



David J. Conrad

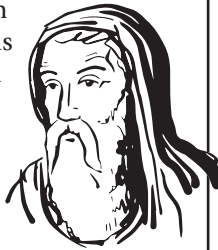
Director of Faith Formation



Thoughtful Moments

St. Athanasius of Alexandria

Born a Christian in Egypt, St. Athanasius became a priest and a great defender of the Catholic faith. He served as secretary to Bishop Alexander of Alexandria, and later succeeded him as bishop. Because of the terrible persecutions, he was exiled several times during his life and was (falsely) accused of murder by his enemies. By popular demand, Emperor Valens permitted St. Athanasius to return to his diocese. He spent the rest of his life working to defend Christ's divinity.



Our spiritual GPS

Children understand the importance of having guides. When we want to travel somewhere, a map or GPS can show us how to get there. The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes are like our spiritual GPS. If we follow them, we will get where Jesus wants us 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).



Honor our Blessed Mother this month

In the month during which we honor our mothers, we give special honor to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Jesus gave her to us as our Mother and we honor her for her love and care. Here's how we can show it:

Offer flowers:

Flowers are a traditional way to show devotion. Place a flower crown on a statue of Mary in your home, plant a garden in her name, or place bouquets by her image. Praying the Rosary is also a way of giving flowers, with each prayer like a rose for Mary.

Give thanks: We owe Mary our gratitude for agreeing to be God's mother, and ours, too. It is hard to comprehend the depth of the sacrifice involved in her "yes" to God.

Follow Mother's instructions:

Mary's requests are simple yet profound. Her directive, *"Do whatever [Jesus] tells you,"* found in John 2:5, is her clearest instruction. By following Jesus, Mary tells us we will find happiness.

Acts of service and imitation:

Another way to show devotion to Mary is to emulate her virtues by

following her example. Mary is venerated for her humility, obedience, purity, and love. By striving to live out these virtues in our own lives and by serving others with compassion and love, we honor her legacy and demonstrate our devotion to our Mother.



Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics crown Mary in May?

The practice of crowning images of Mary began in the eighteenth century. Origins of the practice drew inspiration from Scripture, particularly Revelation 12:1, which describes the crowning of Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth. By



crowning a statue of Mary with flowers, and commemorating her royal role, Catholics express gratitude for her unwavering faith and her "yes" to God, fostering a personal and communal renewal of devotion.

Three ways to welcome God into a busy home

Welcoming God into your home can transform it into a sanctuary of love and faith. Try these meaningful ways to invite His presence into your daily family life:

Display heavenly reminders: Adorn your home with sacred art, crucifixes, and statues of saints. These visual symbols serve as constant reminders of God's presence and love. Encourage each family member, especially children, to choose a favorite and visit it daily, building a personal, visual connection to their faith.

Integrate Prayer: Begin and end your day with



family prayer, such as a morning blessing of protection and bedtime prayers of peace. Say grace before meals and pray the Angelus. Praying together also solidifies your family's bond.

Perform acts of service: Encourage acts of service and kindness. Children can take on extra chores, volunteer at church, gather and donate clothes or toys. These actions reflect the love of the Holy Trinity and make your home a welcoming place for Jesus.

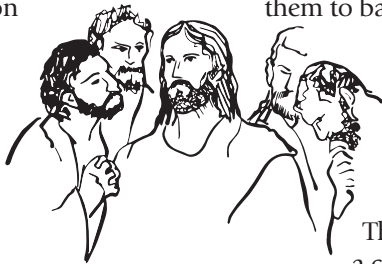
By making God the center of your home, you create a vibrant domestic church.

Scripture LESSON

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

This passage contains the Great Commission and it encapsulates the essence of Christ's mission and mandate for His disciples. In this Gospel reading, Jesus appeared to His eleven remaining apostles in Galilee after His Resurrection. The setting is significant; Galilee symbolizes the beginning of Jesus' ministry, and then marked the continuation of His mission through His followers.

First, Jesus asserted His authority, claiming all power in heaven and on earth, thereby commissioning His disciples to go and make disciples of all



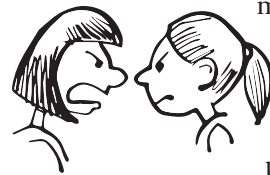
nations. This commissioning extends beyond mere preaching. He instructed them to baptize believers in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything Christ commanded.

What can a parent do?

The Great Commission is a call to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth. It is required of every follower of Jesus. Help children know that they, too, are asked to tell others about Jesus and to live according to His laws. Make sure to take your family to Mass every week so you are all fortified for the mission.

Parent TALK

Our girls are two years apart and usually close. As they got older, however, the bickering got louder and more frequent. I wanted to help but wanted to let them to solve their own problems. So I spoke to other moms in my prayer group and got ideas for age-appropriate conflict resolution.



First, I asked each girl to use "I" statements to articulate her feelings – without blaming others. "When you borrow my favorite book without asking, I feel sad because then I can't read it." "When you don't take turns playing, I feel frustrated and don't have fun." This helped the sisters understand the other's perspective. Then we simulated conflicts and used role-playing to solve them, providing them with hands-on ways to practice resolution. We worked on negotiating, finding common ground, and active listening.

Progress wasn't immediate but building skills gave the girls something to fall back on when they clashed.

Feasts & Celebrations

May 3 – Sts. Philip and James (First Century). St. Philip was born in Bethsaida and followed John the Baptist before he followed Christ. After the Ascension, St. Philip preached in Asia Minor, where he was martyred. St. James, the son of Alphaeus, was also one of the twelve Apostles.

May 9 – The Ascension. This solemnity marks the completion of Jesus' mission of salvation and His triumphant entry into heaven. *Note: In many dioceses, observance of Ascension has been moved to the following Sunday.*

May 15 – St. Isidore the Laborer (1130). Born in Madrid to a poor farming family, he married St. Mary de la Cabeza and worked for a wealthy landowner. He spent many hours in prayer and caring for the sick and the poor.

May 26 – St. Philip Neri (1595). Born in Florence in 1515, St. Philip Neri left his career as a businessman for the priesthood. He later founded the Oratorians. He is remembered for his humor and his joyful love of God.



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