

ST GERARD'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

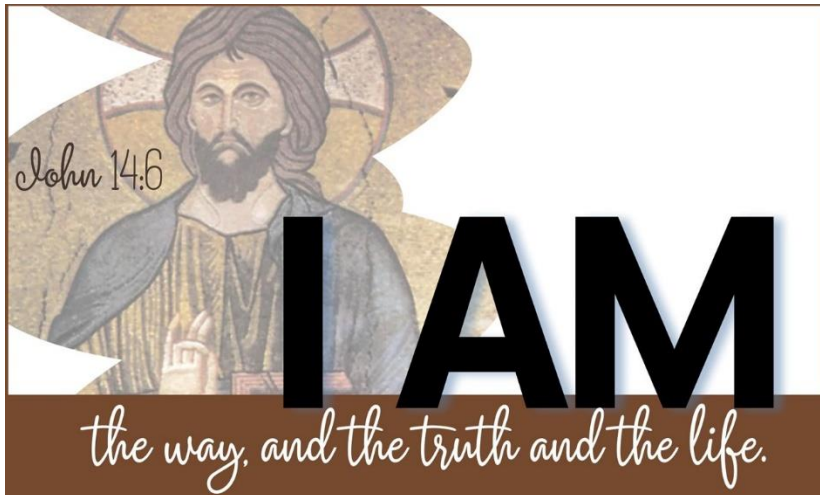
Bulletin

8944 ELBOW DRIVE SW CALGARY AB T2V 1L2

TEL 403 253 2251

WEBSITE: STGERARDS.CA

May 7, 2023



Fifth Sunday of Easter

Fr. Ignatius Message

Good or Evil – see page 2 -3

NO Weekday mass on May 8 -12 for Fr. Ignatius annual priest retreat.

IMPORTANT OFFICE SCHEDULE IN MAY:

May 19 – Office Close at noon;

May 22 – Office Close for Victoria Day

May 29 – Office Close for Staff Retreat



The Chosen - COME and SEE
Season 1 series, Episode 3 & 4
on May 7 at 1:30 pm. Join us for a
Sunday afternoon movie time with
family and friends. **Let's BINGE it!**

Visit our website to RSVP and view upcoming dates:

<https://stgerards.ca/the-chosen>

MASS TIMES

Tuesday 6:30 pm

Wednesday - Friday 9:00 am

Saturday 5:00 pm

Sunday 9:00 and 11:00 am

ADORATION

Tuesday 3:00 - 6:00 pm

RECONCILIATION

Saturday 4:00 - 4:45 pm

PARISH TEAM

Pastor: Fr. Ignatius Tran

fr.tran@stgerards.ca

Gay Abuan-Summers

Pastoral Program Coordinator

Pastoral Related Inquiries:

pastoral.coordinator@stgerards.ca

Nicolette Eden

Administrative Assistant

General Inquiries:

frontdesk.admin@stgerards.ca

Gordon Skaluba, Maintenance

WEBSITE: www.stgerards.ca

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday:

9 am to 12 pm (noon)

Closed noon - 1 pm (*lunch break*)

Afternoons **by appointment only:**

from 1 pm - 4:30 pm

Closed Holidays

Deadline for Parish Newsletter

Wednesday at 4:00 pm

Good and Evil



8944 ELBOW DRIVE SW
CALGARY AB T2V 1L2
TEL 403 253 2251
stgerards.ca

"Each of us has a vision of good and of evil. We have to encourage people to move towards what they think is good... Everyone has his own idea of good and evil and must choose to follow the good and fight evil as he conceives them. That would be enough to make the world a better place." — Pope Francis

Dear Friends,

I came across this story about good and evil. I'd like to share it with you:

It was a day in April when Satan called his minions to an important meeting in Hell Headquarters. He sat at the head of the table and told his minions, "Hey, we have a problem. Three days ago, Jesus, the son of God, died on a cross for the sins of the world."

Well, the news put the demons in an uproar because they knew that the way of salvation had been secured through Christ's blood.

But Satan quieted them and said, "It only gets worse. This morning, Jesus rose from the dead."

At that announcement, there was much weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, because the demons knew that many of the people they were trying to lure to Hell would be saved.

"So what are we going to do," Satan asked, "to turn men and women away from God?"

Much discussion ensued among them until finally several demons suggested, "We need to make them suffer! We need to make them suffer and curse God and die!"

And Satan said, "Now listen, you knuckleheads. We already tried that. Remember Job? Remember how we had those foreigners kill all his servants and steal all his cattle and livestock? And then we sent that great wind to kill off his seven sons and three daughters? And what about that skin disease that covered Job in sores all over

his body? Remember how we took everything away from him except for his nagging wife and those three useless friends? But what did that accomplish? Nothing!!! Job just went on trusting God and in the end God restored to him twice as much as he had before.”

