmed her as a true

*Photo for
illustration only*



Adoption is a choice to choose life.

daughter and equal to everyone. The student was at peace with this because she experiences love and acceptance from her adopted parents.

The scriptures remind us that God in “love destined us for adoption to Himself through Jesus Christ in accord with the favor of His will... [From God we] receive a spirit of adoption through which we cry ‘Abba Father.’ [Indeed] as proof that [we] are chil-

Continued on page 2

Did You Know?

- **Around 7,000 infants born in the United States are adopted each year. (Source)**
- **In the U.S., fewer infants are available for adoption now than in the past. (Source)**
- **About 2% of U.S. children (1.8 million) are adopted. (Source)**
- **424,000 children were in foster care in the USA in FY 2009. 115,000 of these children are waiting for adoption. (Source)**
- **In FY 2009, a child in foster care stayed there for an average of 26.7 months. (Source)**

1. *Ephesians 1:5; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6*
2. *Pope Benedict XVI, Jesus of Nazareth. NY: Doubleday, 2007, p. 138*
3. *Ibid, p. 139*
4. *Isaiah 66:12; 49:15*

Adoption of Children *Continued...*

dren, God sent His Son into our hearts crying out 'Abba Father.'¹

This sums up our fundamental relationship with God. In Christ, we become God's sons and daughters. We can call God our Father and, "To name God as Father thus becomes a summons to us to live as a 'child,' as a son or daughter."² As adopted sons and daughters, we also receive love, comfort and compassion within the motherhood of God:³ "As a mother comforts her son, so will I comfort you...Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you."⁴

The human experience of adoption can in some ways be seen as a parallel to the above reality. In this sense, the adoption of children reflects the likeness of God's love and respect for the dignity of all children. It is a visible expression of adoption, participating in the motherhood and fatherhood of God.

God calls us to choose life.⁵ Adoption is a choice to choose life. If we as a culture succeed in making adoption a more visible option, and if we can place ourselves in solidarity with families who are will-

ing to adopt children who are abandoned by their parents for various reasons, we are more likely to create an alternative to abortion. Indeed, "true parental love is ready to go beyond the bonds of flesh and blood in order to accept children from other families, offering them whatever is necessary for their well being."⁶ This is truly an expression acknowledging that we are all sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father.

[This article is also available online](#)



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We are all children of our Heavenly Father.

Adopted

I will be seventy eight years old by the time this is printed. I am glad to share how the experience of being adopted has affected my life.

First of all I do not recall being adopted. I was an infant, maybe a few months old, when Steve and Mary Tesar took me home with them to be their very own. I be-



lieve I was still in the hospital at that time but I am not sure about that. I am sure I was loved and cared for by my new parents.

At the time of my adoption the law forbid any information being shared about my natural parents or shared with them about my new parents. Only recently was that law changed. By then

I had given up looking for my natural parents. When the adoption became legal I had a new last name, Tesar. My old family name was Griffith, an Irish name I learned much later. My new parents gave me a

by Br. Joe Tesar, MSC

middle name too - Keith. Keith was a friend of theirs. When I was old enough to know about such things I decided I didn't like that name, but I still have it.

When I was three years I thought I learned how we get babies. We lived in Cheyenne, Wyoming. My mother drove to Denver, Colorado with me and we went into this big fancy house. I remember waiting with her in the sitting room where there was a large fire place with a large Mickey Mouse doll standing on one side of it and a Donald Duck doll standing on the other side. After a while someone brought in a little girl baby and we took her home. I

Adopted *Continued...*

was disappointed. I wanted to bring Mickey Mouse and/or Donald Duck home.

That little baby girl is my sister, not natural sister, who is now Agnes Wagner, mother of eight children and fifteen grand children and one great grand child on the way.

When I was ten years old my adopting father died. Mother brought him back to Galena, her home town, to be buried. Some of my cousins were telling me that he was not my real father. I didn't know what they were talking about, but would soon learn. Mom gathered my sister and myself and told us that were adopted. She explained how she and dad picked us out of several children to be their own. I think, to make us feel special, she added that many parents were stuck with whatever children came to them, but we were selected by them to be loved and taken care of and brought up.

When I was about thirteen and thinking about becoming a priest there was some question about my being legitimate. It was decided that since my natural father signed the birth certificate I must be okay. For high school I went to the minor seminary operated by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. One year around Saint Patricks day the Irish kids were saying there were only two kinds of people in the world, the Irish and those who wish they were Irish. This irritated the Slovaks and Germans and me. I figured I was Bohemian like my adopting father.

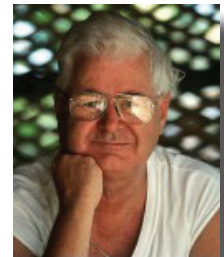
Even though I felt this strongly I found myself interested in Irish songs, not the American Broadway songs, but the folk songs, and the history of Ireland. Now they tell me I look Irish, and my voice sounds Irish, but I was at least fifty years old before I accepted the blood I was born with and stopped trying to sing like a Italian Tenor and allowed my Irish singing voice to have its way.

