



Bashing millennials is a popular pastime.

Diamond, housing, retails, or other industry tanking? Millennials are too addicted to the internet. Person you disagree with elected into a political position? Those darn voting youth! Tide pod challenge fiasco? Dumb youngsters deserved it. Increased mental illness? Definitely, only the younger than forty crowd to blame.

Why are millennials the way they are said to be?

In this interview, Simon Sinek is said that this infamous generation was set up. Between parenting methods and the addiction to unrestricted social media access, the younger generations miss important, vital life lessons, and it is no wonder suicide and mental illness increases. Then, we blame them when we should help them grow.

It's a fallacy to overgeneralize other human persons by placing them impersonally into categories, though necessary at times for valuable research studies. Beyond gathering data to assist others, we should look past generational differences and see the individual, know each person's name, and realize that loving each other is a life or death situation.

The Bible tells us there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastics 1:9). This is good because this means we as humans have the ability to reach out and heal this devastating problem before it is too late.

To illustrate this point, consider this scenario: You're on a walk with your beloved. A person with a gun corners you both and forces you to choose between your own life and your beloved's life. One of you must die. There is no way out of this situation. Who do you choose? Quick!

Yes, you could say you'll just fight for both your lives or come up with some way to avoid answering this question, but take me seriously for a minute. Actually choose.

My high school sociology teacher presented us with this situation. Most of us agreed that we, like many superheroes or romantic drama stars, would choose to die in place of our beloved. Our teacher suggested that if we truly love our beloved, we'd choose them to die.

Her reasoning was that if you're really in love you can't live without each other, so you by living would be worse off. Some students tried to rebuttal her proposition, others whole-heartedly agreed, and I just sat there confused. She meant well, and we trusted her, but after attending a religious university that had crucifixes above every classroom doorway, I realized why it rubbed me the wrong way.

To choose to kill your beloved rather than yourself is exactly the opposite way of loving that millennials—and many people from all eras, backgrounds, and ages to be honest—are falling prey to.

Here's what killing your beloved says:

LIE: Love is when other people say they love you. TRUTH: God is love.

When are we met with God? He's ignored and overshadowed and pushed aside as if an offense, but what we need to show each other is God with our thoughts, words, and actions. He is a good father. He would not cripple us by doing everything for us, but he also wouldn't leave us hanging when we need to learn something important from him—like the importance of knowing that we don't only love one person our whole life.

We can love our friends, family, and our beloved each with 100% of our heart while also understanding that we love them each differently. We love our father differently than we love our spouses. We love one child differently, but just as wholly, as we love another. We love strangers differently than we love our best friend. Younger generations are so confused about all this, which is probably why there are such issues with relationships and confusion about sex, interpersonal goals, and societal roles.

LIE: You are unable to be loved by others. TRUTH: You are made to be loved and able to be loved and love others, too!

I know my husband is a lovable guy, and I'm not the only one who loves him. God loves him, his family loves him, our child loves him, and if I die before him, another woman may love him and marry him. I'm okay with that. I would die for him to let him live and be loved.

Where do we find the love of John 15:13? In Christ and those who knowingly or unknowingly show His love to us.

Show others that they deserve love, God loves them, and that they are worthy of being in meaningful, committed relationships. Show people that the material world is not all there is by the way you love. Otherwise, who can blame millennials for being so seemingly self-centered, distraught, and yet suicidal? Don't let others dwell in their miserable state of unlovingness—love them and lead them to the light.

LIE: Suffering and sacrifice are scary and should be avoided. TRUTH: True love is willing the good of the other, even if it means losing something yourself (even your own life) for them.

Instant gratification. Distracting entertainment. Constant connection to the digital rather than those around us.

It all helps us avoid pain, both physically and socially. We avoid asking people out in person in preference for asking someone out over a message or swiping on dating apps. We would rather rate a professor poorly online than ask the professor what we can do to improve in person. It's a sacrifice to carry a child and raise a family. It's a sacrifice to deny yourself something for the sake of others.

Sacrifice and suffering are not parts of what modern society tells us that a good life is, but as Catholics, we openly, actively, and purposefully embrace suffering and make sacrifices for others and Christ. We do this to show love. We do this to remind ourselves of our faith. We do this in memory of Him.

Younger generations need to be built up with true, determined, sincere love of Christ—not the sham we're sold elsewhere that parades as love but is really destructive to ourselves and others.

That's why loving millennials, rather than bashing, arguing against, or ignoring them, is a life or death situation. Younger generations are growing up whether we like it or not.

Without showing each other true love from God, we fail each other. We let each other be confused and isolated.

In the words of Hugh Victor, "To love another is to see the face of God." And, that same God incarnated Himself to walk among us, suffer and die for us, and rise from the dead. We, too, should love so much that we'd let our beloved live, love others, and find God.

As Micah Taylor asks at the end of his music video, please pray for millennials. Don't do it ironically or to single them out as a hopeless enemy, but because we need each other.

How are you there for other generations? How do you handle differences between generations with humor, wisdom, and charity? How do you love your family and love others who don't have a loving family? What are you doing to stop complaining and do something constructive for the younger generations, especially in regards to finding the truth of our faith?