

The Collection Basket

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IDEAS FOR LIVING BETTER FROM THE FAMILY LIFE OFFICE

Family Ritual

“Easterize” Your Home

What signs of Easter joy would a visitor see in your home during the 50 day Easter season?

Here are some ideas:

- an Alleluia sign
- spring flowers next to an opened Bible
- a crucifix with a white cloth draped over Christ’s shoulders
- a butterfly mobile with a “He is Risen” label.

What ideas do you have?



Creating Sacred Space

Sacred space is the place where we meet others and tell our stories. It stirs our memories and becomes the occasion of hope. We might even call it “sacramental.” Earthy and material, it is also transcendent because it is created and sustained by personal and communal meaning. Sacred place is ordinary place ritually set apart to be extraordinary. It becomes sacred because of the ritual acts performed there.

Simple things make a sacred space. Grandma’s was a sacred place. We gathered there every Sunday. Her table soon became our family’s storytelling space. Here we expressed our need to belong to one another and all creation through the ritual actions of gathering, storytelling, gesturing and sending.

Grandma always lit candles, there were fresh flowers, and iced tea in a dented, aging pewter pitcher. Sometimes there was a cloth on the table, but mostly I remember the worn oak wood-grain table with its support beam across the bottom where I put my feet.

It was the same every week. I felt at home. I belonged. I was connected. I could dream and hope. I was comfortable. Even when the people invited each week were not family, they seemed comfortable, too. Our storytelling space was a safe place.

Because rituals help release and stir consciousness about basic feelings like longing and hope, joy and gratitude, loss and grief, sickness and pain, guilt and jealousy, wonder and surprise, we need an emotionally safe environment to explore and share them.

By Jack Rathschmidt & Gaynell Bordes Cronin

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Saints and Heroes Among Us

St. Bernadette Soubirous (1844-1879)

By Judy Ball

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28 W. Liberty St., Cincinnati, OH 45202
or www.EveryDayCatholic.org



For the first 14 years of her life, Bernadette lived the humdrum existence of a poor, uneducated French peasant girl. Then “the Lady” came into her life—forever changing it, and her.

On February 11, 1858, young Bernadette experienced the first of 18 appearances from the Lady, who later identified herself as the Immaculate Conception. The apparitions continued over the next six months from the woman dressed in a white robe and blue sash, with yellow roses covering her feet. She always came to the same spot, a cave near Lourdes.

Her message to Bernadette was simple and direct. She called for the conversion of sinners through penance, urged people to visit the place of the apparitions and asked that a church be built on the site. Since then, millions of people have bathed in the springs at Lourdes—and many of them have reported miraculous healings.

Though Bernadette’s report of her visions brought crowds to the cave, they also brought skepticism. She faced ridicule and suspicion from townspeople and clergy. But she would not budge from her story: The visions were real, she insisted, and no one was going to make her deny the truth. In 1862, after a thorough investigation, Church authorities confirmed the authenticity of the apparitions.

Bernadette eventually sought protection in a convent. In 1866, she joined the Sisters of Notre Dame. Though in poor health, she spent many hours working in the infirmary and sacristy. She died at age 35.

In 1933, Pope Pius XI canonized Bernadette Soubirous—not because she had reported amazing visions, he said, but because of her life spent in simple devotion to God and in obedience to his will. Her feast day is **April 16**.

Families and the Gospel

EASTER TIME

April 4, 2021: Easter Sunday (John 20:1-9)

That first Easter morning was confusing. Jesus was missing and Mary Magdalene, Peter and John “did not know” what to do. In family life, there are confusing moments when “we don’t know” what to do. Like the apostles, we are Easter people when we believe and trust in each other even when all seems lost.

April 11, 2021: Divine Mercy Sunday (John 20:19-31)

In today’s gospel Jesus teaches, “Blessed are those who have not seen and believe.” Accepting someone as they are, without demanding they prove themselves or meet our expectations, creates a rich relationship. Without acceptance, a home is only a house and a family is just a group of housemates.

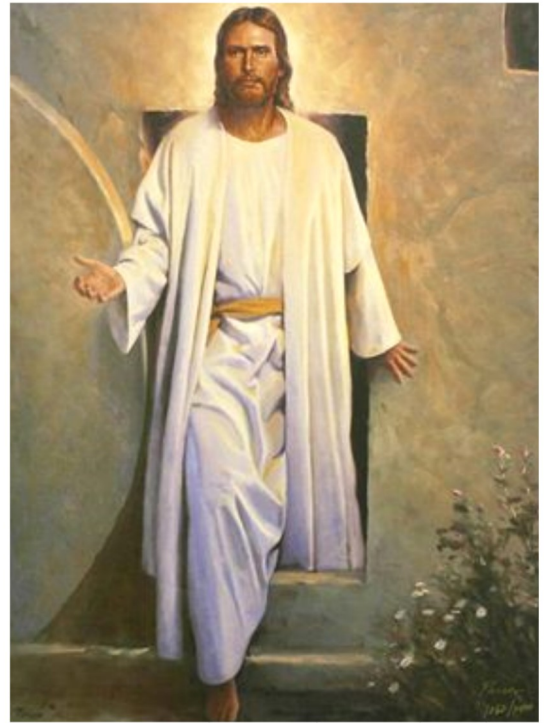
April 18, 2021: Third Sunday of Easter (Luke 24: 35-48)

The apostles were afraid of Jesus until he ate with them and they touched him. In your family, the ordinary acts of eating together, touching, embracing not only confirm our love for each other, but also celebrate God’s presence in your family. These “ordinary” moments contain the “Extraordinary.”

April 25, 2021: Fourth Sunday of Easter (John 10:11-18)

Today’s gospel is a job description for Christian parents. For most people the most influential shepherds in their lives are their PARENTS. Every parent is called to be a “good shepherd” to “freely lay down their life” for their children, to “love” and “know” their children and to “lead” them so “they know your voice.”

Reprinted with permission: A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar



Celebrating the Easter Season

Lent is long—forty days; but the Easter Season is even longer—50 days! Obviously the Church wants us to rejoice and celebrate the “Feast of Feasts” for more than a day. After all, good is triumphant over evil, and our God is willing to share his risen life with us, so that we, too, can live forever. As disciples of Christ we know that, but is it evident in our homes?

Through the 50 days of the Easter Season, remind the members of your “little home church” of their Easter faith. Proclaim your Christian identity to all who visit.

- Include a potted Easter flower on the kitchen table.
- Meet at the “Alleluia” sign for a bedtime hug.
- Use a white tablecloth (plastic or cloth) at mealtimes to remind us of this holy season.
- Light an Easter candle or plain white candle at the evening meal from Easter to Pentecost. As it is being lit, say, “Christ is the Light of the World.”
- A sung or said “Alleluia” might be added to the meal prayer.

Reprinted from the booklet published by the Family Life Office entitled “A CHANGE OF HEART - Lent and Easter at Home.”

