

Familia Fidelis



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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 Proclamation of the Gospel of Life”

“Within the ‘people of life and the people for life’, the family has a decisive responsibility. This responsibility flows from its very nature as a community of life and love, founded upon marriage, and from its mission to ‘guard, reveal and communicate love’. Here it is a matter of God’s own love, of which parents are co-workers and as it were interpreters when they transmit life and raise it according to his fatherly plan. This is the love that becomes selflessness, receptiveness and gift. Within the family each member is accepted, respected and honored precisely because he or she is a person; and if any family member is in greater need, the care which he or she receives is all the more intense and attentive.

The family has a special role to play throughout the life of its members, from birth to death. It is truly ‘the sanctuary of life: the

place in which life—the gift of God—can be properly welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed, and can develop in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth’. Consequently the role of the family in building a culture of life is decisive and irreplaceable.

...It is above all in raising children that the family fulfils its mission to proclaim the Gospel of life. By word and example, in the daily round of relations and choices, and through concrete actions and signs, parents lead their children to authentic freedom, actualized in the sincere gift of self, and they cultivate in them respect for others, a sense of justice, cordial openness, dialogue, generous service, solidarity and all the other values which help people to live life as a gift. In raising children Christian parents must be concerned about their children’s

faith and help them to fulfill the vocation God has given them. The parents’ mission as educators also includes teaching and giving their children an example of the true meaning of suffering and death. They will be able to do this if they are sensitive to all kinds of suffering around them and, even more, if they succeed in fostering attitudes of closeness, assistance and sharing towards sick or elderly members of the family.”

~Pope John Paul II
The Gospel of Life.



For Teens—Why Go to Mass Regularly?

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

Question: “How can I convince friends who go to church once or twice a month or just on holidays why they need to go regularly?”

Answer: It sounds as if they do not realize what the heart of their professed faith is—a relationship of love with Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17-19; CCC 2666). Perhaps you should work on that. You can evangelize your friends by pointing them to Christ (1 Cor. 2:2). The best

way to do this is not simply by what you say but also by what you do (Mt. 5:14-16). Your love for Christ should be evident by how you live. If you are a hypocrite, your friends may see this as proof that going to Mass makes no difference.

As to why they should go to Mass regularly, tell them they should do this as an expression of their love for Christ. This love of Christ means (1) we want to receive Him in the Eucharist (Lk 22:19; CCC 1324) and (2) we will obey Him (1 Jn. 3:24). Jesus

wants us to gather for corporate worship on Sundays. That is how Christians fulfill the commandment, “Keep holy the Lord’s Day” (Heb. 10:25).

Jesus says if we love Him, we will keep His commandments (Jn. 14:15). Conversely, if we do not keep His commandments, can we really say we love Him (1 Jn 5:18; CCC 2180)?

Remind your friend that God gives us twenty-four hours each day. He gives seven days each week. That’s 168 hours a week. We spend fifty-six hours sleeping



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“This Bible is very simple and has beautiful full-color illustrations...”

“...carry the passion of God in your hearts, for it will be your consolation in your last hour.”

~St. Nicholas



For Teens...Continued

and fifty-six hours working or in school. That leaves fifty-six hours for enjoyment and leisure. If we cannot give God one or two hours out of that fifty-six, how serious are we when we say we love Him? And, if we do not love or serve Him in this life, we seriously risk not being with Him in the next (Jn. 3:36; CCC 161).

Question: Where does holy water come from and what is its purpose?

Answer: Holy water is actually just ordinary water that has been blessed and to which some salt has been added. The salt signifies our future preservation from corruption. The purpose of holy water is to remind us of our baptism. It signifies that we are worthy to enter into the presence of Christ only through the grace of baptism (CCC 1668).

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit,

Fill the hearts of Your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, You instructed the hearts of those who believed in You by the light of the Holy Spirit. Grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise and ever to rejoice in His consolation through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

For Children—*The Bible for Little Ones*



I know, I know, I know—there are seemingly millions of Bibles for children (some of which I’ve recommended before), so why mention another one? Because **The Bible for Little Ones** is the first board book Bible that I have come across and our youngest loves it.

This Bible is very simple and

has beautiful full-color illustrations by Maite Roche (whose work some of you will recognize from MagnifiKids).

I read several pages each night to our 18 month-old right before bed and he is very attentive the entire time—often pointing to certain details on the page and chattering excitedly. You could very easily read the entire thing in one short sitting. My wife and I have learned from experience

how exposing children to prayer and the stories of the Bible—even when they seem to young to understand—leads to positive outcomes later. I still remember when our oldest was 2 and I overheard him signing to himself while he was playing. Intrigued, I moved a little closer and realized he was singing the Our Father.

This little Bible is great for your youngest children (or grandchildren).

Friends for Families—*St. Nicholas of Flue (Mar. 21)*

Known as “Brother Klaus” by the Swiss, St. Nicholas of Flue (1417-1487) is remembered as a holy man, counselor to both the powerful and the weak, and a worker for peace.

Nicholas was a member of a Catholic lay association called the Friends of God, which sought to draw closer to Jesus through living a life of discipline and meditating on the Passion. His wife, Dorothy, was also a member of the group. To-

gether, they had 10 children, who were a source of joy to them.

Nicholas served in several minor public offices, turning down the office of Governor on several occasions. At the age of 50, Nicholas began to discern a call from God to live a more contemplative life. With his wife’s blessing, he became a hermit, living for 20 years in a remote cottage. During that time, it is said, the only food he

consumed was the Eucharist.

Despite his remote location, Nicholas had a steady stream of visitors who sought his council on both religious and civil matters. It was largely through his efforts that a civil war was avoided and the unity of Switzerland was achieved. Nicholas died in 1487 and was officially canonized in 1947. He is considered the patron of Switzerland and his feast day is celebrated on March 21.