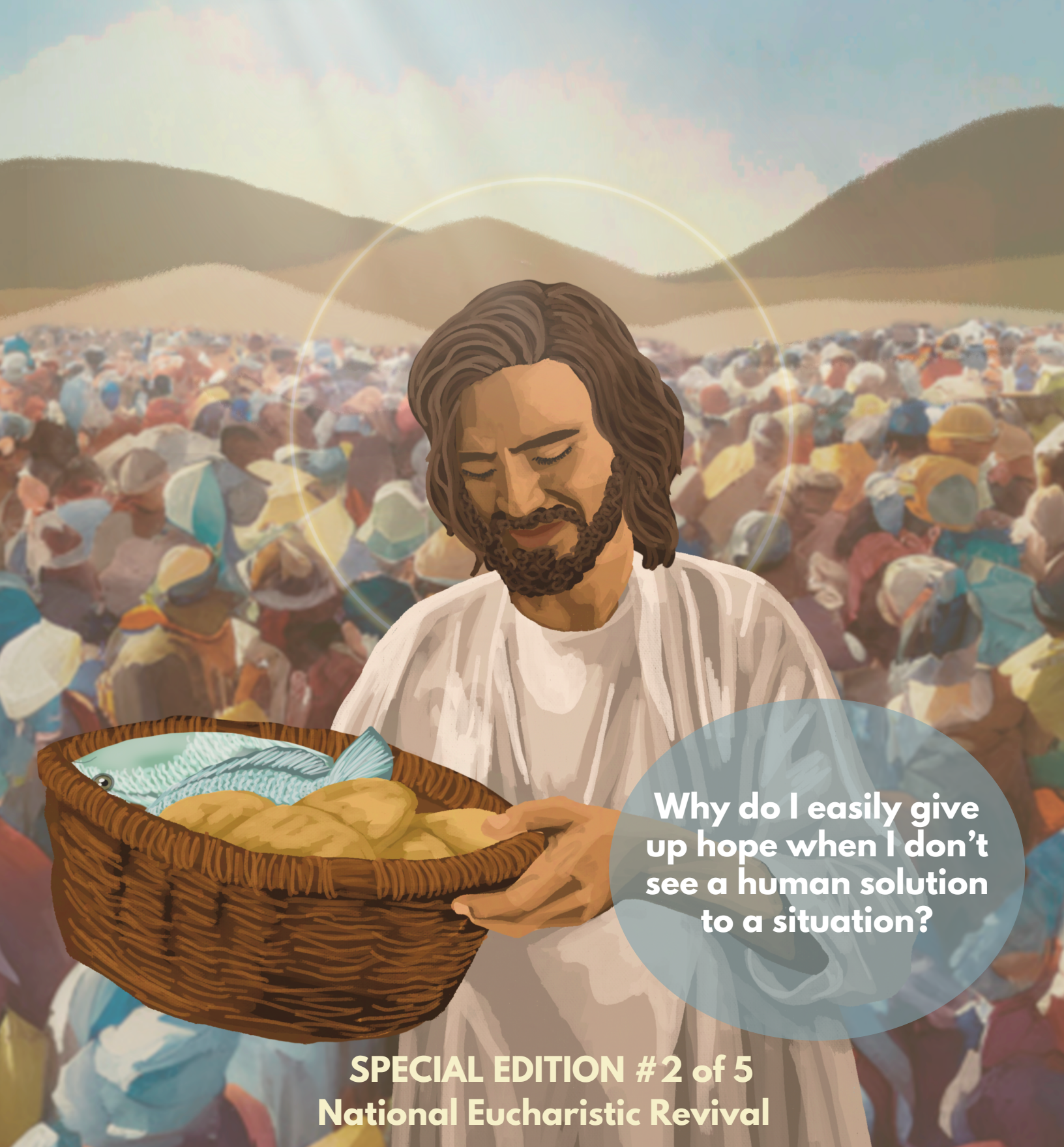


CATHOLIC FAMILY GUIDE

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Volume IV, Guide 2, December 3, 2023



Why do I easily give up hope when I don't see a human solution to a situation?

SPECIAL EDITION # 2 of 5
National Eucharistic Revival



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**All underlined text in
this Guide is linked!
Just click!**



eucharisticrevival.org

How is this Guide working for you and your household or small group?

Share a resource, activity, or picture/video of what you are doing in your Domestic Church.

