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The Fiftieth Issue of E-Read



Adolescence and Preparing for Angelhood *by Revd Jack Dunion*

The recent and necessary lockdown of families in their homes and the problems this incurs will no doubt be the focus of much future research. But what about now? How are families coping with the many difficulties the lockdown is presenting for them now?

One of the most difficult areas of family life is bringing up children, especially leading them through the process we call adolescence.

The heavenly teachings of our Church tell us many things which have been hitherto unknown in the world, and so the world's thinking, planning and teaching has been based on what humankind has previously known. For example, it has been largely unknown that the Lord's end or purpose in all creation is to create a heaven of angels from the human race. If this was more widely known and accepted, it could potentially change for the better our approach to the many relationship problems we experience in this world.

In order for angels to be created, there needs to be people, of course! One of the most important uses in life, then, has to be the procreation and upbringing of children. We teach so much regarding a child's physical and mental development up to the start of their teenage years. But what do we teach about the stage that follows, the stage we call adolescence?

Anyone who has been trained in the caring or medical professions will be familiar with the idea of "*Child development - zero to puberty*". A widely recognised pattern of child development is used to measure a child's progress through the various stages of development. Such knowledge is widely shared by midwives, nurses, nursery leaders and others, and much of it is picked up and discussed openly among parents, carers and teachers. These processes of development are therefore widely known and accepted. Yet, when it comes to adolescence there seems to be a distinct lack of information about what exactly this developmental stage involves. It can even carry a stigma, causing people to be reluctant to talk about it or share its effects on the family with anyone outside of the home. Through a lack of understanding of the process and its very important use, tensions can easily arise to the extent that it tears a family apart!

The adolescent stage of a child's development is one important area of human life where the new revelations from heaven could make a significant impact on the way families bring up their children.

To fully understand the importance of this process it is necessary first to understand that, after reaching puberty, children begin the process of developing the following two faculties:

1. Freedom

To become an angel a person needs to freely choose to become one. The Lord desires nothing more than to give His whole being to someone else outside of Himself; this is the very nature of love. But for a person to receive that life of love from the Lord they must freely choose to receive it.

Think of it like this: If I compelled someone to rob a bank, it wouldn't make them a bank robber because they would stop robbing banks as soon as I stopped compelling them. On the other hand, if I compelled a person NOT to rob a bank when they actually wanted to, through the threat of punishment, for example, they would rob the bank as soon as the threat receded. If we don't freely choose to do something, it doesn't become a part of who we really are. So too, if the Lord compelled a person to love, that love wouldn't be a part of who they really are, and therefore they couldn't make His life their own.

2. Reason

Alongside a person being able to freely choose to do something, they must first understand what it is they are doing and why they are doing it. Without such an understanding their actions and motivations are from a blind obedience. Thinking about it and working out what the options are, and what the consequences might be, is the only way to make a free and reasoned choice. Again, this is what is needed before a person can choose to make the Lord's love a part of who they are. Through

such a process we make progress towards angelhood. Angels are nothing more than people who have chosen to make the Lord's life their own, as opposed to the selfish life we are born into. *"no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above"* John 3:3

Practical application:

Having looked at what these two important faculties are and the need to develop them in order to progress towards angelhood, let us now apply them to the state of adolescence.

Prior to adolescence we note that children are in a state of innocence. They love their parents and carers and rely on them to guide them and look after them. They don't reason about what they are doing or why they are doing it. Children are in this state of innocence because they are accompanied by celestial angels. As adolescence comes on these celestial angels begin to withdraw and other spirits are permitted to influence a growing desire to be independent, to think and act from themselves. At this stage it is notable that the young person switches their allegiance from their parents to their peers. The Lord effects this process in order that the young person can begin to separate from the close influence of their parent/carer and begin to develop the two faculties which are mentioned above, namely, freedom and reason. Without developing these two faculties they will not be able to be brought to a position where they can reason that there is a God, and freely choose His life over their own.

Fearing for the child

The question may arise in parents' minds: *"What is happening to my child? Why is he/she behaving so outrageously?"* If you are thinking this way, congratulations! It's because you love your child so much and fear for their very souls! But please be reassured that a child is never harmed spiritually by the type of behaviour we see them display, no matter how bad they look. What is actually happening is the very necessary separation between parent and child, all part of the Lord's plan to create a heaven of angels from the human race. Despite the appearance to the contrary, your child is on the way to acquiring the two faculties of freedom and reason which are completely necessary for achieving angelhood.

How can this horrible process not be harming them spiritually when their behaviour is becoming so very unreasonable?

The answer to that question lies in the question itself! Adolescent behaviour is often completely unreasonable. Notice that the young person does not see anything of their own behaviour but sees only their own experiences. This means that they can do or say a thousand things to you, but if you dare say one wrong word out of place to them, all hell will break loose! You may then find yourself being branded as being exactly what they are currently being - a monster! Remember we mentioned earlier about the need for things to be reasoned and freely chosen before they can become a part of who we are? The Lord is protecting the young person by blinding them to their own behaviour and not allowing them to see and reason about what they are doing. It's what is meant in Isaiah 6:10: *"Lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed"*. If they don't see what they are doing, they cannot make it part of who they are. These are simply temporary feelings erupting into behaviour that aids the necessary separation between parent and child, all part of their preparation for angelhood.

What CAN I do?

As a loving parent, of course, you want to help wherever you can. The first thing which may help is an acceptance that parents, too, are trainee angels. Parents have feelings, too, and these can lead us to say things and do things we would not ordinarily do or say. Parents, however, have reached the stage where we should be able to reason about our responses, and ask the Lord to show us where we may have over-reacted or allowed our own feelings to spill over inappropriately. We can learn to put ourselves aside and be able to admit if and when we got it wrong, without demanding that the young person do the same until they are ready to accept they have done something wrong.

Remember, in their eyes they have done nothing at all to you! In some cases, it is best to ignore the behaviour - even when it's very bad - at the time they are happening and wait

till things have calmed down, and then explain how this made you feel. But be prepared to back off whenever you see the demons return. Flair-ups usually require fuel, often in the form of an argument, in order to be sustained.

In conclusion

Remember above all that the child you have loved, nurtured, guided and protected is still in there. They still love you dearly and still need you to love them, despite their unreasonable behaviour. All that has changed is the need for parents/carers to learn to communicate with them in a different, more adult to adult way. It won't be too long before they will come back to you. Your relationship with them, though different, will be as loving and caring as it always was.

You will know the job is well and truly done the day you notice them starting to give you advice or tell you off for *your* inappropriate behaviour and attitudes. Look out for it, because your child is then starting to become good at being a trainee angel. Soon enough it will be their turn, no doubt with your continued help and support, to serve the Lord's great end of all creation. They will do the job you have already done as they begin preparing the next generation for angelhood.

Revd Jack Dunion

(Ref: Conjugal Love 398,399, 438 Divine Providence 73, 78, 113, 123)