

“Mothers are the strongest antidote to the spread of self-centered individualism... It is they who testify to the beauty of life”. Certainly, “a society without mothers would be dehumanized, for mothers are always, even in the worst of times, witnesses to tenderness, dedication and moral strength” (#174).

There are **NO** classes this Sunday May 8<sup>th</sup>. Happy Mother’s Day!

<http://usccb.org/bible/readings/050816-seventh-sunday-easter.cfm>

Please share with your children before you go to Mass this Sunday – It’s a link to the Sunday Mass readings.

Read together in order to help organize your thoughts/prayers before you attend Mass!!!!

First Communion: Please arrive to the Church on Saturday morning by 9:30 AM – Go directly to the cafeteria!!

Mass will start at 10:00 AM.

...your kids can do random acts of mercy any time; and would like to be encouraged by your example – so share some experiences with them!

Challenge them to do things for others because of the dignity of each person – and not for a new toy they really don’t need!

Confirmation retreat for Mrs. Walton’s Class on Wednesday May 11<sup>th</sup>. Please make sure that you have both forms 1. from school and 2. parents signed.

Meet at the Church by 8:45 AM. We will provide lunch for your children. Will return to Parish by 6:00PM

Please pray for the following parish children who will be receiving their First Communion on May 7<sup>th</sup> !!!  
Danamarie Galindo, Antonio Hernandez, Gabriela Rodriguez, Joseph Speedone, Kyleigh Staunton, Brigitta Tedeschi, Tyler Venturini, Michael Daniel, Ayomide Idowu.

### **Catholic Underground – last one until October**

All interested parents and children are invited to join us for pizza, music, and an amazing experience of our faith in action! We will leave the Church Parking lot via bus at 6:15PM on Saturday evening May 7<sup>th</sup> and will return by 10:30PM. We will be travelling via bus to Good Counsel Church on 90<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan. Go online and check out [catholicunderground.net](http://catholicunderground.net) which is run by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. Contact Tony MacDonnell at [amacdonnell@arcol.org](mailto:amacdonnell@arcol.org) or call (914) 471 2084 for more information or to register.

The link to the full text of the Pope’s new document (The Joy of Love) is found here in English "[On Love in the Family](#)"

Dear Parents:

On Sunday May 8<sup>th</sup> we will celebrate Mother’s Day! I would like to offer my prayers and thanks for all the mothers/grandmothers of our parish who have formed and continue to form and guide their children – day in and day out! It is a great example for me to see the amount of self-less effort that you put into the care and guidance of them! This effort benefits not just your children,

but the whole community - for this we must all be grateful. Below I have also added a few words from the Pope's most recent letter to families on the "Joy of Love".

174. "Mothers are the strongest antidote to the spread of self-centered individualism... It is they who testify to the beauty of life".<sup>192</sup> Certainly, "a society without mothers would be dehumanized, for mothers are always, even in the worst of times, witnesses to tenderness, dedication and moral strength. Mothers often communicate the deepest meaning of religious practice in the first prayers and acts of devotion that their children learn... Without mothers, not only would there be no new faithful, but the faith itself would lose a good part of its simple and profound warmth... Dear mothers: thank you! Thank you for what you are in your family and for what you give to the Church and the world".<sup>193</sup>

175. A mother who watches over her child with tenderness and compassion helps him or her to grow in confidence and to experience that the world is a good and welcoming place. This helps the child to grow in self-esteem and, in turn, to develop a capacity for intimacy and empathy.

Happy Mother's Day!!!

God bless,

Tony

# Discipleship

Last Fall I introduced the concept of the Year of Mercy convoked by Pope Francis. He called for this special moment of grace because he believes that we, the Church and society need to be more open to mercy and that we need to share this aspect of faith with others.

<https://youtu.be/ZcXX9A2W3jQ>

Two 3 minute videos on the Jubilee Year of Mercy

<https://youtu.be/IYv4BUwytA0>

In order to bring to your child more of an awareness of the importance of the daily practice of mercy we will give each child a wrist band this Sunday that will say on it "Random Acts of Mercy" – in other words this will serve as a reminder that they should be merciful towards others at various times of the day, week and month and throughout this special Jubilee Year.

