

Thoughtful Moments

St. Francis

One of the most cherished of all saints is St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Friars Minor. On his feast day, October 4, many parishes may offer a blessing of the animals during which you can bring your pet for a special blessing in his honor. This reminds us that St. Francis rejoiced in all of God's creation.



Too busy?

On your deathbed you are not going to lie there thinking, "Boy, I wish I had worked more." You are going to long for more time with your spouse, your children, or your family. A child needs the undivided attention of his or her parent for a little while each day. Don't be so busy that you miss even one special moment with yours.

"Had I cherished evil in my heart, the Lord would not have heard. But God did hear and listened to my voice in prayer" (Psalm 66:18-19).



Teach children to pray for miracles

Prayer is part of our nature as Christians. In prayer, we praise God, ask for favors for others, and pray when we have a need. As Catholic parents, we want children to pray and trust God for answers, but what do we do when our experience tells us only a miracle will help?

Teach children to overcome doubt with faith. Adults want to protect children from disappointment, but we never need to protect them from God. Overcoming doubt with faith is part of friendship with Christ. Letting children wrestle with their faith helps build a faith that can withstand the trials that may lie ahead.



Talk about God's history of answering big prayers. For example, Jonah prayed for his life to be spared from the belly of the whale, and God saved him (Jonah 2). St. Paul asked for and received the ability to heal Publius' ailing father and other sick villagers (Acts 28:7-9). When Elijah prayed for rain, "the heavens gave rain" (James 5:13-18). We know that prayer is our first and best strategy when we need a miracle.

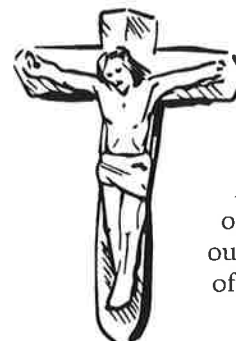
Encourage children to surrender. It's human to focus on the results of prayer rather than God's ability to answer. Teach children to expect an answer to every prayer and trust that the result will be the best God wants for us.

Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics have crucifixes instead of crosses?

The crucifix reminds us of the price of salvation and of God's infinite love: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16). His Son is on the Cross.

In church, the crucifix indicates that "the sacrifice of



Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1367). In the Mass, Jesus, through the priest, offers himself to the Father on our behalf, under the appearances of bread and wine.

Three ways to show love

In the crush of daily life, kindness and love may take a back seat to efficiency and diligence. Yet, making a point to communicate love each day can reassure children that no matter what changes around them, a parent's love is reliable.

Be empathetic. Try looking at life from a child's view. For example, children sense that the adults in their lives may be concerned but don't know why. They may not have the ability to place the situation in perspective. They see "concern" but think "fear."



Put family first. In uncertain times, our priority has to be taking care of our families. It is unlikely that in the future we will look back at our lives and wish we worked more. Yet, we may wish we had spent more time with our family.

Take time to cherish each moment with children. They are only young once.

Bite your tongue. You can't take back a critical or negative remark. Instead, find something positive to say or say nothing at all.

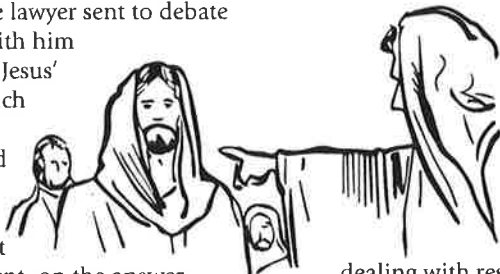
Scripture LESSON

Matthew 22:34-40. Can't argue with love.

There are more than 613 commands in the Jewish law. The lawyer sent to debate Jesus was toying with him when he asked for Jesus' opinion about which law was the most important. Jews had been debating that question for generations without coming to agreement on the answer. Encouraged by the Pharisees, the lawyer asked in the hope of getting Jesus to say something against Jewish law so he could be discredited and perhaps arrested.

Jesus silenced them all by saying that everything starts and ends with love - love of God and love of each other. Even the

Pharisees couldn't argue with that.



The Ten Commandments can be divided into two categories: those dealing with love for God (the first four) and those dealing with responsibilities toward other people (the last six). In the end, it all comes down to love.

What can a parent do? Talk with your children about how easy it is to love people who are nice to us but loving everyone, even if they're not nice, is what God really wants us to do.

Parent TALK

My twelve year old has been feeling unsettled in the pandemic. Nothing is "normal" for her - not school, not friendships, not home life, and she has started acting out. Every



reaction I make in response - laughing, smiling, gasping, reprimanding, yelling - reinforces her

negative behavior in some way. It's exhausting.

When schools and workplaces got shut down last spring, our prayer routine was disrupted as well. It was months before we even got to go back to Mass to receive the Eucharist. Tessa was showing the tension we all felt. I wanted to remind her - and us - that we are all in God's care. So, we decided to gather for morning prayer before breakfast, Angelus at noon, Chaplet of Divine Mercy at 3:00pm, and a Rosary decade at bedtime. The regular connection with God, and the peace that comes with prayer, has given us all comfort in a very strange time.

Feasts & Celebrations

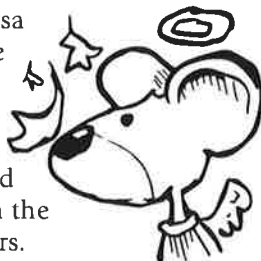
In October, we celebrate the Rosary, the devotion that helps us meditate on the mysteries of our salvation - Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection.

October 1 - St. Therese of the Child Jesus (1897). At the age of 15, Therese Martin became a Carmelite nun in Lisieux, France and served others with "quiet acts of love." Her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, is an easy read for older children.

October 7 - Our Lady of the Rosary (1571). Pope Pius V created this feast in thanksgiving to Our Lady

of Victory who helped the Christians defeat the Ottoman Turks. Since it was believed that they won after praying the Rosary, the feast was renamed Our Lady of the Rosary by Pope Gregory XIII.

October 15 - St. Teresa of Avila (1583). Founder of a strict religious order whose nuns wore rough brown habits and sandals instead of shoes. St. Teresa founded more than 17 convents of Discalced Carmelites and helped reform the Carmelite friars.



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