And the demons said, “Oh yeah.”

So they talked among themselves for a little while longer and a little bit of eternity passed. But finally Satan himself exclaimed, “I know what we’ll do! We’ll get people to destroy *themselves* with evil.”

The demons looked perplexed. “Well, what do you mean, boss?” they asked. “People aren’t stupid, you know. So how are we going to do that?”

And Satan said, “It’s simple really. Very simple. All we have to do is make the evil *look good*.”

We all go through situations where we may be stuck between a rock and a hard place. We have to choose which way we go. Will our choice be the right one or the wrong one? Where will our choice ultimately take us? Remember Jesus is with you. Trust in God. Trust in His Word:

Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them. (Proverbs 4:5)

But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15)

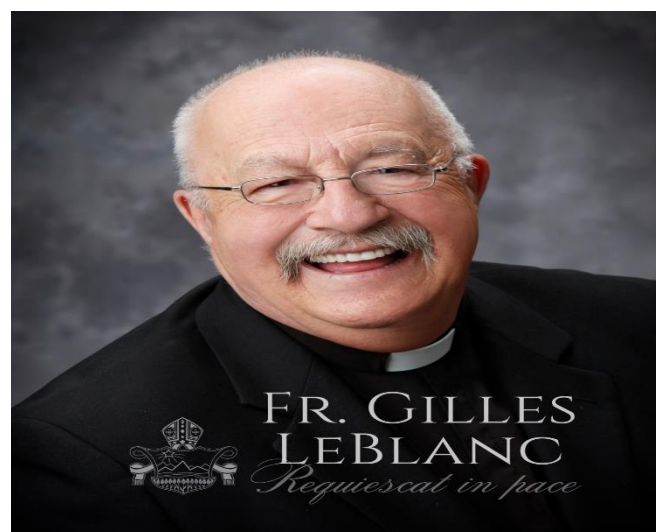
Fr. Ignatius Tran

Please join us in praying for Fr. Gilles LeBlanc, who passed away peacefully early Tuesday (May 2, 2023) morning.

Prayers, Friday, May 5 at 7 pm
Holy Name Catholic Church (2223 34 St SW, Calgary)

Funeral Mass, Saturday, May 6, at 2:30 pm Sacred Heart Catholic Church (1307 14 St. SW, Calgary)

Read "[Custodians of Beauty](#)" - featuring Fr. Gilles LeBlanc as a sacred art artist.



Our Weekly Financial Pulse as of May 5 2023:

Collections Last Week – \$11,644.61

(= the sum of TIA Donations plus General donations)

Weekly Break Even - \$8,184

(= Budgeted Expenses -\$403,931 plus \$36,194 (TIA) / 54 weeks)

OVER - \$3,460.61

TIA (Together In Action) to date: \$6,160; 17% of Target

Donation envelopes are available at the parish office.

Welcome NEW parishioners!! Have you officially signed up to become a member of our parish? Sign up today to become a member of the parish.

Visit <https://www.stgerards.ca/becoming-a-registered-member>

Sign up for electronic giving at <https://stgerards.ca/donate>:

E-transfers accepted through Frontdesk.admin@stgerards.ca ; please specify intended ministry if applicable- ie. St. Vincent de Paul, Mission Mexico, TIA, etc.

May Devotion to MARY – This Wednesday only, May 10th

NO weekday MASS May 9-12. Fr. Ignatius away for his annual priest retreat from May 8 -12. Regular Mass resumes - May 13 at 5:00 pm.



Come join us in prayer for his intentions and our community:

9:30 am – Novena prayer to Our Mother of Perpetual Help. *Prior to Novena prayer, a recitation of the 5 Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary @ 9:00 am.*

Journey with Mary Thursday Talks resumes May 18th after the 9:00 am mass.

All are welcome to attend!

Little Rock Scripture Study presents:

- **Galatians and Romans;** will resume on **May 10 at 9:45 am – 11:30 am.** Lesson 11 in the North Hall.

Card Party Ministry every Wednesday

Bridge and Euchre game continues (South parish hall). **Are you able to play?**

Flowers for the Altar

Please consider making a donation for the "Altar Flowers" using YELLOW envelopes found in your pew. **Thank you for your generosity!** in assisting our Environmental team make our Easter Season Special!



Knights of Columbus News:

Membership Drive, May 6 & 7 - Connect with one of the Knights this weekend!



The poster features a group of seven diverse Catholic men smiling and standing together. The text on the poster includes: "All Catholic men 18+ JOIN US and experience the joy of a charity-based life." in the top left; the Knights of Columbus (K of C) logo in the top right; "Knights of Columbus" in a yellow banner; "MEMBERSHIP DRIVE" in large white letters; and "After all masses May 6 and 7" at the bottom.

