

Joseph, the hidden one, faithfully, quietly, lovingly committed himself irrevocably to his vocation and followed through on his yes day after day, even when things were difficult or seemed impossible.



SISTERS OF LIFE



It's easy to miss St. Joseph. He is often hidden in the shadows of Christmas cards though, next to the Virgin Mary, he is the greatest saint and the one closest to the mystery of the Incarnation. It's no wonder St. Joseph is called the "hidden saint"--he was silent. Silence was his strength. It allowed for a deep listening to the promptings of God. What God revealed, Joseph did: faithfully, quietly, lovingly. He committed himself irrevocably to his vocation and followed through on his yes day after day, with faith, even when things were difficult or seemed impossible.

St. Joseph took his cues from what he learned of God in Scripture and prayer, and from the lived lessons of Nazareth and Bethlehem. Joseph witnessed the gift of the Incarnation: the radical commitment of God to us, for us – day in and day out – for our salvation. This is the way Joseph followed; it is the way each of us is called to follow. It is the Way of Jesus Christ. It is not easy, but it is the only way to deep interior peace, joy and true communion with God and others. It is also the way of Life: such love bears fruit.

This is the vocation to which we are all called: in every state in life, in and from every situation - the Lord takes us as we are and leads us to this authentic love. This edition of our newsletter highlights Supreme Knight Carl Anderson's exhortation to live this call to love as a means to revivifying our culture. And it tells stories of response, at different stages and in varied circumstances: our postulants at the dawn of their consecrated lives; a young woman accepting the demands of single motherhood by relying on new-found grace in the Church; and marriage and fatherhood seen through the lens of a grateful son at the end of his father's well-lived life. It is dedicated to the honor of St. Joseph, and to all the "hidden saints" in our lives who have shown us the way, faithfully, quietly, lovingly. May we someday join their ranks.

As we adore the Christ Child with St. Joseph this Christmas, know that the Sisters are remembering you and your families in our prayers, with gratitude and love.

M. agues.

CALLED TO LOVE:

COMMON VOCATION, UNCOMMON JOY

Getting Beyond a Hope-Killing Culture By Carl Anderson





A couple of years ago, when Benedict XVI visited with some students, two of them asked him a question that could have come from anyone, Catholic or non-Catholic alike. They asked: "Is there someone or something by means of which we can become important? How is it possible to hope when reality negates every dream of happiness, every project of life?" I think many people share these questions. The poor, the elderly, the sick, the immigrant, the stay-at-home parent or the 9-to-5 worker—nobody wants to be dispensable or to feel worthless or trapped. Unfortunately, many people feel that way in different areas of their life. And I think it's a dangerous symptom that we can't overlook. It's a symptom that something about our culture is so unhealthy that its people lose hope. But although the two students asked what seemed to be a secular question, the only good cure is returning to one's original vocation: the call to love.

Often, when speaking about youth and the future of the Church, people bring up the "vocation crisis." However, in order to respond to the crisis it is vital that we respond in a way that underscores the underlying sameness of the vocations. However different each vocation ispriesthood, marriage, consecrated lifethey each have the same goal. All are different manifestations of the vocation we all have in common: the vocation to love. Each vocation requires a total gift of self. Each vocation endures for a lifetime. Each is a path on a journey by which we become more like God who is love. Each has a component that is loving toward

each other, manifesting God's love. Of course, the reality of this isn't always clear... We were created for love, and nothing—not even secular culture—an eradicate the call to love from our sensibilities....



The fact is, we cannot dismiss the avoidance of vocational commitment as a result of rampant immaturity. It is also in part due to the fact that people are questioning the authenticity of the love they experience. Inauthentic love has a name: hypocrisy. It speaks the language of love, but not its meaning. It offers a unique, unrepeatable gift, but then is quick to take it back. It can be seen in a loveless or careless marriage, a self-centered or apathetic priest, a religious sister or brother without compassion.

The consequence of seeing only inauthentic love is this: Love is seen as something that doesn't belong to the structures created for love. When families are separated from love, then love is seen as something to be separated from family. When the Church family becomes unloving, then loving becomes something to be found outside the Church.

