



# Among Friends

Newsletter of the Friends of St. John the Caregiver

July 2008

## The Click-to-Vote Quiz!

How are visitors voting? No, it's not a matter of ballots.

It's . . . mouse clicks!

Here's a list of five popular pages at each of our three sisters sites for the first part of 2008. We've listed each set in alphabetical order.

Which page do you think took top honors in each of the three?

Careful now. You might be surprised.



### YourAgingParent.com topics

- A. Anointing of the Sick
- B. Guidelines for Caregiving
- C. Guilt
- D. "I Don't Want to Be a Burden"
- E. Keeping Secrets, Telling Lies

### CatholicCaregivers.com

- A. Bulletin Briefs
- B. Catholic Caregivers flier
- C. How Your Parish Can Help Caregivers
- D. Prayers of Intercession
- E. Mini-posters

### FSJC.org

- A. Donations
- B. Little Book of Caregiver Prayers
- C. Membership Sign-up
- D. Newsletter
- E. Spirituality

We've put the answers on page two.

Not to imply you'd peek if we put them here. This is just an editorial device to get you to look at the back page. Pretty sneaky, huh?

## And speaking of popular . . .

The order form that we included with the April newsletter has been a great success. That's why we're including it again in this edition of "Among Friends."

You also find the latest update on Prayer Requests and a sample copy of "Catholic Caregivers," the monthly flier available at CatholicCaregivers.com.

## An Excerpt From:

### 'Keeping Secrets, Telling Lies'

It's a bad idea to keep secrets from immediate family members if your loved one is facing a terminal illness. Not always telling the care-receiver the truth—the whole truth—is a mistake, too.

Sooner or later, that secret, the whole truth, is going to be revealed. When that happens, a loving relationship based on trust is damaged. People are hurt more than they would have been if everyone had simply been honest from the beginning.

But it's so tempting.

If your parent or spouse is terribly frightened by the words "cancer" and "malignant," why not gloss over what the doctor has said? Why not just refer to his condition as "stomach problems" and keep his spirits up by telling him he'll soon be back on his feet and good as new?

Why not? Because he's an adult. Because he has the right to hear the truth, even if it's a harsh truth. Unless there are extenuating circumstances—significant dementia, for example—your loved one has the right to make his own decisions, and in order to make the best ones possible, he needs to know all the facts.

While it's not unusual—and it's certainly understandable—that an adult child would want to shield an aging parent, want to protect him or her from as much worry as possible, doing that is also selling a parent short. It may help you to keep in mind that Mom didn't reach old age without going through hard times. She didn't get there without having squarely faced difficulties that couldn't be avoided.

Often a care-receiver, even one who is frail, is much tougher and wiser than others may realize. . . .

(To read more, see page four of the newsletter. We've included a copy of "Catholic Caregivers" that features "Keeping Secrets, Telling Lies." You can find that flier — and many more — at CatholicCaregivers.com. The fliers are great for bulletin inserts! The same material's in the Topics section of YourAgingParent.com.)



## In Loving Memory

We remember caregivers, care-receivers, family members and friends who have recently died:

- Mary Cordwell's husband, Arthur
- Cyril William Dodds
- The father of Kay McMurry
- The mother of Marci Thomsen, Nita

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.*

# Donors Laugh at FSJC Fund-raising Effort!

Here's one — typical — response:

*"I was having a not-very-good day yesterday until I opened your fundraiser letter. I've never laughed so much when being asked to contribute. Whoever wrote that clearly has years of experience volunteering in their parish."*

*"Then there was the youth-group chocolate sale. Instead of ordering ten boxes of 100 candy bars per box, ten cases were ordered. There were six boxes in each case, so you can do the math."*

*"My kids, who are both now in their 20s, thought it was funny, too. Back when they were in high school I was the chairperson for our parish festival for three years and they, and all of their friends, helped. They have a very clear understanding of how much work goes into those things, and just how we get roped into doing them."*

*"Then there was the youth-group chocolate sale. In-*

**You are cordially  
not invited to the . . .**

**Friends of St. John the Caregiver  
dinner-auction • 10k run • phone-a-thon  
chocolate sale • bake sale  
sail away to the Caribbean . . .**

*because we aren't having  
any of those fund-raising events!*

*stead of ordering ten boxes of 100 candy bars per box, ten cases were ordered. There were six boxes in each case, so you can do the math.*

*"Thanks for the laugh, and I'll be sending a check."*

Over the past two and half years we've discovered that an advantage of having an international organization is members and supporters around the world are praying for caregivers and care-receivers!

