

Adoption a needed ministry

We just celebrated the feast of the Holy Family, and to some extent, this is a story of adoption. Our first adoption occurred Nov. 22, 2000. She arrived at the tender age of 4 months old because her mom, my niece, could no longer provide a caring and nurturing home for her children.

Like many, my niece had succumbed to worldly addictions. It seemed at that time our home would be a perfect solution to temporarily provide the love and consistency that was needed for my great niece. She required physical therapy for a birth injury and our family was willing and able to provide the love, care and attention - not to mention there was plenty of room. We had our only son who was 4 at the time and the family dog. Time proved that my great niece would become a permanent family member along with three more of her siblings. All would come at different times to expand the original family of three to a family of seven.

The decision in the early '90s to open our home seemed to be a natural response. It wasn't a hard decision. We would assist until birth Mom was back on her feet, able to provide a safe, loving and nurturing home. When the early '90s turned into the late '90s and a 2-year-old sibling needed the same type of stability, the decision was not as easy. Plenty of thought, prayer and reflection was sought. The end result was our home expanded , and we welcomed in another child.

We quickly adapted to new routines. We were familiar with day care providers and toddler programs. The love, care and attention was bountiful. The plenty of room became adequate room. As time went on it became increasingly clear that a return to birth Mom was not a realistic plan, and in time, two additional children from Mom would be placed in care. We could possibly make room for one more but definitely not two. The decision to open our home again resulted in our home expanding to four children. I come from a family of seven and my husband comes from a family of four. We were raised with emphasis on togetherness, appreciation of neighbor and community and a strong faith foundation. Families enrich our lives. We are stronger individuals because of the strength of families.

It is such a blessing to experience family love. The Holy Family was full of love. We

take so many things for granted including life itself. We are now asking ourselves do we hold the answer for the 12-year-old who has never been placed with family since being committed to the Department of Social Services.

Her feelings of inadequacy and emotional issues echo so many of our children who are in the system.

Thirty-one percent of all children in foster care available for adoption are of African-American descent. This is two times the rate of the general African-American population for those under the age of 18. When we are faced with staggering statistics as these we are obliged to ask ourselves how can I help address this issue. Some of us need only look at our own families, as we did, to see, hear and answer the cry for help. As we prepare to make room, adjust schedules, face new financial challenges for our newest addition we recognize how truly blest we are when we are given a chance to serve and assist in any capacity. To God be the glory, for we are a better family for having experienced the blessings that adoption and sacrifices bring.

We can't pick our relatives and if we could with our flaws we still wouldn't be guaranteed the perfect family. We are all faced with trials and difficulties. As much as we would like to experience happy ever after endings they are not always in abundance. What needs to be in abundance is our outreach to our children, all of our children to provide the love care and support that they all deserve and need.

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