

Teach My People to Pray

Year II: Family & Parish Prayer Resources

2015-2016 | Office of Family & Married Life

About this booklet: Use these prayers, ideas, resources, and activities in your household or parish to foster a deeper family spirituality. Whatever your family looks like, your home is a household of faith where Christ is at the center.

Resource packets will be released quarterly with new information, activities and ideas. They will be posted on our website at www.gbdioc.org/familyliferesources.

In addition to quarterly releases, be sure to check back as we post additional resources! They will be available in PDF form as well as in a Word Document for easy cut-and-paste.

- Quarter 1 - September
 - **Quarter 2 - October, November, December**
 - Quarter 3 - January, February, March
 - Quarter 4 - April, May, June
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Diocese of
Green Bay

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Monthly Themes and Activities

October

October is a month of transitions and preparing for winter. This month is devoted to the Holy Rosary and often to the holy angels who guard and guide us on earth and into eternity. By reflecting on the mysteries of the rosary, with our Blessed Mother's help, we can deepen our understanding of the many transitions of life.

Creative sacred spaces:

- Develop and plant a "Rosary Garden," or a garden dedicated to the Angels. Fall is a great time to plant shrubs.
- Create a prayer corner in the home with a statue or image of Mary, decorated with autumn leaves, the mysteries of the rosary and rosary beads.
- Display an image of St. Francis of Assisi, patron of ecology and animals, with copies of the "Prayer of St. Francis".

October Events

Youth Jam 2015

- Date: Saturday, October 25, 2015 at Nativity of Our Lord Parish, Green Bay
- Youth Jam is an annual Catholic middle school youth rally that uses praise & worship music and powerful keynote speakers to engage and inspire youth to grow deeper in their relationship with God while learning more about their faith!
- Youth Jam culminates in a celebration of the Holy Mass, with the Eucharist being the source and summit of our faith as Catholics!
- For more information and to register, please visit: www.youthjamgb.org

Leadership Convocation

- Date: Thursday, October 29, 2015 at the KI Center, Green Bay
- The Diocesan Leadership Convocation is an annual event that brings together clergy, religious, parish staffs and lay leaders.
- This day provides an opportunity to share in Eucharist and hear national experts speak on current and relevant topics.
- Participants also choose from a variety of workshops that offer practical ideas and resources for every area of parish life.
- For more details and to register, please visit: www.gbdioc.org/convocation

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Monthly Themes and Activities (Continued)

November

Ways for Families to Remember All Soul's Day

Written by Mary Ann Otto, Stewardship and Special Projects Director

All Souls Day, what a beautiful opportunity for households to get out photo albums and huddle around the kitchen table. And yes...you might even want to Skype in those family members who do not live nearby for the event! To be intentional in taking time to honor, remember and pray for those beloved family members who have gone before us is the special gift of this day.

Perhaps you will make a favorite meal using the recipe of parents or grandparents. Maybe you will take time to have each household member express their gratitude for certain qualities of a loved one or just tell their favorite story. Are you able to imagine your loved one resting in the arms of the Lord?

This wonderful day also calls us to prayer.

Lighting a candle by pictures and perhaps playing a song like ["I Can Only Imagine"](#) by MercyMe or a family favorite is a meaningful way of celebrating God's mercy and love and the hope we have been promised when we have passed. Joining hands, expressing gratitude and asking Jesus to wrap his arms around loved ones who have gone and those who remain are a simple way to communicate with God.

Many parishes also offer cemetery services where households gather to remember their family members and place a lit candle on their final resting places. Consider tapping into one of these sacred events if you are able and remember all that Jesus accomplished that we might become a member of the Communion of Saints.

