

# Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

April 2024

St. Philomena Parish

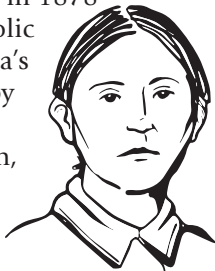
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## Thoughtful Moments

### St. Gemma Galgani

Born in Tuscany in 1878 to a devout Catholic family, St. Gemma's life was marked by consolation and suffering. Early on, she loved to pray, mystically conversing with Jesus, Mary, and her Guardian Angel. She suffered the loss of half her family to tuberculosis and was prevented from entering the Passionist Order due to her own poor health. She died of tuberculosis at the age of 25.



### Religion, front and center

Treat children's religious education classes as the most important education they receive. Make attendance and homework as much a priority as "regular" school. Mastering the content they learn may not get them into college, but it will guarantee their entrance into someplace even more important.

*"Truly, the Lord is waiting to be gracious to you, truly, he shall rise to show you mercy; For the Lord is a God of justice: happy are all who wait for him!" (Isaiah 30:18)*



## Family habits that can help keep youngsters Catholic

Recent studies have revealed that many Catholic children leave the Faith when they leave high school. Those who remain faithful to Jesus come from families who follow four "best practices." Consider these:

**Cultivate communion:** Researchers found that families who shared a meal regularly are more likely to raise faithful Catholic adults. It's a powerful way to strengthen communion, teach values, and share a love for Jesus. Resolve to have family meals three or four times weekly (without screens).

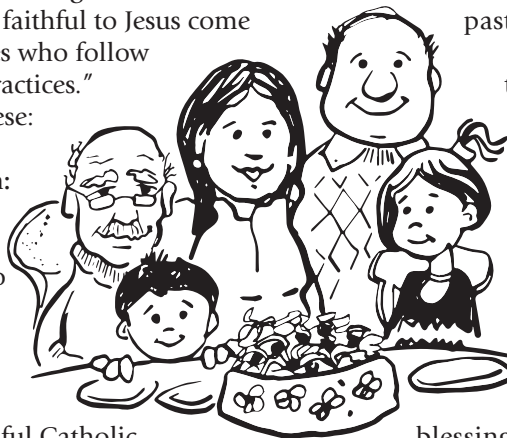
**Be open to questions:** Most young people leave the Church because they had many faith-based questions but no answers. Encourage children to ask and seek the answers together. Teach them

how to use reliable sources, starting with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* or turn to your local pastor.

**Form a prayer tradition:** Keep it simple. Gather round a Crucifix to pray for intentions and exchange a sign of peace. Let a different child lead the "nightly decade," or sing a hymn together and offer a blessing before bedtime.

Make prayer whatever works for you.

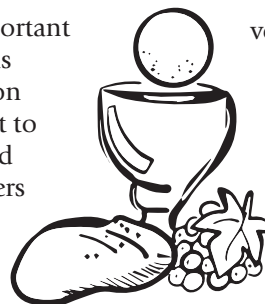
**Encourage service:** Faithful adults tend to grow up in families that prioritized service to the poor. Look for a way to donate time, talent or treasure to those in need. Your parish may need your support of one of its ministries. Let God's priorities shape your own.



## Why Do Catholics Do That ?

## Why do Catholics celebrate Communion?

The Mass is the most important and powerful gift we have as Catholics. Holy Communion brings us into union – heart to heart – with Jesus, really and truly present. When He enters a soul, He brings with Him countless graces: peace, healing, remission for



venial sins, strength, spiritual nourishment, and a "love...strong as death" (Song of Songs 8:6). When Jesus enters the sanctuary of our hearts in Holy Communion, and especially at one's First Communion, it's a cause for joyful celebration.

## How do our children benefit from weekly Mass?

If your family was invited to dinner and you knew Jesus would be there, would you go? Of course you would! You know how blessed your children would be just by being in Jesus' presence. In fact, Jesus is present – in person – at every Mass. Your children are blessed by Him:

**Good food.** Parents are careful to feed children well so they stay strong and healthy. At Sunday Mass, Jesus gives us the food we need for our souls to stay strong and healthy.

**Good practice.** God told us to keep holy

the Sabbath Day and to observe His laws.

Teaching children to obey God's rules is great practice for teaching them to obey ours.

**Good listening.** When we go to Mass, we hear God's Word. Familiarity with Scripture builds the lifelong skill of listening for God's voice.

**Good company.** Each of us is needed by our Catholic community. *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* (Matthew 18:20).



### Scripture LESSON

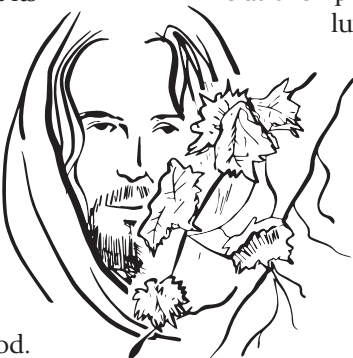
#### John 15:1-8, "Remain in me"

In this Gospel passage, Jesus compares life with Him to the Vine and its branches. Our connection with Him is absolutely vital for our souls. The stark reality is that a vine-branch can't be cut off and "transplanted" in the soil; it's either attached to the vine or it withers and dies.

Why does Jesus say something so shocking? Because He is the Word of God.

Jesus Christ must be the center of our lives. While some are called to devote themselves more radically to Christ than others (e.g. monks, nuns, and priests), everyone is called to deep, living

intimacy with Him. A close relationship with Christ isn't a luxury; it's a necessity for our spiritual health.



**What can a parent do?** Teach children that Jesus must be the center of our hearts, souls, and lives. Help them to build the habit of praying to Him often. Teach

them that weekly Mass and monthly Confession is needed to "keep in touch" with their Friend. To the extent that our hearts belong to Jesus, we will find lasting peace and joy.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**April 3 – St. Richard of Chichester (1253).** Born in England, St. Richard studied law at Bologna. Known for his holiness and administrative skills, he was named archbishop of Chichester, but because of political persecution, spent most of his office in exile. St. Richard died in Dover while preaching a crusade.

**April 7 – Divine Mercy Sunday (1931).** Jesus asked St. Faustina to ensure that the Sunday after Easter become the "Feast of Mercy." He promised special graces and mercy to whoever honors him as the King of

Mercy and prays The Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

**April 8 – The Annunciation of the Lord.** The angel Gabriel visited the Blessed Virgin Mary with the extraordinary news of her role as the Mother of God, to which she had complete confidence in God's wisdom.

**April 25 – St. Mark the Evangelist (First Century).** St. Mark wrote his Gospel based on St. Peter's perspective and accompanied Saints Paul and Barnabas in Cyprus. He is credited with founding the Church of Alexandria.



### Parent TALK

When we moved into a new neighborhood, I became concerned about some of the boys Toby started playing with. They seemed a little wild and some of the neighbors accused them of vandalism and stealing. I told Toby of

my concerns but said I wouldn't forbid him from playing with them. However, if the boys committed any misdeeds – whether he participated or not – I would hold Toby solely responsible.

That next week Toby ran home in a panic. Even though he "told them not to," the boys threw a rock through Mr. Grayson's front window. I walked Toby back to Mr. Grayson's house where he apologized for his and his friends' behavior and made arrangements to replace the window.

He had to mow a lot of lawns and rake a lot of leaves to pay for the window but he quickly lost interest in those friends, much to my relief.

#### Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children  
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