

Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

February 2016

Church of the Annunciation

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Thoughtful Moments

St. Josephine Bahkita

St. Josephine Bahkita was a young girl in Darfur, Sudan when she was captured and sold into slavery. Despite serving under cruel masters for many years, she remained sweet and kind. Eventually, the Michielis, who treated her very kindly, bought her. They introduced her to the Canossian Sisters of Charity, which she joined in 1893. She spent the rest of her time there as a cook and sacristan. She also helped to prepare young sisters for missionary work in Africa.



Holiness is simple

Pope Francis said holiness is simple. "Like happiness, holiness is always tied to little gestures. These little gestures are those we learn at home, in the family; they get lost amid all the other things we do, yet they do make each day different."

"Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward" (Mark 9:41).



Create balance for Lent

The season of Lent is a beautiful season of conversion and renewal yet it can be a hard sell for children. Parents want to convey the penitential nature of the season but we don't want to make practices so severe that we turn youngsters off completely.

Try these ideas for creating balance during the season of Lent.

Encourage better attention during Mass on Sunday.

Assign each member of the family one part of the Mass on which to report afterwards. Give one child the first reading, another the Gospel, a parent the homily, etc., and recap in the car or at home over a cup

of hot chocolate.

Plan and cook meatless meals together on Fridays. It feels less like a sacrifice and more like an offering when done together and in a generous spirit.

Perform Works of Mercy.

Buy a large bag of jelly beans at the beginning of Lent and place it near an empty jar. Whenever someone performs a good deed, he or she can drop a jelly bean in the jar. (No snacking!) The idea is to fill the jar and share the candy on Easter.

Vote on a family

Lenten sacrifice. Giving up something as a family communicates the warm and vital role families play in helping us to meet our Christian challenges.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics pray the Stations of the Cross?

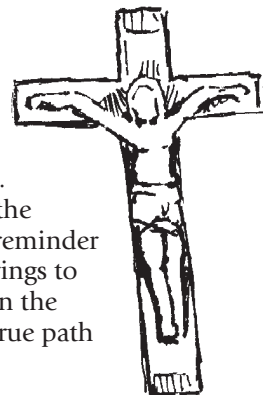
The Stations of the Cross is a devotional practice that traces the steps of Jesus along the road to Calvary.

As a practice, this Lenten devotion is prayed regularly in preparation for Good Friday. It allows us to put ourselves in the scene.

From the condemnation of death to the Crucifixion, we "see" the price Jesus

paid for us and are moved to repentance for sin.

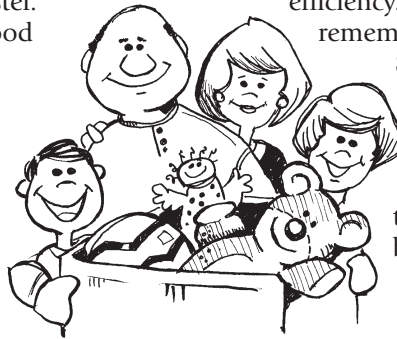
Finally, praying the Stations can be a reminder to unite our sufferings to Christ's sacrifice on the cross. That is the true path of a Christian.



Spring cleaning for Lent

The Teutonic word "lent" meant "Spring" and became the English name of the Catholic fast before Easter. Thus, the term "spring cleaning" can be a good way to approach this season as a family.

Family room. In the room where we seek entertainment, we can ask to what we are exposing ourselves and our children. Are the books, magazines, television shows and video games we bring into our homes appropriate for Christian families? Are there others that better reflect our values that we can also enjoy?



Kitchen. Busy families may choose between nutrition and efficiency. Lent is when we can revisit those choices and remember that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps we can try some quick but healthy recipes.

Bedroom. Family prayer teaches lifetime prayer habits to children, solidifies a family's Catholic identity, and provides time to talk to God every day. During Lent, try bringing the whole family together for family prayer each night before bedtime in a warm and loving way to end the day.

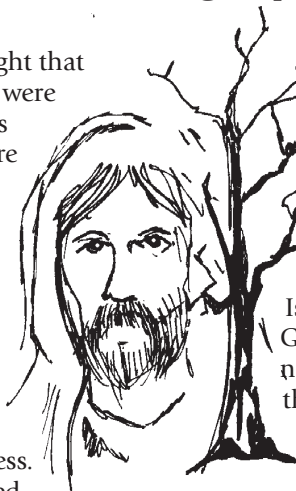
Scripture LESSON

Luke 13:1-9 Sin is a tragedy

In Jesus's time, it was thought that physical suffering and death were the punishment of a person's sins, yet tragedy and death are part of life. Jesus uses the examples of two tragedies, one that was accidental and one that was brought about by human cruelty.

Jesus explained that in both cases, the tragedies themselves were not reflections of the people involved or their righteousness. The real tragedy, Jesus pointed out, would be if the victims had died without repenting for their sins.

To further make his point, Jesus told a story about a fig tree that hadn't born fruit and needed to be cut down. It



was given more time to grow and yield at the request of the gardener.

"It may yet bear fruit in the future" (Luke 13:9). Jesus

was warning the Israelites against taking God's care for granted by not repenting of the wrong they did.

What can a parent do?

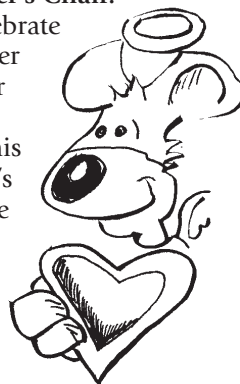
Jesus teaches us that God, like the merciful

gardener, is giving us this time during Lent to repent and follow him more faithfully. God's love, grace, and mercy are free gifts to be treasured and valued and never taken for granted.

person's forehead as a sign of penance, saying, "Remember, you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Feb. 22 — St. Peter's Chair.

On this day, we celebrate the first time St. Peter sat in authority over an assembly of the faithful at Rome. This also marks St. Peter's establishment of the Holy See, on this festival we thank God for his church and pray for its holy preservation.



Parent TALK

I thought the idea of Lent was to give up something I really liked,

so last year, I decided to give up drinking coffee. Right

away I felt really cranky without it. I'm not

a morning person by nature, and without the caffeine, I just couldn't seem to get out the door without yelling at my husband or my kids.

"You're so cranky all the time!" Kara complained finally at dinner.

"You're even making me cranky!" Tessa chimed in.

I realized I'd been doing Lent wrong: my Lenten sacrifice had become everyone's sacrifice. Lenten sacrifices are supposed to help us become more like Jesus.

Instead, I decided to give up thirty minutes of sleep. As difficult as it was, getting up earlier gave me more time to wake up on my own and even pray a little. I discovered, I was more patient with my family despite less sleep.

Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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(Unless noted, Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and New American Bible.)

Feasts & Celebrations

Feb. 3 — St. Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste (316). He was martyred for refusing to renounce his Catholic faith. St. Blaise is remembered for curing a young boy who was choking on a fish bone. The boy's mother asked St. Blaise for help, and at his command, the boy was able to cough up the bone. Priests usually bless throats on this day.

Feb. 10 — Ash Wednesday. The first day of Lent. Ashes from the burnt palms of the previous Passion Sunday are blessed. The priest makes the sign of the cross with the ashes on the