



INSIDE:

+ **Inspiring Men of
Faith**



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Editor's Note:

With Father's Day coming up, in this issue we asked our writers to describe a man in their life who has been a "spiritual father" or "spiritual mentor" to them. We hope you enjoy their responses.

Father Scully is Truly a Follower of St. Francis of Assisi

Jordan Schmeidler

Hays, Kansas

There is a great tale of St. Francis of Assisi from an early account. Francis was approached by one of his zealous companions who begged him to go preaching with him in the town square. Francis took him after much persistence.

Both of these men, clothed in the garment of the poor beggar, began walking through the town square not uttering a word. When they made it to the other side, Francis' fellow frater (brother) asked him with great fervor when they were going to preach. St. Francis told him in a fatherly, yet brotherly, way that they just had. The moral of the story is this: Often one does not have to use words to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but they/we do so by the way we live our lives.

Enter Father Mike Scully, OFM Capuchin. Fr. Mike is a follower of St. Francis. He wears a similar brown habit and takes the same evangelical vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Many of you who read this article will probably know him or know of him, or you might just know his voice from his weekly radio talk show, "Message at the Top."

Fr. Mike is one, to me, who truly and affectionately deserves his relational title as father. I first met him when he was pastor of my home parish as I was navigating the life of a high schooler. I still remember the first homily I heard of his as he made the connection of the Sunday Gospel with a relevant song by the artist Pink.

It piqued my interest, and I remember sitting upright in the pew to listen, rather than hearing the same mundane

homily where eyes begin to wander. Faith became relevant to me. His preaching was and is inspiring. His preaching sparked an interest in my Christian faith as I began making ties of the ordinary with the sacred. His preaching wasn't filled with shame or blaming but followed the preaching of Christ of loving God, neighbor, and self.

Fr. Mike Scully taught me two important lessons as we drew closer over the years: To be a bearer of peace and to love God and others liberally. These lessons were not taught from the pulpit but rather from daily interactions, from actions. Fr. Mike preaches the Gospel, but he also shows and lives the Gospel.

To grow into a coming-of-age time of my life and have Fr. Mike as a pastor, friend, mentor, brother, teacher, and

Father Scully is Truly a Follower of St. Francis of Assisi (Continued)

father-like figure helped me to form my identity. He showed me that the chaos of the world doesn't have to consume me, but I can listen to the Prince of Peace to become peace to others. Finally, and most importantly, Fr. Mike showed me how deep the Father's love is and how we are called to love in very liberal ways. The Gospel was and is the lens of how to encounter others.

Fr. Mike Scully served as that spiritual father-like figure to me through an important time of my life. He helped form me in my faith, in my call to service of others, and in my ability to relate the ordinary to the sacred.

Love is the word when I think of what highlights Fr. Mike's preaching. Love is the

word that seems to guide his life and that I love so much about him. Love is by far the most important commandment. It is, as St. Fulgentius of Ruse stated in a sermon, "Love, indeed, is the source of all good things; it is an impregnable defense and the way that leads to heaven. He who walks in love can neither go astray nor be afraid. Love guides him, protects him, and brings him to his journey's end. Christ made love the stairway that would enable all Christians to climb to heaven. Hold fast to it, therefore, in all sincerity, give one another practical proof of it, and by your progress in it, make your ascent together."

Fr. Mike is not St. Francis. He is a follower of Christ, like

St. Francis, and like you and me. We all have footprints we're trying to follow as we seek to live the radical Gospel of Jesus Christ. He has been that practical proof of love of God to me. It's the guidance towards love himself that makes Fr. Mike an important spiritual father to me.

Happy Father's Day to all those who have served as spiritual fathers to us. In the words of St. Francis of Assisi, "Peace and all good."



Jordan Schmeidler is a resident of Hays, Kansas.

Fathers in the Bible Offer Us Inspirational Examples

Cheryl Glassman

St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church

Psalm 103:13 reads, "As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him."

