



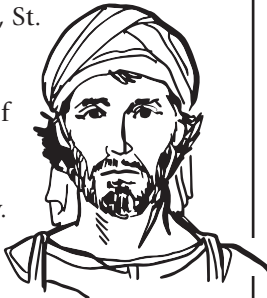
Thoughtful Moments

St. Joseph the Worker

As a carpenter, St. Joseph, earthly father to Jesus, used the work of his hands to serve his family and community.

He taught his Son his trade, working side-by-side in his shop. Jesus also learned dedication, integrity, and the dignity of work from the example of his earthly father.

As the protector of the Holy Family and the spouse of the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph is an example of strength and obedience and devotion to God.



Our spiritual GPS

Children understand the importance of maps. When we want to travel somewhere new, a map or GPS can show us how to get there. The 10 Commandments are our spiritual GPS – if we follow them, we will get where we want to go.

"Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me" (Matthew 18:4-5).



Parenting tips from the Mother of God

God chose Mary to be the Mother of his Son, and gave her the preparation she needed to do the job. Jesus thought so highly of the mother she became, that his dying thoughts were of her. During this month for mothers, we can take parenting tips from the Mother of God:

"May it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). When faced with events beyond her understanding or control, Mary leaned on God. We, too, encounter situations we can't understand or control. That's when we can imitate Mary's trust in God. His plan for her worked out better than she could have dreamed. The same will be true for us.

"Do whatever he tells you"



(John 2:5). Mary knew when her Son was ready for his first public miracle so she gently nudged him when he hesitated. We, too, can show gentle confidence in our children's competence and encourage them to reveal their strengths when they hesitate to believe in themselves.

"And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart..." (Luke 2:19).

When the extraordinary happens, our first impulse is to tell someone. We want advice or attention. Yet, throughout life with her divine Son, Mary kept to herself and reflected in private moments. She sought only God's counsel because he knows best.

Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics call Mary our Mother?

Mary's role in history is to bring people to her Son. "The Virgin Mary... is clearly the mother of the members of Christ" (Catechism of the Catholic Church #963).

When Jesus hung on the cross, Mary and St.



John were there (John 19:26-27). Jesus told her, "Woman, behold your son," and to John, "Behold your mother." At that moment Mary became the mother of us all. Because of her special relationship to Jesus, she is the perfect intercessor for us.

Make your home a church

Your home can be a domestic church in which you meet God every day. Try these suggestions for creating a sacred space:

Give prayer a central place in your home. Cover a table with a special cloth in the color of the liturgical season. Add a crucifix and small statues or pictures of saints, a family Rosary, a Bible, and add a candle. Leave space to kneel before it. No space for a prayer table? Fill a large basket with pillows, your Bible and some Rosaries, and take it wherever you can gather for prayer. Use it often.



Add sacred objects. Put a crucifix in every room, add holy water fonts, put up icons. Displaying sacred objects in each room of your home will help your family to remember that God is always with you.

Start personal spiritual traditions. Pick days that are special to each of you – birthdays, patron saint feast days, anniversaries. Sing favorite hymns, recite prayers that you write yourselves. Read your favorite Scripture story or verse.

Scripture LESSON

Matthew 28:16-20, "I will be with you always."

Jesus appeared to the Apostles on the mountain-top in Galilee so the crowd with them could see the Resurrected Christ and get their final instructions: to go, baptize and make disciples, and to teach them all he had taught them. Jesus also promised his disciples, and us, that he will be with us always.

Because Jesus is God, he is present everywhere.

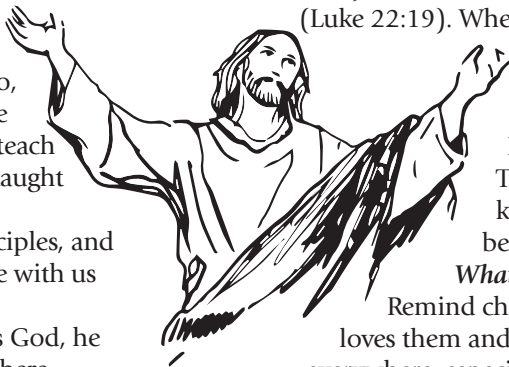
However, we encounter him in a special way in the Sacraments, especially in Holy Communion. At the Last Supper, Jesus took bread and wine, blessed

them and gave them to his disciples, saying, *"This is my body ... (this is my blood) ... Do this in memory of me"* (Luke 22:19). When the priest prays

over the bread and wine at Mass, they become Jesus' Body and Blood. This is how Jesus keeps his promise to be with us always.

What can a parent do?

Remind children that Jesus loves them and is with them everywhere, especially in the Sacraments. Tell them that in every Catholic church where the Eucharist is kept, Jesus is really present, waiting to spend time with them.



Parent TALK

When my father died, we began visiting the cemetery regularly to pray for him. I noticed that some of the

surrounding graves looked neglected. They had dead flowers or mildew obscured the name on the stone. It was sad that the people buried there had no one

to take care of their memorials.

Prior to our next trip, we picked up cleaning supplies. We spiffed up the tombstones and cleaned up the areas around the graves. We said a prayer over each tombstone we cleaned for the person it named.

"Why are we doing this?" Tessa asked. "The dead people won't care."

I explained that caring for graves and praying for the people they contain is considered "burying the dead" – one of the Corporal Works of Mercy the Church asks us to do for others. I reminded the children that whatever kindness we do for others, we do for Jesus.



Feasts & Celebrations

May 1 – St. Joseph the Worker (1st century). Entrusted with the care of the Blessed Mother and Jesus, Joseph was a carpenter dedicated to his family and obedient to God.

May 20 – Pentecost (1st century). Today, we celebrate the birthday of the Church, when the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles following the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus.

May 27 – St. Augustine of Canterbury (604). Despite mistakes and failures, Augustine persevered as a missionary in rough and dangerous

times in England. Wisely, he purified and retained local customs into Christian rites. His efforts would eventually bear fruit in the conversion of England after his death.

May 30 – St. Joan of Arc (1431). The patron saint of France, St. Joan was inspired by God in a vision to lead the French to victory during the Hundred Year's War against England. Her troops successfully freed Orléans from the English. She was captured, sold to the English, and falsely accused of sorcery. She was canonized in 1920.



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