

Familia Fidelis



A resource for Catholic families in the Diocese of Scranton

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“The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason it can and should be called a *domestic church*. It is a community of faith, hope, and charity....”

(*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2204)

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For Mom and Dad—“The Family, the First Transmitter of the Faith”

“The Christian family, through the Sacrament of Marriage and the Baptism of the parents and the children, is a ‘domestic church’ and shares in [the mission of the universal Church]. As the generator of children, the family becomes the first and principal institution entrusted with transmitting the saving mystery of God to them. For this reason, parents are the authentic transmitters of the faith they profess to their children. The great saints were usually born into deeply Christian families. It is a fact that in countries where faith was persecuted for a long time, it was preserved and transmitted through the ministry of the parents.

The family is not a self-sufficient or autonomous institution in transmitting the faith to its children. It needs to be in close relation with the parish and the school their children attend, especially if it is Catholic school.

The parish catechesis and the religion class in the educational center complement informal family catechesis, which must also be formal at times.

In the earliest times of Christianity, the Christian family already appeared to be the transmitter of the parents’ faith, as manifested in the practice of bringing the children to Baptism and the acceptance of this proposal by the bishop in charge of the community. The parents’ witness played a decisive role, to the point that the family became the place par excellence where the Church transmitted the faith. This is what happens in the mission countries, whereas in other nations with a great Christian tradition, the family has often lost its protagonist role, with the resulting decline in faith and religious practice.

The recovery of a vigorous, evangelizing Church passes by

way of the restoration of the family as the basic institution for transmitting the faith. Therefore, in the countries mentioned above the Christian family has a special field of action today, especially with regard to other non-Christian families or those that have drawn away from religious practice. Grandparents, children and other Christian family members are urged to transmit the faith to their parents and relatives.”

-Pontifical Council for the Family



For Teens—What is Purgatory?

(From *Did Adam and Eve Have Belly Buttons?* by Matthew Pinto)

Question: “What is purgatory?”

Answer: Purgatory is the state of purification that some souls must undergo before experiencing the Beatific Vision, the vision of God. Purgatory is an infallible dogma of the faith (CCC 1030).

Purgatory is for people who are destined for heaven but have venial sins or the effects of for-

given mortal sins on their souls (Mt. 5:26; CCC 1031). Because ‘nothing unclean shall enter’ into heaven (Rv. 21:27), God has established a place of final purification—purgatory. Purgatory is not a ‘second chance.’ If one dies in mortal sin, one goes directly to hell (CCC 1874). If one dies in a state of grace and has completely formed his will and love of God to a state of perfection, one will go straight to heaven.

When we are judged immediately

after death (Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10), we will know the true state of our souls and our life’s work as never before. If we are saved but are still attached to the vestiges (remnants) of sin, we will not only see the justice and logic of purgatory but will actually want to go there. As C.S. Lewis once wrote, ‘Our souls demand purgatory, don’t they?’ (See his book *The Joyful Christian*.) Before we come into the presence of an all-holy, perfect God, we will need



“Our souls demand purgatory, don’t they?”

~C.S. Lewis

Author of *Chronicles of Narnia*

“If our families are to be a domestic Church, we need to engage the entire ‘congregation.’”

St. Monica is a patron for alcoholics, difficult marriages, mothers, victims of infidelity, and widows.



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For Teens...Continued

and want to be purified of anything unholy or imperfect that remains.

When we sin, we love ourselves more than God and His laws. This is disordered love. This sin is like the impurities found in newly mined gold. To make the gold perfect, we need to put it through fire. The fire ‘sweats out’ the impurities. This is analogous to the purification process in purgatory (1 Cor. 3:12-13).

There is a common objection, directed at the Church by

some Protestants, that the doctrine of purgatory takes away from the work of Jesus on the cross at Calvary and is therefore unbiblical. This is not true. Purgatory is an *application* of the cross. Jesus’ death is so powerful that it can actually purify us in the after-life. The souls in purgatory are cleansed of their sin precisely because of the sufferings of Christ on the cross.

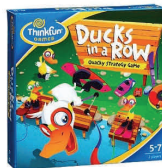
Great Catholic Website

If you spend some time online this month, why not check out

romanticcatholic.com. This site is a project sponsored by youth groups in the Colorado Springs, CO area. The site features cool t-shirts they designed, an online radio station, a forum, blog, apologetics resources, games, daily Mass readings and much more. Check it out!



For Children—Ducks in a Row



Those of you who have followed this newsletter with any regularity know that I like family games that can engage the younger siblings in the family. My main theory behind this is that it encourages younger and older siblings to interact and spend time together, instead of the older kids doing “their thing” and the younger ones

doing theirs. If our families are to be a domestic Church, we need to engage the entire “congregation.”

In that vein I want to recommend **Ducks in a Row** from the good people at ThinkFun. This two player game is simple—each player tries to get four of their ducks in a row (vertical, horizontal, diagonal) in order to win. If your child can count to 4, they can play this game (think of it as Con-

nect Four with ducks).

The younger kids who aren’t great at strategy can still manage to play the game and the real treat for them, from my experience, is just being able to play with mom or dad or one of their older siblings. Meanwhile, older siblings can play a more competitive/strategic game against each other or their parents. A worthwhile addition to the family game collection!

Friends for Families—St. Monica (Aug. 27)

St. Monica is most famous for being the mother of St. Augustine, one of the greatest theologians in the history of the Church. She was, however, a great saint in her own right. Besides patiently praying and setting a Christian example for her son and husband (Patrick), who both lived as pagans for much of their lives, Monica assisted the poor, refused to participate in spreading gossip, and overcame an

addiction to alcohol that she had developed when she was young.

In *Confessions*, St. Augustine powerfully portrays the role a loving, faithful mother played in his conversion to the Catholic faith. Monica’s love for her son often forced her to be blunt with him about the poor decisions he made. While Augustine didn’t appreciate these comments at the time, he realized in later years the

motivation behind them. “I cannot speak enough of the love she had for me,” he writes in admiration.

St. Monica’s feast day is celebrated on August 27, the day before the feast day of St. Augustine. This seems fitting on the part of the Church—after all, there would be no Augustine to celebrate were it not for Monica.