Living our own vocations well helps other people live their own vocation. It helps those already in a vowed vocation to be true to it. It helps those who have not yet given themselves through a specific vocation to be open and to have the courage to say yes to their vocation. A vocation well lived restores trust in love. The answer is, in Pope Benedict's words, to have a "harmony between what we say with our lips and what we think with our hearts."

Another facet of authentic love is perseverance. The witness each of us can give is to continue to love through one's vocation even during times of spiritual aridity, like Mother Teresa experienced, and St. John of the Cross and many other saints. Such an experience shouldn't simply be looked on as a step in the spiritual journey of life. It is an experience by which we can relate to all of those who feel disconnected from the love of God in some way. In a way, this type of spiritual aridity, this failure to "feel" the power of love, is exactly what so many young people feel today. In other's perseverance, they can find and see the strength of love, the strength of a heart that does not simply feel but a heart that sees and loves according to the truth.

And for many, a litmus test of this authenticity is joy—and rightly so. And perhaps the greatest obstacle to the reputations of each vocation is not scandal but joylessness—or what we might call the scandal of joylessness. For this reason, too, before becoming Pope, Cardinal Ratzinger said the Church doesn't have "such urgent need" for reformers, but rather what the Church really needs are "people who are inwardly seized by Christianity, who experience it as joy and hope, who have thus become lovers. And these we call saints." Each vocation offers a particular answer to the questioning of authentic love. And thus all vocations are necessary.

This article was adapted from Carl Anderson's speech to the CMSWR Congress in Washington, D.C., Sept. 11, 2009. Mr. Anderson is the supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus and a New York Times bestselling author. Reprinted with permission from Zenit.

they're here!

Our current postulants

arrived at St. Barnabas Convent in the Bronx on September 5th, 2009 to embark on the adventure of following their vocation, their call to love. Below are some interesting facts about each and the answers each gave to the question:

Whose commitment and fidelity most influenced you in following your vocation?



Marie Baranko

Hometown: Whiting, IN
Studies: Purdue University, IN
Construction Management
Inspiration: Witnessing the love and
dedication of my parent's marriage
through the upbringing of seven children.
Learning about JPII's Theology of the
Body, coming to know the Lord in
adoration, praying the rosary daily and
making my consecration to Mary.

Faustina Bianchi

Hometown: Somers, CT
Studies: Franciscan University of
Steubenville, Human Services; Springfield
Technical Community College, Nursing
Inspiration: Reading the diaries of St.
Faustina and St. Therese, as well as the
fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of John.
My parents fidelity to their vocation
showed me what true love is and
witnessing my sister join the Missionaries
of Charity inspired me further!



Virginia Cotter

Hometown: Greenville, SC Studies/Recent Work:

Franciscan University of Steubenville, Business Management
College Counselor in a High School Inspiration: The blessing of being born into a faithful family. My parents and grandparents have always been an example to me as they live their faith. The knowledge that God has a unique plan for each individual really inspired me to trust and to pursue His will for my life.

Christine Friedrich

Hometown: Berwyn, PA Studies/Recent Work:

Boston College, Biology;

Chastity Educator for Generation Life Inspiration: The pro-life club moderator at my high school instilled in me a great love for the pro-life movement, especially through prayerful witness at abortion mills. My parents have been a wonderful example of commitment and fidelity, as well as many other holy couples and priests I have known.

Erin Nikitas

Hometown: Apollo Beach, FL Studies/Recent Work:

Florida State University,
Communication Disorders;
University of North Florida, Nursing
Inspiration: Witnessing my parents,
who have been blessed with 33 years
of marriage, live joyfully, trusting
God during difficult times, and
loving all whom they encountered.
Also through working with the sick
and suffering.













Julie Carleton

Hometown: Chico, CA

Studies/Recent Work:

University of Portland Theology NET Ministries (National Evangelization Team) Inspiration: My parents, I always wanted to be my mom when I grew up: faithful and faith-filled, loving, fun, spunky, selfless mother/wife to a beautiful Catholic family! While working at NET I realized I needed to ask the Lord what He wanted me to do with this life He's given me... rather than telling Him my plans and asking Him to bless them!

Mary Dobson

Hometown: Belvidere, IL

Studies/Recent Work:

Loras College
Math/Secondary Education
High School Teacher
Inspiration: My parents,
they have been committed
to each other for 25 years,
and both have had a
strong commitment to
Christ longer than that.
They always encouraged
me to be open to God's
will for me.

