



Smartphones, Kids and Anxiety:

Should We Panic?

By: Shelly Thieme

Mother of Nick '16, Drew '18 and Zach '23

Addiction to technology has caused our young people to become more anxious and lonelier than any previous generation. The urgency of what we are dealing with regarding anxiety, depression and mental health concerns is all too real. There have been a disturbing number of suicides throughout the Carmel Deanery that reflect a nationally disturbing trend.

Did you know that in 2017, over 47,000 people committed suicide in the United States and that number is on the rise? It is real and heartbreaking, and most of the loved ones of these souls believed it would never happen in their families.

On CNN's "Mostly Human" a group of leaders from the tech industry were interviewed and they were discussing the problem of mental health as it relates to young people. Ultimately, these leaders decided that maybe the best thing to do is just to unplug from the digital world in an intentional way and frequently enough that we are left with time to rediscover the beauty of everyday things like conversation, prayer and stillness. Those are remarkable conclusions from folks whose livings are made in the field of digital media!

A little closer to home, Catholic media expert, Bishop Robert Barron, recently shared with his vast group of digital followers that while he sees tremendous value in the opportunities that present themselves through participation in technology platforms, he believes our main preoccupation in social media is our own ego. He says, "You're a spectator to your own ego, the responses you get, how other people view you. It's going through life with the monkey of your ego on your own back." He goes on to explain how the solution is humility—"humilitas veritas"—humility is truth. It's about being completely present and putting your feet on the ground. How many of our own families could use some work in this area?

Catholic life is about joy, love of Christ, and how to become happy and holy. To those ends, three of our deanery parishes, Holy Spirit Parish at Geist, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and St. Elizabeth Seton, are offering parents some meaningful tools to help our families navigate parenting teens and lead our children to Christ. As our young people begin the school year here at Guerin Catholic, I encourage you to take advantage of the following opportunities:

Dr. Greg Bottaro, Friday, August 23, 7 pm - FREE!

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church

Come hear author and speaker, Dr. Greg Bottaro, speak about how to unplug from technology, decrease anxiety, and rediscover the beauty of life in Christ through everyday things like conversation, prayer and stillness using "Catholic Mindfulness". This **free** event is being held at OLMC at 7pm on Friday, August 23 in the church.

Dr. Greg Bottaro, Saturday, August 24, 10 am - 3 pm, \$15

St. Elizabeth Seton

For folks who want to dig in further and learn more about the tools available to help our children and ourselves to unplug, you are encouraged to register for a workshop at St. Elizabeth Seton on Saturday, August 24 from 10 am - 3 pm. Reserve your spot at www.mercifulhelpcenter.org by clicking on the homepage header. The cost for this event is \$15 (includes lunch). Dr. Greg Bottaro's popular book, *The Mindful Catholic*, will be available for purchase at both events for \$25.

Jeff Yalden, Saturday, September 25, 7 pm

Holy Spirit Parish at Geist

Parents and their teens (12 and older) are invited to hear Jeff Yalden, Teen Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Expert, talk about raising teens in a digital world and the impact on their well-being, signs and symptoms of teen depression and teen suicide, the importance of parental involvement and more.

Parenting Teens: Will It Glorify God?

By: Wendy Pottratz

Mother of Jacob '15, Sr. Claire Dominic '14, Cici '18, Adam '20, Lily '22, Elyse, Julia and Leo

Do you remember the special day your child was baptized? Personally, I would answer that question with a big NO! I was in the midst of sleep deprivation, probably wearing an outfit that was still too tight, and definitely spending my energy hoping desperately that no bodily fluids from the baby would get on guests or the priest!

Now that I have teens, the things I said and did when my children were babies are a distant memory. Currently, I am deep into navigating the territory of high school, friends, privileges, technology, dances, social media, driving, group projects, alcohol, and school drug testing! I would take baby spit up any day over attempting to make the “right” parenting decisions for teens. However, I harken back to the day of their baptism to help me navigate!

As I held each of my babies at that baptismal font, the priest asked my husband and I to make some vows. For those of us who are a little foggy about that day, he said, “You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting responsibility of training him (her) in the practice of the faith. **It will be your duty to bring this child up to keep God’s commandments.** On your part, you must make it your constant care to bring him (her) up in the practice of the faith. See that the divine life which God gives **is kept safe from the poison of sin** to grow always strong in his (her) heart.”

Of course, my husband and I said, “Yes, we will!”

