

We hope you enjoy these sample pages. For ordering information, visit Liguori.org.

**FAMILY,
THE CHURCH,
AND THE
REAL
WORLD**

A REDEMPTORIST PASTORAL PUBLICATION

Introduction by Mary Beth Yount, PhD



Imprimi Potest:

Stephen T. Rehrauer, CSsR, Provincial
Denver Province, the Redemptorists

Published by Liguori Publications
Liguori, Missouri 63057

To order, visit Liguori.org or call 800-325-9521.

Copyright © 2015 Liguori Publications

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior written permission of Liguori Publications.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Family, the church, and the real world / introduction by Mary Beth Yount, PhD.

pages cm

ISBN 978-0-7648-2620-7

1. Families—Religious aspects—Catholic Church.

2. Marriage—Religious aspects—Catholic Church. 3. Church.

4. Catholic Church—Doctrines. I. Liguori Publications.

BX2351.F3548 2015

261.8'358—dc23

2015020620

p ISBN 978-0-7648-2620-7

e ISBN 978-0-7648-7053-8

Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible*, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C., and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the *New American Bible* may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Excerpts from the English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America © 1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—*Libreria Editrice Vaticana*; English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* © 1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—*Libreria Editrice Vaticana*.

Excerpts from other Vatican documents used with permission and copyright © 2015 *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*.

Liguori Publications, a nonprofit corporation, is an apostolate of the Redemptorists. To learn more about the Redemptorists, visit Redemptorists.com.

Printed in the United States of America

19 18 17 16 15 / 5 4 3 2 1

First Edition

CONTENTS

Introduction	vi
--------------------	----

THE CHURCH

Family, Scripture, and the Sacraments:

Holiness Through Family Life in the Sacrament of Marriage

<i>Thomas J. Neal, PhD</i>	3
----------------------------------	---

Church, Family, and Working Together:

Our Family's Relationship and Responsibility to the Church

<i>Sean P. Reynolds, DMin</i>	19
-------------------------------------	----

THE FAMILY

Changing Times, Changing Roles, Same Family:

The Catholic Vision of Family Life in the Twenty-First Century

<i>Dr. Gregory Popcak</i>	39
---------------------------------	----

Faith, Family, and Finding the Time: How to Get Everyone in Your Family Focused on Faith <i>Lisa M. Hendey</i>	57
--	----

Faith, Vocations, and Discernment: Helping the Next Generation Find Their Path <i>Fr. Andrew Carl Wisdom, OP</i>	73
--	----

Church, the Home, and Putting It Together: Building Up Your Domestic Church <i>Donna-Marie Cooper O’Boyle</i>	89
---	----

THE REAL WORLD

Family, Faith, and Everything Else: Challenges Facing the Twenty-First-Century Family <i>Donald J. Paglia</i>	113
---	-----

Family, the Body, and God’s Plan: Fostering Faith-Filled Sexuality in the Secular World <i>Christopher West</i>	129
---	-----

Don’t Panic: When Will My Family Be Perfect? <i>Greg and Jennifer Willits</i>	145
---	-----

Resources and Works Cited	159
---------------------------------	-----

FAITH, FAMILY, AND FINDING THE TIME:



HOW TO GET EVERYONE IN YOUR FAMILY FOCUSED ON FAITH

LISA M. HENDEY

WHAT DOES A CATHOLIC MOM HAVE TO SAY?

I often wish I had the means to go back in time and visit with myself as a young mother. I would offer that young lady a bit of perspective on what her priorities should be. When I remember those days now, filled with toddlers and temper tantrums (thrown as often by me as by my two precious sons Eric and Adam), it's tempting to wish for a "do over." I'm equally as certain that I'll wish for that same type of wisdom years from now when I'm an aging grandmother looking back on these days of parenting young adults. Although embracing my vocation as a Catholic mom has never been simple, it has, without a doubt, been the greatest joy of my life.