November Events

Stewardship Weekend

- Date: November 14 - 15, 2015
- Stewardship Weekend is celebrated in the Diocese of Green Bay on the second weekend of November.
- It is the time when Gratitude, Prayer, Service and Sharing are promoted at a Disciple's Response and a Way of Life.
- This year's theme is Every Knee Shall Bend: Be Grateful, Pray, Serve, Share!
- Find Parish Resources online: www.gbdioc.org/images/stories/Resource_Site/stewardship-pastoral-services/Stewardship/Documents/StewWknd2015Master-KneeShallBend.pdf

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Monthly Themes and Activities (Continued)

December

“Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy” begins December 8, 2015, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and goes to November 20, 2016, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe (Christ the King). Pope Francis has announced an extraordinary Holy Year of a ‘Jubilee Year of Mercy’ to contemplate the mystery of mercy. During the year, the Holy Father has asked we focus on recognizing the need to extend God’s mercy throughout the world, continual conversion to Christ, reconciliation, and the works of mercy.

What is Mercy?

- Talk about “mercy” at home.
- Mercy is more than just feeling sorry for another person. Mercy allows us to compassionately walk with people; to know their pain, to see with their eyes, and to get inside their heart and mind.
- When we can do that, then we can respond with mercy. When we forgive each other, or offer kindness to each other, or put someone else first, we act with mercy.
- Share examples of how to show mercy. (Adapted from Our Sunday Visitor, “Take Out: Family on the Go”)

“Door of Mercy”

As part of our celebrations, the Diocesan “Door of Mercy” will be located at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral and will be accessible from December 13, 2015 through the Fall of 2016. The door will be ‘opened’ at a special Mass on December 13th by Bishop Ricken. Having the multiple doors is meant to symbolize the church’s unity and communion.

How can families celebrate the Year of Mercy?

- Make your own “Door of Mercy”.
- Choose a door in the home to signify to all family members that forgiveness and mercy are part of living in a family.
- Walking through the door can acknowledge that a person chose to be merciful, (maybe performed one of the Works of Mercy), or took the time to forgive someone or are asking for forgiveness.
- Decorate the special door as a family. (Adapted from Our Sunday Visitor, “Take Out: Family on the Go”)

Pilgrimage

Pilgrimages are encouraged during the Holy Year, especially to the Cathedral and the Holy Door, to focus on the opportunity for conversion and the path of our own path towards conversion in life. “By crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, we will find the strength to embrace God’s mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us.”

Corporal & Spiritual Works of Mercy

The year of mercy also presents the opportunity for parishes to intentionally reflect upon and engage in the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy within their local communities, schools, religious education, and other groups. The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are actions we can perform that extend God’s compassion and mercy to those in need. (*Check out the boxes on the next page!*)

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Monthly Themes and Activities (Continued)

Corporal Works of Mercy

The Corporal Works of Mercy are these kind acts by which we help our neighbors with their material and physical needs.

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Clothe the naked
- Shelter the homeless
- Visit the sick
- Visit the imprisoned
- Bury the dead

Spiritual Works of Mercy

The Spiritual Works of Mercy are acts of compassion by which we help our neighbors with their emotional and spiritual needs.

- Counsel the doubtful
- Instruct the ignorant
- Admonish sinners
- Comfort the afflicted
- Forgive offenses
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Pray for the living and the dead

Dedication to the Holy Family

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph serves as the model of virtue of all Christian households. They demonstrate that family life is a communion of love for one another.

It is in the family, the “domestic church,” where each member of the family learns to love God first and foremost, but also, how to love and respect each other. These lessons in love establish how each member of the family is to build and foster a loving relationship with God and each other.

Many times, it is within our own families where we experience brokenness and loss. By dedicating ourselves to the Holy Family, we are asking for them to pray for our healing.

What does dedication mean?

- The word dedication is used to describe persons who are devoted to God’s service.
- It is also applied to the “setting aside” of places for a special and sacred purpose.
- We know that God is everywhere; however, it is a good idea to reserve a special place in one’s home to help focus and recognize the presence of God in our midst.
- We can see many examples of reserving a special place for God in the Old Testament. (Genesis 28:18, 1 Kings 8).