And we've also figured out it would be more than a little

tricky to host a bake sale or golf tournament as a fund-raising event. Who would be the "host nation"? (Ireland? Australia? China?)

That's why we chose "Non-event 2008": no travel, no committee meetings, no hassles.

Thank you so much to all who have contributed to this unconventional appeal. No, it's not too late to donate! (Surprise, surprise.) Your gift is truly appreciated.

(Figure out that math question yet? Yes, 6,000 bars!)

## Lights, Camera . . . Catholic Caregiving! Videos Now Available on Web and DVD

Thanks to all those who stopped by our new YouTube "channel":

JohnTheCaregiver.

We invite – and encourage – you to take a look at our videos and, if you should be so inclined, rate what you see and add a comment or two.

Please also consider sending links to your family and friends and embedding the videos themselves in your Web site or blog.



**The same videos are also available on a DVD.**

We've added that to the FSJC Order Form which – what a coincidence – we're including with this edition of "Among Friends."

Please share a copy of the form with any friends or family who are caregivers but don't have access to the Internet.

### Click-to-Vote

## Quiz Answers

Here are the answers to the quiz on page one.

Did you notice we gave a bit of a hint with our lead article? We were surprised that "Keeping Secrets, Telling Lies" ranked highest!

Here's how each Top Five list reads:

#### *YourAgingParent.com Topics*

1. Keeping Secrets, Telling Lies
2. Guilt
3. Guidelines for Caregiving
4. Anointing of the Sick
5. "I Don't Want to Be a Burden"

#### *CatholicCaregivers.com*

1. Prayers of Intercession
2. Catholic Caregiver flier
3. Bulletin Briefs
4. Mini-posters
5. How Your Parish Can Help Caregivers

#### *FSJC.org*

1. Little Book of Caregiver Prayers
2. Spirituality
3. Newsletter
4. Membership Sign-up
5. Donations

### Weekly Updates

You can find a weekly update letter every Monday on the home page at [YourAgingParent.com](http://YourAgingParent.com).

And — if you're the kind who likes information delivered right to you — there's an RSS link, too.



Not familiar with "Really Simple Syndication"? Many

sites have information on choosing a "reader" and receiving information.

Search "RSS" and "how to."

**Friends of St. John the Caregiver**

# Order Form

We know that some family caregivers and FSJC members don't have access to the Internet. Here's a handy way to order a variety of resource material for yourself, your family member, your parish . . . or anyone else. **Thanks to the generosity of FSJC donors we can offer all these items at no charge.** Just let us know what you would like and where you want to have it sent. Items with an asterisk (\*) are also available on-line at YourAgingParent.com.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Quantity Requested</i>	
		Exhaustion: Care for the Caregiver _____
<b>Prayer Books</b>		Evaluating Housing Options _____
The Little Book of Caregiver Prayers _____		Caregiving is a Family Affair _____
The Stations of the Cross for Caregivers _____		Parent's Grief _____
		Caregiver Grief: Sorting Out, Moving On, _____
<b>Holy Cards</b>		Remembering _____
St. John the Caregiver _____		Dealing with Caregiver Guilt _____
Our Lady in Need _____		Home Safety _____
Caregiver's Prayer bookmark _____		Independence, Control and Self-determination _____
		Keeping Secrets, Telling Lies _____
<b>*Brochures</b>		If You Are a Long-distance Caregiver _____
The Basics of Catholic Caregiving _____		Helping Your Loved One Deal with Losses _____
The Friends of St. John the Caregiver _____		When You're Married to the Caregiver _____
		Should Mom or Dad Move In? _____
<b>*Checklists</b>		When Mom or Dad Moves In _____
Overall Assessment of Care-receiver _____		Not My Parent, Spouse, Loved One _____
Assisted-Living Facility Evaluation _____		Choosing a Nursing Home _____
Nursing Home Evaluation _____		Guidelines for Caregiving _____
Legal and Financial Paperwork _____		Finding Respite Care _____
Depression _____		It's a Matter of Respect _____
Driving Skills _____		Respectful Caregiving as the Parent-Child _____
Home Safety _____		Roles Reverse _____
Elder Abuse Prevention _____		When the Parent-Child Roles Reverse _____
		The 'Sandwich Generation' _____
<b>*Topic Sheets</b>		Caregiving Stress: Warning Signs _____
The Stages of Caregiving _____		The Need to Talk _____
Alcoholism and Aging _____		When Your Loved One Has Poor Vision _____
Dealing with Caregiver and Care-receiver Anger _____		
Assessment: What Help Does _____		<b>Videos on DVD</b>
Mom or Dad Really Need? _____		Catholic Caregiving, Volume 1 _____
Choosing the Best Solution _____		A Caregiver's Prayer _____
'I Don't Want to Be a Burden' _____		Caregiver Advice from St. Francis de Sales _____
Helping Your Parent Give Up the Car Keys _____		Caregiver Concerns: Helping Your Loved One _____
Preparing Your Children to Visit Your Parent _____		Give Up the Car Keys _____
In Case of an Emergency or Disaster _____		Caregiver Concerns: Keeping Secrets, Telling Lies _____