I'd like to enter this conversation with you by offering a stern caveat that I do not consider myself by any means to be an expert on the topic of the domestic church. Even after almost thirty years, our family is still very much a work-in-progress. What I know of this amazing vocation has come to me by watching my own parents successfully raise five of us and our spouses in the faith, by interacting on a daily basis with parents around the world via my internet-based apostolate, and by studying the teachings of our Catholic Church on this most important of topics.

Even after nearly a quarter-century spent parenting, I am still a novice who loves to linger at the feet of the paramount mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Although that may seem to be a lofty benchmark, I turn to Jesus' mom for her example, as well as to her most chaste spouse, St. Joseph, because they also likely grappled with their own trials in understanding the role of faith in their family. In Catholic families, it's easy to fall prey to the temptation to look with envy or despair at other families and assume they never face the challenges we do in our own homes. The more I mature in my understanding of our faith, the more I recognize that all families deal with their own trials and tribulations. For us to find joy and peace in our own vocation as Catholic parents, we must stop our comparisons and begin to embrace our own unique gifts and circumstances.

"TURN TO MARY AND JOSEPH BECAUSE THEY TOO GRAPPLED WITH THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF FAITH IN THEIR FAMILY."

What connects most Catholic parents is our deeply held faith in the teachings of our Church, as well as our sincere desire to pass along this same gift to our children. When we bring our children forth for baptism, we vow solemnly to commit ourselves to the task of raising these young souls in the faith. This includes the promise to make family Mass attendance a weekly priority, to see to the religious education of our children, and to set an example of Christlike love and values for them by our own endeavors to live the faith. We promise verbally as we stand before the baptismal font to teach these young souls to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor.

How simple that vow feels when we hold a precious white-garbed infant in our arms, supported by loving godparents and with the delicious aroma of the chrism oils still fresh in the air. And yet, how challenging that promise can feel when we attempt to quiet a petulant toddler in the midst of a consecration or coax a defiant teen to participate in the Mass when their peers have all walked away. Yet, as Catholic parents, we rest assured in the knowledge that we do not undergo the challenges of the domestic church alone.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches us:

In our own time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith. For this reason the Second Vatican Council, using an ancient expression, calls the family the *Ecclesia domestica*. [continued on next page]

It is in the bosom of the family that parents are “by word and example...the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children” (CCC 1656).

It is here that the father of the family, the mother, children, and all members of the family exercise the priesthood of the baptized in a privileged way “by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, and self-denial and active charity” (CCC 1656). Thus the home is the first school of Christian life and “a school for human enrichment” (CCC 1657). Here one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, generous—even repeated—forgiveness, and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one’s life.

With both the Church as our guide and the examples of the communion of saints as our role models, prioritizing faith in our families can create a joy of living out the gospel in our homes that will enable us to weather even the greatest storms. Faith is not only a creed we profess from the depths of our heart but also a cement that bonds us to one another in a way that many families who lack it will never truly understand. Our unity of belief in the promises of Christ becomes our family’s answer to the challenge issued in 1 Peter 3:15 to “always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason” for the hope that sets us apart.

***“FAITH IS NOT ONLY
A CREED WE PROFESS,
BUT A CEMENT THAT
BONDS US TO ONE
ANOTHER.”***

EUCHARIST AT THE CORE OF OUR FAMILIES

In today's world, it seems countercultural to live a family life centered on the Catholic faith and the Eucharist. While recent studies show one quarter of the adults in the United States identify themselves as Catholic, we also know that fewer than 25 percent of Catholics say they attend Mass weekly. Perhaps you've experienced the unusual situation of a parish nearly empty on a typical Sunday, but filled to the brim for back-to-back Ash Wednesday services. Even some parents who pay for a Catholic school education prioritize travel with sports teams over Mass attendance as a family. Without the Eucharist as the source and summit of our faith, families begin to lose the very core of what makes them truly Catholic.

When families come to me to discuss the challenges they are facing in their Catholic homes, one of the most frequent questions I ask is, "Do you make attendance at Mass as a family a priority in your life?" All too often, my question is met with a variety of excuses about busyness, children who refuse to attend, or work priorities that make Mass attendance "impossible." Believe me when I tell you that I can definitely relate to being the mother who finds herself alone in the pew with two rowdy toddlers on the receiving end of glares from elderly parishioners. (Perhaps that's why these days I go out of my way to try to offer a word of encouragement to any young family I meet at Mass.)