“I wish to invoke the protection of the Holy Family of Nazareth...it is therefore the prototype and example for all Christian families...St. Joseph was a “just man” ...may he always guard, protect and enlighten families. May the Virgin Mary, who is the Mother of the Church, also be the Mother of “the Church of the home”...May Christ the Lord, the Universal King, the King of Families, be present in every Christian home as He was at Cana, bestowing light, joy, serenity, and strength.”

- St. Pope John Paul II

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Monthly Themes and Activities

All Household Mailing

- There will be diocesan mailing to all households in early December.
- The mailing will include: a letter from Bishop Ricken, an image of the Holy Family, a prayer for Dedication, information on the rosary, and prayer intention cards that you can send in to have the Bishop pray for.
- It is not a letter asking for money. Bishop is inviting all families or households to dedicate their household to the Holy Family.
- The prayer can be prayed together regularly throughout Advent and Christmas, and then on the Feast of the Holy Family, December 27, the family can plan a special celebration.
- Parishes will be celebrating on that date together as a parish family. The family can continue the celebration at home.
- This is another opportunity to set up a special prayer space to pray together – use the Nativity Creche or other setting of the Holy Family!

Diocesan Household Prayer of Dedication to the Holy Family (Feast: December 27)

Let us pray,

O Joseph, guardian and protector of the Holy Family, pray for us that through the example of your holy obedience all who dwell here may be guided in their daily work and journey of faith.

O Mary, our mother, through you Christ made his home with us on earth and sanctified the life of our homes. Pray for us that we may grow in holiness by your example of compassion and merciful love.

O Jesus, we set before you now our trials and joys. Look graciously upon this home, that it be dedicated to your Holy Family in peace, faith, and the example of your merciful love. Protect us both here and away, and welcome those who have gone before us into your heavenly home.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

December Events

Green Bay Youth Conference (GBYC)

- Date: Sunday, December 6, 2015 at St. Agnes Parish, Green Bay
- Green Bay Youth Conference offers an opportunity for high school students to encounter Christ and the Catholic Church with the sacraments, formative talks geared toward high school ages, dynamic music, fellowship, and prayer.
- Mass with Bishop Ricken, confession, opportunities to learn more about their faith, and times for music and praise allow for various opportunities for young people to grow in their faith and experience the incredible adventure of what Catholicism brings!
- For more details and to register, please visit: www.gbdioc.org/youth-ministry/opportunities/green-bay-youth-conference.html

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The First Crèche & Family Activity

Our present-day tradition of displaying Nativity sets was originated by St. Francis of Assisi, who built the first one in Greccio, Italy, one Christmas a few years before his death. Francis desired to celebrate Mass and to pay homage to Christ's birth in a way that was as close as possible to what the child of Bethlehem knew when he entered our world. St. Francis' first crèche included hay, livestock, and Mass celebrated around the manger. (Taken from: *A Catholic Gardener's Spiritual Almanac*, 2015. p. 200).

During December, we may find ourselves assessing what is valuable to us (relationships, how we spend time and money, etc.). With the Christmas season approaching, we may want to let go of personal wants to do good for other people – sacrifice! It is the time of year when many special efforts are made to help people who are less fortunate (Advent Tree, Toys for Tots, Bell Ringing, etc.). Families often make sacrifices for other families so they can celebrate Christmas.

- To help show the “good deeds” - the sacrifices, the acts of service and kindness - performed by the whole family, the sacrifices and serving others, a paper chain could be used.
- Each time family members perform a good deed it can be written on a strip of paper to make a chain to hang for all to see.
- The chain can then be hung on the Christmas tree or near the Nativity Crèche.
- Another way to illustrate the many good deeds is to add paper straw (strips of yellow construction paper) to the bed where Jesus will lay in the crèche.

