

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— What Makes Marriage Work?

“Communication

What is the one indispensable ingredient for making marriages work? Family life educators usually answer: communication. This is good news, because effective communication can be learned. Skills such as active listening, using “I” statements, paying attention to my feelings and those of my spouse, and learning tips for “fighting fair” make marriage easier. Some couples use these skills intuitively because they saw them modeled in their own upbringing. Others can learn them through classes, workshops and reading.

Of course, the hardest part of communicating usually comes when there is disagreement between the two of you.

Commitment and Common Values

Some ingredients, if missing, can doom a relationship from the start. Two primary ones are commitment and common values.

Commitment bonds a couple together when you are tired, annoyed, or angry with each other. Sometimes, remembering your vows can prompt you to push past these problems and try to forgive and start again.

Common values are important. If you aren’t together on basic values such as children, honesty, fidelity, and putting family before work, no amount of learning or effort of the will can resolve the conflict. For example, constant tension will result if one spouse wants to live simply while the other wants life’s luxuries.

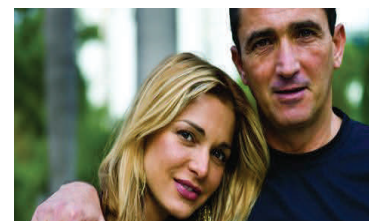
Spirituality/Faith

You might not consider yourself

a spiritual person; however, anyone who seeks the deeper meaning of life, and not a life focused on personal pleasure, operates out of a spiritual sense. For many this desire is expressed in commitment to a specific faith tradition. Here one joins with others to worship God and work for the common good.

Although being a person of faith is not essential to making your marriage work, it’s a bonus. Certainly good people throughout the ages have had happy marriages and not all of them have been religious. But it helps to have faith principles to guide you and a faith community to encourage your commitment.”

~ForYourMarriage.org



For Teens— Can the Unbaptized go to Heaven?

[The following is an excerpt from *Did Jesus Have a Last Name?* By Matthew Pinto and Jason Evert]

Question: “If a person is not baptized, but lives a good life, can that person go to heaven ?”

Answer: “As Catholics, we affirm that baptism is necessary for salvation (CCC 1257). In the Gospel of John, Jesus says clearly that unless one is born ‘of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter

the kingdom of God’ (Jn. 3:5). We are born with a fallen nature due to original sin, and we enter the world without God’s grace (CCC 1250); we need to be ‘reborn’ into this grace through baptism. Naturally speaking, a ‘good life’ is not sufficient to merit salvation. One reason for this is that ‘good’ is often understood in a subjective way to be whatever each individual person believes.

This being said, as the *Catechism*

states, ‘God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but He Himself is not bound by His sacraments’ (CCC 1257). The Church has always held that a person who sincerely *desires* baptism, such as catechumens preparing to enter the Faith, can be saved (CCC 1259). This is called the *baptism of desire*.

Imagine that a person, through no fault of his own, has never been exposed to the saving teachings of Jesus. He can be



“Ultimately, we must commend the soul of an unbaptized individual to the mercy of God.”

“Our son no longer has any difficulty losing his spot on the beads...”

“Never tire of doing good.”

~Blessed Rafaela



For Teens...Continued

saved if he strives to follow God's will *as he understands it*. As the Second Vatican Council teaches, salvation is possible for such people who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel but follow their conscience and ‘strive to live a good life.’

One cannot be held responsible for what one genuinely doesn't know or understand. This is called *invincible ignorance*, which means that the person does not *choose* to be uninformed about the Faith. In

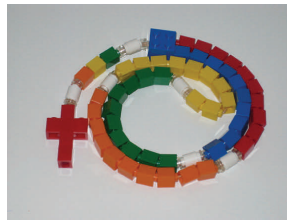
this sense, there really may be some people who fall into this category because they live in remote regions of Africa or Asia—or even in the United States if they have been poorly catechized. However, with the spread of modern communications, it is becoming more unlikely that there are many places where the name of Jesus is not known. Ultimately, we must commend the soul of an unbaptized individual to the mercy of God. Only He knows the true state of a per-

son's heart.”

The St. Michael Prayer

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, oh prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

For Children—Lego Rosary



Last month I mentioned that my wife and I live with a Lego addict (our newly minted 7 year old son). You can find almost anything made out of Legos these days—including rosaries.

In our family we celebrate one another's patron saint feast days. Typically, part of the celebration is a small treat (a stop at the bakery or some small gift). Last year my wife discovered on Etsy.com, a website devoted to handmade crafts, [MementoMoose](#), who designs Lego rosaries. When we saw them we knew we needed to get one for our son.

The Lego rosary is a great hit. As a family we pray a decade

each night from Monday to Friday and on Sunday we pray a whole rosary. Our son no longer has any difficulty losing his spot on the beads because with his Lego rosary he can attach all the blocks at the beginning, and then pop them off after each Hail Mary.

The rosaries cost \$20 and come with a storage bag and pamphlet on praying the rosary with children. A great buy!

Friends for Families—Blessed Rafaela Ibarra

Blessed Rafaela Ibarra (1843-1900) was born into a very faithful Spanish family. From a young age she displayed a deep love for Christ. Her First Holy Communion, in particular, made a very deep impression on her. She wrote in her diary at that time that she wept tears of joy afterwards.

Rafaela desired from an early age to show people that you could live a devout Christian life through the sacrament of

Holy Matrimony. At the age of 18 she married Jose de Vilalonga and, together, they made a conscious effort to include Christ as the third person of their marriage bond.

Rafaela and Jose were well known for their generous love. Besides their own children, they also adopted several nieces and nephews whom they treated like their own children. In addition to the children, the couple welcomed

Rafaela's parents and other relatives into their home as they aged.

Rafaela looked beyond her own family as well, using her family's wealth to establish Holy Family Hospice, which cared for women in difficult circumstances and at risk girls. She also started the Sisters of the Holy Guardian Angels to care for the needs of these women. Rafaela was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1984.