Sara Hulse

Hometown: Milford, NJ

Studies/Recent Work:

DeSales University, Communications/Spanish Freelance Journalist Inspiration: The Lord has worked in my heart through a number of events: Youth 2000 NY, DeSales Center for Discernment, JPII's Theology of the Body, and priests and religious, as well as my college theology and philosophy professors, faith-filled friends and, of course, my loving family.

Mariana Uribe

Hometown:

Los Alamos, NM Studies/Recent Work:

Williams College, Chemistry FOCUS Missionary (Fellowship of Catholic University Students)

Inspiration:

My family, and in a special way, my grandparents were an incredible example of love, commitment and faithfulness—they really embodied the "one flesh" unity of marriage in the way they lived and depended on each other, especially in their last years.



MOTHERHOOD & GRACE

"My journey into the Catholic Church began simply by walking into St. Catherine of Sienna Church in Manhattan. The very first time I entered the church, I was filled with peace, calm, and joy in my heart. It was a peace that I had never known. That night, as I thought about my experience, I felt that something was telling me to learn more about the Catholic Church and to come close to God."

How long after that experience did you enter the Church?

"About three years. It was a difficult path at times. For a while I couldn't understand why I was so drawn to that church, because I was born and raised in a Hindu family in India. This was very confusing to me, but I just knew it was where I belonged. Soon after I started going to church, I began dating a man who happened to be a Christian. I had hoped that he would guide me in the faith, unfortunately this did not happen. I became pregnant and he convinced me that we were not ready to have a baby. Without thinking about it very deeply, I had an abortion. We continued dating and planned to get married someday. Throughout this time, I went to St. Catherine's almost daily."

What were your daily visits to the church like?

"It's hard to describe but I experienced the purity and the holiness of God. I feel so at home and a deep sense of peace whenever I am there. If I don't go for even a couple of days I really miss it. I started to bring flowers to Mother Mary and I asked for her guidance."

How was your life different when you found out you were pregnant for a second time?

"Exteriorly nothing was different, my circumstances had not changed. Interiorly though, I was being changed. I knew very deeply that God was speaking to me through the events of my life when I found out that I was pregnant a second time on the exact day, one year later, that I had an abortion. I knew God was showing me that I must keep this baby. This knowledge changed me completely and I decided to give life to my child. Everyone in my life wanted me to have an abortion, including my parents, the baby's father, and his parents. I suffered a lot after my abortion and I knew I was going to keep this baby. My family kept pressuring me almost daily. One day, I even went to the abortion clinic with my daughter's father, but I went in and left. I was filled with many fears. My daughter's father said



that he would break up with me if I did not have an abortion and he did. Often, I would go to the church and cry. One day, I finally got the courage to talk to the priest, Father Gabriel. He listened to me and guided me to the Sisters of Life. The day I

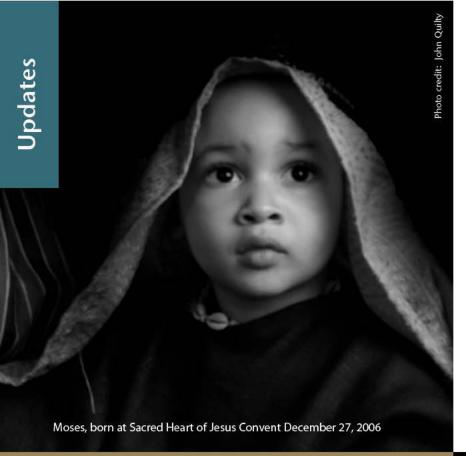
moved into Sacred Heart, I cried for hours because I felt so relieved to be in a safe place of love. Throughout my pregnancy I asked God to guide me and many things happened that let me know that He was the one leading."

How has being a mother changed you?