Two Special Feasts of Our Blessed Mother

December 8 - Feast of the Immaculate Conception

This Holy Day is Mary's conception (not Jesus). She is conceived without sin in the womb of her elderly mother St. Ann. Her father is St. Joachim. They were childless up until Mary's conception where the grace of God's salvation begins for us. From Mary's Immaculate Conception came the Incarnation of Christ. Mary, the Immaculate Conception is the patron saint of the United States, declared in 1846.

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, dedicated to the patroness of the United States is located in Washington, DC. It is the largest Roman Catholic Church in North America, and one of the ten largest in the world. It is an often-visited pilgrimage site for Americans, being the largest Marian shrine in the United States.

December 12 – Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas

In 1598, Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego (Now St. Juan Diego, Dec. 9) as an Aztec princess, a familiar image to the culture. The continent was falling away from Christianity, but because of the miraculous image that appeared on St. Juan's tilma, six million Mexicans were converted to Christianity. There is a very strong devotion by Hispanics to Our Lady of Guadalupe. The image is still visible at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City.

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Advent Wreath & Seasonal Greenery

The wreath points to the coming light of Christ in our world of darkness, using four candles.

- Circle – symbolizes eternal life of God; everlasting life found in Christ.
- Evergreens – points to God’s gift of life even when the days are shorter and there is less sunlight hours.

Meaning of different evergreens:

- Balsam – commonly used for wreaths; symbolizes eager anticipation
- Cedar – fragrant and long-lasting; incorruptibility and healing; associated with eternal life of Christ
- Fir – used for garlands and wreaths; symbolizes a lifting up.
- Holly – used as a reminder of where Jesus’ birth and life will lead; its prickly leaves suggest the crown of thorns and red berries of blood he shed upon the Cross.
- Juniper – symbolizes protection
- Pine – eternal life
- Spruce- represents hope in the midst of adversity

Christmas

The purpose of Christmas is the Incarnation of God, the incredible faith and obedience of Mary and Joseph, and the heavens opening for the angels to sing and for all humankind to give praise!

The secular world is bustling with noise and chaos, but it is a peace-filled time – the Light of World is born to us! It is customary to put lights on our houses during Christmas, and sometimes to extremes!

As a family project, create a lighted path for Christmas Eve, using nail-punched tin cans, white paper bags, or glass jars with sand in the bottom to hold tea-light candles. Some people create a grotto in the garden or display an outdoor Nativity crèche that depicts the true meaning of Christmas.

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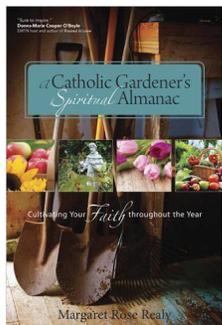
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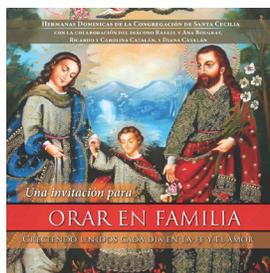
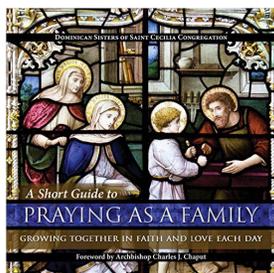
Additional Resources



The Catholic Gardener's Spiritual Almanac: Cultivating Your Faith Throughout the Year by Margaret Rose Realy

This book, published in March 2015 combines gardening and Catholic spirituality. It is both practical and spiritual, offering creative ideas—including many suitable for parents and children to do together—along with meditations, prayers, and suggestions for reflection.

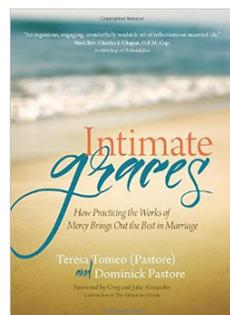
Recommended reading!