Calling all Catholic men, 18+ years to join the order that **Pope St. John Paul II** referred to as the "**strong right arm of the church.**" **Live by our compass:** *charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism.* Meet like-minded Catholic men who practice their faith daily with passion and fraternity.

Join us and experience the joy that comes with a life focused on charity. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Hike for Life - May 13

Sign up sheets in gathering area or Support us by visiting at calgaryprolife.com, accepting donations until **June 30th** and type in **EMMAUS TEAM** (**Noreen, Geraldine, Dianne and Erika**) or using link below:

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/calgary-pro-life-association/p2p/Hike-for-Life-2023/team/emmaus-team/>

Don't miss this chance to show your support for life and family.

Join a peaceful, prayerful, and family-friendly 10K Walk/Hike on Saturday, May 13 to celebrate and witness to respect for every life!



SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION:

First Eucharist:

Congratulations!! to all 34 First Holy Communion celebrants this weekend and their families. Thank you to Fr. Ignatius, First Eucharist team and the community for your support.

Next step: Fr. Ignatius' invites **YOU** to become an **ALTAR SERVER** starting in FALL. Contact pastoral.coordinator@stgerards.ca today!



CONFIRMATION (Grade 6 and up)

Retreat & Rehearsal: May 6 at 10:00 am - 12:00 pm (noon); Bring a dish/ beverage to share to the group using link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4EA8A92EA4F8C70-confirmation>

Parishioners are invited to keep 24 confirmandi in their prayers.

Confirmation celebration - May 13 @ 1:00 pm with Bishop McGrattan. Join us and show your support! Cake and fellowship to follow.

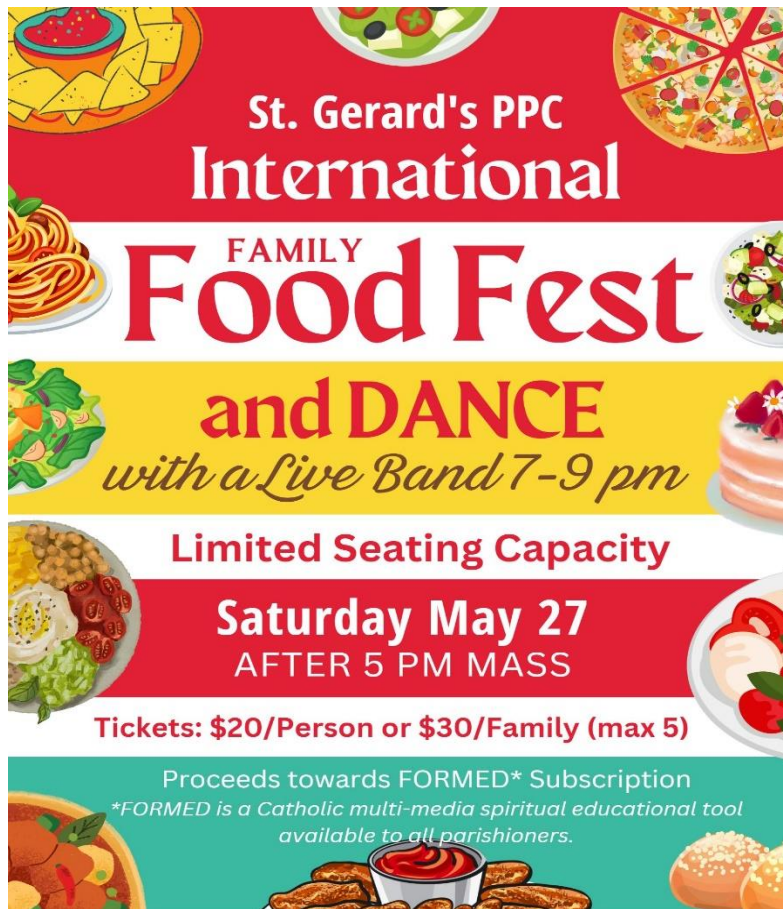


National Family and Life Week May 7-14 2023



The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) warmly invites the Catholic faithful to celebrate **National Family and Life Week 2023** on **May 7-14**, with the theme: **"Love one another. Just as I have loved you, love one another"** (John 13:34). For more info and family resources, visit www.cccb.ca

PPC Presents: International Foodfest Fundraising Event



Proceed towards our Annual FORMED Subscription.

FORMED Stats: Our parish has watched **474** unique videos over **10,334** minutes; Top watched content includes: The Last Days and the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, Reborn and Clare and Francis.

The music and band are set. **Now time to gather the chefs and hospitality team.**

* **Chefs** - Sign up and bring your favorite dish to the table and **GET a discount** (Half off the ticketed event. ie. regular - \$20 person, \$30 per family).

