

Thoughtful Moments

St. Jerome Emiliani

St. Jerome led a wayward life as a soldier until he was captured in battle and turned back to God. After a miraculous escape, he returned to Venice and studied for the priesthood. After being ordained, he began working for the poor. He was especially devoted to caring for orphans—victims of a recent war. To help, he and some companions founded the Clerks Regulars of Somascha. He is the patron saint of orphanages and abandoned children.



A faithful friend

Holy friendships support efforts to holiness. It's why so many saints come in pairs. We can encourage children to be friendly and respectful to all. Yet, gently guiding them towards friends who share our values will help, not hinder, their journey towards Christ — their ultimate goal.

"All our works must converge toward [receiving Jesus in Holy] Communion as toward their end and flow from it as from their source." St. Peter Julian Eymard



Living, loving, and sharing the Gospel every day

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Jesus asks His followers of all ages to live good lives, love others, and share His message. Teaching children to spread the Gospel from an early age helps them develop a lifelong habit of faith-sharing.

Living our Faith: It takes courage —especially for youngsters—to live our faith publicly. Wearing public signs such as a Miraculous Medal or crucifix, avoiding bad language, dressing modestly, planning the day around prayer, or centering weekend activities around Sunday Mass are all quiet but powerful ways to practice — and witness — to our faith.

Doing good: The most effective way to

spread the Gospel is to live its message. This means choosing to be kind, honest, hardworking, and a good sport, no matter how others behave. It's not always easy—for children or adults—but it's the foundation of evangelization.



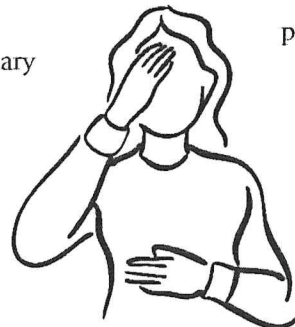
Answering questions: Explaining to youngsters what we believe will equip them to answer questions they may get asked, such as "Why don't you eat meat on Fridays?" or "Why do you go to church every Sunday?" Preparing them with thoughtful answers can build their confidence to engage in faith-based conversations.

By teaching children to live their faith, do good, and answer questions confidently, they can become true disciples, sharing God's love wherever they go.

Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics cross themselves three times before hearing the Gospel at Mass?

Before the Gospel is proclaimed, it is customary to trace the Sign of the Cross on the forehead, lips, and heart. This gesture symbolizes a petition to God to receive the Gospel with an open mind, to



proclaim it faithfully, and to cherish it within our hearts. Many individuals accompany this practice with a prayer, such as: "May the Lord purify my thoughts, my speech, and my heart, that I may worthily receive and live according to His holy Word."

Make mercy your family's way of life

Mercy is showing kindness, compassion, and forgiveness, even when others may not deserve it. Taught early, mercy becomes a way of life. Fill your family's year with the compassion and kindness of this virtue:

Foster kindness. Grab chances to be kind. Teach youngsters to pitch in without being asked. Allow someone to cut in line. Walk away from an argument. Hug a sad friend.

Forgive quickly. Jesus said, "If you forgive others their [sins], your heavenly Father will forgive you"



(Matthew 6:14). Followers of Jesus forgive even before we are asked. Better still, forgive as God forgives: fully and fast.

Practice mercy. Choose a corporal or spiritual work of mercy and perform it as a family. Feed the hungry at a soup kitchen, give gently used clothing to a shelter, pray for the dead.

Pray for mercy. Prayer is powerful. Together, pray, "Lord I am a sinner; come with your mercy." Also, pray a Chaplet of Divine Mercy, a short, comforting prayer that can be said on regular Rosary beads.

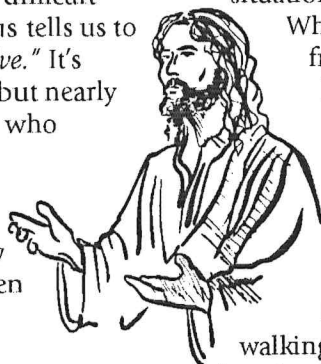
Scripture LESSON

Luke 6:27-38, Loving like God

This Gospel passage is all about Christ-like conduct with difficult people or situations. Jesus tells us to "love your enemies ... forgive." It's easy to love our friends, but nearly impossible to love those who treat us badly.

Love is acting for the other's good; it's not (just) a feeling. We know our love is authentic when we can pray for our enemies, do a favor for someone who can't repay us, repay an insult with kindness, or return violence with non-violent resistance.

Forgiving others means we stop accusing them in our hearts. It's



choosing not to prolong a bad situation by hoping for revenge.

When we forgive, it sets us free to move on with our life.

What can a parent do?
Tell children that truly following Christ means doing the right thing even if it's difficult or unpopular.

Not taking reckless dares, walking away from a fight, and choosing not to "get even" aren't signs of weakness, but require real strength of character. The surest sign of being God's children is if we love others the way He does.

Parent TALK

To teach my children about generosity, I made up a "game" using a homemade "blue ribbon" crafted from construction paper and a scorecard featuring each of our names, all displayed on the refrigerator.



After dinner, I handed out paper and crayons, encouraging the children to draw pictures of people being generous. Their artwork was proudly displayed around the home as inspiration. I explained that throughout the week, each act of generosity would earn a star on the scorecard, and the person with the most stars would win the "blue ribbon." This "game" transformed our family dynamic — every good deed was recognized, and we all became more intentional about being generous.

At Sunday breakfast, my daughter received the blue ribbon to a round of applause. Then, my son eagerly asked, "So, Mom, what virtue are we practicing next week?" It was a reminder of how small actions can nurture lasting values.

Feasts & Celebrations

February 11 – Our Lady of Lourdes (1858). A heavenly lady appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous, a poor girl from a French village, and a spring with miraculous, healing waters emerged from a nearby cave. The lady revealed herself as the "Immaculate Conception," the Blessed Virgin Mary.

February 12 – St. Meletius of Antioch (c. 381). Meletius spent his time as Bishop of Antioch fighting heresy and political rivals. He conducted the Council of Constantinople (381) — one of the councils that produced the

Nicene Creed we say today.

February 14 – Saints Cyril and Methodius (869). With his brother St. Methodius, St. Cyril was a missionary, teacher, and patron of the Slavic people. He invented an alphabet, still used in some Eastern liturgies, and preached the Gospel in an easily understood manner. He died in Rome after taking the monastic habit.

February 22 — St. Peter's Chair. This festival marks St. Peter's establishment of the Holy See. We thank God for His Church and pray for its holy preservation.



Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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