Please send this material to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Prov \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your request to:  
**Friends of St. John the Caregiver**  
**P.O. Box 320**  
**Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043**

There is no charge for any material and no charge for shipping or handling.  
 All donations are gratefully accepted.  
 FSJC is a 501(c)3 organization. Donations are tax-deductible as provided by law.

***An international Catholic organization promoting care for family caregivers.***

# Catholic Caregivers

*'Caregiving is pro-life!'*

## Keeping Secrets, Telling Lies

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Not always telling the care-receiver the truth—the whole truth—is a mistake, too.

Sooner or later, that secret, the whole truth, is going to be revealed. When that happens, a loving relationship based on trust is damaged. People are hurt more than they would have been if everyone had simply been honest from the beginning.

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While it's not unusual—and it's certainly understandable—that an adult child would want to shield a aging parent, want to protect him or her from as much worry as possible, doing that is also selling a parent short. It may help you to keep in mind that Mom didn't reach old age without going through hard times. She didn't get there without having squarely faced difficulties that couldn't be avoided.

Often a care-receiver, even one who's frail, is much tougher and wiser than others may realize.

If both your parents are still living, there may also be times when one of them says to you, "Don't tell your mother" or "Don't tell your father." But a spouse knows when there's a serious problem, and hearing "everything's fine" can make him or her worry even more because obviously everything *isn't* fine. Obviously something is very wrong.

There may also be times when a parent wants to keep the secret with only one child. "Don't tell your brother. He has enough to worry about with his job." "Don't tell your sister. It will only upset her." Of course it will add to his worry! Of course it will upset her!

Some things in life are very worrisome, are very upsetting, but worse still is being excluded from an inner family circle.

You need to keep in mind getting the secret out into the open means more than simply stating it out loud. It means being there for your spouse and children, for your parents and siblings, as they too acknowledge the harsh reality that must be faced.

It means supporting, encouraging, consoling and loving one another. Maybe it means all of you coming together, one final time, as a family.

But what about not telling the truth when it's *not* a life-and-death situation? Lying can seem like such a good idea at the time. The perfect solution.

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*When the truth comes out, and it always seems to at the worst possible moment, it can take a long time before trust is reestablished.*

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For example, Mom has made it clear she will not pay for getting extra medical help at home. If her health insurance doesn't cover a visiting nurse, then she will do without. But you're the one handling her bills now. You know she has plenty of money. She's just being stubborn. So you go ahead and hire a nurse and tell Mom the insurance company has a new policy. No harm done.

That's not so. When you start lying to your loved one or begin withholding information from him or her, harm *is* being done.

When the truth comes out, and it always seems to at the worst possible moment, it can take a long time before trust is reestablished.

But, again, it comes down to this: Your loved one has a right to know. Your parent needs to know if she is going to make informed choices. Your spouse needs to know if he is going to be able to prepare for what's coming.

If sometime you're tempted to lie, imagine someone keeping similar, personal, vital information from you. Imagine someone lying to you about it just so you won't worry.

You would be furious. And rightly so.

Telling the truth is another way you show your love and respect for the person who's in your care. □

Visit [YourAgingParent.com](http://YourAgingParent.com) for more spirituality, information and resources for Catholic caregivers.

*A program of the  
Friends of St. John the Caregiver.*

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