

Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

September 2026

St. Philomena Parish

www.stphils.com



Thoughtful Moments

St. Hildegard of Bingen

St. Hildegard was a German Benedictine abbess, mystic, theologian, composer, writer, and student of the natural world. Known for her remarkable intellect and spiritual insight, she wrote extensively on theology, virtue, medicine, and creation, while composing sacred music of striking originality. Hildegard advised popes, bishops, and political leaders and preached publicly at a time when few women did so. Pope Benedict XVI named her a Doctor of the Church in 2012.



Patient growth

"I want to grow in patience, right now!" Patience often seems elusive when we need it most. Like a good coach, God knows what trials lie ahead and prepares us by challenging us. If you're struggling with a persistent bad habit, don't be discouraged. God asks for perseverance, not instant perfection. Growth requires grace, practice, and patience, including patience with yourself.

"The Lord is faithful in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds."
(Psalm 145:13).



Centered on Christ, steady in the chaos

Family life requires constant attention to competing demands: school, work, household responsibilities, finances, parish commitments, friendships, and family time. The goal is not to eliminate the inevitable messiness of family life, but to establish a center that holds everything together. For a Christian family, that center is Christ. Through prayer, the Eucharist, and the grace of the sacraments, He gives us the strength to order our priorities and bring peace even as life gets demanding.



Relationships: The home is where children first learn how Christians treat others. Respectful speech, honest conversation, attentive listening, sincere apologies, and generous forgiveness teach that loving relationships matter more than winning arguments or being right.

Stewardship: Families form habits by what they consistently prioritize. Children benefit from learning to fulfill responsibilities, contribute to the household, use technology wisely, and honor commitments. Protecting time for Mass, prayer, meals, and family life communicates what your family values most.

Service: Faith becomes tangible when families serve together. Helping with a parish ministry, supporting a family in need, visiting someone who is lonely, or regularly giving to the poor teaches children that Christian love requires action.

Love: A Christ-centered home will not always be orderly or easy. Its peace comes from something deeper: knowing to whom the family belongs and learning to receive Christ's love and extend it to others.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics use incense at Mass?

Incense is made from frankincense, which is made from the sap of desert trees. When burnt, the sweet smell signifies something pleasing to God and the smoke symbolizes one's prayers rising to heaven: "Let my prayer be incense



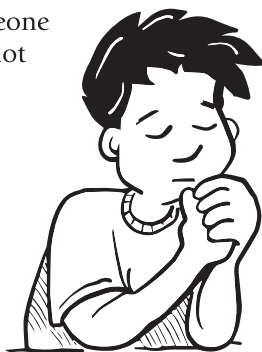
before you; my uplifted hands an evening sacrifice" (Psalm 141:2). Incense is used to draw attention to important objects or areas of the event, for example, the altar, the

Gospels, and the priest. Incense is also used to venerate the Blessed Sacrament.

Teach mercy without surrendering wisdom

Jesus' command to "pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44) can be hard, especially when someone has caused real harm. Praying for an enemy does not mean excusing wrongdoing, denying what happened, or abandoning healthy boundaries. It means refusing to let another's actions determine the condition of our hearts.

Pray for conversion: We are not asking God to overlook someone's wrongdoing. Instead, we pray that He brings the person to repentance, heals what is wounded, and gives him or her the grace to turn from sin and choose what is good.



Forgive as we are forgiven: In the "Our Father," Jesus directly connects receiving forgiveness with offering it. Forgiveness is not just a feeling. It is a repeated decision to surrender resentment and the desire for revenge to God.

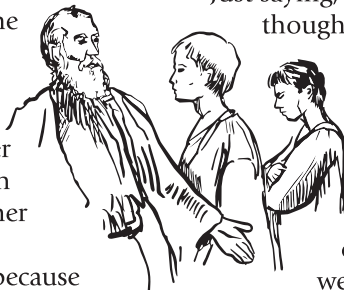
Remember but don't resent: Forgiveness does not require pretending nothing happened. We can learn from painful experiences, establish appropriate boundaries, and protect ourselves from further harm. Praying for enemies allows us to seek their good without sacrificing wisdom, justice, or our own well-being.

Scripture LESSON

Matthew 21:28-32, Living our "yes" to God

This Gospel passage features Jesus' parable of a father who asked his sons to work in the vineyard. The first said, "No," but went anyway. The second said, "Yes," but didn't go. Which son did as the father asked? In other words, with whom is our heavenly Father pleased?

The Pharisees "obeyed" because they wanted to look good. Their "yes" to God stopped at appearances without leading to real change. The tax collectors and public sinners repented of their former lives because God's love had touched their hearts. Their "no" to virtue became an enthusiastic,



action-oriented "yes" to God.

Just saying, "Yes" is not enough, though. It must be lived by treating others with love and acting with integrity. Jesus assures us if we said "no" to God before, we can still give Him our "yes" now. God will welcome us back with joy.

What can a parent do? Teach children that obedience expresses love and trust in God and parents. When we model our own faithfulness to God, children learn that obeying Christ is the best way to live.

Feasts & Celebrations

Sept. 8 – The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Tradition says Mary was born in Jerusalem after her parents, Anne and Joachim, had been childless for more than twenty years. Mary's birth brought her parents – and humanity – joy.

Sept. 14 – The Exaltation of the Holy Cross (c. 326). St. Helena (mother of Emperor Constantine) discovered what is believed to be the True Cross while on pilgrimage in Jerusalem. On that site, Constantine built the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher.

September 28 – St. Lawrence Ruiz

and Companions (1637).

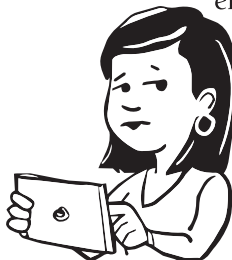
A martyr of Japan, Lawrence was born in the Philippines to Christian parents. Accused of murder, he fled, traveling with four Catholic priests and a leper to Nagasaki, Japan where there was violent persecution. They were arrested, brutally tortured, and martyred on Okinawa.

Sept. 30 – St. Jerome (420). St. Jerome's love of Scripture led Pope Damasus I to ask him to translate the Bible into Latin. Called the "Vulgate," this translation made the Bible more accessible to more people.



Parent TALK

I'm often convinced that all I need is the latest gadget to make me more efficient and help me



accomplish everything. This time it was a new tablet. From one screen, I could access our family calendar, my

work schedule, email, shopping, and news. It even reminded me to pray the Angelus at noon and the Rosary at 3:00 p.m. What could go wrong?

Kara got scared when I was late picking her up. I'd gotten caught up in an email exchange with a client. Tessa grew frustrated waiting in the parking lot while I finished editing a work article. One evening I was online shopping at dinner and my husband asked me to give the family my full attention.

The device I bought to help manage my life had begun managing me. My new tablet had stopped being a useful tool and had become something closer to a false god.

Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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