I now realize I made an important vow before our blessed Lord that day. When I die and stand in judgement, I will need to answer to God about this promise. When it comes to big and small decisions, I can fall back on this vow I made by asking, “Will this party/sleepover keep my child safe from sin? Will this app on their phone bring them closer or further away from following the Ten Commandments (not the 10 suggestions)? Do I bring them to confession and mass like I promised I would? Are the shows on Netflix/Hulu/YouTube something my kids should watch if Jesus was on the couch next to them? Do I check their social media for sinful posts and tweets (theirs or friends) and talk to them about questionable content? Do I have limits and rules to keep them from viewing porn or “MA” shows on their laptops and iPhones?

While I am far from perfect on all of these, I do try to make the decisions (through many prayers offered to God, Our Blessed Mother Mary, and St. Michael) that God wants me to make. Often, I think, “will this glorify God? Yes, no, or is it neutral? This helps me in my decision-making process.

When you need to say “no” to a party, digital media, dating or friends, tell your kids that you are following the vows you made to God to care for their eternal soul... go ahead...blame it on God. He’s amazingly big, and He can take it!



The Pottratz Family

Photo 1: Mike and Wendy Pottratz, Godmother Ellen; Bottom row: Jacob, Audrey and Adam Pottratz (getting baptized in 2002);

Photo 2: Front row (L-R): Julia, Leo, Elyse; Middle Row: Cecilia '18, Sr. Claire Dominic '14, Lily '22; Back Row: Jacob '15, Adam '20, Wendy and Mike.

Dear Mom and Dad . . .

Writing you a letter to thank you for the most life-altering gift I've ever received seems rather insufficient when compared to the gift itself, but I want to do it just the same. Going through life without ever thanking you for this would go against everything you've taught me. Please know that writing this letter to you was quite difficult because expressing my gratitude for this gift seems nearly impossible—especially in just a few words. Mom and Dad, I want to thank you for giving me, and my siblings, the gift of our Catholic faith.

Thank you for praying with us before bed when we were little. As we grew older and as there were more of us with differing bed times, it was harder to pray together. But Dad, that didn't stop you from prompting us each night with, "Don't forget!" to which we always immediately responded, "Thank Jesus for a great day! Say your prayers! Hail Mary for your special intentions!" This nightly ritual, even to this day, is the perfect reminder of how we should always end the day: in gratitude to God.

You didn't just teach us to pray in the evening though. Thank you for praying with us in the car on the way to school every morning. Right before pulling into St. Maria Goretti or Guerin Catholic, we would turn down the music to say our Morning Offering. Thank you for teaching us this prayer that you used to say when you were little. I'm grateful we ended the prayer with a litany of saints, each one of special significance to our family. We even started adding a Hail Mary for our family to the end of this morning prayer routine. I loved knowing my brother and sisters were praying for me each morning when I was away at college!

Of course, I also need to thank you for always ensuring we make it to Mass every Sunday, even on days we don't go as a family. It was never an option, but simply an expectation, and I am so grateful for it. So many things I took for granted: Mass on Sundays, prayer before meals, sharing prayer intentions before bed, having priests frequent our lives (whether this was for dinner or joining us in a 5K race). Now I am realizing what an impact these things have made, and continue to make, on my own faith. Thank you so much for providing us with such holy daily practices.

Thank you for being such great examples of living out our Catholic faith. Mom, your work with the women at The O'Connor House inspires me. Dad, your daily acts of kindness, like mowing our neighbor Paul's lawn, do just the same. Thank you for creating a New Year's Eve tradition of Mass and service to the poor as a family. You are both true examples of what it means to live selflessly!

When you turned to God during hard times as a family, this has taught me that I need to do the same as I face adversity. Praying those few Divine Mercy chaplets as a family when I was experiencing such sadness in California truly made me feel connected to both you and the Lord. I know we weren't in the same room praying, but just to know each of us was praying at the same time, and for each other, was such a powerful experience!

Thank you so much for sacrificing year after year to send all five of your children to Catholic schools. Now a middle school teacher, Catholic education is truly my passion, and there's no way this would be the case if I didn't have the experiences you provided for us.

Mom, Dad, thank you for passing on the Catholic faith to all of us. It gives direction and purpose to our lives, centers us, and gives us joy, hope, and peace. Reflecting on the past twenty-five years of my life, I have realized that our Catholic faith is infused into all that we do as a family. There are no words to express how blessed I feel to be Catholic, or to be a part of the Barrett family. I pray that one day my future husband and I, God-willing, can pass on the faith to our children just as you have to us. I know I will look to you as examples of faith and selfless love. Thank you so much Mom and Dad! I love you!

