

“If I could give one book on motherhood to every mom I know, *Everyday Heroism* by Christine Hanus would be it. As wise as it is humorous, this heart-to-heart meditation is guaranteed to cheer and inspire those who do the deepest work of all: mothers.”

–**Mary Eberstadt**

Author of Adam and Eve after the Pill, Revisited

“Christine writes from the heart in *Everyday Heroism*. The illustrations of grace that come from the “little way” of being a mom fill each page. The scripture, words of the saints, and prayers for each day are enriching. Whether a new mom or a seasoned mother in need of refreshment, you will be blessed by these day-by-day meditations.”

–**Very Rev. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D.**

President, Saint Francis University

“Funny, humble, warm, wise—Christine Hanus manages to be all these things to the mother in the trenches. In a world of Instagram feeds filled with false images of perfection, her words are refreshing and necessary, and will doubtless save many moms from despairing, “Am I the only one?” I am often asked by women where they can find a spiritual director—and while nothing can take the place of an actual person, this book is a great place to start for any mother seeking a guide. I can’t recommend it enough.”

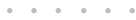
–**Claire Dwyer**

Author of This Present Paradise: A Spiritual Journey with St. Elizabeth of the Trinity
and editor of Spiritualdirection.com

Everyday Heroism



*28 Daily Reflections on the
Little Way of Motherhood*



Christine M. Hanus

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*It is necessary that the heroic becomes
daily and that the daily becomes heroic.*

—*St. Zelig Martin*
(*St. Thérèse of Lisieux's mother*)

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A Note to the Reader



Dear Fellow Moms,

There are two reasons I wrote this book. It all started with my own struggles as I began to live out the heroic call to motherhood, which was a lot less idyllic than I first imagined it would be. My head knew how significant my vocation was, but there was always a part of me that fought the obscurity and mundaneness of it all, especially when the kids were very young. I started journaling about my experiences to encourage myself and to remind myself why I was eager to be a mom in the first place.

Second, as many of the women I knew started to marry, I became increasingly aware of the dilemma women face. I realized there were women who wanted to be good wives and mothers as much as I did, but their cultural education had omitted, warped, and even disparaged a Catholic understanding of what it means to be a woman. So I began writing to offer women something practical, beautiful, and eternal—a Catholic perspective on motherhood.

When I started to write this book about embracing motherhood while in the *midst* of it, something interesting happened: the time and energy necessary to write any kind of book was impossible for me to find. Like taking a long shower or having nice furniture ... it just wasn't happenin'. Paradoxically, the longer I went without realizing my dream of producing a book that examines what I call "the little way of motherhood," the more qualified I became! My youngest child is now eighteen. And no, I haven't brought home a paycheck or earned a degree in more than twenty years. I haven't accomplished many of my goals—or the thinness—I had planned for myself. Yet, being "unsuccessful" in the eyes of the world does add to my credibility when speaking about the Little Way. When I claim that a life lived in service to family is grossly undervalued in our culture, I can now personally testify to the fruit it bears over time.

Recently, though, I did find the time to finish this book. In fact, it was my oldest son, now twenty-seven years old, who kept urging me to finish it.

I have written from the heart, often sharing my own story as an ordinary Catholic mom. I have thought of you often over the past fifteen years—you women who are now reading this book—and I am praying God's best for you and your families. As you read, reflect, and pray over the course of the next twenty-eight days (or however you choose to break it up), I hope that God will help you internalize whatever is most helpful in these pages.

Finally, though this series of reflections is for *any* mother who wants to be encouraged and renewed in her vocation

as a mom—or for any woman who wants to understand more about the true meaning and purpose of motherhood—it is written with special empathy and encouragement for the women who are in the midst of kid-chaos. Kid-chaos is like childbirth. You forget the intensity of it when you are no longer being overpowered by it. One day, in the not too distant future, you will look back at the present frenzied pandemonium of your family life and say, “Ahhh ... those were the days!” In the meantime, there is so much to be grateful for and so much good work you are doing.

To all moms everywhere, be assured, God has an amazing purpose and plan for your life.

Love on!

Christine

P.S. It was difficult for me to so often leave husbands out of the conversation in these meditations, but I wanted this book to be for single moms as well as married. In an effort to support and validate the heroic work of many single parents, sometimes the other parent (dads in particular) are treated as superfluous. They are a far cry from superfluous!

Let it be known in no uncertain terms: the sacrament of marriage is the primary well-spring of the grace we need to parent. God looks after single parents and their children in a particularly powerful way, but marriage was instituted by Christ as a sacrament for a reason! *The sacrament of Matrimony is the normative way for parents to receive the grace necessary to parent well.*