



# Boston Catholic Journal

Nihil nisi Jesum

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Dedicated to Mary, Mother of God

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## Creating and Maintaining a Traditional Catholic Home



### Traditions, Customs, and Practices

**If you wish to create and maintain a genuinely Catholic home, we offer a few suggestions: The first two may surprise you:**

- **There should be no profanity in the house** — and this applies as much to women as to men! None, absolutely none of the ugly, shameful words you hear as much on television as you do on the streets. St. John Chrysostom called the Catholic home “a church in miniature.” Would you speak that way in Church?
- **The husband and wife should never argue in front of the children!** This is, as it were, the first “schism” that your children will encounter. It is as traumatic to the children as it has been in the Church. Disagreement should be polite. Arguments seldom are. They are often venomous, vindictive, self-righteous, and for all purposes verge on malice and hatred! *This is the devil’s wedge in the family: disunity, animus, malice. Take your arguments elsewhere and far from the children!* Remember that Christ’s relationship to His Church is spoken of as that between the Groom and the Bride (the Father and the Mother). “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her.” (Ephesians 5:25) How did He do that? He died for the Church. You must die to yourself for your wife and your wife should die to herself for her husband — out of love for each other and for the sake of the children.
- **Nothing is more frightening to a child than to witness a loud, ugly, accusative, and vindictive argument between husband and wife, wife and husband!** In an unarticulated way they ask, “Is this how God is? Is this how Mary is?” — and then the terrible response to the ugly argument in every child: I am frightened!” Hold your tongue! Reign in the passion of anger! The storm will pass: spare your children the clap of thunder! To whom can they run without being brought into the division? Will you divide your children among yourselves — set daughter against father, son against mother when they seek shelter from the storm? If you are unwilling (you are never “unable”) to do this, then abandon any idea creating a genuinely Catholic home. The Cornerstone is Christ, and Christ is God, and God is Love. Love cannot co-exist with enmity.

- **You, as a father, will have the most important role in setting the example for your children**, especially your sons. If your sons see that Dad is a manly Catholic, unafraid and unashamed to express his Catholic Faith in the home and even, when called for, in public discourse, they in turn will be very likely to follow your example. People — even children — are not converted through intellectual arguments ... but by *example*: they see another doing something remarkable and good — and are deeply impressed. *They want to be like them!*
- **This is especially true of what children observe in your behavior when they know that you do not see them watching you.** We cannot stress the importance of this. A child unexpectedly opening his father's bedroom or office door at home and finding father in prayer on his knees will say more to the child than years of lectures on the importance of praying. A mother found lying in bed or sitting in a chair praying the Rosary when she thought the children were out a play will strike them more forcefully by the example she sets than by her words encouraging them to pray the Rosary.
- **In you, the father, they will first encounter Christ ... or not. In your wife they will see Mary ... or not.** They will understand the Fatherhood of God (which He has participated to you) and the Motherhood of Mary (which is the exemplar for perfect motherhood) through each of you. Please read a short story submitted to us at <http://www.boston-catholic-journal.com/teach-him-a-lesson-he'll-never-forget.htm> .
- **Say grace before every meal — in the house or at a restaurant:** if you are ashamed to acknowledge God ... they will be, too. If you have that strength, they will acquire it, too.
- **When you pray, make the Sign of the Cross *slowly and reverently*** — the half-hearted, rote, and careless motion of your hands say much about what is truly in your heart: if you teach them reverence by example ... they will become reverent. If you show them that it is no cause for shame to make the Sign of the Cross in public at a restaurant ... they will not be ashamed ... of Christ. Children are incredibly perceptive!

They can see through any short-cut you devise and will recognize insincerity.