"I was amazed when I first held my daughter, I have so much love for her. She has changed my life; all the sacrifices bring me joy. I feel like I have come to know myself through loving her. I learned that I had the gift of patience and that I could give myself to another in love. Before I had her, I was only focused on my education and my career. Now, I know my greatest accomplishment and joy has been in giving life to my daughter. All my other accomplishments mean nothing compared to her. I named her Grace, which means 'gift of God that we do not deserve.' I realized that only a woman can give life; this is a great gift of femininity. While I was at Sacred Heart, I finally listened to that voice and I took instructions to prepare for baptism. I was absolutely amazed when I learned about the sacrament of baptism. I could not believe it, God purified my soul! Purification, the forgiveness of sins, it is so incredible! No other religion or culture offers this. God, Jesus Christ, died to forgive my sins. After much preparation, I entered the Church at the Easter Vigil. My daughter and I were baptized together."

What has your life been like since you entered the Church?

"Since baptism and receiving the Eucharist, there is a new life and a new energy in me. Before I was baptized, I was somewhat indifferent towards the needs and sufferings of others. God has given me a new heart filled with a deep compassion for the suffering, especially the cancer patients I serve. God has given me the grace to forgive others, including my daughter's father who has not had any contact with us. I am enjoying practicing my new faith, I make regular confessions and experience the joy of having my soul cleansed each time. I still bring flowers to Our Lady each week and pray the daily rosary, just because I love her. She is my mother."



The Visitation Mission:

Responding with love and compassion, the Sisters and their Co-Workers of Life offer practical and emotional support to pregnant women in need.

Co-Worker Training New York City March 13, 2010 To register call: 347-843-8900

Our Visitation Mission in New York continues to serve over five hundred women each year. Like the Magi, Our Co-Workers of Life offer gifts. Such time, encouragement and support witnesses to every mother that her child is sacred. Each a unique, unrepeatable reflection of the Christ Child himself.

The Holy Respite Mission:

Sacred Heart of Jesus Convent is a place of peace and nurturing for mothers awaiting the birth of their children. Here we live Christmas every day walking with the courageous women living with us, choosing life for their unborn children against all odds.

Our three little Magi, whose mothers lived with us at Sacred Heart Convent, truly lead us to Jesus offering their gifts of purity, innocence and joy.



Ewa and Sr. Bridget with little Dennis



The Visitation Mission, Toronto

Our Visitation Mission North of the Border is thriving! Now with five Sisters, a brand new mission center in downtown Toronto, and over 500 Co-Workers of Life, vulnerable pregnant women in need are finding encouragement and practical support in ways that make an eternal difference. Not only are these women able to choose life for their children, but they are finding new confidence in the strength, courage and capacity God has placed within their own hearts. With His help, nothing is impossible.



Join us at these Upcoming Events:

March 25, 2010

Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord
Celebration dedicated by the Knights of
Columbus as the Day of the Unborn Child.

March 27, 2010
Annual New York Archdiocesan
Family Life Conference
St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers.
This year's theme is: John Cardinal
O'Connor and the Pro-life Movement.

John Cardinal O'Connor 10th Anniversary May 3rd, 2010

With Archbishop Dolan, the Sisters of Life look forward to hosting celebratory events to mark the 10th Anniversary of our Founder's entrance into eternal life on May 3, 2010! Save the date to remember and celebrate the life of this great priest of God. As May approaches we will share more information with you.

To come to one of these events: Look for more info to come on these events on our website: sistersoflife.org



Family Life/Respect Life

Mission A new team of Sisters is heading up the NY Archdiocesan Family Life/ Respect Life Office: Sr. Lucy Marie, Sr. Veronica Mary (director), Sr. Margaret.

- ◆ Spanish Pro-life Congress Good News! Over 1,000 enthusiastic people turned out for the Hispanic Pro-Life Congress in NY.
- ◆ Chastity Education
 This fall, through the generosity of donors, the Office launched a new program, hiring a full time Chastity Education Coordinator to help spread the good news of God's beautiful plan for life and love to the young!
- ♦ Gianna Women's Healthcare Center Dr. Kyle Beiter, an OB-Gyn Surgeon and Dr. Anne Mielnik, a family practitioner with a specialty in women's health and infertility, have teamed up with St. Vincent's Hospital in Manhattan to provide women with NaPro Technology services ranging from basic Natural Family Planning instruction to full Ob/Gyn services, and infertility treatments in line with Catholic teaching. For more information, visit www.svcmc.org/gianna

Villa Maria Guadalupe Retreat Schedule 2010



For more information or to register go to: www.sistersoflife.org/vmg.html or call 203.329.1492

