

CONNECTIONS

Your Resource for Building a Strong Catholic Family

What We Believe As Catholics - Part 2



The second part of the Nicene Creed enlightens us about Jesus Christ. This is the largest section in the creed because it is Jesus that we as humans know the best and have had the most interaction with. The first part about Jesus expresses our belief that He is God. One of the words used stands out, 'begotten.' We do not use this word often in daily life, but it simply means that Jesus came from God and was not simply a product of a mother and a father. The phrase says 'begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father.' Consubstantial is not a word we use often either. It simply means 'of the same substance.' So, Jesus is of the same substance as God.

The creed goes on and tells us that Jesus came down from heaven and was 'incarnate of the Virgin Mary.' Incarnate is

used to let us know He was made human, like us. He breathes the same air we breathe and drinks the same water we drink.

The remaining part about Jesus summarizes His main reason for coming among us. In these three sentences the creed recounts for us Jesus' crucifixion, His ascension into heaven, and His reigning in glory.

It is so simple to just say these words at Mass and not really think about them or understand them in their fullness. As we hear and pray these words each week at Mass, it would be good for us to focus on the meaning of the words. Maybe even a simple discussion about the words on the way home in the car would be beneficial.

Why do Catholics Celebrate Advent?



Advent marks the beginning of the Church's liturgical year and consists of the four Sundays before Christmas. This is a time of great anticipation of the coming of our Lord. The word 'Advent' comes from the Latin word *Adventus*, which signifies 'a coming.' Advent is also a time of penance and preparation in our hearts.

During Advent, some things are noticeably different at Mass. For one, the priest wears

purple vestments. Why purple? Purple signifies the royal color of the coming king. Secondly, the Gloria is omitted during Mass. Why? The omission of the Gloria gives us pause during this season to reflect and think about what is missing and what we are waiting for – our Lord.

By most historical accounts, the Church began celebrating Advent, in the liturgical sense, in the second half of the 4th century. The traditions and practices of Advent have

evolved over the centuries. Advent continues to be one of the most treasured and sacred seasons of the liturgical year for many Catholics.

Need some ideas for Advent prayers?

Check out the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' website www.usccb.org. In the search window type Advent Prayers.

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



The church, family, state, and world are all preparing in one way or another for the arrival of the Savior.

What are you doing to prepare? And what about those who cannot or have no one to share in the excitement of this season? We are fortunate to have several ministries at St. Francis that help those less fortunate. Participating in these ministries can help families refocus on what the Advent season is about. So what can your family do to extend the celebration of the birth of our Lord? Here are some suggestions:

- Give generously to the Saint Francis Holiday Food Collection drive and consider helping to distribute baskets. If you know of a family in need, advise them of the basket availability and sign them up for delivery.
- Participate in St. Francis' annual Giving Tree to help families with children during the holiday season.
- Invite local shut-ins to go to Mass with your family and provide transportation.
- Invite the less fortunate to participate with your family in the holiday meals at the Hope Diner and/or one of the other local civic or church holiday kitchens and provide the transportation.
- Above all, daily prayer. Christmas usually poses a very difficult time for many. High unemployment, home foreclosure, health issues and family problems impact the excitement. This is one time of the year we can make a significant difference.



Mission Statement

The Strong Catholic Families initiative at St. Francis Parish 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.stfranciscisherwood.org/>

(Go to: Faith Formation then Strong Catholic Families)

Start a New Tradition



Next weekend marks the beginning of Advent. It seems that we spend so much of Advent planning, shopping, and stressing about December 25th that we don't take much time to stop and reflect on its meaning. Advent stands for "coming" and is supposed to be a time of waiting and spiritual preparation for the birth of Christ. So this year, in addition to trimming the tree and buying presents, how about starting a new family tradition?

Build an Advent wreath.

As a family make a commitment to light the wreath each Sunday of Advent during your family prayer time. This is a great opportunity to teach your children about the true meaning of Christmas, and to take a few minutes to talk with your children about how they are preparing themselves for Christ's coming. Do they understand the real value of the greatest gift in the world? Our culture has become so detached from our faith; it is hard for a 10 year old to understand how getting an Xbox for Christmas has anything to do with

the gift of salvation. There are quite a few blanks to fill in, and this is the moment to do it! The Parish will be having an **Advent wreath making event on December 2nd immediately following the 10:30 Mass.** Come and join us as a family to make your wreath. Need some ideas for Advent prayers? See the Prayer and Worship section on the front of this newsletter.

Set up a Nativity scene.

Whether it is lit-up lawn decorations, or small figurines, having a Nativity scene prominently displayed helps kids remember the true meaning of Christmas. As the pieces are being set out, take the time to talk as a family about the events surrounding the birth of Jesus.

Reach out to others.

As a family, visit the local nursing homes and hospices. Take some presents, bring some goodies and, where appropriate, participate in prayer and communion. Or, invite a family into your home to share in your holiday celebration.



Word Search The Lords Prayer

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

AGAINST
 AMEN
 BREAD
 DAILY
 DELIVER
 DONE
 EARTH
 EVIL
 FATHER
 FORGIVE
 GIVE
 HALLOWED
 HEAVEN
 KINGDOM
 LEAD
 NAME
 TEMPTATION
 TRESPASS
 WILL