For a long time I thought about trying to find my natural mother, but was afraid that if I found her and she was destitute I would be in no way able to support her. I shared my worries with one of our wise old priests and he advised me to let go of those who, for whatever reason, had let go of me.

As a Missionary of the Sacred Heart I served in Papua New Guinea for seventeen years, with a trip home every three years. This called for a lot of time in airports, and I often found myself studying faces to see if any looked like mine.

Yes I was adopted, but my adopting Father and Mother were the parents I knew. My little sister, who is three years younger and ten years wiser than I, is my sister. I thank God for them and for my sister and her offspring whose uncle Joe I will always be. Peace.

Brother Joe Tesar, MSC



Adoption in the United States: A Quick Glance



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115,000 of the 424,000 children in foster care in the United States are waiting to be adopted.

- In 2002, nearly 2 million people in the United States had adopted children. Most adoptions, over 50,000 a year, are of children who had been in foster care. The average age of a child in foster care who is waiting to be adopted is approximately 8 years old, and is increasing over time.
- Fewer babies are available for adoption today than in the past. The percentage of infants in the US who are given up for adoption has decreased from 9% of babies born before 1973 to around 1% of those born between 1996 and 2002. Currently, around 7,000 infants are adopted each year.
- Well over 12,000 children were adopted by US families from other countries in Fiscal Year 2009.

Is God Calling You to Open Your Home and Heart to a Child?

God calls us to choose life and to respect the dignity of each human being. One way we can help foster a culture that respects life is by opening our hearts, and sometimes our homes, to a child in need. Remember, sometimes God's plan for us is different from our plan. It is important that we stay open to the workings of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Ways We Can Open Our Home and Hearts to a Child:

- Consider whether God is calling you to adopt or foster a child whose biological parents are unable to care for him or her.
- Help a friend, neighbor, relative or parishioner balance parenting with work or educational obligations by offering to babysit for their children on an occasional or regular basis.
- Get to know our children's friends and their parents. Do you have the impression that one of your child's friends is facing difficulties at home, doesn't always get enough to eat or spends a lot of time unsupervised? Invite him or her over for dinner or to spend time at your house after school.
- Help a woman facing an unexpected pregnancy. There are a myriad of ways you might be able to help, from simply listening to her and supporting her emotionally, to driving her to doctor's appointments, to opening your home temporarily while she looks for permanent housing.
- Be a mentor. Some programs look for people willing and able to serve as mentors to children in the community, but you may not have to look that far. Perhaps a younger relative really looks up to you. Spending extra time with this person could make a positive difference in both your lives.



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Sisters by adoption

Did You Know?

Some personality traits, such as being shy or outgoing, are known to be genetic, yet preliminary (not final) findings from the SIBS study show that adoptive siblings are similar to each other in other ways, such as in motivation levels and academic achievement. ([Source](#))

A Couple Common Adoption Concerns

Concern #1: Isn't adoption extremely expensive?

Response: The cost for adoption varies according to the type of adoption and circumstances. International adoptions are generally more expensive than other types of adoptions. Whereas 93% of international adoptions cost \$10,000 or more, over half of adoptions through the U.S. Foster Care System, are at no cost to the adoptive parents and half of private domestic adoptions cost less than \$5,000 ([see source](#)). There are often several resources available to help reduce the expense such as the Federal Tax Adoption Credit ([more information](#)). Also, in most states, the public child welfare agency reimburses families for adoption-related costs for parents who adopt children from foster care.

Concern #2: Do adopted children do as well as biological children?

Response: This question is a source of great debate and several studies. If you are interested in this topic, one study you might want to follow is the [Sibling Interaction and Behavior Study \(SIBS\)](#), which was launched in 1999 and is still in progress. Preliminary findings are available (released in 2002) but please note that these findings are not final. ([See preliminary findings](#)) It might also help to remember that parenting doesn't come with guarantees. If you are seriously considering adoption, work with a skilled adoption counselor to identify and address your questions and concerns and to help prepare you for any special circumstances you might face.

Ways We Can Promote Adoption

While God may not be calling us to adopt a child, we can still foster a culture of life by raising awareness of adoption as an alternative to parenting or abortion, and by helping support people who are adopted, choose to adopt, or choose adoption for their child.

- **Be understanding and supportive of people who choose adoption for their child.** Adoption is a very difficult decision, and it is also a very loving and selfless one. Don't criticize or judge a parent who decides that adoption is the best option for their child. Negative attitudes towards adoption from friends and family can make a difficult situation even more difficult, and may place more pressure on a woman facing an unexpected pregnancy who feels that she cannot parent the child to choose abortion.
- **Learn more about the adoption process and resources in your area.** By learning more about how adoption works, the kinds of adoptions available, and where someone can find adoption counseling and support throughout the process, you are well prepared in case someone you know faces an unplanned pregnancy and wants to explore adoption as an option.
- **Talk about adoption in your parish.** Consider inviting someone who has personal experience with adoption to talk to your pro-life group or host an adoption information session for couples in your parish. You can also increase the visibility of adoption by periodically including information about adoption and area adoption services in your parish bulletin and on your website, and by placing informational pamphlets in the back of church.
- **Be willing to talk about it.** Some birth parents report struggling after the fact because their friends and family didn't want to talk about it, or expected them to "get over it" right away. Let your friend or relative know that he or she can talk to you.