Without the centrality of the Eucharist as the core foundational value of our families, we are lost. Until we commit ourselves to not only attending Mass together as a family but also to finding a

role of true service for ourselves and our children in our parishes, church will never feel like the second “home” it is intended to be.

MAKING THE CHANGE

When I was a young adult and new mother, I struggled with the sensation that I was not getting anything out of Sunday Mass. I came and went feeling unfulfilled and alone. In those days, before my husband, Greg, entered the Catholic Church through RCIA, I knew that Sunday Mass was the most critical component of helping our little domestic church to grow. But I hadn’t yet learned that Mass was not a “consumer” experience. I complained far too often that the parishes we chose were “unwelcoming.” It wasn’t until I learned that I had a responsibility to my parish to be more than just someone who showed up on Sunday expecting to be served that things changed.

If family Mass attendance is to be the glue that truly binds our families together, then an unwavering belief in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist absolutely must be what sets our homes apart. We Catholic families simply must believe that when we receive holy Communion together on Sundays (and hopefully on other days of the week as well) we are united even more perfectly not only with one another but also with our Creator.

Gifted homilists may come and go in our parishes. Liturgical music may be beautiful, or not. What will never waver in our parish homes is the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. For this reason, we must consistently lead our children into an ever-deepening encounter with the Church by participating in

Mass. We must also model for our children our deep desire to encounter Jesus in the gift of holy Communion.

From an early age, our babies watch and learn from us. When we prepare our hearts for Mass by reading and pondering the Liturgy of the Word in advance, when we dress for Mass as the highlight of our week, when we arrive early and sit in the front of church to more fully encounter the liturgy, and when we reverently go forward to receive Christ in the Eucharist, our actions underscore the words we profess in the Creed.

Being a family of faith does not end when we leave the church parking lot. Our Catholic faith calls us to not only listen to the Gospel but also to live it. We must, at every juncture, be willing to see the face of Jesus Christ in those around us, within our own homes, in the needy of our community, and in a world where so many live without the most basic necessities.

*"BEING A FAMILY
OF FAITH DOES
NOT END WHEN WE
LEAVE THE CHURCH
PARKING LOT."*

EVERY FAMILY MEMBER MATTERS

Families come in all shapes and sizes. In today's world, we can no longer assume that a Catholic family fits the traditional mold of two parents and multiple children. Now more than ever, our churches contain families with single parents, families with many or no children, families where parents have divorced or separated, families with foster or adoptive children, and families of multiple generations living within the same home.

Regardless of how many members a family has, one thing

holds true: every family member matters. Especially within families of faith, it is clear that each person in a family unit plays a unique role in drawing his or her relatives into closer relationship with God.

A **NEWBORN INFANT** opens the hearts of her joy-filled parents to the blessing and miracle of new life.

A **RAMBUNCTIOUS TODDLER** teaches his siblings and parents about patience and perseverance.

A devout **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILD** hungering for her sacraments offers a beautiful lesson for her parents about never taking for granted the gift of reconciliation or holy Communion.

A **PETULANT TEENAGER** can lead his parents to an ever-deepening understanding of the nature of unconditional love.

A **YOUNG ADULT CHILD** leads her parents to develop trust in God's divine will for each of us.

PARENTS strive to become the most real example their children will know of God's love, compassion, care, and forgiveness.

Even the experience of caring for and interacting with **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**, for an **INFIRM RELATIVE**, or a **BELoved GRANDPARENT** in the final stages of life can cultivate within us the ability to see the face of Jesus Christ in those most fragile of our loved ones.

In our homes, every family member takes a turn loving and being loved, forgiving, accepting forgiveness, serving and being served. Parents learn to rely not only upon one another for support and strength but also upon the often unwavering faith of their children to see the omnipresence of God with simple eyes and hearts unscarred by disappointment and loss. Just as we marvel at the fact that a young Christ Child could teach his parents about his heavenly Father, we must concede that our own children have the capacity to lead us into an ever deepening love for the one who fashioned us into being.

