

## Eparchy of Saskatoon Family and Life Office Bulletin:

December 2018



### "The future of the world passes through the family"

St. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 79

"You cannot give what you do not have" is a commonsense principle. We struggle with this when it comes to passing on our faith as we may feel that we need a super-hero sort of faith to pass it on to our kids—especially in the world today where we feel very little support in this endeavor. However, there are some practical things we can do to make a difference in our spiritual lives and those of our children.

*Deborah Larmour, Family and Life Office*"

### Giving the gift of prayer this Christmas:

One of the most significant things about passing on the faith to our children, is passing on the ability to pray. Some of us have negative experiences of being forced to pray and there are others for whom prayer was not a part of family life at all. For both those groups the question remains is how do I develop a real relationship with God in prayer and pass that on to my kids. I may want my children to know God's love and presence in their lives--but I may not have a clue of how to do this.

My own experience has taught me a few things about this struggle and how to overcome the obstacles in the way of personal and family prayer. These are a few of my thoughts:

1. **Just Do It!** Prayer, like good communication, does not necessarily come naturally and requires work. This does not mean it needs to be unbearable or painful but it does require a dedicated time and discipline, especially to get started. So, the Church Fathers have told us to have '**rule of prayer**'. What that is for you and your family is something you must decide, but without some kind of commitment, and desire to overcome inertia and distraction we will not make progress. Small achievable goals are usually best, growth is always possible.
2. **HELP!** In order to be meaningful, we need to be completely honest with God and not overly complicate the process of developing a relationship with Him. That is not to say that we might not use formulas such as the Rosary or the Jesus Prayer but is to affirm the need to pray from our heart with complete honesty. If I am worried about something but fail to mention it to God I may find my experience hollow and just one of going through the motions. It is only through faith that we can come to a place where we believe God cares. But, actually bringing our needs to Christ can build our faith as well. No, God may not always answer our prayers the way we want but He will always answer us and bring good from every situation if we let Him. (Rom. 8:28) As we experience these answers it builds our faith. It affirms our faith in who God is—the almighty and all powerful who loves me and you. Personal understanding of this is what leads to worship and thanksgiving as well as the desire to love and follow Christ and the teachings of His Church. This is power of God, working in our lives, that can transform us.
3. **Better Together:** We as parents are the models our children follow but we can learn to pray together. On the flip side of this page is a simple method of prayer popularized by Pope Francis. I would be happy to speak with you individually about other types of prayer if you need more ideas on how to grow prayer in your personal and family life.

**INDEX FINGER**  
**FOR THE ONES THAT TEACH US**  
 For those who instruct you and heal you. They need the support and wisdom to show direction to others.

**MIDDLE FINGER**  
**FOR OUR GOVERNORS**  
 As it is the tallest finger, it reminds us of our leaders, the governors and those who have authority.

**RING FINGER**  
**FOR THE SICK AND WEAKEST**  
 It is our weakest finger. It reminds us to pray for the weakest, the sick or those plagued by problems.

**THE THUMB**  
**FOR THE ONES WE LOVE**  
 Start praying for those who are closest to you. They are the easiest to remember.

**THE PINKY**  
**PRAY FOR YOURSELF**  
 The smallest finger should remind you to pray for your own needs when you are done praying for the other four groups.

**THE 5 FINGER PRAYER**  
 BY POPE FRANCIS

SOURCE:  
 CATHOLIC.ORG - POPE FRANCIS' FIVE FINGER PRAYER  
<http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=3396>

CatholicLink

As a family you might try having certain prayers that you pray together such as the Our Father, Hail Mary, Guardian Angel Prayer or the prayer to St. Michael followed by giving each member of the family an opportunity to give voice to one intention in each (or even one or two) of the 5 categories, if they can think of one. Very young children may initially need help but they learn very quickly especially when we remind them about how much Jesus loves to hear their prayers. The prayers of children are very close to His heart and therefore they are very powerful!

May God bless you and your family. I pray that we all grow closer to Jesus as we prepare for the great celebration of His birth, so we might truly experience that God is With Us!