Young Women's Retreat (ages 18-35)
 February 12-14, 2010; June 25-27, 2010

Frassati Young Adults Retreat April 30-May 2, 2010

To Register: frassatiny@gmail.com

Come and See Weekend Retreat

March 18-21, 2010 To register: 718.863.2264

Intro to Ignatian Meditation January 29-31, 2010

Rev. Greg Cleveland, OMV

Theology of the Body
 February 19-21, 2010

Retreat for all Women: Feminine Genius

March 5-7, 2010

Mother Agnes Mary, SV

You are Salt and Light:
 A Retreat for Young Adults of the

Generations of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI

March 26-28, 2010 Rev. Thomas Rosica, CSB

Hope and Healing Mission

DAYS OF PRAYER & HEALING for WOMEN suffering after abortion January 16, 2010 February 27, 2010 April 24, 2010 June 19, 2010

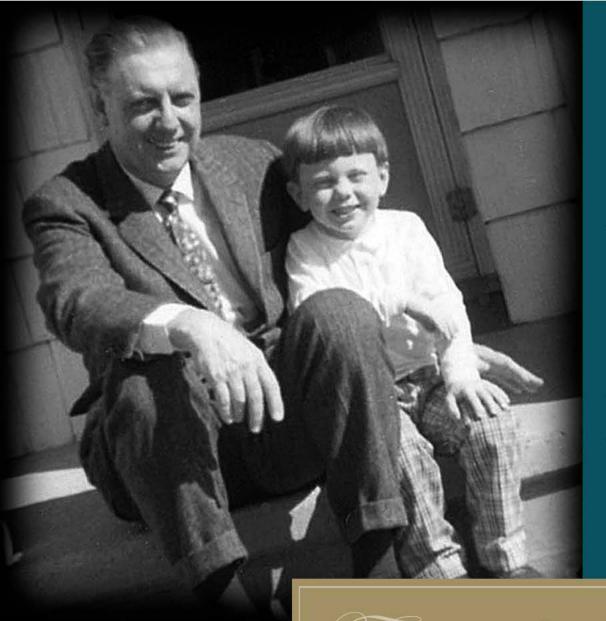
For more information or to register please call the Sisters of Life: 866.575.0075

or email: hopeandhealing@sistersoflife.org

DAYS OF PRAYER & HEALING for MEN suffering after abortion For more information or to register

Please call: 877.586.4621

or email: Lumina@postabortionhelp.org



We would like to share with you the following excerpts from a homily by Rev. John McCartney, preached at his father's funeral, on St. Joseph as a model for Christian men in living their vocation. Dr. John J. McCartney, a retired physician from Long Island, made his final journey to God on the Feast of the Queenship of Mary, August 22, 2009. May his soul and all the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.

My dad:

Forever faithful

A commitment to love as husband, father and doctor

"Ite ad Ioseph." The Church has traditionally used these Latin words to encourage her sons and daughters to seek the prayers and assistance of the greatest saint in Heaven after our Blessed Mother. "Ite ad Ioseph": "Go to Joseph."

When we think of the life of St. Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, we think of the few stories we have of him from Sacred Scripture... After the infancy narratives, St. Joseph, without ever speaking a word, disappears entirely from Sacred Scripture, except for a few passing references during the public ministry of our Lord, calling Him "the son of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth."

Although no spoken word of his is recorded by the Bible, St. Joseph speaks to us very clearly indeed. He speaks to us in the faithful way he lived the vocations God gave to him: as worker, as husband, and as father. We can know something of St. Joseph's greatness by the importance of these vocations God called him to. The two greatest possessions of God on earth, the Blessed Virgin Mary and His own Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, God the Father chose to place in the care of this simple, humble laborer from a rather obscure village in Galilee. The most important task in salvation history, after those of Jesus and Mary, was assigned to St. Joseph. He would be husband and father, guardian and provider, and head of the little family the world will always call "Holy."

Think of the weight of this awesome responsibility placed on the shoulders of this man. Despite the many graces God certainly gave him, St. Joseph could have said no; he could have rejected his vocation. But he did not. With complete faith and trust in God, St. Joseph said yes. Each time God speaks to him in Scripture, St. Joseph renews that yes, and acts immediately to carry out God's will. In the quiet of his silence, St. Joseph is a man of deeds, rather than words.

