

CATHOLIC DADS
SPIRITUAL TRIATHLON

DAY 1

TRUSTING PROVIDENCE

FROM FEAR AND CONTROL TO TRUST IN THE FATHER

LEARNING TO SEE GOD'S CARE

God does not abandon His sons. He teaches faithful fathers to **trust His providence** one step at a time.

TODAY'S FOCUS

- PAUSE AND PRAY**
Bring your fear to God before reacting.
- LOOK FOR THE RAVENS**
Notice the unexpected ways God provides.
- TAKE THE NEXT STEP**
Providence strengthens responsibility, not passivity.
- TRUST THE FATHER**
The visible situation is not the whole story.

SCRIPTURE TRAINS VISION
Faith learns to see more deeply.

PROVIDENCE IS REAL
God provides, often unexpectedly.

ST. JOSEPH MODELS TRUST
Quiet, faithful obedience.

MASS IS THE CENTER
Trust is sustained by grace.

Look at the ravens...
God feeds them.
— LUKE 12:24

† **REMEMBER:** Faith does not erase responsibility. It teaches us to act with courage while entrusting the outcome to God.

Catholic Dads Spiritual Triathlon

Day 1: Trusting Providence

When the Ravens Come: Learning to See God's Care

Series Orientation

Download the free PDF teaching series from Catholic Dads HQ [here](#)

This three-part series is written for Catholic dads who want to move beyond occasional inspiration into a stable rhythm of formation. Its center is not psychology, self-improvement, or brain technique. Its center is Christ: the Word made flesh, present in Scripture, the sacraments, the life of the Church, and the vocation of the domestic church.

The language of cognitive behavioral therapy, neuroplasticity, early brain architecture, and ecological systems is used only as a secondary aid. Science can describe patterns in human development; the Christian response is conversion, virtue, prayer, sacramental grace, and charity.

The working image is a spiritual triathlon. A man does not prepare for a demanding race by training once a week for fifty minutes. Likewise, a father does not ordinarily grow in stable Catholic fatherhood by giving God one hurried hour on Sunday and then living the rest of the week without prayerful contact with the Word of God. Sunday Mass is the center, but the center is meant to order the whole week.

Catholic Guardrails for the Whole Series

- Grace, revelation, the sacraments, virtue, and Church teaching are primary.
- Psychological tools can help a father notice patterns, but they do not replace conversion, prayer, Confession, the Eucharist, spiritual direction, or professional mental health care when needed.
- Neuroplasticity can describe how repeated actions shape habits; it is not the cause of grace.
- Developmental science can help us understand the human dynamics of relationship; it is not the theological foundation of fatherhood.
- The goal is not technique-driven control, but faithful cooperation with God in love. These insights can help us understand patterns, but conversion and virtue are the work of grace that we freely cooperate with.

The Daily Script: Same Training Plan for Each Lesson

Daily: 10 Minutes

- 5 minutes — Scripture: read a short passage slowly. Read for the literal sense first, then ask how the text leads you to Christ, virtue, repentance, and trust.
- 2 minutes — Prayer dialogue: respond to God with gratitude, petition, repentance, and surrender.
- 3 minutes — One faithful action: choose your concrete action from prayer, charity, repentance (including Confession when needed or planned), and obedience to your duties. Make the action virtue-based: patience, gentleness, courage, repair, service, or a needed apology.

Church-Style Scripture Reading: A Micro-Guideline

- Read for the literal sense first: what the inspired author intended to affirm in context.
- Let the Church guide the spiritual sense: application must stay connected to the text, to Christ, and to His paschal mystery, not to private imagination.
- Avoid ready-made answers that ignore genre, figurative language, historical setting, or the actual words of the passage.
- When uncertain, lean on Church teaching and the Church's preaching: the Mass readings, the homily, the Catechism, the Fathers, the saints, and trustworthy Catholic resources.

Weekly: 20 Minutes

- Review one Scripture passage from the week.
- Name one virtue God is inviting you to practice.
- Ask: What did I do? Where did I fail? Whom do I need to repair with? What grace should I ask for tomorrow?
- Plan Confession periodically, such as monthly or quarterly, as an ordinary repentance rhythm rather than only as an emergency response. Fathers should not treat repentance as a vague feeling; the sacrament trains humility, truth, mercy, and return.

Day 1: Trusting Providence

When the Ravens Come: Learning to See God's Providence

A Catholic dad often stands between two realities. On one side is the visible world: work pressure, bills, fatigue, marriage, children, anxiety, schedules, and cultural noise. On the other side is the deeper reality revealed by faith: God is present, God speaks, God provides, and God is forming us even when the path is hidden.

The challenge is that the visible world shouts, while providence often whispers. This is why Scripture matters: it trains the Catholic father to see.

In 1 Kings 17, Elijah is sent into hiding during a drought. The brook is drying up. Ordinary sources of security are gone. Then the Lord says, "I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." Scripture tells us that the ravens brought Elijah bread and meat in the morning and in the evening.

At first glance, the modern mind may stumble. Ravens? Birds? Bread and meat? Is this literal? Is this symbolic? What does a Catholic dad say when someone mocks the passage and asks, "You actually believe birds fed Elijah?"