- **There should be a Crucifix in every room of the house** (not the silly “Children’s Crucifixes” of pop culture that do not depict Christ crucified) and beautiful pictures of Mary and statues of Saints special to you. They need not be overwhelming in number or size; remember that you are not creating a monastery, but a devout Catholic home.
- **A Crucifix should be placed over the inside entrance door of your home.**
- **Pray with your children every night before bed** — again, **prayerfully, not quickly as though simply to “get it over with”**. The Our Father, Hail Mary, and the Glory be — and teach them when they are old enough (which is fairly young) to say them in Latin also. If you need to learn these prayers in English and Latin, contact us: <http://www.boston-catholic-journal.com/basic-catholic-prayers-in-latin-and-english-in-audio-format.htm> and we will send you a free CD.
- **Always bless each of your children at bedtime:** it is your right as a father, and your duty as a Catholic. One such prayer is the following:

Say: **May the blessing of Almighty God be with you (name the child):**

**The Father † (Making the Sign of the Cross over them)**

**And the Son † (a second time Making the Sign of the Cross over them)**

**And the Holy Ghost † (a third time Making the Sign of the Cross over them)**

**May the peace of Jesus Christ be in your mind † (trace the Sign of the Cross with your thumb over their forehead)**

**And the love and praise of God the Father be on your lips † (trace the Sign of the Cross with your thumb over their lips)**

**And may the joy of the Holy Ghost be in your heart † (trace the Sign of the Cross with your thumb over their hearts)**

**May you always walk in the company of the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
Saint Michael the Archangel, Saint Francis and Saint Clare (or whichever Saints are  
dear to you)**

**And all God's Holy Angels, Saints, and Martyrs**

**Now and all the days of your life**

**Forever and ever.**

**Amen**

- **Go to Mass as a family every Sunday (a Tridentine Latin Mass whenever possible** — this is very important given the lack of reverence and the inane homilies prevalent in nearly all “Novus Ordo” Churches and offer yourselves and your children up to God in union with the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ at every Mass (uttering, *“I die with Thee, O Christ on Calvary!”* as Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen exhorted us).
- **Your house should be blessed by a priest** (there are specific prayers for a house, each room, and even your car!) There is a formulary for this that a priest should have (and a Traditional priest *will* have one), or lacking one, his blessing in his own words.
- **There should be a font of Holy Water attached to the wall on the right of the front door to the house, and beside the door of every bedroom.** You can replenish it at any Catholic Church which always has a container for dispensing Holy Water into small vessels. You should use it each time you enter the house or bedroom and leave it, signing yourself in the Name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and if you wish, followed by: “Asperges me Domine” (From the Antiphon: Asperges me, Domine, hyssopo et mundabor, Lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor. Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.” (Thou wilt sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop and I shall be cleansed; Thou wilt wash me, and I shall be washed whiter than snow. Pity me, O God, according to Thy great mercy.”)
- **Whenever you pass a Crucifix in the house, you should bow your head** and utter the short prayer, *“Gloria tibi, Domine”* (Glory to You, Lord!), and if it is easily in

reach you should kiss it. Are you ever in such a hurry that you cannot spare God literally two seconds?