A Short Guide to Praying as a Family: Growing Together in Faith and Love Each Day and Una invitación para Orar En Familia: Creciendo Unidos Cada Día en la Fe y El Amor

This newly published book is written by the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia Congregation in English and Spanish. It is adorned with beautiful stained glass artwork. The chapters include different ways to pray, tips of how to pray as a family, how to make the home a sacred place, the power of prayer, among other topics. The book will make a beautiful gift for families. Please ask for it at your local Catholic Bookstore.

Help families to pray!



Intimate Graces: How Practicing the Works of Mercy Brings Out the Best in Marriage by Teresa Tomeo (Pastore) and her husband, Dominick Pastore

The book is timely for “Jubilee Year of Mercy” and for the diocesan focus on family and marriage. The chapters of the book focus on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. There is a witness by both husband and wife, followed by tips of how to live the works of mercy, a prayer, and discussion or reflection questions. It is a great gift for married couples of any age and stage of marriage. It will help couples to deepen their faith and to live the works of mercy more fully. It can be used in parish settings.

For Married Couples – Hot off the press!

What's Working For You?

Do you have any ideas, prayers, or activities that you would like to share with us? What has helped your family grow closer to Jesus. We'd love to see your photos, hear your tips, and share what parish life looks like in your community.

Please email pvandehey@gbdioc.org

“The union of man and woman in marriage [is] a unique, natural, fundamental and beautiful good for persons, communities, and whole societies.”

- Pope Francis -

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Parish Bulletin Resources

Below are some key quotes taken from Bishop Ricken's pastoral meditation, "The Catholic Household as a Home of Prayer and Love." You can use these quote bubbles in your bulletin to keep parishioners and families thinking about the Disciples on the Way and Teach My People to Pray initiatives.

"My mother used to say that a house is just a house until the family invests love and prayer in it, then it becomes a home."

- Bishop David L. Ricken

"Evidently the Lord and the Blessed Mother want to pour out even more abundant graces on all of us so that we may learn to pray and to pray more deeply, thereby growing in holiness together!"

- Bishop David L. Ricken

"Whether you live by yourself or with others, your home is a household of faith where Christ is at the center of your life."

- Bishop David L. Ricken

"In the words of St. John Paul II, the mission of the family is to "guard, reveal and communicate love" (1) and the family serves as a school of compassion, respect, humility and forgiveness in the midst of a world darkened by self-absorption, conflict and selfishness."

- Bishop David L. Ricken

"If we don't share our faith with our children, what will the world share with them instead? If we don't pray for them, with them and teach them how to pray, where will they turn in difficulty and who will they turn to?"

- Bishop David L. Ricken

Parish Bulletin Reflections

The following quotes of Pope Francis were made at the "World Meeting of Families" which took place in Philadelphia, PA, from Sept. 22-Sept. 27th, 2015.

"The family is, forgive me, it is a factory of hope, of life, of resurrection. God was the one who opened that path." - Pope Francis. He joked that sometimes family life is bittersweet. But with difficult moments also comes great happiness.

"In families, children bring headaches. I won't speak about mother in laws. But in families, there is always a Cross. Always. Because of the love of God, the Son of God opened up that way. But also in families, after the Cross there is Resurrection." - Pope Francis. To conclude the World Meeting of Families, Pope Francis celebrated a Mass with nearly one million attendees. He recounted to families the importance of everyday gestures.

"Like the warm supper we look forward to at night, the early lunch awaiting someone who gets up early to go to work. Home-ly gestures. Like a blessing before we go to bed, or a hug after we return from a hard day's work." - Pope Francis. He also praised the infinite generosity that parents have for their children. He asked families and every individual person to open themselves up to authentic love.

"We renew our faith in the word of the Lord which invites faithful families to this openness. It invites all those who want to share the prophecy of the covenant of man and woman, which generates life and reveals God!" - Pope Francis. He gave this advice: think critically about how they speak to one another when they're at home.

"I leave you with this question, for each one of you to respond to. In my home, do we yell, or do we speak with love tenderness? This is a good way to recognize our love." - Pope Francis

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