

# Mom realness: Simcha Fisher

**W**hen it comes to capturing marriage and motherhood, Simcha Fisher has a distinctive voice that Catholics can find both comfort and chaos in. The New Hampshire-based mother of 10 lends the quirky edge of her observations to [simchafisher.com](http://simchafisher.com) and numerous Catholic periodicals.

She is also the author of “The Sinner’s Guide to Natural Family Planning,” and she recently spoke with Cross Roads about why she’s been wearing the same pants for three days.

**CR:** **How does your family life evangelize through what you write?**

**Simcha Fisher:** Mainly, I pledge never to Photoshop stuff out, literally or metaphorically. Catholics have gotten better about acknowledging that a worthwhile life isn’t always Instagram-pretty; but there is still a deep need for people to see that we all struggle and we all screw up, and that doesn’t mean you’re doing a bad job or that something’s wrong with you or that you’re not worthy of love. It’s just how life is.

I’m really good at being a mess, and it seems to help people to see it, so that’s what I lead with a lot of the time. Being a mess really is at the heart of our faith. It’s why we need confession; it’s why we need the Eucharist. I just don’t see any point in acting like we don’t need help. It’s why Jesus came.

**CR:** **Why is humor important?** **SF:** I honestly don’t see how you could survive NFP, or marriage, or Catholicism, or life without laughing about it at least sometimes. Maybe people think laughing about something proves that you don’t take it seriously, but really all it shows is that you don’t take yourself too seriously. I scrupulously avoid blasphemy, but not every joke is blasphemy. Some of it is just acknowledging that life is weird, people are crazy, and sometimes all you can do is laugh. For me, it’s a matter of survival.

That being said, jokes about faith aren’t for everyone, and that’s OK, too. People with a more solemn bent are entitled to encounter their faith in a way that makes sense for them. The variety in people’s spiritual approaches is a feature, not a bug. I would truly hate it if everyone I met was like me!

**CR:** **How has your experience as a woman in the Church shaped you?**

**SF:** In the same way those Play-Doh extruders shape Play-Doh: with steady pressure, and a certain amount of discomfort.

Like a lot of Catholic women, I tried on, failed at and discarded a lot of extremist lifestyles while I worked out how to be A Catholic Woman Today. Now I mainly think people need to settle down about the role of women in the Church and just focus on being human. Avoiding sin, pursuing virtue, that sort of thing. Accept what the Church teaches dogmatically, pray about what you have a hard time accepting and then just try to do well in the life that God has put in front of you. If you’re a human woman, then the virtues you will build are feminine virtues, automatically. It’s not necessarily easy, but it is simple.

**CR:** **What has motherhood taught you about being a Christian?**

**SF:** I spent 20 years hearing the words “This is my body, which will be given up for you” at Mass, but I didn’t really get it until I was in labor with my first kid, bleeding and crying and feeling like I was dying as I gave up my body for someone else. Then I gave birth nine more times. Giving birth to them, and caring for them, and feeding them, cleaning up after them, and losing my mind over them has forced me to conclude that this is a very incarnational faith we have. ... It’s not a metaphor. It’s about the body.

This is true not only for mothers, but for everybody. If you spend your life talking about spiritual things but you spend at least some of your time giving up your body — and your time, and your energy, and your vanity, and



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your sleep, and your bodily strength — serving the people that God has put in front of you, then I just don’t know what you’re doing. I know there are all different kinds of spirituality, but we are humans, and humans have bodies. Like it or not, our faith is found in the flesh.

**CR:** **What have you learned about the Church over the course of your journey?**

**SF:** That it was founded by God, but it is most certainly made up of human beings. That the gates of hell will not prevail against it, but prevailing feels scary a lot of the time. That you can talk all day long about the Church, the Church, the Church and never once think about Jesus, or talk to him, or look at him. ...

If you want to find Jesus, look at a cross. He’s not on the right or on the left. He’s in the center, bleeding. Being Catholic means admitting how we hurt the Body of Christ, and choosing to suffer with him. †