



## *Equipping families to encounter Christ*

This newsletter is meant to give everyone at St. Luke ideas to live their faith more fully and joyfully. Each month will focus on ritual and the celebration of the Eucharist. In addition, each newsletter will include useful information about the Catholic faith, activities, models of faith, and ideas for prayer. Please take what is useful for you and your family.

### **Some saints to celebrate:**

Nov 1 – *All Saints' Day*

Nov 2 – *All Souls' Day*

Nov 11 - *St. Martin of Tours*

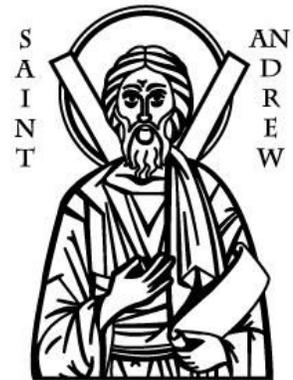
Nov 13 - *St. Frances Xavier Cabrini*

Nov 17 - *St. Elizabeth of Hungary*

Nov 18 - *St. Rose Philippine Duchesne*

Nov 24 – *St. Andrew Dung-Lac*

Nov 30 – *St. Andrew, the first apostle*



### **Ritual of the month:**

### **Giving Thanks**

Ritual is a set of actions with meaningful and symbolic value.

Assessment of the Family Meal: Take time before creating ritual to look at your mealtimes and ask:

1. How grateful are we?
2. Do we take time to give thanks to God and others?
3. Are we thankful for even the crosses in our lives?
4. What can we do to create an intentional space to speak our gratitude and live it as ritual?

With this assessment, consider the ideas below, choosing one or two and bringing them into your time together. Once you have established your Gratitude Ritual, consider deepening the experience with an additional idea. Remember that the idea is to create meaning and purpose, allowing you to savor the experience.

“The best way to show your gratitude to God and people is to accept everything with joy.”

St. Teresa of Calcutta

## Giving Thanks

What is the ritual of gratitude? It is creating an intentional space in which to acknowledge that we have received love, help, support, companionship from another and God. It is to purposefully acknowledge that we cannot do this alone, nor should we. Ritual is a connection to other and gratitude highlights that connection. The benefits of an attitude of gratitude are widely acknowledged. Gratitude imparts a joy and an ability to face the hardships in life. It can improve your physical health, help you sleep, give you patience, and improve relationships.

“Give thanks to the Lord who  
is good, whose love endures  
forever!” Ps 107:1

### Here are some ideas for creating a ritual:

- Attitude of Gratitude chain: each day, write down what you are grateful for on a 1”x 8” slip of paper and chain the papers together. Hang the chain in a prominent place and add to it daily.
- Decorate a large jar and fill it with your thanksgiving each day. Go to [www.josierobinson.com](http://www.josierobinson.com) to get a more complete set of instructions on how to do this. She created this way to approach gratitude:
  - Think about what you are grateful for
  - Have an open mind
  - Allow yourself to feel gratitude
  - Note your gratitude
  - Keep it in a jar, or other special place
  - Share it with someone else.
- Establish a time during the month to write a handwritten note to someone, thanking them for what they have done for you. This could be a teacher, a friend, a family member, an acquaintance, your priest.
- Wake up with thoughts of thanksgiving and fill your heart with gratitude. This can help you meet the day, strengthened by placing your heart in the Lord’s care.
- At the dinner table, take time for each family member to name something for which they are grateful.
- Be intentional in modeling gratitude for others. Don’t keep your thankfulness to yourself – share it with those around you.
- Express your gratitude by giving (time, talent, treasure) to the poor. While our society focuses on consumerism, our Catholic faith asks us to live simply and give of what we have to others who are in need. Who is in need around you? How can you broaden your view to see those in need?
- Each time you stub your toe or come upon a difficulty, pause and thank the Lord for His presence in your life.

“Give thanks in all circumstances;  
for this is the will of God in Christ  
Jesus for you.”

1 Thessalonians 5:18

In this month of Thanksgiving, consider watching the movie, “Babette’s Feast” rated G.

After winning the lottery, a cook prepares a sumptuous dinner for her employers. More than just a feast, the meal is an outpouring of Babette’s appreciation, an act of self-sacrifice. Babette’s gifts break down the distrust and superstitions of her employers, elevating them physically and spiritually.

## All Saints' Day

The month begins with a celebration of all saints and continues with the honoring and praying for the dead.

