



Family Life Office
2713 West Chestnut Avenue
Altoona, PA 16601
(814) 695-5579
familylife@dioceseaj.org

MAY 2020

Volume XXXV, Number 5

IDEAS FOR LIVING BETTER FROM THE FAMILY LIFE OFFICE

Family Ritual

Due to the pandemic, with school and business closures, many families are experiencing fear and stress. But also, many families are spending more time together than before.

While the fear and stress are real, and what is causing them needs to be addressed, don't pass up the opportunity your family has to spend time together! Play with your children more. Read to them. Take family walks. And make certain to use this opportunity for prayer. You can read the scriptures together or do a Daily Examen.

There are many excellent ways to pray with young children. Our Diocesan website has links to a number of family prayer possibilities.

While it is ok to be afraid during these uncertain times, and it is necessary to pray for all those who are fighting the illness as well as those who have been impacted negatively by it, do not forget to see the blessings that can be found within it.

When God allows evil, it is to draw forth some greater good. (CCC 412)

Andre McCarville

Family Life & Missions Office, Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown



Pope Francis composes a prayer to Our Lady, Health of the Sick, to implore her protection during the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic.

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith.

You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.

We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us:

He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

POPE FRANCIS, MARCH 2020



Families and the Gospel

May 3, 2020: Fourth Sunday of Easter (JN 10:1-10)

In today's gospel Jesus tells us, **HE IS THE WAY** and warns anyone who offers "another way" to happiness is "a thief and a bandit." Strong words! Don't listen to the sales pitch of society for happiness. Look to yourself where God is present and "calls you by name and leads you to abundant life."

May 10, 2020 Fifth Sunday of Easter (JN 14:1-12)

Jesus tells us in the gospel: "I am in the Father and the Father is in me!" The point is: God is in each one of us, in our relationships and in our homes. The vocation of the Christian family is to live the divine gift which is already in and around us.

May 10, 2020: Mother's Day

Mothers are instruments of Christ's presence in the home. A mother's love reveals the attentive, thoughtful, serving, forgiving and concerned side of God's love. Thanks to all mothers for showing us the tender and loving face of God.

May 17, 2020: Sixth Sunday of Easter (JN 14:15-21)

In today's gospel Jesus prepared his disciples for his departure. Family life is a series of departures. As we mature and grow older we constantly transition from the familiar to the new unknown. Today Jesus assures us we are not alone in these transitions. "I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you."

May 21, 2020: Ascension Thursday (MT 28:16-20) As Jesus appointed apostles, he also appoints parents to represent Him in the family; "make disciples of your children, baptizing and teaching them all I have taught you. Don't worry, I am with you always."

May 24, 2020: Seventh Sunday of Easter (JN 17:1-11) Jesus tells us today, "you are my witnesses" and guarantees the "promise of the Father" to "clothe us with the power to accomplish this mission. It is not worldly power which dominates and manipulates. It is the power of the Kingdom of God to live in peace, forgiveness, compassion, service to others, love of enemies and care for the poor and defenseless.

May 25, 2020: Memorial Day

Our decisions create our style of living and also what kind of person we are. That's the awesome power of free will. As we celebrate Memorial Day it is a good time to ask ourselves; "How do I want to be remembered?" The power is in your hands, or rather in your decisions.

May 31, 2020: Pentecost (JN 20:19-23)

Like the disciples in today's gospel, there are times we shut the doors of our hearts to people or events. It's how we create emotional distance. Permanent distancing is lethal and prevents the **PEACE** Jesus offers you today.