Adoption Resources

Check out the links below for more adoption resources:

General:

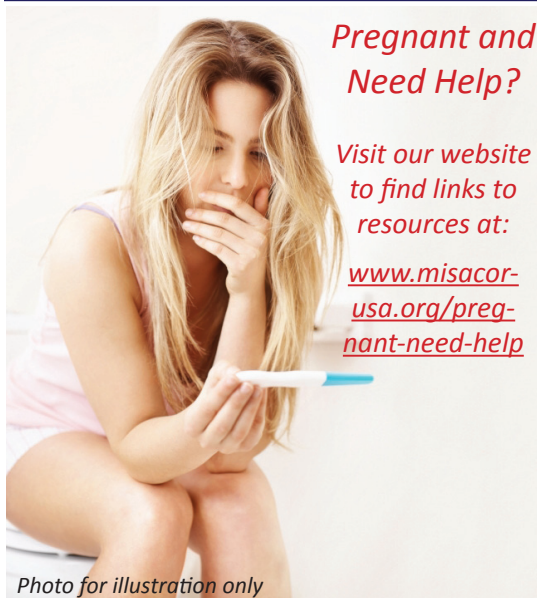
- [National Foster Care & Adoption Directory Search](#)
- [Pros of each kind of adoption](#)

For Birth Parents

- [Find a Catholic Charities Near You](#)
- [Exploring Your Options](#)
- [Selecting Adoptive Parents](#)
- [A Birth Parent's Bill of Rights](#)
- [Staying in Touch with Your Child After Adoption](#)
- [Legal Considerations](#)
- [Birthparent Voices](#)

For Couples Considering Adoption

- [How to Adopt](#)
- [Parenting After Adoption](#)
- [Talking About Adoption](#)
- [Funding Adoption](#)
- [Adoption Home Study](#)



Pregnant and Need Help?

Visit our website to find links to resources at:

www.misacorusa.org/pregnant-need-help

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Types of Adoption

In the past, almost all adoptions were closed. Today, there are many more options:

Open Adoption

In an open adoption, adoptive parents (and often the child) and birth parents interact with each other directly.

Semi-Open Adoption

In semi-open adoptions, contact between the birth parent(s) and adoptive parents is handled through a third party, such as an agency caseworker or a lawyer.

Confidential (Closed) Adoption

In confidential adoptions, identifying information is not exchanged and there is no contact between the birth parents and the adoptive parents.

See [Pros of Each Kind of Adoption](#) & [Cons of Each Type](#)

At the Crossroads: In Defense of Life

A Excerpt from an article written by Fr. Benjamin Alforque, MSC, a Missionary of the Sacred Heart from the Philippines who works in St. Catherine of Alexandria Parish in Riverside, California. Originally published in St. Catherine of Alexandria Parish Bulletin.

...Today's discussions on the legality of abortion, and our Catholic movement to repel the Supreme Court's Roe vs. Wade decision, pursues the arguments on constitutional-legal and religious-moral grounds. The fundamental question that is being raised is this: does the Constitution define when life begins? From the Catholic perspective, the answer to this question covers wide ranging consequences that impact on married love, responsible parenthood and family planning methods, like contraception, abortifacient contraceptives, abortion and infanticide.

Roe vs. Wade majority decision (Section IX) says: "We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer." In the absence of a legal definition, the legal arena is a free-for-all.

Instead, the majority decision considered the rights of women over their own body, and their right to privacy as the basis of this landmark decision. The appellant claimed her right to choose to terminate pregnancy or not, citing the "concept of personal 'liberty' embodied in the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause; or in personal,

marital, familial, and sexual privacy said to be protected by the Bill of Rights or its penumbras..or among those rights reserved to the people by the Ninth Amendment.." (Section V). Whereas, the fetus, for as long as it is considered as such, has no legal personality. Thus, it cannot have constitutional and legal protection of the right to life of the unborn.

Modern experience of developing/underdeveloped Third World countries shows that legalized abortion is part of the whole package peddled by multi-national corporations and big business to control population growth and the accumulation of capital and profits. My position is that overpopulation is a myth. Population control is designed to control the distribution of economic and political power in the hands of the few. Biblical experience already spoke about this. And the Church has its own moral definition on the beginning of life and its absolute value. Between the State and its laws, and the Church and its morals, which one do we choose? How do we advocate our choice?

– Fr. Ben Alforque, MSC

Ask an MSC

Have questions?

Ask one of our members.

www.ask.misacor-usa.org

Please Join Us in Prayer

Please join us in prayer for everyone affected by the recent shooting in Tuscon, AZ, especially for the victims and their families.

Tell us what you think!

How can we raise more awareness of and promote adoption in our communities?



Email Br. Warren at jpac@misacor-usa.org.

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