For questions, comments, and feedback, please contact us at

discipleship@cgscc.church

Welcome

DISCIPLES OF JESUS!

During this holy Advent season, we present a very special series of Catholic Family Guides to help our parish families to grow in knowledge of the faith and deepen our relationship with Jesus as his disciples. On this First Sunday of Advent, we welcome Father Tom Ponzini, pastor of Prince of Peace in Houston, Texas, who preaches for us on the Gospel for this week's Guide.



This Week

Guess Whose Coming to Dinner

A woman was hosting a dinner party and, at the table, she asked her 6-year old daughter to say "Grace". The little girl responded: "I don't know what to say!" The mother replied: "Just say what you hear Mommy say." The little girl nodded and prayed: "Dear Lord, why in the world did I invite so many people to dinner?"

In today's Gospel, we hear about the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. Jesus and His disciples find themselves in a remote place, with a large crowd - 5,000 men not including women and children. That's probably close to 20,000 people! And these people were hungry!

Now, it was clear that Jesus' disciples did not have the means to feed all these people - neither in ready available cash nor access to a huge, nearby market. Yet, surprisingly, Jesus asks Phillip: "Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?" (John 6:5b) But, the passage continues: "He said this to test Him..." (John 6:6)

This passage reminds us that God sometimes allows our challenges to become so big and so desperate to show us His incredible power. How great is our Lord in solving the unsolvable and making possible the impossible! As stated in Luke 1:38: "Nothing is impossible with God." Ask yourself the following question: **"Why do I easily give up hope when I don't see a human solution to a situation?"**

Today's Gospel also shows us that Jesus wants us to play a part in His miracle. Even though God has the power to create something out of nothing, He asks for human collaboration - even if it is minimal. The disciples could bring Jesus only five loaves and two fish from a boy they found in the crowd. Jesus wants us to contribute because He wants us to be generous - even when we think we have nothing to give. Lack of resources is never an excuse for lack of generosity in serving the Lord. This miracle accentuates that God can never be outdone in generosity! The gospel for this Guide foreshadows the self-giving love of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Ask yourself the following question: **"Why do I sometimes feel that I have nothing to offer in certain situations?"**

Fr. Tom Ponzini

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN GOD PRESENT AND ACTIVE IN YOUR LIFE THIS WEEK?



The Holy Mass

The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed, at the same time, it is the font from which all her power flows. (Cf. SC #10)

[Why go to Mass?](#)

[Mass Schedule for Our Parishes](#)

[Find Mass Anywhere](#)

[Tips for Taking Young Children to Mass](#)

We come to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ.


Scripture Readings for This Guide

[2 Kings 4:42-44](#)

[Psalms 145:10-11, 15-16, 17-18](#)

[Ephesians 4:1-6](#)

[John 6:1-15](#)



Why do I easily give up hope
when I don't see a human
solution to a situation?

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW
FR. TOM'S VIDEO](#)



ADVENT PORTAL

[Find readings and resources for Advent](#)

WE LEARN & BECOME DISCIPLES TOGETHER

Getting
Started

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

How to manage a group discussion.

Question of the Week

Why do I easily give up hope when I don't see a human solution to a situation?

CONNECT with our GOD through Prayer

- Let's start with the The Sign of Cross.
- As we gather to share our faith, ask the Holy Spirit to be present. Use your own words or offer a Prayer to the Holy Spirit.
- As someone reads out loud the Gospel for this Sunday, listen to the Lord speaking to you.
- Listen to one other as everyone shares what in the Gospel caught their attention.
- Prayer for the Eucharistic Revival

This week's Guide is based on the Gospel of John
John 6:1-15
excerpt from Christ's "Bread of Life Discourses"

CONNECT with our daily LIVES

When have you been through a situation where things seemed really tough or impossible, but then something unexpectedly amazing happened? Share how this experience changed the way you see everyday miracles or the generosity of others.

Family life is the first place where children learn how to pray as the Church. Through family prayer, children experience the first witness of Christ's living memory.

Points of Understanding
Grade 3, #4.4.1



Jesus' multiplication of the loaves and fish prefigures his giving himself in the abundance of the Eucharist (Catechism #1335)

WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S TEACHING?

POINTS OF UNDERSTANDING

Where they come from and ways to use them.



Choose from among the following Scriptures and teachings for reading, prayer, and discussion.

