

As a pro-life church, let's consider how we talk about adoption

During the homily last Sunday our deacon was speaking about spiritual adoption. He told us we should consider God's love from the perspective of a person who has been adopted.

Prior to being adopted, the deacon said, that person feels rejected. That person feels that no one has ever loved him. Then after adoption everything changes.

Sitting there in the pew, I started to get upset. Later that evening, John and I discussed the deacon's words. He reminded me that not everyone has been educated in how to speak about adoption. He is absolutely right. I can't expect people to know how to approach adoption with sensitivity and understanding.

But the truth is that my frustration with the comments had less to do with our children and more to do with a larger issue for the Catholic Church.

If we are a pro-life community of faith, and I believe we are, we must approach adoption with a pro-life view.



If we are concerned with the child, we must also be worried about the mother. We must acknowledge that if she chooses to place her child for adoption instead of abortion, she is not rejecting the child. She is, in fact, embracing her child with a love so deep that she would carry her little one, give birth, and then entrust her child to someone else's care.

Go ahead. Tell me I'm reading too much into the deacon's words. Tell me I'm misconstruing his meaning.

Maybe so.

But if we can't speak of adoption as a form of love—not just on the part of the adopters but also on the part of the birth parents—we are perpetuating the myths and stereotypes about adoption that make it seem like a negative. And a woman in a crisis pregnancy needs a positive option. Let's help her see it for what it is.

Placing a child for adoption is an act of love. As adoptive parents, we don't love our children

more than their birth parents loved—and continue to love—they. We are merely adding our love to theirs.

If the Church is on board with that, let's say so. And let's use the right words.

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