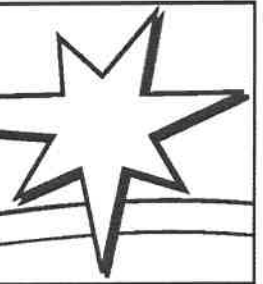


Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

November 2024

St. Joseph School, Amherst
Mrs. Amy Makruski, Principal



Thoughtful Moments

St. Josaphat of Volhynia

Born in Lithuania in 1580, to Orthodox parents, St. Josaphat became a monk, then a priest. When he was consecrated Archbishop of Plotsk, he worked to bring his diocese into union with the Catholic Church. While his personal holiness inspired many of the Eastern Orthodox in his diocese to return to communion with Rome, it was still a widely unpopular decision. He suffered persecution by a schismatic party and was eventually martyred by an angry mob.



Making room for God

Building Christ-centered homes starts with making our hearts home for Christ. Is there room in your heart for Jesus? Do you make time for Him? Give Him a central place in your life. When we let Jesus be King of our hearts, we'll experience deep peace, lasting joy, and true freedom.

"Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).



Prepare for the holidays by sharing Christ's love

Advent is a season of giving and hope, making it an ideal time for Catholic families to practice charity by sharing Christ's love with others. Here are some meaningful ways parents can teach charity during Advent:

Donate care packages. Call homeless shelters to see what items are most needed during the winter season (e.g., socks, toiletries, and gloves). Organize a family outing to purchase them. Prepare the care packages and together, bring them to the shelter.

Volunteer at the parish. Offer to help parish staff by setting up decorations, organizing events, or assisting with Advent services.

Write cards for the sick and homebound of your parish. Create

homemade Christmas cards for nursing home residents, hospital patients, or parishioners unable to leave their homes.

Give the gift of presence. Visit a nursing home or assisted living facility to spend time with residents. Encourage children to sing Christmas carols or read short stories to residents during the visit.

Pray for those in need. Create a family prayer list during Advent, praying for people in need. Add those mentioned during Mass.

Teach children the value of giving. Encourage children to donate unused toys or clothes to those in need. Place a "sacrifice jar" in a prominent spot, encouraging everyone to put in coins whenever they make a small sacrifice. Donate proceeds at Christmas Mass.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

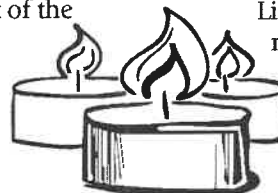
Why do Catholics light candles?

Ancient Jews kept a light burning perpetually near the Ark of the Covenant as a sign of reverence for God's presence. For Catholics, a lit candle in the sanctuary symbolizes Jesus Christ, who proclaimed, "I am the light

of the world" (John 8:12).

Lit votive candles in churches represent the prayer intentions entrusted to God by others.

Lighting a candle also reflects our desire to remain spiritually present with God throughout the day, even when we cannot stay in prayer ourselves.



Help children love Confession

Inviting children to join you for Confession may not spark excitement, but the Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of God's greatest gifts of mercy. With the right approach and preparation, it can become a meaningful and joyful family practice.

Set the tone with love and grace. Remind children that Jesus instituted this Sacrament (Matthew 16:19) because He loves us and wants to help us stay close to Him. Confession is not about punishment but about receiving grace and making things right with God.



Ease anxieties by practicing together. Role-play Confession at home to help children feel comfortable. Reassure them it's okay to bring notes into the confessional if needed.

Build a routine with clear expectations. Choose a regular day—like the first Saturday of each month—and mark it on the calendar. Predictability makes Confession easier and avoids surprises.

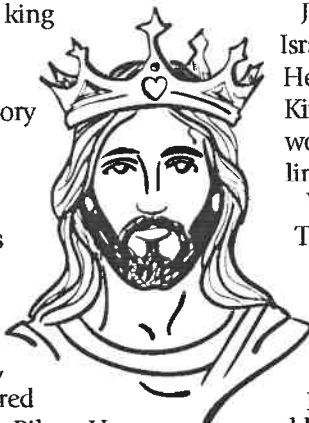
Celebrate God's mercy as a family. Make it a joyful occasion! Go out for ice cream or enjoy a special family meal to celebrate being restored in friendship with God.

Scripture LESSON

John 18:33b-37, Our love shows who our King is

God promised a powerful king for His people, a king who would unite them, fight for them, and lead them to victory against their enemies. The image of a triumphant Messiah-king kept God's people hopeful. When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, hopes ran high. Perhaps He was the one.

Yet, on Good Friday, Jesus, bound and subdued, appeared before the governor, Pontius Pilate. He was rejected. The people didn't want a leader who talked of love, suffering, and service, but someone who would wipe their enemies off the face of the earth.



Jesus is King—not just of Israel, but the entire universe. He told Pilate that His Kingdom is not of this world, not bound by the limits of an earthly kingdom. **What can a parent do?** Teach children that Jesus' kingship is rooted in grace, repentance, justice, and mercy. Encourage them to serve Christ by practicing love, patience, and kindness—both at home and in school. Through their actions, they reveal who their true King is, bearing witness to His reign of love over all creation.

Parent TALK

My girls were more interested in rock stars than God's stars. I explained that saints are people who lived with extraordinary virtue and are in Heaven with God. Following their examples can help us get to Heaven, too. And, if we ask for their help, they will pray for us to God.

One day Kara found a picture of my college graduation. "Is that Mother Teresa?" she asked. St. Teresa of Calcutta was the commencement speaker when I graduated from college. I described how simple and powerful her words were that day and that I never forgot her. We watched a movie about her life on Formed.org.

The girls were impressed that this saintly woman lived in their lifetimes. I told them I had given our family to her special protection when she died. "So, she is our patron saint," Kara said. "That's so much cooler than a rockstar."



Feasts & Celebrations

November 1 – All Saints Day. In the early Church, the persecutions were so widespread, there were more martyrs than feast days to commemorate them. Pope Gregory IV designated November 1 as All Saints Day. This year, it's a holy day of obligation.

November 3 – St. Martin de Porres (1639). A saint and mystic, St. Martin joined the Dominicans in 1594, when people of African and indigenous descent were barred from religious orders. Despite this, he founded an orphanage and cared for the needy,

regardless of race or rank.

November 18 – Dedication of the Basilicas of Saints Peter and Paul. Today, we celebrate the dedications of the two Roman churches dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul, honoring their role in spreading the Gospel.

November 28 – St. Catherine Labouré (1876). Born to a farming family in Cote d'Or, France, St. Catherine joined the Daughters of Charity in 1830. Our Lady appeared to her, asking to have a medal engraved. This became known as the Miraculous Medal.



Our Mission

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