We have been blessed with so many wonderful examples of fatherhood, especially within the words of the Bible. As far as examples, I start with the first

man, Adam. Adam, being the first earthly person to become a father, had no previous person to learn from. But Adam did have God, who helped Adam understand nothing is hidden from God and that we are responsible for our own actions.

Then there was Noah. What a situation he put his family in! I'm sure Noah's wife and children thought he was

a little off when he said the earth would flood and they would spend 40 days and nights in a boat with every living creature. Noah's fatherly instincts give rise to the thought that every day of our lives we are called to be God's servants, and, like fatherhood, it is a life-long commitment.

Then, there is Abraham. Wow! Remember how he

Fathers in the Bible Offer Us Inspirational Examples (Continued)

was willing to sacrifice his only son? I'm sure as his son Isaac grew and also became a father, Isaac remembered his father's faith. What a powerful gift to share with your family. Also, I wonder if it was hard for Isaac to follow in his father's footsteps. I'm sure some of my friends who are fathers feel that way, even my own son, following in his father's footsteps. But I also believe by seeing Abraham's strength, and as my own son has watched his father's work ethic, they both became confident that God hears our prayers and wants us to be trustworthy.

I next think about Jacob. Jacob was a great Old Testament leader, but he did have some faults, such as favoring one son over the others. Remember Joseph and his awesome coat? This, too, teaches us the lesson that we are all precious in God's sight, and, in their humanness, fathers might make mistakes. But it is important to remember, God never stops loving us and will help us overcome and see our mistakes if we take time to see or hear God's message.

Speaking of listening to God, what about Moses? Moses "fathered" the Israelites. I think of all the things they went through, and how many times the Israelite children turned from the message God had entrusted to Moses. Like the Israelites, I didn't always listen to my dad or follow what he told me to do. But, in the end, it was obvious my ways were not always leading me in the right direction.

Then there is Joseph, the earthly father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I see Joseph in so many of my friends, and my husband Rick, and my own father. Joseph was a man of integrity, humility, honesty, faith and strength.

Each Biblical father figure can be seen in the men around us. Fatherly--caring for their families the best way they can--not always perfect, but examples of each of the Biblical forefathers who faced doubt, pain, adversity, and joy. All of these men lead us to God the father, who is always faithful and loving to each and every one of his children.

On a personal note, I have

been singing at church for as long as I can remember. I attended grade school at Jefferson East (anyone remember?) and we had church services at school during the week.

That being said, I learned quite a bit of church music during the school year. On Sundays, I would attend Mass with my parents. My dad, who wasn't Catholic at the time (he grew up Methodist), would always sing the songs with me, belting out harmonies. Even if Dad hadn't heard the song before, he sang with me. His rich baritone voice always made me smile, and I was so proud to sing along with him. Dad, who is 95 and doing well, reminds me each and every day how I am thankful for his love, for my husband and father of my children, Rick, and, most importantly, for God the Father, who blessed us with all the fathers who have gone before us. Happy Father's Day!



Cheryl Glassman is the Minister of Music at St. Nicolas of Myra Catholic Church in Hays.

Be That Guy Who Spiritually Mentors Another Person

Reverend Shay Craig

St. Andrews Episcopal Church

St. Michael's Episcopal Church

I am an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church, my dearest sister was a priest as well, and my beloved aunt was the third woman ordained a bishop in the United Methodist Church. I've worked in two dioceses, served five churches and been an active and faithful Christian for 40 years. And for all those reasons, I find it deeply depressing to admit, I have no "spiritual father."

In our tradition, we ordain to Holy Orders people of all races, genders and sexual orientations. We have an "open table," meaning that I won't check your baptismal credentials before welcoming you to the Lord's table. We build our lives of faith on the firm foundations of scripture, tradition and reason. For all of these reasons I am a fiercely proud member of the branch of the Jesus Movement called the Episcopal Church.