In the HOLY SCRIPTURE, we read:

- I am tough, I can handle this or fix this problem by myself. Matthew 4:8-9
- I tossed and turned all weekend over this. Job 17:15
- The challenge seemed insurmountable. 1 Corinthians 10:13

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church

- God blessed us with a freedom to choose, he did not give us superpowers. #398
- Do not let the nagging worry consume you. #2830
- "Let nothing trouble you, let nothing frighten you, everything passes, God never changes, patience obtains all, whoever has God, wants for nothing." #227

"Faith in God gives us hope, trustworthy hope, that we can face our present circumstances, even if they seem insurmountable. We will live through this trial and make it toward our ultimate goal of Salvation."

SPES SALVI, Pope Benedict XVI

Discuss

1. How quickly do I judge the person or the situation or make assumptions that may be out of line? Do I recognize my mistake with humility and growth?
2. "He never asks for directions!" How long do I wander in my own problem desert?
3. How does the Eucharist give me spiritual food and sustain me when the problems of life are difficult to bear?

Want more? Go Deeper!

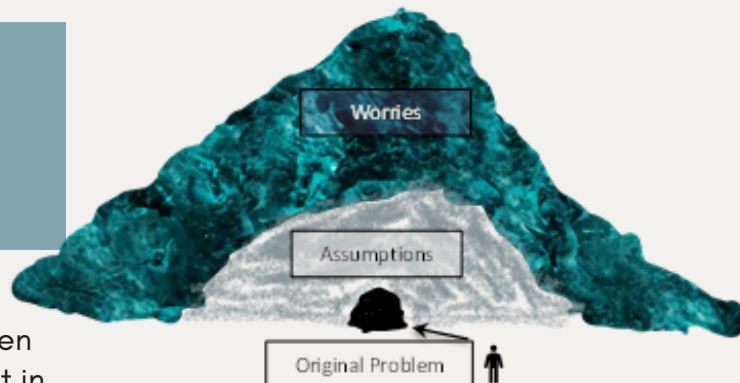
Help me to explore my relationship with God and the Human Condition.

Learn More



Reflection Question

It is important for us to not freeze or feel stuck in any given situation – do not let this consume you. Turn to God, trust in him through prayer and receiving the Eucharist and grasp his offered hand. "Is this difficult for me to do?"



CONNECT with OTHERS...

Living the Gospel with commitment & action.

What is one thing I am are willing to change in my life so that may trust God to provide for my needs and bring me closer to Him?

Practical Activities



For the Individual

Surrender to the will of Jesus.

This week, add this simple prayer to your quiet time. Slowly repeat these words at least 10 times until you feel peace..."O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything."



For Couples

Assess Your Offering

Pick a day this week, preferably Sunday, to discuss what your family offering currently is and reassess. Everything we have is given to us by God from our money and talents to our time. The more you offer Him, the more you rely on His providence!



For the Domestic Church

Trade One Activity

Teach your family to use time wisely this week! Have each family member choose one activity to fast from this week and replace it with time with God. Silence or reading for adults and older children and a craft or coloring page of Jesus for young ones.



Missionary Mindset

Give and Receive Joy

Many cannot afford the material goods that we take for granted. Have each family member choose something they have enjoyed using and are willing to give away to someone in need who will enjoy it also. Simply donate it at a charity and trust that God will deliver it!



Building Your Church at Home

Your household is where "church" begins. Your parish is here to help you with support, resources, small Faith Groups, and gathered activities on our campus throughout the year. Visit our website or contact us if you need help.

For more ideas on how to build your home as a Domestic Church, go to: www.domestic-church.com or visit *The Family Fully Alive*, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, or [Tools for Building a Domestic Church](#) by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

Closing Prayer

- We sign ourselves with the Sign of Cross.
- According to what we reflected on, or whatever is in my heart share a petition. At the end we all say: **Lord hear our prayer.**
- Then we can pray the Our Father, Hail Mary and the Glory be...
- As we finish, let us share a sign of peace with each other.

"Know that our loving God will never ever abandon you, no matter what!" Fr. Tom



Prayer

In this uncertain time in history,
we ask you Lord Jesus to awaken
hardened minds and hearts
so that they may recognize Truth
and return to your merciful Love.
You are everything; the Alpha, and the Omega,
our reason for living and the God of Salvation.