CULTIVATING FAITH IN YOUR DOMESTIC CHURCH

For some families, living out the faith at home comes easily. They may come from a long line of relatives whose faith has remained unwavering through the tests of time. But other families, for many different reasons, may find themselves struggling to cultivate a culture of faith or to build their own unique domestic church.

Such was certainly the case in our home. Although I was raised in an active Catholic family, my husband, Greg, was not brought up attending church on a regular basis. When we married, I vowed to raise our children in the Catholic Church. Greg consented to this agreement, but it was clear to me early on that if our sons were to know and love the Church, the responsibility would be mine. With Greg's full support, I began to commit myself fully to bringing my faith into our home. But those early years proved to be a struggle. I felt lonely, overwhelmed, and never "holy enough" for the task of being the primary faith formator of my children. These concerns led to an online search for resources that ultimately motivated me to begin my website, CatholicMom.com. I did not launch the site thinking I had all the answers. In fact, what I hoped to build—and am still working toward fifteen years later—is a community of mothers like myself who could focus together on how to cultivate, cherish, and treasure our Catholic faith in our homes. Even now, with my husband having come

***"I FELT LONELY,
OVERWHELMED, AND
NEVER 'HOLY ENOUGH'
FOR THE TASK OF
BEING THE PRIMARY
FAITH FORMATOR OF
MY CHILDREN."***

into the Church seventeen years into our marriage, I continue to learn something new every day about what it means to live out the faith in our family.

LIVE BY EXAMPLE

In order to cultivate faith in our homes, we parents must first and foremost come to know and love God and the Church ourselves. This means prioritizing prayer on a daily basis, being immersed in the sacred words of Scripture, receiving the Eucharist as frequently as possible, and seeing the face of Jesus Christ in those we serve both in our homes and in the world around us. Only when we are fully attuned to God will we be able to pass along our faith to our children. For busy parents, this often means letting our children “catch us” in the act of being people of faith.



Do your children witness you praying or reading the Bible on a daily basis?



Do they encounter the Mass through the prism of your love for it?



Are they raised by parents who see charitable giving and service as a hallmark of being a person of faith?

Many say that faith is “caught and not taught.” In truth, a strong faith life probably stems equally from a vibrant education in the teachings of the Church and from learned behaviors modeled both formally and informally for our children. For families without a long track record of religious involvement, there can be great joy in taking baby steps together to grow in knowledge and commitment.

PRAY TOGETHER

If prayer has not been a large part of your life, join your children in adding regular prayer moments to your family’s days together. Gather over breakfast or on the way to school for a brief morning offering. Bless your meals and the hands that have grown, prepared, and served it to you each time you dine. End your busy days with quiet bedtime prayers that recall the day and seek God’s protection through the night. Learn the formal prayers of the Church with your children, but also quiet your heart to hear and emulate the simple, childlike ways in which your little ones express their love for God.

For young couples just beginning their family life together, this time in your life can be the precious beginning of your beautiful domestic church. From the moment you approach the altar in the sacrament of matrimony, consecrate your marriage to God through the intercession of the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph. Let the early moments of marriage, even the stressful ones, create in you a reflex to pray with and for one another. Open your hearts and home fully to the gift of life. Begin your own unique family

traditions, not turning your backs on your families of origin but always remembering that your marriage and the new family you are creating come first.

**"OPEN YOUR HEARTS
AND HOME FULLY TO
THE GIFT OF LIFE.
BEGIN YOUR OWN
UNIQUE FAMILY
TRADITIONS."**

BE ACTIVE

In order for faith to be cultivated in the home, it's also critical that our families have a second "home" in our parishes. Once you find a church home to worship in, make a firm commitment. Register as a member of the parish, but don't stop at just attending Mass on Sunday and dropping an envelope in the weekly collection. Just in the same way that you are a contributing member of your family, look for ways to more fully give of yourself and your gifts to your church home. Volunteer for a ministry. If you see something lacking at the parish, find a way to be a part of the solution. Meet and develop a relationship with the pastor at your church and any religious or clergy in the parish. Now, more than ever, our priests need our prayerful support for the challenging service they so

lovingly render. Begin to see your parish as a second home by always looking for ways to give, to love, and to serve. In doing so, you lend to the creation of the environment we all want in our parish communities.

