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Dad's gift reminds children of the Catholics they want to be

Pam Cohen | May. 4, 2012 NCR Today

As I'm sure you've heard by now, *NCR* is in the middle of its third annual webathon. This time of year, we receive all sorts of stories about how *NCR* has played a role in the lives of readers in the last four decades, but this one stopped us in our tracks.

The story comes from *NCR* reader Celeste DeSchryver Mueller:

> I am the youngest of seven in a family in which the span of ages between the eldest and me is 20 years. I was born about the same time that Pope John XXIII was giving birth to the Second Vatican Council while my oldest sister was attending Marygrove College and learning theology from the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In the span of our ages, we represented the full spectrum of experiences of the church in those tumultuous times before and after the Council.
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> Image not found https://www.ncronline.org/sites/default/files/stories/images/oldimgs/DeSchryver%20Family.img_assist_custom-250x156.jpg
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> When I was very young, I remember kneeling around my parents' bed in the evening for the family rosary; I heard about the debates between my mother and father -- one who wanted to be involved in The Catholic Family Movement and the other who favored participation in the Catholic Worker movement; my mother was scandalized the first time my sister Diane appeared in church without her mantilla; my brother Tommy was distressed that the pastor would not allow his wedding Mass to be celebrated in Latin; and I started playing guitar at the folk Masses and retreats in high school and began to serve on liturgical committees in college.
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> The unifying element through all these experiences was the high value my parents placed on education and our exposure to the Catholic intellectual tradition. For a period of his career, before I was born, my dad had owned a Catholic goods bookstore, Madonna Books in Detroit, which he opened with an initial inventory from his own library. Although the bookstore was closed before I was born, the shelves in our den were filled with the works of Merton and Maritain, Chesterton and Newman, and, of course, Aquinas. I didn't realize that it was unusual in my friends' families to analyze the homily on the way home from church.
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> When all of us kids had reached adulthood, my dad's desire that we should all remain informed about our faith took the shape one Christmas of gift subscriptions to the *National Catholic Reporter* for each of us, which he renewed each year until he died. Periodically, during those years, Dad would call or even send a clipping of an article of particular interest. When we cleaned out his apartment after his death, we found

more articles clipped in folders that traced both dad's love and worries about the church. For the last 20 years of his life, *NCR* was a continuous source of insight, commentary and provocation for family conversations that reflected both our deep concerns and our highest hopes for the church we had all grown to love in different ways.

NCR is still important! Besides keeping us well-informed on the church in the world, it is a constant reminder of what our dad wanted us to grow up to be. We are proud to continue the tradition and pass *NCR* on to the next generation.

If you are able, please give to the webathon [1]. It will ensure that *NCR* will be around for your children and your children's children.

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[1] https://npo.networkforgood.org/Donate/Donate.aspx?npoSubscriptionId=1001385&code=NetworkforGood