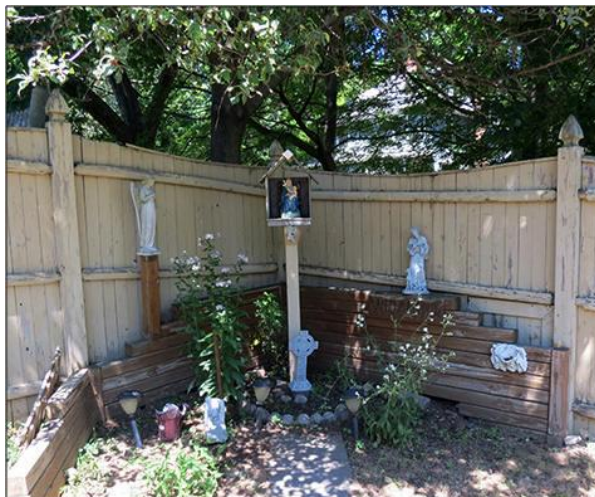
- **Whenever you leave the house** to go to work or shopping or for any length of time, you should sign yourself in the Name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Ghost, saying: “*Deo fidens proficio*” (“Trusting to God I go forward”).
- **You should have a small container of Consecrated Salt.** Holy Water and Consecrated Salt protect your house from the evil one.
- **A Rosary for each family member**
- **Pray the Rosary together as a family.** Set apart a time of the day or night for this. After Rosary, each family member should mention a special intention and the family should respond, “Amen”. It is a time to unite your family in prayer under the protective veil of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- **Go to Confession as a family.** None of us are free from sin, especially venial sins, and so the need for weekly or at least monthly Confession is for all.
- **You should have a copy of Butler’s Lives of the Saints,** and every family member should be encouraged to read one of the lives of the Saints each week. They are typically brief and very inspiring. You can get used copies for under a dollar at <https://www.amazon.com/Butlers-Lives-Saints-Concise-Revised/dp/0060692995> as of this writing. You can also download it as a free PDF file at <https://ia800309.us.archive.org/7/items/ButlersLivesOfTheSaintsCompleteEdition/ButlersLivesOfTheSaintsCompleteEdition.pdf>
- If you are fortunate enough to own your own home and have an area in the yard available, **create a Mary Shrine.** It need not be a large area, but sufficient for a statue of the Blessed Mother, a Crucifix, and perhaps some small statues of Angels and

Saints. Remember that it will be place for prayer and reflection and made beautiful in your own way that is befitting the Mother of God. You can have a bench there or simply bring a chair. Pictured below is a more elaborate one, but the simplest statue and smallest Crucifix in the most humble arrangement is as pleasing to God and our

Holy Mother Mary as the grandest one possible. It should be blessed by a priest.



**A Simple Mary Garden**



**A More Elaborate Mary Garden**

- **You should have a Holy Bible (the Catholic Douay-Rheims version only) and it should be both in Latin and English.**
  
- In addition to celebrating birthdays, Catholics should **always also celebrate the day of their Baptism.**
  
- **A careful record should be kept with the names, dates, priests and bishops who conferred the Sacraments on your family members:** Baptism, First Penance, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Marriage or Ordination or Profession of Vows, and Extreme Unction (Last Rites). Also the dates of each of your Patron Saints. These should become special days for you throughout the year. There is much more to celebrate in a Catholic home than a secular home.
  
- **You can keep a library of Catholic videos.** Among these we would suggest:
  - The Bells of Saint Mary's
  - Going my Way
  - The Song of Bernadette
  - Ben Hur
  - The Ten Commandments
  - The Passion (Mel Gibson)
  - Miracle of Marcellino
  - Black Robe
  - The Scarlet and the Black
  - Jesus of Nazareth (the television mini-series)
  - For Greater Glory
  - Thérèse (Leonardo DeFilippis)
  - Edith Stein — the Seventh Chamber
  - Demetrius and the Gladiator
  - The Ninth Day (Volker Schlöndorff)



- I Prefer Heaven (Saint Philip Neri)
- Padre Pio — Miracle Man
- The Chronicles of Narnia (C.S. Lewis)
- A Man for All Seasons
- It's a Wonderful Life
- The Mission
- Boys Town
- Beckett (Richard Burton, 1964)
- The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima
- Quo Vadis (1951)
- Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison
- Angels With Dirty Faces (1938)
- The Robe
- Lord of the Rings Trilogy (Tolkien)

We hope that these few suggestions are useful to you in both keeping your home — and your children — for Christ through His Holy Catholic Church with its beautiful traditions.

See the following links for more resources, especially if you wish to create a home altar (no you will not be celebrating Mass there, nor keeping the Holy Eucharist in a Tabernacle, although it can be used by a Catholic priest in necessity).

Editor

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<https://www.stpeterslist.com/3562/the-domestic-church-7-steps-to-a-proper-catholic-home/>

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/FAMILY/HOUSE.TXT>

[http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2013/07/guidance-for-young-parents-how-to-raise\\_31.html](http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2013/07/guidance-for-young-parents-how-to-raise_31.html)



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