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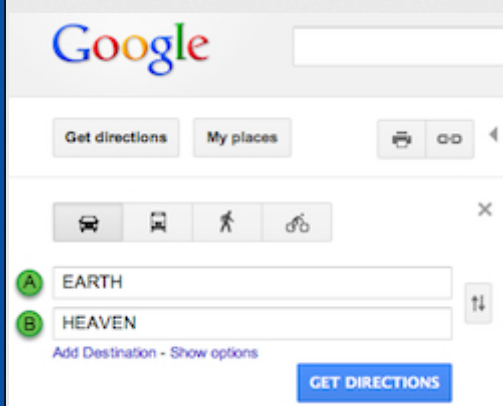
Stations of the Cross 2021

Make a Gift of Ourselves



By Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers '88

In the days before global positioning systems, Mapquest, and Google Earth, men were stereotyped as reluctant to ask for directions. You know the scene: a couple is driving somewhere and, unable to find their destination, the wife turns to her husband and says, "Honey, maybe we should stop and ask for directions."



Thanks to modern technology, those days are gone forever! In this day and age, it is virtually impossible to get lost. However, a GPS may be able to get you from Portland to Chicago; Mapquest may be able to get you to your favorite downtown restaurant; Google Earth may show you the best route from New York to Australia, but no amount of technology in the world will get you from

earth to heaven!

What Jesus says in the Gospel is true of many men today: we are "troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9: 36). When a man would rather spend time looking at pornography or "hanging out with the fellas" than have a meaningful relationship with his wife and children, he is lost. When a man approaches dating as a conquest, he is lost. When a man becomes

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wealthy at the expense of the poor, he is lost. When a man under the influence of drugs or alcohol beats his wife, passing on a legacy of violence and abuse to his children, he is lost.

Jesus calls husbands and fathers who are lost to use the navigational tools of prayer, forgiveness, and mercy to find our way back to our Father in heaven. Just as Jesus calls men to the priesthood to serve his bride, the Church, he also calls men through baptism to be priests of the domestic Church, the Church of the home.

The main job of a priest is to offer sacrifice. A husband and father exercises his priestly ministry through the offering he makes of himself and his daily activities. This offering should offer as a spiritual sacrifice all of our work and prayers, the happenings of our ordinary married and family life, our daily labor, our mental and physical relaxation—even the hardships of life.



Husbands and fathers can unite their sacrifice to Christ's offering in the Eucharist. The holy sacrifice of the Mass should lead fathers to an intimate and personal relationship with God, uniting him so closely to Christ that the Eucharist becomes the very soul and center of his spiritual and family life.

The Church tells us that the priest of the home must accept the responsibility of living the Gospel in faith, and proclaiming it in word and deed. Fathers are not only called to preach the Gospel but also, and above all, to live the Gospel by setting a good example for their children.



If our children see us living the faith with fidelity and joy, then we can have confidence that our love for Christ will be written into the hearts of our sons and daughters. When we do this, the Catholic faith will become more than a fond memory that fades with time. A father's living witness will become his enduring legacy, a precious gift for his children, and a sure sign of hope in God's endless mercy and love.

Stories of Hope

Any man can be a daddy. It takes a real man to be a father. Before any of this can happen, we fathers must have the courage to take the first big step: we must dethrone the reign of sin in ourselves so that we can welcome Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives. The sooner we begin to appreciate the great gift we have been given, and begin living the mission of service to our families, the faster we will arrive at a civilization of love and a culture of life. Let us make a gift of ourselves to our wives and children, and participate deeply and personally in the fatherhood of God.

Harold Burke-Sivers '88 is a deacon in the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon. He is also an internationally-known [speaker and author](#) on spirituality, evangelization, and marriage and family life, and regularly contributes to EWTN. He recently contributed a chapter to the book, "[Man to Man, Dad to Dad: Catholic Faith and Fatherhood](#)."

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