Many of your people have fallen and
need your forgiveness and Love.
Give us grace to be instruments of
love and mercy to everyone we meet.
Stay with us, Lord, on our journey.
Give us Courage and Humility.

Help us to bravely speak to people
who are lost in the chaos of today's world
and to be examples of the Faith
that only You can manifest in us.
Give all Christians the desire
to share in your mission of Mercy and Restoration.
Thank you for Redeeming our sins.
We will fear nothing and Trust in You always, our God.
Amen.

AT THE END OF THE LESSON OR END OF THE WEEK

From what you have learned, how would you now answer the Question of the Week?

Why do I easily give up hope when I don't see a human solution to a situation?

WE ARE THE CHURCH

What Makes Us Catholic?

The Eucharist

What makes us Catholic? The simple answer is, “the Eucharist.” Yet, like an iceberg, there is much more under the surface. As Catholics, we believe that the Eucharist is what Jesus Christ says it is: His Body and Blood and, by extension, soul and divinity. The bread and the wine brought forward to the altar during Mass are changed by Jesus himself, using the words of the priest, into His Body and Blood. This means that once the host is consecrated we are now in the physical presence of Jesus and are to show the respect we would if he appeared in his human form. This understanding and acceptance of the Eucharist is what makes us uniquely Catholic. This is indeed a hard saying, even as it was when Jesus himself said this in person ([John 6:60](#)). Many of his followers left him. Centuries later, this belief is part of the reason why the Protestants left the Catholic faith. [Learn more here in paragraph 1402](#) and beyond in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.



Word of the Week - Eucharist

Eucharist is “The ritual, sacramental action of thanksgiving to God which constitutes the principal Christian liturgical celebration of and communion in the paschal mystery of Christ. The liturgical action called the Eucharist is also traditionally known as the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, [glossary](#)). It is one of the seven sacraments of the Church; the Holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation (CCC [#1332](#)). The Sunday celebration of the Eucharist is at the heart of the Church’s life” (CCC [#2177](#)).

Find Your Group!



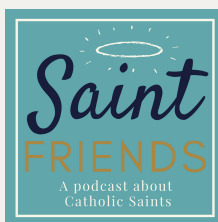
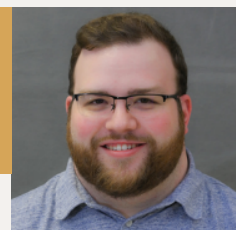
Four Reasons Why Faith Groups are Vital

(Video, 2:49)

Join a small Faith Group or start one of your own! Contact your parish for more information.

Saints of the Month

by Jeremy Hearne



Podcast each Tuesday!

National Eucharistic Revival

Learn More



Video (2:32)

ADULT & FAMILY MINISTRY

Adulthood

Articles

- Catholic Exchange // [Bringing our Loaves and Fishes to Jesus](#)
- Busted Halo - Brant Law // [3 scripture Verses to Reflect on During the Eucharistic Revival-- Article, 5 min read](#)
- Simply Catholic - Msgr. William J. King // [Eucharistic Processions - 2 min read](#)
- Simply Catholic - Msgr. Charles E. Pope // [Is Adoration Different Than Prayer Before a Tabernacle? - 1 min read](#)

Videos

- [What is the National Eucharistic Revival? \(2:32\)](#)
- Busted Halo // [Sacraments 101: Eucharist \(how we receive\) - video \(4:46\)](#)



Deepening Understanding of the Eucharist

Resources for Adults, Teens, and Children

Loyola Press



To pray a holy hour of Adoration of the Eucharist, all you need is a tabernacle with a lit sanctuary lamp, maybe a Bible or other reflective reading and/or prayers. Want more information on how to what to do during a Holy Hour check out the links below:

Aleteia// [A minute-by-minute guide for a Holy Hour of Adoration](#)
Hallow// [How to Pray While Making a Holy Hour](#)
USCCB// [Eucharistic Devotion](#)

Catholic Apps



Book Suggestions

[Adult Faith Formation](#)

[Young Adult & Campus Ministry](#)

[Sacramental Information](#)



[& Becoming Catholic!](#)

FAMILIES WITH YOUTH



Early Adolescence

Middle School, Grades 6-8

Characteristics of Early Adolescents

Question: Where to find hope in 2023?

