



Girls
and
Boys
Town

FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

THOUGHTS FROM GIRLS AND BOYS TOWN

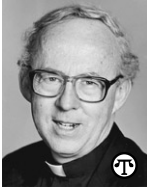
The Original Father Flanagan's Boys' Home

A Good Mom Is A Precious Commodity

by *Father Val Peter*

(NAPSA)—The other night at supper, six of my high school girls at Girls and Boys Town were discussing the qualities of a good mom.

The girls began to share stories of their mothers and how they affected their lives.



Father Peter

Maria, who is from the South Bronx, began. She told a story of her mom's addiction to crack cocaine and her inability to care for her and her two

younger brothers. Meals for the children are hit and miss, and last week, she "forgot" Maria's birthday. "Mom isn't here for us, and we need her so much," she said, tears running down her cheeks.

Maria's mom can't be a good mom because of her addiction. No matter how hard Maria wants it, her mom will not be a good mom until she is in recovery.

Praise the Lord for all the moms in the world who are in recovery and who can care for and about their children. They are strong, good and holy.

Then it was Linda's turn. Her mom is a very successful and well-respected lawyer in Los Angeles.

"She really is a good person, but she is so busy," Linda said. "On weekends, she gives me \$100 and says, 'go to the mall and have a good time.' More than anything else, I want my mom to spend time with me, to have fun with me, to teach me how to cook," Linda said.

"But after a while I got used to being alone." Linda said she even started liking the things she was buying. "They became more important than my mom."

Linda's mom is a workaholic. She says she loves Linda but doesn't have time for her. Now, Linda is learning to rely on things more than people.

Praise the Lord for all the moms who overcome their workaholic ways and make time for

their children and themselves.

Then Elise, who is from Atlanta, spoke up with a story about her mom. "She just enjoyed being a mom," Elise said. "After dad abandoned us, she went through a hard time, but she never let us down. She worked hard, but was always there for us.

"When she died last year, it was hard, but at least we knew what a real mom was. We will always be grateful for her."

Blessed is Elise's mom. She was the sunshine of her daughters' lives. She taught them to always "look for the silver lining when a cloud appears in the sky." She taught them to give and not to count the cost. She taught them to laugh in good times and in bad.

A good mom is precious beyond price. In this month of May when we celebrate Mother's Day, we ask God's blessings on all moms wherever they may be.

I also pray mightily every night that my girls will grow up to love children, to nourish them, to bring them joy and happiness. God knew what he was doing when he created good moms.

Girls and Boys Town, the original Father Flanagan's Boys' Home, is a leader in the direct treatment and care of abused, abandoned and neglected girls and boys. Through 18 sites across the country, the organization directly cares for more than 37,000 girls and boys annually.

Girls and Boys Town also assists 1.5 million children and parents through its National Hotline (1-800-448-3000), outreach and training programs and community partnerships.



• *Father Val Peter is executive director of Girls and Boys Town, the original Father Flanagan's Boys' Home in Boys Town, Neb., and in California, New York, Louisiana, Texas, Florida, Nevada, Rhode Island, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Georgia and Washington, D.C.*