And yet, here is a place where my churchy upbringing, my vast professional experience and the relative "woke-ness" of

my tradition have failed me.

I can't think of a single man whom I can describe as "a spiritual father." I can think of no man who formed my faith, nurtured my spiritual life or guided me on the path to my vocation. Isn't that sad? And because there is a blank slate here in my mind, it makes me wonder what I want in a "spiritual father," if one were to come along some time.

First, I would want to be seen. See every person in your life as a child of God. As they are now. Not as you would have them be. Not if they cut their hair. Not if they sobered up. Not if they changed their mind about that one issue. Everyone in your path is a child of God, and the potential is there for you to be the person who helps them grow in their faith. But only if you love them for who they are. Be that guy who "sees" them.

Secondly, I would want to feel safe. Wherever they are in their journey of faith, they will need someone they can trust with their fears and doubts. They will need a person who will keep confidences, who will not

judge, who will protect the sanctity of their conversation. And, because we are talking about a "spiritual father" here, someone who will stand up for them. If you can, from a position of power or privilege, ease the way for someone to follow in your footsteps, do. If you can name and dismantle biases that are obstacles to their growth, do. Be that guy who helps to assure that both the journey and the destination are safe.

Thirdly, and this may seem contradictory to the last item, I would want my "spiritual father" to be bold. To state his own faith. Describe moments of doubt, experiences that tested his belief, times when he felt close to or abandoned by God. Invite other people into the story of You and God and be humbled when you are invited into theirs. The name for this is shepherding, or perhaps mentoring. It has a long tradition in other fields, and let's just say there is some Biblical precedent. Be that guy who knows that authentic is not the same as weak.

Finally, believe. Believe that God has a plan for the

Be That Guy Who Spiritually Mentors Another Person (Continued)

person in front of you. Believe that God has filled them with potential, and the world is just waiting for them to live into it. Believe that God has made you one of the people who can help them feel that God has made them perfect. Believe that God has placed you here in this season of their life for no other reason than to see, trust, mentor and believe in them. Only God knows what

this person will amount to. Be that guy about whom they can say, "He believed in me."

I invite you (and now I am looking at you, fathers, grandfathers, father figures, Scout leaders, team coaches, professionals, professors, and role models) not to let another Christian look back over 40 years of faith and find no spiritual father along the way. If you can, if the situation

arises, if the person is put in your path, if you feel the Spirit nudge you, help them feel seen, safe, trusted, believed in--in short, loved. If you can do that, you will be that guy.



The Rev. Shay Craig is Vicar of St. Andrew's and St. Michael's Episcopal Churches in Hays.

"FOR YOU DID NOT RECEIVE THE SPIRIT OF SLAVERY TO FALL BACK INTO FEAR, BUT YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION AS SONS, BY WHOM WE CRY, "ABBA! FATHER!" - ROMANS 8:15

"GOD IS THE ARCHETYPAL FATHER; ALL OTHER FATHERHOOD IS A MORE OR LESS IMPERFECT COPY OF HIS PERFECT FATHERHOOD." - F.F. BRUCE

"AS A FATHER SHOWS COMPASSION TO HIS CHILDREN, SO THE LORD SHOWS COMPASSION TO THOSE WHO FEAR HIM. FOR HE KNOWS OUR FRAME; HE REMEMBERS THAT WE ARE DUST." - PSALM 103:13

"BEING A GODLY FATHER REQUIRES MUCH PERSEVERANCE AND PRAYER AS WE SEEK GOD'S GUIDANCE IN BEING THE TYPES OF FATHERS HE WANTS US TO BE." - JONATHAN FALWELL

"SEE WHAT KIND OF LOVE THE FATHER HAS GIVEN TO US, THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD; AND SO WE ARE. THE REASON WHY THE WORLD DOES NOT KNOW US IS THAT IT DID NOT KNOW HIM." - 1 JOHN 3:1