Ascension Presents // What is Hope and Why do You Need It?--video (5:07)

Ascension Presents // How to Lose Everything & Still Hope--video (9:09)

Sacred Scripture // Psalms 91:1-16



Adolescence

High School, Grades 9-12

Characteristics of Adolescents

Question: Where to find hope in 2023?

Bible Project // How You Can Sustain Hope for a Better Future--video (4:33)

Steubenville Youth Conferences // Hope Does Not Disappoint--video (29:06)

Sacred Scripture // Psalms 91:1-16

“Do not be afraid. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch. I plead with you--never, ever give up on hope, never doubt, never tire, and never become discouraged..”

- St. Pope John Paul II



Youth & Young Adults

See when youth meet at your parish!

Young Adult and Campus Ministry.

Or contact your
local parish.



FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN



Birth to Age 2

The role of parents at this stage is to model the example of Jesus by offering God's unconditional love to their children and to others. Parents benefit from growing in their own faith so they are able to hand on the faith to the next generation.



Early Childhood Ages 3-5

Characteristics of Young Children

Question: Where is Jesus?

Formed // The Eucharist for Little Children--video

Formed // Presence - For Children: The Miracle at Every Mass - video (11:01)

Formed//Brother Francis --The Bread of Life: Celebrating the Eucharist! -video (28:35)



Childhood Elementary, Grades 1-5

Characteristics of Children

Question: What is the Eucharist?

Formed// Short Answers to Big Questions -What is the Eucharist?--video and (4:21)

Aleteia // What You Should Teach Your Children About the Eucharist

Catholic Kids Media // What is the Eucharist? (video 2:20)

Catholic Link // How to Explain the Eucharist to a Child

Allison Gingras with Brother Francis // How to Explain the Eucharist to a Child

For Parents



Strong Catholic Family Faith

A project of Strong Catholic Families, Strong Catholic Youth Initiative



Family Faith Practices

GENERAL RESOURCES

The Holy Bible

Online Bible via the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

If you don't know much about the Bible or want to learn more: **Scripture Support**

Catholics use the **New American Bible Revised Edition** (NABRE) as the translation for Mass readings. There are many acceptable versions of NABRE as well as other approved translations. You may purchase from any vendor. Basic editions are available upon request at no charge. Pick one up at the parish office.



Recommended Print Bibles

These are all by St. Mary's Press: Order directly from the publisher or search online for other vendors.

Catholic Family Connections Bible
(digital version available)

Catholic Youth Bible (Adolescents & College)
"Breakthrough" (Early Adolescents // Jr. High)

Catholic Children's Bible

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)

Online Catechism via the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

NEW! Simplified version of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

If you don't know much about the Catechism or want to learn more: Catechism Support

Formed Online

Our parish subscribes to a library of online resources called **Formed**. It is excellent and free for you to use. Register at formed.org - Just click "Sign Up as a Parishioner." Need help? Watch this video.

Counseling & Spiritual Direction

Our parish offers **Rejoice Counseling** for individuals and families for a variety of issues and needs. You may use this online form to contact them directly.

We also offer **Spiritual Direction** for anyone interested in a spiritual companion, discerning God's will in your life. Follow the links or inquire through the parish office.

Prayers and Praying

Sister of Life// Litany of Trust



Prayer Requests



Common Prayers and Formulas to Learn by Heart

and a chart showing at what age level they should be learned.



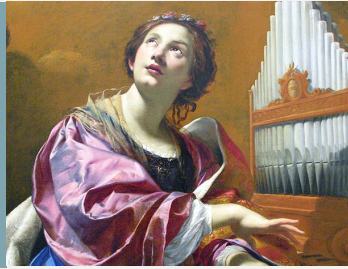
How to create a prayer table or prayer area in your home.

ART & MUSIC

Sacred Art on Formed

Parish subscription free for parishioners--register once, access all content.