Can you help? What talents can I bring to the table? Yes, I can share my talent and skills in cooking; clean/ set up; assist serve our guest. Please sign-up using link below or contact pastoral.coordinator@stgerards.ca to assist us in this event.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4EA8A92EA4F8C70-international>

Purchase your tickets through the parish office (M-F) or by e-transfer to Frontdesk.admin@stgerards.ca, on memo - name the event: foodfest and dance and how many in your party?

MARK your calendar: June 23 (Fri) at 7:00 pm, Wine down and Silent Auction Fundraising Event. Tickets are \$55 per person.

Purchase the tickets through parish office (M-F). Also accepting payment by e-transfer Frontdesk.admin@stgerards.ca ; on memo - name the event: wine tasting.

Let's set the mood @ 6:30 pm with Live Jazz band.

*Now Accepting Donations for Silent Auction – contact the parish office.

New Ushers Needed

The Usher Team needs new members to help with collections and other duties.

Call or email Randy
587-777-8925
randylangille@shaw.ca



Your help is needed! The Usher team is looking for new members. We have returned to the ‘old’ way of collections. This means we need more Ushers to assist in passing of the baskets as well as other duties.

If you think you would like to join the Usher team, please either call Randy at 587-777-8925 or email him at: randylangille@shaw.ca

UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY IN OUR PARISH:

This Easter Season put on a discerning heart and a prayerfully intention.

Ask yourself - *Where are my talents needed today?* *How can I help build this ministry in our community.* **Yes, we need YOU!** Let us build our parish together with the future generation in mind. Are you interested? Please contact pastoral.coordinator@stgerards.ca

Volunteer Children’s Liturgy Coordinator:

- Twice a month commitment for 9:00 am and 11:00 am mass if possible.

Volunteer Youth Coordinator:

- Once a month commitment.

MASS INTENTIONS –MAY 2023

*May 9-12 (*Private mass will be offered by Fr. Ignatius*).

**RIP – Rest In Peace; SI – Special Intentions

*Tuesday, May 9 @ 6:30 pm	Jemmy Vi Almoros	RIP
*Wednesday, May 10 @ 9:00 am	Michelle Baldwin	SI
*Thursday, May 11 @ 9 am	Andriiechko Family	SI
Friday, May 12 @ 9am	Intention rescheduled	
Saturday, May 13 @ 5:00 pm	Jose Abuan	RIP
Sunday, May 14 @ 9:00 am	Oliver and Mary Fahy	SI
Sunday, May 14 @ 11:00 am	Albert Hess	RIP

Our Lady of Fatima Feast Day

Join this significant event's anniversary on **Saturday, May 13 at 5 pm** - Rosary followed by Mass and candlelight procession at Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Calgary.

Chalice Sponsorship Weekend - June 3rd - 4th **SAVE the DATE!**



chalice.ca

Chalice Sponsorship Weekend

This June 3rd and 4th, open your heart to child sponsorship.



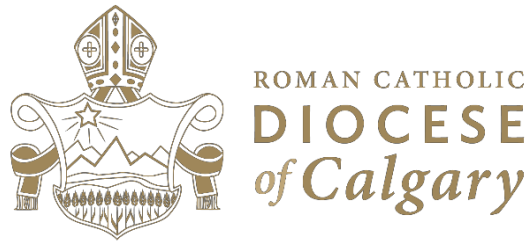
Chalice is coming to St. Gerard Parish! At the June 3-4 Masses, Canada's largest Catholic Child Sponsorship organization will provide you the opportunity to begin a relationship with a child in the developing world through the benefits of Child Sponsorship. It is a powerful way to reveal God's love for those most in need. Please visit www.chalice.ca for more information about Chalice and its mission.

Learn more by watching this link: <https://youtu.be/Hs-4oAtAQfY>

KIDS Bulletin – Fifth Sunday of Easter

Kid's challenge this week: Right at the beginning of today's gospel, Jesus tells the disciples not to be worried and to believe in him. He is asking them to trust him. Think about the people in our lives that we trust. How does it feel when someone breaks your trust? This week think about ways to show your trust in God, and what will you do for the people who trust in you?

- [Colouring page this Sunday](#) ; [Kid's Bulletin this Sunday](#)



PERSONNEL ANNOUNCEMENT

May 4, 2023

PASTORAL ASSIGNMENTS

- **Rev. Robert Dielissen**, currently Pastor of St. Paul's Parish, Airdrie, has returned to the parish at Easter after a health leave of absence.

Bishop McGrattan expresses his appreciation to **Rev. Thomas Vadassery** for being the Administrator of the parish during Rev. Dielissen's leave of absence.