The Catholic answer is not embarrassment, and it is not shallow literalism. The Church teaches us to begin with the literal sense of Scripture: what the sacred author truly intends to affirm. But the literal sense is not the same as simplistic literalism. We read according to genre, context, and the unity of God's revelation.

In the story of Elijah, the point is not that ravens are rational spiritual agents. The point is that God's providence is concrete, surprising, and sovereign. God can sustain His servant through means no one would have predicted.

The ravens matter because they interrupt our narrow expectations. If Scripture had simply said, "Do not worry; God will provide," the statement would be true. But it might remain abstract. The image of ravens bringing food forces the mind to pause, contemplate, and ask: Do I really believe that God can provide through means I did not choose, control, or imagine?

The New Testament deepens this image rather than replacing it. In Luke 12:24, Christ tells His disciples to consider the ravens, who neither sow nor reap, and yet are fed by God. Read together, 1 Kings 17 shows God providing for Elijah in a dire circumstance, while Luke 12 teaches every disciple - including every father - to trust the Father without falling into anxiety.

A Catholic dad does not read Elijah and conclude, "If I am in trouble, I should expect a raven to fly into my kitchen with lunch." That would turn Scripture into a technique. Rather, he learns: God is Lord even when the brook is drying up.

Translation Line

- Psychology may describe how fear narrows perception; Scripture forms the father to see reality under God's providence.
- Providence does not eliminate responsibility. It strengthens it: the father trusts God and still takes the next prudent, faithful step.

Pope Leo XIV's catechesis on *Dei Verbum* is helpful here: revelation is not merely information from God; it is God speaking to us as friends. Scripture is personal. It calls for listening, response, and relationship. Pope Benedict XVI likewise urged Christians to grow accustomed to daily reading of Scripture and *lectio divina*. Friendship with God cannot be sustained by occasional attention.

Today's Daily Script

- Scripture: Read 1 Kings 17:1-6. Then read Luke 12:24 as Christ's echo of the raven image: the Father feeds them, and He calls His sons to trust Him without anxiety. Psalm 23 may be used as an additional prayer of trust.
- Prayer: "Father, teach me to trust Your providence. Help me see beyond fear, control, and discouragement."
- Faithful action: Choose one practical step that refuses despair: make the call, apologize, prepare the budget, ask for help, pray with your family, or complete the duty in front of you.

Reflection Questions

- Where is the "brook drying up" in my life right now?
- Where am I tempted to confuse uncertainty with abandonment?
- What unexpected "ravens" has God already sent: a person, a correction, a grace, an opportunity, or a hard mercy?
- How can I model trust in providence for my wife and children today?

Catholic Examples for Dads

- St. Joseph — silent obedience, protection, and action under uncertainty.
- Elijah — prophetic courage and dependence on God's provision.
- St. Augustine — the restless heart converted by grace and truth.
- Pope Benedict XVI — prayerful confidence in the Word of God and the harmony of faith and reason.

Universal Appendix: One-Page Daily Triathlon Script

This stable rhythm is repeated in each lesson as the unchanging daily training plan. Use it as a one-page handout, daily checklist, or print appendix for the full three-day challenge.

1. Scripture — 5 Minutes

- Read a short passage slowly, beginning with the literal sense: what the text says in context.
- Ask: What does the text actually say?
- Ask: What does this reveal about God, Christ, sin, grace, virtue, discipleship, and the paschal mystery?
- When confused, do not invent a private theory. Return to the Church: the homily, the Catechism, the Fathers, the saints, and trusted Catholic resources.

2. Prayer Dialogue — 2 Minutes

- Gratitude: Lord, thank You for...
- Petition: Lord, help me with...
- Repentance: Lord, forgive me for...
- Surrender: Lord, I entrust...

3. One Faithful Action — 3 Minutes

- Choose one virtue for the day: patience, gentleness, fortitude, prudence, temperance, humility, mercy, or charity.
- Choose one concrete action from prayer, charity, repentance, Confession when needed or planned, obedience to duty, repair, apology, blessing, listening, restraining anger, family prayer, or service.
- At night ask: What did I do? Where did I fail? How will I repair tomorrow?

Closing Charge

The Catholic dad is not called to be perfect. He is called to be faithful.

When the brook dries up, the father must remember that God is not absent. Scripture teaches him to see providence without abandoning responsibility. He trusts the Father and takes the next faithful step.

Today, let trust become practice: pray, read the Word, refuse despair, and act with courage.

References and Recommended Reading

- **Sacred Scripture:** 1 Kings 17:1–6; Luke 12:22–34; Matthew 6:25–34; Psalm 23.
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §§2205 and 2685, on Scripture reading with prayer and the Christian family as a place where children learn to pray.
- Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum*, on divine revelation and Sacred Scripture.
- Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993), especially the literal sense, spiritual sense, genre, and the rejection of purely private interpretation.

- Pope Leo XIV, General Audience, “The Documents of Vatican Council II. I. Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*. 1. God speaks to men as to friends” (14 January 2026).
- Pope Leo XIV, Address to the Executive Committee of the Catholic Biblical Federation (17 November 2025), encouraging *lectio divina*, easy access to Scripture, and frequent Bible reading.
- Pope Benedict XVI, *Africae Munus* (19 November 2011), §151, encouraging daily Bible reading and *lectio divina*.