Saints are our cloud of witnesses, our community. Saints are human beings who lived holy lives in obedience to God's will and are now in heaven for eternity. Those whom we honor by name as saints are those whom the Church has determined with complete certainty to be now in Heaven. Saints are our role models – they show us through their lives how to live the way Jesus asks us to. When we pray to the saints we are asking them to intercede – go to God and plead our case – for us. We ask the saints to intercede for us because they are very dear friends of God. (from [Faith and Life 6](#))

**An idea for celebration:** Buy prepared bread dough from the market and make pretzels. In some Eastern European countries, pretzel making is an All Saints' Day ritual. The shape of a figure eight represents saints and martyrs. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into ropes about 12 inches long. Twist each rope into an eight. Place these "saints" on a greased baking sheet 1 ½ inches apart, then brush with an egg white beaten with water. Sprinkle with coarse salt. Bake 15-20 minutes, or until golden at 375 degrees. (from [The Catholic Home](#) by Meredith Gould)

### Models of Faith

St. Ignatius of Loyola is well known as the founder of the Jesuits and creator of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. Gratitude permeates this compilation of meditations, prayers, and contemplative practices. Within the Exercises, the Examen requires those praying to look at their day and find God's presence and to be grateful for all God has given us. Ignatius exhorted his followers to respond to their daily trials and blessings with thanksgiving and praise to the Lord. Try to pray the Examen in your evening prayers (see page 7).

Venerable Pierre Toussaint was born a slave and freed in 1807 by his master's widow shortly before her death. He dedicated his life to helping others, both when a slave and after receiving his freedom. He nursed those suffering from yellow fever, housed and educated orphans, and helped both blacks and whites in need. When told he should retire and enjoy his wealth, he responded, "I have enough for myself, but if I stop working I have not enough for others." He is one of the best-known Catholics in NYC and is buried at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

St. Andrew, pray for us.

St. Elizabeth, pray for us.

St. Rose, pray for us.

St. Martin, pray for us.

To put you in a saintly frame of mind, try reading this book: [The Saintly Outlaw](#) by Paul McCuster. This book is the first in the Virtue Chronicles and follows the adventures of 12 year-olds Andrew Perry and Eve Virtue as they contend with the Radiant Stone – an ancient jewel with the power to send them back in time. This series explores the wonder of God's universe and the many saints and sinners who have impacted it through time. Meant for ages 9+

## Dia de Los Muertos

November 2 is All Souls' Day. In Mexico it is called Dia de Los Muertos, or the Day of the Dead. This day and throughout the month we take special time to pray for those who have died so that they may journey quickly to Heaven.

### Activity: Day of the Dead Altar

Make a special place in your home to honor the dead you know and to remind you to pray for them. There are many ways to do this. Traditionally, skulls, papel picado (colorful, perforated paper), marigolds, photos of the dead, food that the dead enjoyed in life, and candles all decorate the table. Make this ritual your own. Search the internet to find beautiful examples of Day of the Dead altars.



A good book to read with kids on All Souls' Day is The Spirit of Tio Fernando by Janice Levy. The book follows Nando and his mother as they prepare to remember Uncle Fernando.

The film, "Coco," narrates the story of Miguel who longs to play music and enters the land of the dead to find his ancestor who played guitar and finds much more.

May the souls of the faithful  
departed, through the mercy  
of God, rest in peace.  
Amen.

### Did you know?

The prayer, "Glory Be," is also known as "the Doxology." Doxology is defined as a liturgical form of praise to God.

## The Year of the Eucharist

June 14, 2020 – June 6, 2021

The Greek meaning of Eucharist is "thanksgiving" or "gratitude". Each time we attend Mass and receive the Eucharist, we are giving thanks to the Lord. We are thankful for the Real Presence of Jesus. He gave us His body and blood to spiritually feed us and remember his sacrifice that we may have life eternal. How Awesome!

To help explain this to kids, see this: <https://www.teachingcatholickids.com/teaching-the-realities-of-the-eucharist/>

## Music

Music is such a powerful way to pray and give praise to the Lord. In this month of thanksgiving, try incorporating some form of song of praise and thanksgiving into your prayer life. The suggestion below is a doxology which is a liturgical form of praise to God:

“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

### Thanksgiving

In the United States we celebrate a national day of Thanksgiving, remembering when some first European settlers in Massachusetts took time to have a feast with Native Americans and thank God for surviving a year in the New World.

This is a great opportunity to have ritual, both in your meal and in giving thanks. Suggestion: Ask everyone planning to celebrate at your home to make a list of what they are grateful for. Share these during dinner.

### The Solemnity of Christ the King

The last Sunday in ordinary time is the Solemnity of Christ the King, which takes place on November 29 this year. This feast was established by Pope Pius XI in 1925. A fun activity for kids is to make crowns, scepters, and orbs, dress in a kingly manner and have a parade around the neighborhood. Enter into a discussion about kingship. Ask your family these questions: What is a king? What do they do, and what are they like? How is Jesus like a king? How is Jesus different from ordinary human kings? Why do we call Jesus king?

