

# CONNECTIONS

Your Resource for Building a Strong Catholic Family

## Prayer, a Fundamental Thing We Do as Catholics



Prayer is one of the most fundamental things that we do or should do as Catholics.

**What is prayer?** Prayer, very simply, is speaking lovingly to God. Prayer can be individual or it can be communal, that is, in union with others. Prayer can also have a very calming influence on a family, de-stressing stressful situations.

As a family there are many opportunities to pray during the day. It's always good to start

the day with a simple morning offering in which we offer up to God the day's activities that are to come. One such morning offering is:

*O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all our associates, and in particular for the intentions recommended this month by the Holy Father.*

Praying at meals is our Catholic custom and is very pleasing to God. However, for a family, bedtime prayers are possibly more important. This is when we can gather together and very briefly discuss our day's activities. Patterns in children's lives are extremely important. We need to reinforce their prayer life with our own participation in prayer. It is also a time that we can teach such simple prayers as the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

## Why is the Mass Different During Lent?



As Jesus relived the life of Israel by fulfilling all that Israel had failed to do, the Church lives the life of Jesus in its liturgical seasons and the Mass.

The Church makes changes to the Mass to reflect the liturgical season. What's different in the Mass during Lent? The most notable changes are the colors of the priest's vestments (purple symbolizing repentance) and the absence of the Gloria and the Alleluia.

### The Alleluia

Alleluia is Greek and means "praise Yahweh." The Alleluia is seen as the highest term of praise of the choirs of angels as they worship around the throne of God in Heaven. The Alleluia is a term of great joy and

our use of the Alleluia during Mass is a way of participating with the angels in worship. It is also a reminder that the Kingdom of Heaven is already established on earth, in the Church, and that our participation in Mass is participation in the Heavenly liturgy. Did you know that we participate in the heavenly liturgy right here at St. Francis?

### Our Lenten Exile

During Lent, however, our focus is on the Kingdom coming, not on the Kingdom having already come.

We are on a spiritual journey toward the Second Coming and our eternal life in Heaven. In order to remind us of that journey, the Church, during Lent, removes the Alleluia from the Mass. Instead, we

acknowledge our sins and practice prayer, fasting and almsgiving so that one-day we may again have the privilege of worshipping God alongside the angels.

### The Return of the Gloria and Alleluia at Easter

That day comes triumphantly on Holy Saturday night during the Easter Vigil when the priest or deacon chants a triple Alleluia before proclaiming the Gospel and everyone responds in turn, with a triple Alleluia. 1) The Lord is risen 2) The Kingdom has come and 3) Our joy is complete. In communion and in concert with the angels and saints, we greet the risen Lord with shouts of "Alleluia!"

## Symbol Key



### Prayer and Worship

Understanding what happens at Mass and incorporating prayer into family life.



### Family (The Domestic Church)

Incorporating Catholic customs and traditions into family life.



### Formation

Fills in the holes of faith knowledge that may have missed growing up and highlights what makes Catholics distinct



### Charity and Service

Highlights charity and service opportunities for the family within St. Francis Parish and the greater community.

# Charity and Service



Saint Francis Catholic Church provides the center of Catholic activity for Saint Francis parishioners.

The Church and related buildings provide the environment by which parishioners worship, attend Mass, receive the Sacraments, attend spiritual and social activities and interact with other Catholic families. The Church grounds are an integral part of the Saint Francis experience; the natural setting makes people feel that they are some place special. Unfortunately, time, weather and other factors can diminish the beauty of the existing grounds.

This provides an excellent service opportunity for families to help prepare for the celebration of our Risen Lord at Easter. Consider as part of your family's Lenten sacrifice these activities:

1. Claim a portion of Church property as a "family plot", and give it all the love and care that would be given to the family yard.
2. Select a parking lot and sweep it every other week.
3. Periodically, clear weeds and debris from various Church areas such as the outdoor Stations of the Cross, playground, and parking areas.

# A Family That Prays Together...



**...stays together!** My Mom used to tell me this all the time when I was a kid. At the time, it seemed like a cliché, but now that I have a family of my own, I recognize the wisdom and truth behind her words. In addition, some of the fondest memories of my childhood were the quiet moments spent with my family in prayer. As protestants, we didn't say the same dinner prayer that I do with my family now as a Catholic, but I can still hear my father's voice leading Grace before our family meal. I remember the feeling of security that I felt hearing my Dad say the final Amen after family prayer time before bed.

The fact is this: if your children pray with you, they will connect with you on a deeper level. They will respect you for taking leadership in the action of prayer. They will develop a deeper security in their faith because of the support they get from you. Most importantly, they will learn how to pray by watching you.

**This Lenten season can be a great opportunity to begin a new tradition of family prayer.**

The Strong Catholic Families Committee is hosting a Family Prayer Candle Making Event on 2/24/13 after the 8:30 and 10:30AM Masses. Come make a Family Prayer Candle that you can use during Lent.

**Here are a few other ideas to consider regarding how to pray as a family:**

- Create a simple prayer book and leave it out where it is accessible to all members of the family.

- When someone asks you to pray for them, write their intention in your family prayer book.
- Encourage your children to write their intentions and prayers of thanksgiving in the prayer book.
- Set aside 10 minutes in your evening for family prayer. Right before bedtime is usually a great time.

The value of family prayer cannot be measured materially, but the memory of your family prayer time will live forever in the hearts and minds of your children. Take the opportunity this Lent to share this tradition with your family. You never know how deep of a root you may plant.



### Mission Statement

The Strong Catholic Families initiative at St. Francis will provide support to help families pass on the traditions of the faith and share the love of Christ.

For more information visit:

<http://www.stfrancissherwood.org/>

(Go to: Faith Formation then Strong Catholic Families)



## WORD SEARCH

Find the words for Lazarus

Asleep  
Awaken  
Bethany  
Behind  
Brother  
Burial  
Caiaphas  
Cave  
Disciples  
Ephraim  
Father  
Glorified  
Jerusalem

Judea  
Lazarus  
Life  
Light  
Loved  
Martha  
Mary  
Master  
Messiah  
Passover  
Perfumed  
Propheesied  
Rabbi

Resurrection  
Rise  
Romans  
Sanhedrin  
Signs  
Sister  
Stone  
Teacher  
Temple  
Troubled  
Weeping  
Wept

X G Y Z Y O H B S W E E P I N G Z U D R  
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X P T Q M A S T E R N A H T R A M R T S  
L D M L A Z A R U S R H L L E S I R M U  
B R E H T O R B P H D O E B M J N J P R  
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R H A Z F U A T W P O Y H A R V S W S E  
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X C T S I G N S S P E E L S A D M Q J O  
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Z M R A W A K E N P M Q V U P D P L C S