- **Rev. Nathan Siray**, currently Pastor of St. Anthony's Parish, Calgary, will be away from the parish mid-May to mid-August for the summer semester of his canon law studies.
- **Rev. John Kohler**, currently completing doctoral studies in Biblical Theology at the Gregorian University, Rome, will be replacing Fr. Siray from mid-May to mid-August.

DEACON RETIREMENT

- **Deacon Robert McLean**, previously assigned to St. Paul's Parish, Airdrie, has retired effective January 2023.



Catechesis for Families & Parishes

"The strength of a faith that feels like home" – Pope Francis, Edmonton 2022

Love one another

In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells us, **"Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another"** (Jn 13:34). Jesus' words "love one another" motivate us to love and forgive daily, for better and worse, in sickness and health, in good times and bad. **We find love at the heart of family relationships, a communion of love in Christ.** When we think about the day-to-day lives of families, we know that sometimes a family is one of the most challenging relationships to build, nourish and maintain. Families can disagree about many things – sometimes with lots of emotions! Our faith joyfully shares that the Christian proclamation of the family is Good News! ⁱ We learn how Christ loved us through the Gospels, and we come to know that the Son of God came to us as a child and grew to walk among us, to know and be near to us, to give His life freely for us on the cross, and to rise again to save us.

To love one another is to be "guardians of life" within our families and in caring for the elderly, devoting attention to being of service for persons with disabilities, and providing attention to people living in poverty.ⁱⁱ Love, sometimes called **charity**, is a theological virtue, which means **we need God's grace** to receive and give it. Charity is what holds together our Church, a family of families. Together, faith, hope, and charity are all gifts from God that we receive and practice through prayer, concrete acts of generosity and care, and the Sacraments.

The strength of a faith which makes us feel at home

When Pope Francis visited Canada on his penitential pilgrimage in 2022, he encouraged us to walk together and **renew "the strength of a faith which makes us feel at home"**ⁱⁱⁱ. A family rooted in Christ claims the beauty and abundance of grace in the family anew. The New Testament speaks of



Office for Family and Life

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB)
2500 promenade Don Reid Drive, Ottawa, ON K1H 2J2
Tel: 613-241-9461

“churches that meet in homes” (cf. 1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:5; Col 4:15; Philem 2). In our daily lives, our family homes become a **domestic church** when the smallest gathering of believers understand that Christ is present among them and they make room around the table for him.^{iv} We are reminded of the image found in the Book of Revelation, where the Lord says: **“Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me” (Rev 3:20).** Here we see a home filled with the presence of God, common prayer and abundant blessing.^v

The gift of grandparents

Our roots are important! Across Canada, many people have a special devotion to Jesus’ grandparents, Saint Anne and Saint Joachim. During his visit last year, Pope Francis said that “it was in the home of Joachim and Anne that **the child Jesus came to know his older relatives and experienced the closeness, tender love and wisdom of his grandparents.**”^{vi} This is a beautiful scene to imagine. In our own families, we may hold special memories of meals or simple times spent chatting with our grandparents. So often, through listening, and conversations, including silly, sad, and joyful stories, we learn to understand about our family history and diverse identities.

The Pope reminded us that our family roots are “the love that awaited us and welcomed us into the world, the families in which we grew up.”^{vii} We are part of a unique history that came before us and gave us life. We receive this history and life as a gift and are called to pass it on to future generations. As Pope Francis said, we are “children of a history that needs to be preserved” but also “authors of a history yet to be written.”^{viii}

The treasure of faith inherited

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus describes our identity as believers:

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the



*lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before others**, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (Matt 5: 14-16).*

In speaking to young people in Iqaluit, Pope Francis extended this invitation echoing the above Gospel reading: **“Come to the light which is Christ and share that light with others.** You are called to bring new light into the world, the light of your eyes, the light of your smile, the light of the goodness that you and you alone can bring.”^{ix}

The faith we have inherited must be cherished and safeguarded. We are asked to remember and take care of our roots and to pray for and with those who came before us. We can concretely do this by making space in our homes to preserve the memory of our ancestors, keeping close their Bible or rosary beads. In doing so, the Holy Father said: **“This is how a family tree grows; this is how the future is built.”^x**

The closeness of Christ to Indigenous Catholic families

When Pope Francis visited us on this land, he opened a space to recall the memory of the past. He spent time with and listened to us in the present and set his gaze on a future full of hope and healing. At Sacred Heart Church in Edmonton, Pope Francis recalled the words from Saint John Paul II’s visit to Canada, **“Christ animates the very centre of all culture. Thus, not only is Christianity relevant to the [Indigenous] people, but Christ, in the members of his Body, is himself [Indigenous].”^{xi}** This teaching affirms the beauty and goodness of Indigenous ways of life and is lived out in many Indigenous Catholic families.