**"ALWAYS BE
LOOKING FOR
WAYS TO GIVE,
TO LOVE, AND TO
SERVE."**

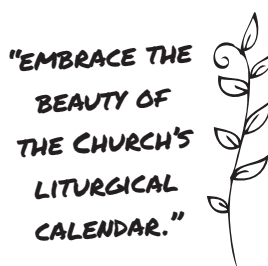
BRINGING THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR TO LIFE

One of the most beautiful ways to live out the faith in our homes is to embrace the beauty of the Church's liturgical calendar. In the same way that many family traditions are built around holidays such as Christmas and Thanksgiving, Catholic celebrations can become the hallmark of our domestic churches. I'm not recommending expensive gifts, complicated crafts, or elaborate feasts for these commemorations.

In fact, sometimes we can get so lost in the details of planning for a celebration that we lose sight of the cause for our joy.

All year long, our Catholic Church invites us into a deep relationship with one another. We recognize and live

out together the liturgical seasons of Advent and Lent, with their complementary feasting seasons of Christmas and Easter. But we are also called to count together the days and weeks of Ordinary Time with their memorials, feast days, and solemnities. Indeed, in our Church every Sunday is a cause for celebration. In fact, almost every week marks the celebration of the life of a canonized saint or two. These feast days invite us into a deeper consideration of the lives of the holy men and women who have gone before us. They offer us very real role models of courage and sanctity for the challenges we face in our own lives. The saints become our friends and intercessors, carrying our heartfelt prayers to a God who loves us greatly. Teach your children to know and love the



saints who are significant to your family. Choose a few that will be special to you in your own walk. Learn the details of their lives. Pray regularly through their intercession. Invoke their protection for your loved ones.

There are many beautiful and simple ways to live out the liturgical calendar in your home.

★ Begin the new liturgical year intentionally by placing an Advent wreath at the center of your family dinner table. As a part of your family's dinner hour, spend a few moments in quiet prayer around the wreath each day.

★ In anticipation of the season of Christmas, connect your family's giving to the true cause for the season. Consider simple gifts with religious significance or a gift to a charitable organization to avoid falling into the popular consumerism that has become so prevalent at Christmas. When our children were young, each boy received three gifts as we taught them to unite the cause for our celebration with the gifts of the wise men to the Christ Child in celebration of his birth.

★ Even young children can understand marking the season of Lent with the three devotions of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Although young ones are not called to the rules of fasting and abstinence, helping a young child to discern a "fast" from something simple like a new toy or a treat in order to prayerfully give a gift to someone in need can help them understand this time of prayerful penitence in anticipation of Easter.

★ Discuss with your children your own Lenten practices to help them see how your own season is helping you to draw into closer communion with Jesus Christ.

WITNESS AS A FAMILY

As you begin to more fully live out the liturgical calendar by celebrating family members' feast days or observing holy days throughout the year, you will find your domestic church beginning to thrive. Don't be afraid to try new traditions or to do things a little bit differently than what everyone else is doing in their homes. Being a family of faith sometimes means swimming against the tide of popular culture. When our friends and extended families begin to question why we celebrate things a bit differently in our homes, it offers us a beautiful opportunity to witness to the impact that living a life of faith can truly offer.

**"DON'T BE AFRAID TO TRY
NEW TRADITIONS OR TO
DO THINGS A LITTLE BIT
DIFFERENTLY THAN WHAT
EVERYONE ELSE IS DOING
IN THEIR HOMES."**



LISA M. HENDEY is the founder of CatholicMom.com and author of *The Grace of Yes* and the *Chime Travelers* series of books for children. She employs television, radio, social media, and her writing to share her passion for the New Evangelization and in support of the domestic church around the world. Lisa speaks internationally on faith, family, and technology and resides in the Diocese of Fresno with her husband, Greg.