

Parents of slain journalist drawing on faith

by [Melanie Eversley](#) with added sources

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Once again, John and Diane Foley appeared on national television to speak about their son, conflict journalist James Foley.

Only this time, on August 20, it wasn't to plead for his release from captors but to thank the public for the outpouring of support that has flooded in since officials confirmed a videotaped killing of their son by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria was authentic.

"We know Jimmy's free," John Foley said, standing in front of the family home in Rochester, New Hampshire, according to The Huffington Post. "And we know he's in God's hands."

Diane Foley and the family's pastor spoke of James Foley's sense of mission, according to the *Boston Globe*.

"He felt compelled to be a witness to people in conflict," she said. "He died for that compassion and that love, and I pray that he can be remembered that way and that he not have died in vain."

Paul Gousse of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary parish in Rochester said James Foley "had a love for people who were oppressed, and he wanted people in the world to know of their suffering."

In years past, the Foleys have taken to television to draw attention to the cause of their son, who was abducted in November 2012 in Syria and also held captive for 44 days in 2011 after being captured in Libya.

Writing of that time in [a published letter to Marquette University](#) in Milwaukee, his undergraduate alma mater,

James Foley had described family as having "a strong faith."

He was able to speak to his mother by phone once from Libya, and she told him, "So many people are praying for you."

Through prayer, "I knew I wasn't alone," he wrote. "If nothing else, prayer was the glue that enabled my freedom, an inner freedom first and later the miracle of being released during a war in which the regime had no real incentive to free us. It didn't make sense, but faith did."

After Foley disappeared in 2012, his parents launched FreeJamesFoley.org to serve as a clearinghouse for information that might lead to his release. In October 2013, they joined *Today's* Matt Lauer to wish their still-captive son a happy 40th birthday and to keep his cause alive. Even when interviewers noted that Foley's career took him to many volatile places, his father was quick to defend him.

"He's not reckless," John Foley said. "He's been doing this conflict reporting for almost eight years."

The Foleys said August 20 that their son was the oldest of their five children and that his attraction to reporting from war-torn areas came from having brothers who served in the military.

Journalist Max Fisher of Vox [described Foley](#) as a person of quiet but strong faith. He noted that Foley helped organize a memorial fund for the family of photographer Anton Hammerl, who was killed in Libya in 2011 at the same time that Foley was kidnapped.

Fisher said, "Jim's faith was something we all agreed not to discuss publicly while he was held in Syria, but it was the wellspring of his generosity."

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