Formed.org



Using Sacred Art to Bring the Faith Alive

Sophia Institute

Sacred Art to Inspire You

Wayne Paschal on Fine Art America // [The Master's Hands](#)

Graham Braddock // [Give Him What You Have](#)

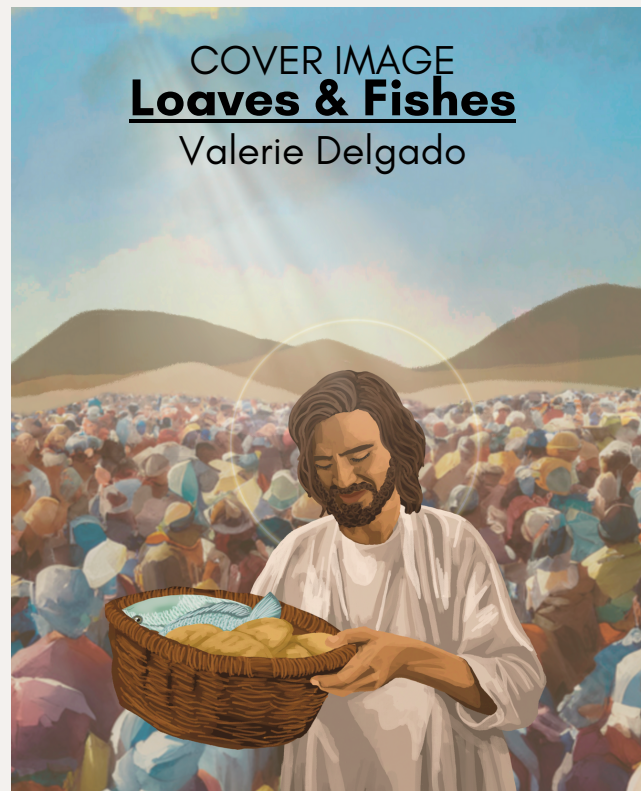
Artist Unknown // [Loaves and Fishes](#)



Our Lady of Grace

by Jessica Coe

Owner of The Living Heart Co.



COVER IMAGE **Loaves & Fishes**

Valerie Delgado

Music to Move You

For King And Country // [Shoulders](#) -- music video (5:23)

Brother Isaiah // [Pray, Hope, Don't Worry](#) -- music video (5:35)

Brian Stokes Mitchell // [Through Heaven's Eyes](#) -- music video (3:49)

Kari Jobe // [I Am Not Alone](#) -- music video (5:26)

In what ways do art and music help strengthen your relationship with God?

Meet Our Directors

Helping People to Know and Love Jesus Christ



Prince of Peace

Dave Regitz

Director of Evangelization

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St. Ignatius Loyola

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**The
CHURCH EXISTS
IN ORDER TO
EVANGELIZE**

...bringing all
humanity to union
with God; this is
the missionary
mandate
of the Church.

*Pope Paul VI in
"Evangelii Nuntiandi"
("Evangelization in the
Modern World"), 1975.*

About This "Special Edition" Series

These **"Special Editions" of the Catholic Family Guide** are a joint effort of our four parishes for the Sundays of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King through the four Sundays of the Advent season, 2023. They are written by our clergy and staff for our parishioners to come to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ during this Advent Season, culminating in the great Eucharistic Revival of 2024. Our pastors each desire their parishioners to know and love Jesus Christ in the Eucharist in a deeper and more profound way during this Eucharistic Revival. We want to demonstrate that, though we are distinct parishes, we are one Church of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston; we are part of something bigger than ourselves. It is up to us to evangelize the world so that many more people will come to the knowledge and love of God and receive the gift of salvation. We can accomplish great things when we work together and cooperate with the Holy Spirit.

Our priests and staff are excited to be working collaboratively and it is beautiful to see our pastors coming together and encouraging unity and fellowship among Catholics in our archdiocese. We want you to be a part of this because together, we are the Church—for the glory of God and the good of his holy people.

Special thanks to our priests and staff who contributed to the creation of these Guides.

Meet Our Pastors

The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus.
When you see a priest, think of our Lord Jesus Christ."

— St. John Vianney, patron saint of parish priests.



Rev. Tom Ponzini

Prince of Peace

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2601 Spring-Stuebner Road, Spring, Texas 77389
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Our daily access to the Eucharist is possible because of our priests.

Through their lives of dedicated service, we have access to the Mass and the sacraments.

Please pray for vocations to the priesthood, diaconal ministry, and religious life.

Please pray for families, that they may nurture the lives of their children and raise holy men and woman who are ready to serve the Lord in whatever ways he calls.



The contents of this Guide are in accordance with the teachings of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the *Catechetical Framework for Lifelong Faith Formation* of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, under the pastoral care of Archbishop Daniel Cardinal DiNardo. Accordingly, the *Catechetical Framework* serves the definitive aim of catechesis which is to put people not only in touch with, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ.

All parishes of our Archdiocese follow the same plan for catechesis. It is part of the unity of our Church.