

Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

November 2010

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish

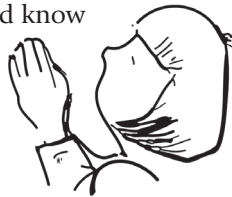
Laura Glaser, Ann Pifer and S. Mary Caroline Marchal



Thoughtful Moments

Pray, pray, pray

Raising Catholic children to love and serve God and know their faith isn't easy. It may be our job, but it is also God's work. Making time for prayer acknowledges that God is in charge of the process. It is during prayer that he can offer us comfort and guidance in our important work.



Good enough for Jesus ...

As they raised their son, Mary and Joseph knew he was destined for greatness. Still, they probably gave him tedious chores and menial jobs necessary to help the family. The skills he acquired may not have helped during his public ministry, but the virtues of patience, persistence, hard work, and honesty that he learned by doing that work did.

About Advent

"It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope." Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Seek That Which Is Above*



The saints invite us to their garden

Imagine that the saints in Heaven are like beautiful flowers in a garden. Each flower seems flawless and its beauty effortless but it took a lot of labor to make them so. The same is true for the saints. It took a lot of hard work to get where they are. Learning about them may help us to become saints, too.

Rooted in faith. Not every saint was holy from birth. For some, growing spiritual roots took years. The gift of faith helped them to find the garden where their roots would grow healthy and strong.

Nourished by grace. A flower needs

soil and sunshine to grow. To grow in holiness during their lives, the saints relied on God's grace, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to holiness.

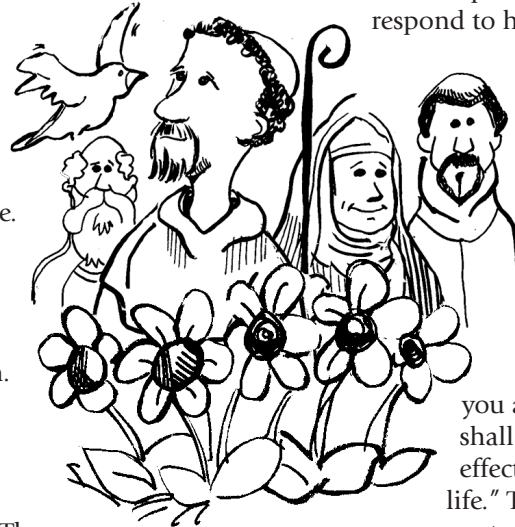
Grown with love.

Flowers also need food to become beautiful. Love fed the saints on Earth and feeds them still. Before he died, St. Dominic said, "Do not weep, for I shall

be more useful to you after my death and I shall help you then more effectively than during my life." The saints join their

prayers to ours and petition

God for the help we need whenever we ask. They continue their efforts to bring each of us to the most beautiful garden of all.



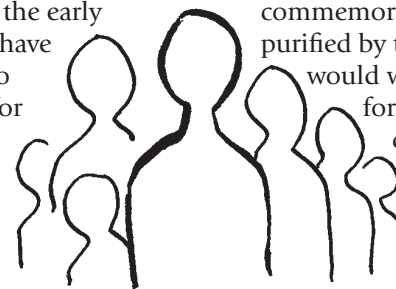
Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics offer Masses for the dead?

From the days of the early Church, Catholics have been encouraged to pray and sacrifice for the dead. Praying for souls in Purgatory helps them pass through faster.

"Let us help and

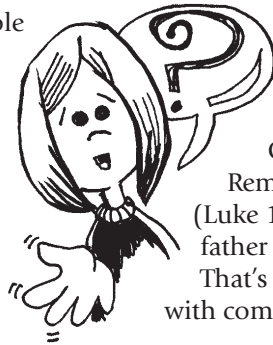
commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1032).



“Does God love me less when I sin?”

Children often worry that they become unlovable when they do something wrong. It may help to remind them that God’s love can’t be lost.

Imagine God’s love as a bright light shining in the window. We can close our eyes or pull down a shade to keep the light from shining on us. The light still shines, but we can’t experience it because we have shut it out. Sin shades our hearts from God’s love, but the love still shines. Removing sin helps us bask fully in the light.



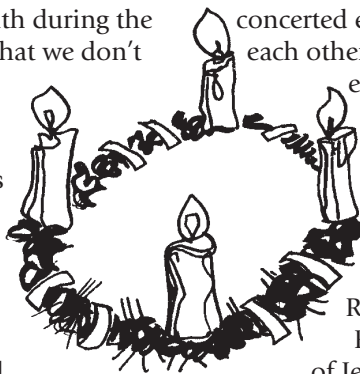
That’s one of the reasons why Jesus created the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Receiving absolution and being assured of God’s forgiveness opens our shuttered hearts so we can receive God’s love again. God’s love doesn’t depend upon our actions.

Remember the parable Jesus told of the prodigal son (Luke 15)? No matter how bad the son’s behavior, his father forgave him completely the moment he asked. That’s how God feels about us. He is ready to forgive us with complete love.

Scripture LESSON

Matthew 24:37-44, “Is he here yet?”

We know Jesus came more than 2,000 years ago and we will celebrate that arrival next month during the Christmas season. What we don’t know, and must be ready for, is when he will come again. In this reading, he urges all his followers to be ready for whenever he comes again. That is what Advent is all about: anticipating our Lord, wondering at the mystery of his coming, and marveling at the light of his glory when he arrives.



What can a parent do? Help your family prepare for Jesus. Start by

resolving as a family to avoid sin. Go to Confession together. Make a concerted effort to be considerate of each other, do assigned chores, show extra patience.

Then, light the Advent wreath and pray together each night during the season. Either come up with your own prayer service, or pray a family Rosary.

Finally, savor the Bible story of Jesus’ coming. Marvel over the Annunciation. Exclaim over the Visitation. Celebrate the Birth. When Christmas finally arrives, the whole family will share in its wonder and excitement together.

Parent TALK

For years my children have begged for a dog and for years I resisted. I bought fish and even hermit crabs, but they were poor substitutes.



Finally, I agreed to consider a dog. Promises were made, responsibilities assigned and, after endless discussions, we got a small white dog we named, “Lucy.”

I didn’t grow up with a dog but figured she would be a cheery presence. In fact, Lucy is the furry hug when someone is sad and a source of delight when she learns a new trick. That, I expected.

What I didn’t expect was how a dog would help my children learn to live their faith. All three are slowly putting Lucy’s needs before their own. They feed her, fill her water bowl, teach her, and care for her when she isn’t feeling well. They are learning patience, charity and kindness by caring for one of God’s creatures.

Feasts & Celebrations

In November we celebrate the saints on **All Saints Day (Nov. 1)** and pray for souls in Purgatory on **All Souls Day (Nov. 2)**. A new Church year begins on Nov. 28.

Nov. 4 – St. Charles Borromeo (1584). After earning doctorates in civil and canon law by the age of 21, he was called to Rome by his uncle, Pope Pius IV, to be cardinal and bishop of Milan. He worked tirelessly to reform his diocese and care for poor and sick in his charge.

Nov. 10 – Pope St. Leo, the Great

(461). Pope St. Leo helped the Church stay united despite attacks from false teachers and warring tribes. He is famous for his explanations of the faith.

Nov. 28 – First Sunday of Advent.

During the next four weeks, we anticipate the Messiah’s birth, remembering when he was awaited. Catholics all over the world light candles in an Advent wreath each night of the season to signal the coming of the true light of Christ.



Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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