Twofold Transformation

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"I would not consider the home I grew up in to be a typically religious home. There were certain characteristics that made it a religious home, but I do not think an outsider looking in would immediately label it that way. There are seven people in my family. I am the middle child and I have an older brother and sister, and a younger brother and sister. From the time I can first remember I have always believed in God and I was baptized at the age of 12."

Cover Page Footnote
Selected for the Parent and Child prize.

This parent and child is available in Verbum: https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/verbum/vol12/iss2/14
I would not consider the home I grew up in to be a typically religious home. There were certain characteristics that made it a religious home, but I do not think an outsider looking in would immediately label it that way. There are seven people in my family. I am the middle child and I have an older brother and sister, and a younger brother and sister. From the time I can first remember I have always believed in God and I was baptized at the age of 12.

The reason that my home is a religious one is my mother. My mother is very strong in her faith in God and has always set the example for me and my siblings. She took us to church every Sunday and tried to take us to as many church functions as possible. My father was the complete opposite of my mother. My father was an alcoholic from the time he was a teenager and struggled for many years. My parents met at a summer camp the summer before my mother’s junior year of high school. She got pregnant with my older sister Hope a year later. It is highly likely that if she hadn’t gotten pregnant they would have never gotten married and I would not exist today.

My father was abused throughout his childhood, and had many deaths in the family; the only way to describe my father was that he was a broken man. He had a huge amount of anger
that he just held inside and drowned with alcohol. He refused to go to church and I often heard him call it pointless and stupid. These conflicting messages that we were receiving in our home were definitely hard to deal with and I know they affected me and my siblings in different ways. No one in our town really knew about my father’s issues and many people called our family religious because we went to different church functions all the time.

My freshman year of high school, after one violent drunken outburst by my father, my mother finally demanded change. He was arrested and he went away to rehab. The elders from the church came to our house that night and prayed with us. I loved my father, but he made it really hard sometimes and I was extremely embarrassed in this moment. After this one night our home completely changed. My father was only away for two weeks instead of the whole thirty days and I didn’t know what was going to happen. Something had changed in my father and he began changing more and more every day. For the next few years things were still really hard at home. My parents’ marriage was still suffering and my father still had a lot of anger in his heart.

Eventually I went away to St. John Fisher and was home a lot less. It was really hard being away from home because I wanted to know what was going on and I wanted to make sure my mom and siblings were alright. Even though I am the middle child, I have always been the “mothering” one among my siblings. The summer after my freshman year my father had a heart attack and was diagnosed with diabetes. When this happened I didn’t really know how to feel about it. There were times throughout my childhood when things were so bad that I often wished my father would just disappear. I loved him and I didn’t want him to die, and I felt very guilty for having wished those things when I was younger.

Throughout that summer, my father began to come to me with questions about God and the bible. He asked what one has to do to be saved. This really struck me at the time, and I had
I had always considered myself to be a Christian and that I was saved; but it was during this time that something changed for me as well. I began to question my own faith and the way I had been living my life. At school I was friends with all the wrong people, and I was doing things I knew were wrong. My father was baptized in the following February and it was one of the most moving, emotional, and important moments in my life. Beforehand my father said a prayer in front of those gathered as tears streamed down his face. He came out of the water with a smile on his face. I struggled to hold back tears as I held my mom’s hands. I realized that my faith was one of the most important things in my life, and it should be what I am living my life for. My father was not a good man, but eventually he became a great man, a great father, and a great husband. Growing up in my religious home was not typical, but as time has gone by it has become more typically religious, and a peaceful home. My father’s desk is covered with bibles and other religious books, and there is always Christian music playing.
Ancient Bridge, Rome, Italy

(Photo by MC)