

# Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

January 2024

Church of Saint Ann

Lawrenceville, NJ



## Thoughtful Moments

### St. Marguerite Bourgeoys

Born at Troyes, France in 1620, St. Marguerite desired early on to become a missionary. A friend introduced her to the mayor of Ville Marie (now Montreal, Canada) and, at his invitation, St. Marguerite traveled to Canada to teach the children of the colony. She was later joined by several women – all consecrated to God and devoted to teaching and Works of Mercy. In 1676, she gained approval for her order, the Congregation of Notre-Dame de Montreal.



### Fishers of Men

Some of the first apostles were fishermen working in the Sea of Galilee. The fish there were known for their quality and commanded a high price. Next time you eat fresh fish, remember Peter and Simon, James and John, the hard-working fishermen who left their boats to follow Jesus.

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come"*  
(2 Corinthians 5:17).



## Shape children's hearts with virtues

A key element of Catholic parenting is to shape the hearts of our children, not just manage their behavior. One way to shape a child's heart is to offer opportunities to grow in virtue:

### Modesty:

"Modesty protects the intimate center of a person. It means refusing to unveil what should remain hidden"

(Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), #2521).

Modesty awakens in youngsters a respect for the human person. Teach them to dress, speak, and take in entertainment that is wholesome, uplifting, and respectful of themselves and others.

**Faithfulness:** When children see that their parents are faithful to one another, for example, they intuit that

faithfulness or fidelity means to act in a way that honors a commitment. Children may not always hear what we say, but they are influenced by what they see us do.

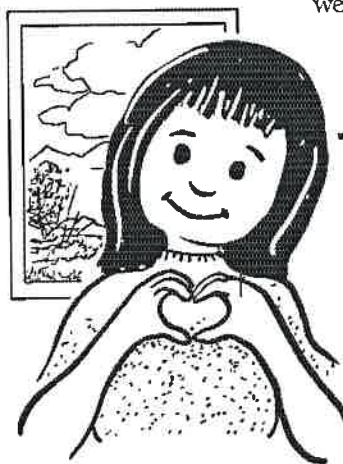
**Meekness:** Meekness is not timidity. It fuels self-control. St.

Thomas Aquinas cautioned against expressing physical anger because it makes anger outsized.

Guide and model how to use meekness to manage anger. Meekness will help prevent evil from ruling actions.

**Charity:** *"If I...have not love, I gain nothing"*

(1 Corinthians 13:3). Charity is giving love without an expectation of receiving in return. Teach children to put others' needs first. They will find that as they grow in charity, they will be happier and more joy-filled.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why do Catholics have infants baptized?

As a Sacrament, Baptism conveys grace and the "washing away" of sin and the "rebirth" of the baptized as a child of God. It starts us on the surest path to salvation: *"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will*



*be condemned"* (Mark 16:16).

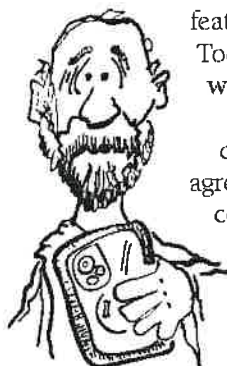
Catholic parents, desiring the best for their children, baptize them as infants, believing it will give them the best chance of true joy in this life and eternal life in the next.

## If the saints had social media, what would they post?

Is there a "holy" way to use social media? Consider these suggestions from the saints:

**To friend or unfriend?** St. Teresa of Ávila cautioned that parents "be very careful whom they allow to mix with their children when young." Although socially outgoing and fun-loving, she didn't try to be liked by everyone, but sought the close friendships with those who encouraged her in holiness.

**"Kind comments, only."** St. Philip Neri advised someone who gossiped to pluck a chicken and scatter the feathers in the wind. Those far-flung



feathers were like rumors – impossible to take back. Today, he would warn us to be careful what we post; who knows how many will see it.

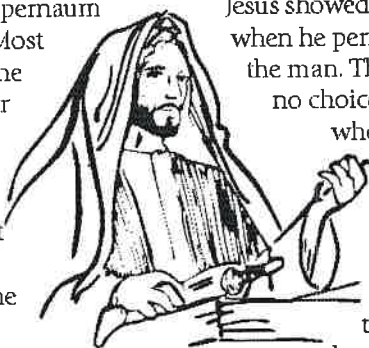
**Disagree, but charitably:** St. Thomas Aquinas debated often and won admiration, if not agreement, from his adversaries for his respectful conduct. "We must love [those who agree and disagree]...for they help us in the finding of [the truth]." For those in online debates, he would advise all to respond with charity and humility while still seeking the Truth.

### Scripture LESSON

### Mark 1:21-28, Jesus is no ordinary teacher

In this Gospel reading, we read that Jesus entered the synagogue at Capernaum with His apostles to teach. Most teachers would draw from the writings of other scholars for authority, and would begin, "Thus says the Lord..." but Jesus said, "I tell you..." As God, He already knew what the Scriptures meant without leaning on someone else's teaching.

Jesus taught as one who had the authority of God and that astonished His listeners. Even the unclean spirits who were torturing a man at the synagogue recognized Jesus as "the Holy One of Israel." Clearly, this was



no ordinary teacher!

Jesus showed His authority again when he performed an exorcism on the man. The unclean spirits had no choice but to obey Him when he commanded them to depart, despite their reluctance.

**What can a parent do?** Jesus shows us that God's power and love are greater than any evil. Teach children that they can talk to Jesus about anything that happens, good or bad. At the same time, stress that Jesus is God and deserves to be worshipped and obeyed.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**January 3 – Feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus.** "...At the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Philippians 2:10). Today, a deep bow of the head at the Name is an accepted form of respect.

**January 7 – Epiphany of Our Lord.** Epiphany is Greek for "manifestation." When they honored the infant Jesus, the three wise men bore witness to the fulfillment of God's promise of a savior.

**January 21 – St. Agnes (304).** St.

Agnes consecrated herself to God. Reportedly she was betrayed for being a Christian by a suitor whom she refused to marry. She maintained her faith and was executed as a result.

**January 25 – The Conversion of St. Paul.** Formally called "Saul" he persecuted the Christians until Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus, saying, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:5). After that, Saul became Paul and traveled around the known world, preaching the Faith.



### Parent TALK

Our busyness was crowding out family time. Between homework, practices, and playdates, we hardly ever had family dinner or attended Mass together. One Sunday when my daughter expected to skip Mass for a soccer tournament, I realized we needed a reboot.

That Saturday night we gathered around the table. I lit a candle and announced that Family Day had begun. I said that God wants us to keep Sunday holy, so Family Day starts at sundown on Saturday and goes through Sunday.

Now Sunday morning begins with church music while we dress for Mass. There are muffins or coffee cake made the night before so we can enjoy them and still observe the Communion fast. Then we attend Mass together and have a meal afterwards.

Then, whatever we do during the day, we do together. After dinner we blow out the "Sunday Candle" and feel ready to face the week.

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To help parents raise faithful Catholic children  
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Publishers of Growing in Faith™ and Partners in Faith™  
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