## Catholic Cooking

The Feast day of St. Elizabeth of Hungary is November 17. She is known for her works of charity, including giving bread to the poor. Here is the Hungarian version of pot roast. Known as gulyás in Hungary, this is a stew made with beef or other meat and vegetables and flavored with Hungarian paprika. Garnish with dollops of sour cream and serve with buttered noodles. (from [www.catholicculture.org](http://www.catholicculture.org))

### INGREDIENTS

vegetable oil  
2 pounds stewing beef, cut in 2-inch cubes  
3 medium onions, coarsely chopped  
1-1/2 Tablespoon paprika  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 green pepper, diced  
hot water

### DIRECTIONS

Put 2 tablespoons oil in large skillet; brown beef well on all sides. Remove from pan. Add more oil, if necessary; cook onions until light brown. Stir in paprika and salt; blend well. Return meat to pan with green pepper. Add 1 cup water; stir well. Cook, covered, over very low heat 2 hours or until tender. Add more water, if necessary. Serve with hot cooked noodles. Makes 6 servings.

Recipe Source: The Cook's Blessings by Demetria Taylor, Random House, New York, 1965

## Advent

This is the beginning of the liturgical calendar for Catholics. We begin with reflection and penance symbolized by the color purple. There are four Sundays in Advent that are filled with waiting. We are both waiting for the baby Jesus to be born and for the second coming of the Lord.

“When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she make present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing the long preparation for the Savior’s first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming” CCC 524

Advent brings us many opportunities to reflect, pray, and wait through ritual. Here are some suggestions to bring meaning to your time before Christmas.

### Advent wreath

With three purple candles and one pink candle, the wreath gives us opportunity to pause and pray as we wait. Place it on your dining table or prayer table. When lighting the candles, consider singing “O come, O come, Emmanuel” or reading the Sunday’s gospel. The third candle is pink, representing joy and so that Sunday is called “Gaudete” Sunday. The white center candle is not lit until Christmas eve, and then can be lit throughout the Christmas season.

### Jesse Tree

This tradition is based on Isaiah 11:1 “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.” On a small tree, hang ornaments that represent the roots of Jesus. These ornaments have a symbol that comes from readings in the Bible. For example, Adam and Eve represented by an apple or serpent; Jacob by a ladder; Solomon, a crown; Bethlehem, a star. There are many ways to do this – a real tree, a tree painted on paper, a small, fake tree. Check out this website for premade ornaments and a book of readings:

<https://www.myjessetree.com/what-is-jesse-tree/>

### Advent Calendar

This is a way of marking the days before the birth of Christ. You can have a premade calendar or make a calendar for family or friends. Here are some ideas, besides candy, to fill each day:

Scripture passages

A special prayer for the day

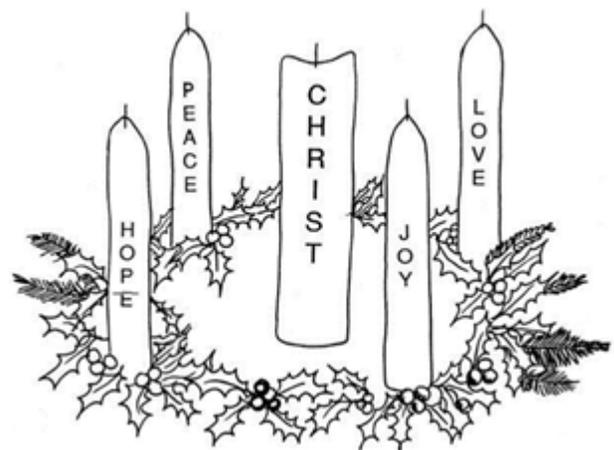
Parts of the nativity scene

A small activity for the day

An act of charity

Do a chore for a member of your family

A Bible reading



## Prayer: Examen

A great way to pray is to look for God's presence in your life. More than 400 years ago St. Ignatius Loyola encouraged prayer-filled mindfulness by proposing what has been called the Daily Examen. The Examen is an evening technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and to discern his direction for us. Try this version of St. Ignatius's prayer taken from <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/how-can-i-pray/>

1. Become aware of God's presence.
2. Review the day with gratitude.
3. Pay attention to your emotions.
4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.
5. Look toward tomorrow.



St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God. End the Daily Examen with the Our Father.

## Family and the Bible

The Bible is a large group of books and can be daunting to read together as a family. This website is a great resource – after signing up, you will receive a reading and questions each week:

<https://familybiblechallenge.org/>



Suscipe (from Latin for "receive")

Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my whole will. All that I am and all that I possess, Thou hast given me: I surrender it all to Thee to be disposed of according to Thy will. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace; with these I will be rich enough and will desire nothing more. Amen.

St. Ignatius

"In spite of everything, give thanks to the Lord" ~  
Judith 8:25

Gift from Above  
TO THE  
FOR THE  
GOOD; HIS LOVE  
FOR US

Psalm 107:1