

Pentecost



A Prayer for Church Unity

God our Father,
as Jesus promised,
you have sent us the Holy Spirit.
Through the inspiration of the Spirit,
the Church teaches the faith.
Through the consolation of the Spirit,
the Church has survived persecution.
Your Spirit is present
in the beauty of the liturgy,
and intercedes for us
in the prayers of the faithful.
May the Spirit bless, defend,
and protect your people,
heal our divisions,
purify the holy Church,
and grant her peace and unity.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

May 31, 2009 The Domestic Church

From an early age, our children know who they are in the family. By the age of two, they are individuals with autonomy and a sense of self. They understand the words *mine* and *no* (which, roughly translated, mean "I am me and not you."). It is in adolescence that our children develop their identity. Identity is not self-concept; it is not the answer to Who am I? Identity is the answer to Who am I in the world? In adolescence, our children begin to leave the warmth, security, safety, and confinement of home to enter into the freedom, challenge, and opportunity open to them in the world.

The first Christians began a kind of adolescence on the day of Pentecost. They had discovered, in the

days following the Resurrection, who they were in their intimate familial relationship with Christ and with each other. Now they would embrace their Christian identity, becoming a people for the world. Today is a birthday for both the ecclesial and the domestic Church. It is a time for our families to celebrate the birth of the Church and the coming of the Holy Spirit into our hearts and homes; but it is also a time to reflect on the necessary connection between the domestic and the ecclesial Church, between our homes and our parish. To become Church is to become a Christian for the world. How might you strengthen the connection between your family and parish life? Begin by praying as a family for Church unity.

This Week at Home and Beyond

Ordinary Time

The weeks of the year outside of the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter are called Ordinary Time. *Ordinary* comes from the word *ordinal*, meaning, “counted.” The liturgical seasons mentioned above take us on a journey into the very heart of our faith. During Ordinary Time we must attempt to live there, at the heart of Christianity, faithful to the essence of our faith in our daily lives, allowing God—not self-will or convenience—to order our days.

June 7, 2009

The Most Holy Trinity

This is a good day to teach children to make the Sign of the Cross. This simple ritual has been practiced from the earliest centuries. Initially, Christians made the Sign of the Cross with three fingers, representing the Trinity, on their foreheads. Now it is customary to make the Sign of the Cross by touching the middle fingers of the right hand to the forehead, heart, the left shoulder and then the right, saying, “In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” Try singing the Doxology as a grace at mealtime or before bed.

June 14, 2009

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

It has been customary since the fourteenth century to carry the Blessed Sacrament in procession around the outside of the church on this day. Join your parish procession, spend time venerating the Blessed Sacrament, and return home for a special family meal with a good bread. Before your meal, read 1 Corinthians 10:16–17. Put children’s first Communion pictures on the mantel, surrounded with flowers.

August 15, 2009

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

This feast, coming at harvest time when the fruits are ripe and the grain is full grown, celebrates Mary’s entrance into the fullness of heavenly life. Her example renews our hope that the fruits of the spirit shall ripen in us as well. According to popular (and ancient) legend, the disciples discovered Mary’s empty grave filled with flowers and herbs. From this arose the lovely custom of blessing herbs and other

plants on this day. This was especially meaningful at a time when herbs were a primary source of healing. Use herbs in your family meal today, decorate the house with flowers, and pray the glorious mysteries of the Rosary.

November 1, 2009

All Saints Day

All Saints Day is a good day to read the stories of the saints (especially obscure ones). Find stories at your local library or read the brief stories offered by the Daughters of Saint Paul at <http://www.daughtersofstpaul.com/saintday/index.html>.



November 2, 2009

Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls)

Today we pray for our beloved dead, and many families visit gravesites. Pray this prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours: “*Merciful Father, / hear our prayers and console us. / As we renew our faith in your Son, / whom you raised from the dead, / strengthen our hope that all our departed brothers and sisters / will share in his resurrection, / who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, / one God, for ever and ever.*”

November 22, 2009

Our Lord Jesus Christ the King

The liturgical year comes to an end with today’s solemnity. Decorate your dining table or home altar with yellow roses or other yellow flowers, representing Christ in glory. Pray for the coming of the kingdom of God when all will live in peace.