During his meeting with young people in Iqaluit, Pope Francis described the testimony of an elder. This elder spoke of the beautiful spirit that reigned in Indigenous families before the time of the residential school system. The elder compared those days to springtime when young birds chirped happily around their mother. Families of grandparents, parents and children lived



harmoniously together. But suddenly, the singing stopped. Families were broken up. Little ones were taken far away from home. Winter fell over everything. Expressing his hope and prayer, Pope Francis shared his wish for Indigenous people; he said, **“that by listening to your elders and drawing from the richness of your traditions and your personal freedom, you will embrace the Gospel preserved and handed down to you by your ancestors, and thus come to see the Inuk face of Jesus Christ.”**^{xii} May we continue to walk together, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, families, parents, grandparents and children, to grow in understanding, truth, healing, forgiveness, faithfulness and hope.

Each person is invited to reread the catechesis and to reflect on what resonates in their heart in a particular way.

Summary and key points for children

- In the Bible, Jesus tells us how much he loves us! In return, Jesus says we must love our parents, siblings, grandparents and friends, just as much as he loves us.
- God’s grace, love and charity hold our families and our Church together.
- Our faith and relationship with Christ should “feel like home” – a safe, loving place where we grow into who we are created to be.
- Jesus loved and learned from his grandparents, Saints Anne and Joachim. Grandparents and elders teach us about our family history. It is important to spend time listening to them.
- Through our Baptism and through knowing and loving Jesus, we are the light in the world. We are called to share this light with others.
- We should find ways in our homes to remember and pray for our loved ones.

Discussion questions for couples and families

- *Describe a time when God’s charity and grace made it easier for me to forgive a loved one.*



Office for Family and Life
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB)
2500 promenade Don Reid Drive, Ottawa, ON K1H 2J2
Tel: 613-241-9461



- *In what ways does your faith “feel like home”?*
- *Share some concrete ways Christ and your family’s history can be more present in your Domestic Church?*

Learn more about Pope Francis’s Penitential Pilgrimage to Canada toward healing and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. “Educational resources. Indigenous delegation to Rome, 28 March to 1 April, 2022”.

<https://www.cccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/indigenous-delegation-march-28-to-april-1-2022-vatican-city/educational-resources/>

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. “That we may walk together” Series of Pastoral Letters, 2023. <https://www.cccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/that-we-may-walk-together-series-of-pastoral-letters-2023/>

Endnotes

- ⁱ Pope Francis. Apostolic exhortation. *Amoris Laetitia*, "The Joy of Love". 19 March 2016. para 1. <https://www.cccb.ca/faith-moral-issues/family-and-life/celebrating-the-amoris-laetitia-family-year/explore-and-reflect-on-amoris-laetitia/>
- ⁱⁱ Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, "Catechumenal pathways for married life. Pastoral Guidelines for local churches". *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, 2022. http://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/dam/laityfamilylife/amoris-laetitia/OrientamentiCatecumenatomatrimoniale/Catechumenal%20Pathways_ENG.pdf
- ⁱⁱⁱ Pope Francis. "Homily of the Holy Father on the Feast of Saints Joachim and Anne during the Apostolic Journey to Canada (24 - 30 July 2022) at Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton", 26 July 2022. <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2022/documents/20220726-omelia-edmonton-canada.html>
- ^{iv} "The family, is so to speak, the domestic church." See Pope Paul VI, Dogmatic Constitution. *Lumen Gentium*, 1964, para 11. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html
- ^v cf. Pope Francis. Apostolic exhortation. *Amoris Laetitia*, "The Joy of Love". 19 March 2016. Follow link for the text and discussion questions prepared by the CCCB Office for Family and Life. <https://www.cccb.ca/faith-moral-issues/family-and-life/celebrating-the-amoris-laetitia-family-year/explore-and-reflect-on-amoris-laetitia/>
- ^{vi} Pope Francis. "Homily of the Holy Father on the Feast of Saints Joachim and Anne during the Apostolic Journey to Canada (24 - 30 July 2022) at Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton", 26 July 2022.
- ^{vii} Ibid.
- ^{viii} Ibid.
- ^{ix} Pope Francis. "Address of His Holiness, Meeting with Young People and Elders during the Apostolic Journey to Canada (24 - 30 July 2022) at Primary school in Iqaluit Tuesday", 29 July 2022. <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2022/july/documents/20220729-giovani-anziani-iqaluit.html>
- ^x Pope Francis. "Homily of the Holy Father on the Feast of Saints Joachim and Anne during the Apostolic Journey to Canada (24 - 30 July 2022) at Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton", 26 July 2022.
- ^{xi} Pope Francis. "Address of His Holiness at Sacred Heart Church in Edmonton", 25 July 2022.
- ^{xii} Pope Francis. "Address of His Holiness, Meeting with Young People and Elders during the Apostolic Journey to Canada (24 - 30 July 2022) at Primary school in Iqaluit Tuesday", 29 July 2022.