The Father of Jesus, and the Father of us all, is our Father in Heaven. And when God the Father had to choose a man, a human being, to represent His fatherhood to His Son here on earth, he chose Joseph, the son of Jacob. Long before Jesus taught His apostles to pray using the word "Abba," meaning "Father," He addressed that title, as a little boy, to the carpenter of Nazareth. Jesus discovered human fatherhood through His life with St. Joseph. For our Blessed Lord, St. Joseph was truly the human face of the Eternal Father. This was one of St. Joseph's most important vocations, to faithfully mirror the loving fatherhood of God, and so to bring that fatherhood down from heaven to earth, and make it visible.



Fr. John McCartney with his father, mother and sister Dorothy on his Ordination Day.

Every Catholic man should always be aware, whether he is the father of a family or a spiritual father, that like St. Joseph, he too is called to represent the fatherhood of God to all, but especially to those under his care.

My father's middle name was Joseph, and he was an extraordinarily devout Catholic man. Like his patron's, his was a simple faith, based on simple prayer and deep belief. He loved the Holy Eucharist and never missed Mass. Throughout his life he had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and a tremendous love of our Blessed Mother; he prayed her rosary every day. During his working life as a doctor, it was his practice to pray the rosary in the car in the mornings before his first house calls — to pray for the patients he would treat, and to ask for the wisdom he would need to heal them. Like my mother, Dorothy, my father would want all of us in this church to commit ourselves to praying the rosary every day. As he said to me shortly before he died: "Remember always to have great devotion to the Blessed Mother. It's very, very important."

Prayer was so important to my father; he prayed constantly, as the Church intends. When he was in

practice, if he had a particularly difficult decision to make he would excuse himself from the patient for a moment and step into the next room. And there, alone, he would pray to the Divine Physician for wisdom and guidance. And then he would return and make his diagnosis. He said it never failed. And with this lively sense of the presence of God with him every day, my father was a man with a profound sense of his vocations. He understood that a vocation is a calling by God; not something we choose for ourselves, but something we are chosen to do. And because vocations come from God, they can only properly be lived with His supernatural help. My father never called himself merely a "doctor"; he was a "Catholic doctor."

During his last days, my father spoke constantly of the innumerable blessings God had given him in the course of his life. He really was aware of them, and stood in awe of these tremendous graces. But he never took his salvation for granted. He understood that to those to whom much is given, our Lord will expect much. He prayed for, but also trusted in, God's mercy, and so he did not fear death, because of his great love and deep faith.

The special role which St. Joseph plays in the Church, God intends to be played by every Catholic man as a part of his vocation as well. We are to do battle with the world to make sure that nothing interferes with the ability of those we love to encounter Christ. Like our patron, we are to lead by example, not words. "Ite ad Ioseph," go to Joseph; pray to him, and ask for his guidance and protection. Imitate St. Joseph in his virtues — his fidelity, his constancy, his love, his gentleness, his strength, his courage, his faith, his manliness.



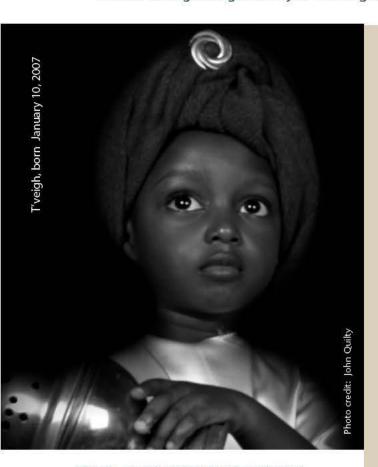
The greatest husband and father in the history of the world did not shower his family with material things. St. Joseph gave them something of much greater value: He gave them himself. Every moment of every day, through his love, his sacrifice, his labor, he gave them himself. They knew that they always came first in his mind and in his heart, never second. Today, the world needs an increase in devotion to St. Joseph, because we need more men like St. Joseph in the world.

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T'veigh, one of our little Magi, was born at Sacred Heart of Jesus Convent almost three years ago.

Beginning on Christmas Day a Novena of Masses will be offered for you and your family.

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