Your daughter,

Katie

3 Katie Barrett '11

Editors Note: As we begin the school year, we thought it would be appropriate and meaningful to hear from a GC alum, Katie Barrett '11 about what the gift of her faith and a great Catholic education has meant to her. She chose to share her thoughts via a (surprise) letter written to her parents, Susan and Joe Barrett. We hope you will all find it as meaningful and inspiring as we did! Thank you, Katie for sharing this with the Guerin Catholic Community.



The Barrett Family (L-R) Joe '19, Katie '11, Ellie '16, Anne '13, Susan, Rosie '23 and Joe.

NEXT ISSUE: JANUARY 2019

Do you have a story idea for a future newsletter?

Please e-mail Shelly Thieme at shellythieme@yahoo.com with your idea!



Smartphones, Kids, & Anxiety *Should We Panic?*

Friday, August 23 • 7 p.m. • Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church

featuring Dr. Gregory Bottaro, PSY.D.



Does the image above look familiar?

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Trustful Surrender

A Seminar on Catholic Mindfulness

featuring Dr. Greg Bottaro, PSY.D

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St. Elizabeth Seton

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Dr. Greg Bottaro's popular book, *The Mindful Catholic*, will be available for purchase for \$25.

Addiction to technology has caused people to become anxious and lonely, more than any time in history. Come listen, learn, and participate in a seminar on Catholic Mindfulness with author and speaker Dr. Greg Bottaro, as he teaches us how to unplug and rediscover the beauty of life in Christ through everyday things like conversation, prayer, and stillness.

Every day life offers endless opportunities for you to stop, to focus, and to remind yourself to be fully aware and present to the people around you.

This seminar's purpose is to increase our awareness into ourselves so that we can be an integrated person: mind, body, and soul. Practical mindfulness exercises will be taught in a small group setting, which are proven to improve anxiety, depression, self-acceptance, anger, marriage/parenting, and mental clarity, among many others.

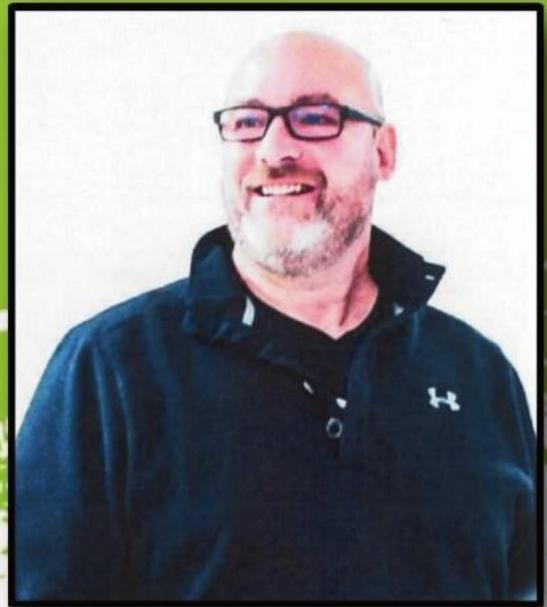


Holy Spirit Parish at Geist Welcomes

Jeff Yalden

Teen Mental Health &
Suicide Prevention

EXPERT



JEFF CHANGES LIVES...ONE COMMUNITY AT A TIME!

- ⇒ Raising teens in a digital world and the impact this has on their well-being
- ⇒ Signs & symptoms of teen depression & teen suicide
- ⇒ Validating the importance of parental involvement and understanding the sensitivity of today's teens
- ⇒ Jeff's theory on teen suicide & your mental health
- ⇒ And more...

SINCE 1992, #1 YOUTH MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER IN THE WORLD

- ⇒ Four Time Amazon Best Selling Author
- ⇒ Celebrity Teen & Family Life Coach
- ⇒ Podcast Host - "Mental Health & Motivation"
- ⇒ Spoken in 50 States ... 49 Countries
- ⇒ Certified Speaking Professional
- ⇒ 25 Years over 5 Million People
- ⇒ **TEDx Speaker:** The "WHY" Behind Today's Teen Suicide Epidemic

OPEN TO PARENTS & THEIR TEENS (12 AND UP)

SEPTEMBER 25, 2019 * 7:00 PM * WORSHIP SPACE

Holy Spirit Parish is located at 10350 Glaser Way, Fishers IN 46037