Catechesis for Families & Parishes

"The strength of a faith that feels like home" – Pope Francis, Edmonton 2022

Love one another

In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells us, **"Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another"** (Jn 13:34). Jesus' words "love one another" motivate us to love and forgive daily, for better and worse, in sickness and health, in good times and bad. **We find love at the heart of family relationships, a communion of love in Christ.** When we think about the day-to-day lives of families, we know that sometimes a family is one of the most challenging relationships to build, nourish and maintain. Families can disagree about many things – sometimes with lots of emotions! Our faith joyfully shares that the Christian proclamation of the family is Good News! ⁱ We learn how Christ loved us through the Gospels, and we come to know that the Son of God came to us as a child and grew to walk among us, to know and be near to us, to give His life freely for us on the cross, and to rise again to save us.

To love one another is to be "guardians of life" within our families and in caring for the elderly, devoting attention to being of service for persons with disabilities, and providing attention to people living in poverty.ⁱⁱ Love, sometimes called **charity**, is a theological virtue, which means **we need God's grace** to receive and give it. Charity is what holds together our Church, a family of families. Together, faith, hope, and charity are all gifts from God that we receive and practice through prayer, concrete acts of generosity and care, and the Sacraments.

The strength of a faith which makes us feel at home

When Pope Francis visited Canada on his penitential pilgrimage in 2022, he encouraged us to walk together and **renew "the strength of a faith which makes us feel at home"**ⁱⁱⁱ. A family rooted in Christ claims the beauty and abundance of grace in the family anew. The New Testament speaks of



Office for Family and Life

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB)
2500 promenade Don Reid Drive, Ottawa, ON K1H 2J2
Tel: 613-241-9461

“churches that meet in homes” (cf. 1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:5; Col 4:15; Philem 2). In our daily lives, our family homes become a **domestic church** when the smallest gathering of believers understand that Christ is present among them and they make room around the table for him.^{iv} We are reminded of the image found in the Book of Revelation, where the Lord says: **“Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me” (Rev 3:20)**. Here we see a home filled with the presence of God, common prayer and abundant blessing.^v

The gift of grandparents

Our roots are important! Across Canada, many people have a special devotion to Jesus’ grandparents, Saint Anne and Saint Joachim. During his visit last year, Pope Francis said that “it was in the home of Joachim and Anne that **the child Jesus came to know his older relatives and experienced the closeness, tender love and wisdom of his grandparents**.”^{vi} This is a beautiful scene to imagine. In our own families, we may hold special memories of meals or simple times spent chatting with our grandparents. So often, through listening, and conversations, including silly, sad, and joyful stories, we learn to understand about our family history and diverse identities.

The Pope reminded us that our family roots are “the love that awaited us and welcomed us into the world, the families in which we grew up.”^{vii} We are part of a unique history that came before us and gave us life. We receive this history and life as a gift and are called to pass it on to future generations. As Pope Francis said, we are “children of a history that needs to be preserved” but also “authors of a history yet to be written.”^{viii}

The treasure of faith inherited

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus describes our identity as believers:

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the



*lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before others**, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (Matt 5: 14-16).*

In speaking to young people in Iqaluit, Pope Francis extended this invitation echoing the above Gospel reading: **“Come to the light which is Christ and share that light with others.** You are called to bring new light into the world, the light of your eyes, the light of your smile, the light of the goodness that you and you alone can bring.”^{ix}

The faith we have inherited must be cherished and safeguarded. We are asked to remember and take care of our roots and to pray for and with those who came before us. We can concretely do this by making space in our homes to preserve the memory of our ancestors, keeping close their Bible or rosary beads. In doing so, the Holy Father said: **“This is how a family tree grows; this is how the future is built.”^x**

The closeness of Christ to Indigenous Catholic families

When Pope Francis visited us on this land, he opened a space to recall the memory of the past. He spent time with and listened to us in the present and set his gaze on a future full of hope and healing. At Sacred Heart Church in Edmonton, Pope Francis recalled the words from Saint John Paul II’s visit to Canada, **“Christ animates the very centre of all culture. Thus, not only is Christianity relevant to the [Indigenous] people, but Christ, in the members of his Body, is himself [Indigenous].”^{xi}** This teaching affirms the beauty and goodness of Indigenous ways of life and is lived out in many Indigenous Catholic families.

During his meeting with young people in Iqaluit, Pope Francis described the testimony of an elder. This elder spoke of the beautiful spirit that reigned in Indigenous families before the time of the residential school system. The elder compared those days to springtime when young birds chirped happily around their mother. Families of grandparents, parents and children lived





harmoniously together. But suddenly, the singing stopped. Families were broken up. Little ones were taken far away from home. Winter fell over everything. Expressing his hope and prayer, Pope Francis shared his wish for Indigenous people; he said, **“that by listening to your elders and drawing from the richness of your traditions and your personal freedom, you will embrace the Gospel preserved and handed down to you by your ancestors, and thus come to see the Inuk face of Jesus Christ.”^{xii}** May we continue to walk together, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, families, parents, grandparents and children, to grow in understanding, truth, healing, forgiveness, faithfulness and hope.

Each person is invited to reread the catechesis and to reflect on what resonates in their heart in a particular way.

Summary and key points for children

- In the Bible, Jesus tells us how much he loves us! In return, Jesus says we must love our parents, siblings, grandparents and friends, just as much as he loves us.
- God’s grace, love and charity hold our families and our Church together.
- Our faith and relationship with Christ should “feel like home” – a safe, loving place where we grow into who we are created to be.
- Jesus loved and learned from his grandparents, Saints Anne and Joachim. Grandparents and elders teach us about our family history. It is important to spend time listening to them.
- Through our Baptism and through knowing and loving Jesus, we are the light in the world. We are called to share this light with others.
- We should find ways in our homes to remember and pray for our loved ones.

Discussion questions for couples and families

- *Describe a time when God’s charity and grace made it easier for me to forgive a loved one.*



Office for Family and Life
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB)
2500 promenade Don Reid Drive, Ottawa, ON K1H 2J2
Tel: 613-241-9461



- *In what ways does your faith “feel like home”?*
- *Share some concrete ways Christ and your family’s history can be more present in your Domestic Church?*

Learn more about Pope Francis’s Penitential Pilgrimage to Canada toward healing and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. “Educational resources. Indigenous delegation to Rome, 28 March to 1 April, 2022”.

<https://www.cccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/indigenous-delegation-march-28-to-april-1-2022-vatican-city/educational-resources/>

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. “That we may walk together” Series of Pastoral Letters, 2023. <https://www.cccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/that-we-may-walk-together-series-of-pastoral-letters-2023/>

Endnotes

- ⁱ Pope Francis. Apostolic exhortation. *Amoris Laetitia*, "The Joy of Love". 19 March 2016. para 1. <https://www.cccb.ca/faith-moral-issues/family-and-life/celebrating-the-amoris-laetitia-family-year/explore-and-reflect-on-amoris-laetitia/>
- ⁱⁱ Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, "Catechumenal pathways for married life. Pastoral Guidelines for local churches". *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, 2022. http://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/dam/laityfamilylife/amoris-laetitia/OrientamentiCatecumenatomatrimoniale/Catechumenal%20Pathways_ENG.pdf
- ⁱⁱⁱ Pope Francis. "Homily of the Holy Father on the Feast of Saints Joachim and Anne during the Apostolic Journey to Canada (24 - 30 July 2022) at Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton", 26 July 2022. <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2022/documents/20220726-omelia-edmonton-canada.html>
- ^{iv} "The family, is so to speak, the domestic church." See Pope Paul VI, Dogmatic Constitution. *Lumen Gentium*, 1964, para 11. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html
- ^v cf. Pope Francis. Apostolic exhortation. *Amoris Laetitia*, "The Joy of Love". 19 March 2016. Follow link for the text and discussion questions prepared by the CCCB Office for Family and Life. <https://www.cccb.ca/faith-moral-issues/family-and-life/celebrating-the-amoris-laetitia-family-year/explore-and-reflect-on-amoris-laetitia/>
- ^{vi} Pope Francis. "Homily of the Holy Father on the Feast of Saints Joachim and Anne during the Apostolic Journey to Canada (24 - 30 July 2022) at Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton", 26 July 2022.
- ^{vii} Ibid.
- ^{viii} Ibid.
- ^{ix} Pope Francis. "Address of His Holiness, Meeting with Young People and Elders during the Apostolic Journey to Canada (24 - 30 July 2022) at Primary school in Iqaluit Tuesday", 29 July 2022. <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2022/july/documents/20220729-giovani-anziani-iqaluit.html>
- ^x Pope Francis. "Homily of the Holy Father on the Feast of Saints Joachim and Anne during the Apostolic Journey to Canada (24 - 30 July 2022) at Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton", 26 July 2022.
- ^{xi} Pope Francis. "Address of His Holiness at Sacred Heart Church in Edmonton", 25 July 2022.
- ^{xii} Pope Francis. "Address of His Holiness, Meeting with Young People and Elders during the Apostolic Journey to Canada (24 - 30 July 2022) at Primary school in Iqaluit Tuesday", 29 July 2022.