Above is a list of the traditional Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Obviously some are more accessible than others for your children. Try and encourage what seems reasonable. They don't have to do all of them. We are just trying to raise the consciousness in our Parish family in this area of faith development!

God bless,

Tony MacDonnell  
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## *Areas of Interest and Upcoming Events*

<http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/marriage-and-family/other-topics/bishop-barron-q-a-on-amoris-laetitia-the-joy-of-love.html>

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/08/europe/vatican-pope-family/index.html>

2 minute video overview of Pope Francis brand new document – “Love in the Family”

<http://aleteia.org/2016/03/30/watch-pope-francis-if-you-fall-get-up-get-up/>

Pope Francis' 44 second video – If you fall get up, get up!!

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liWjpDmpAgM&ebc=ANyPxKr8ouO7he22d83ZyvIRJoeKQDCzq9op63gs1oKO4cePdzySiC71n366lwgSKXhx-Zrn\\_DVSxTVckPHQZBG-PjkERXIFCg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liWjpDmpAgM&ebc=ANyPxKr8ouO7he22d83ZyvIRJoeKQDCzq9op63gs1oKO4cePdzySiC71n366lwgSKXhx-Zrn_DVSxTVckPHQZBG-PjkERXIFCg)

Divine Mercy is always celebrated the first Sunday after Easter. Here is a short explanation of this new devotion that has grown dramatically in the Church in recent times!

<http://petersboat.net/2016/03/17/march-madness-spiritual-and-religious-2/>

Short 3 minute video by a young New York priest on how spirituality and religion work together

- Here is a good Lenten reflection link from a friend of mine who is a seminarian in the Archdiocese of New York: Eric Wandrey: <http://godlights.me/2016/02/04/an-idea-for-lent-more-leisure/>

Video about Lent in two minutes <http://bustedhalo.com/video/ash-wednesday-in-two-minutes>

<http://godlights.me/2016/01/13/david-bowie-shakespeare-death-and-hope/>.

The Holy Doors associated with the Jubilee Year of Mercy officially opened in our Archdiocese on Sunday Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> at St Patrick's Cathedral and at Old St. Patrick's Cathedral in Lower East Manhattan.

<http://archny.org/mercy>

<https://youtu.be/ZcXX9A2W3jQ>

Two 3 minute videos on the Jubilee Year of Mercy

<https://youtu.be/IYv4BUwytA0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtBsI3j0YRQ>

David Steindl-Rast: Want to be happy? Be grateful

Published on Nov 27, 2013

The one thing all humans have in common is that each of us wants to be happy, says Brother David Steindl-Rast, a monk and interfaith scholar. And happiness, he suggests, is born from gratitude.

An inspiring lesson in slowing down, looking where you're going, and above all, being grateful.

Catholic Underground in Manhattan, <http://catholicunderground.net/> (First Saturday of month)

Children's Choir sign up - please reach out to me if you have any questions ([amacdonnell@arcol.org](mailto:amacdonnell@arcol.org)) meets at 8:50 am in the choir loft.

Pflaum Publishing is the main program our teachers use for your child's Sunday lesson.

The two exceptions are the classes on the Sacraments: First Communion and Confirmation.

All parents, no matter the grade will find that the link below is a complimentary resource for

the work we do with all of the parish children.

[http://www.pflaumweeklies.com/new\\_page/parent\\_guide.php](http://www.pflaumweeklies.com/new_page/parent_guide.php)

[http://www.pflaumweeklies.com/new\\_page/index.php](http://www.pflaumweeklies.com/new_page/index.php)

This part of the Pflaum website also gives you access to more resources to reinforce the weekly lessons done by the Catechist.

<https://youtu.be/ZcXX9A2W3jQ>

Two 3 minute videos on the Jubilee Year of Mercy

<https://youtu.be/IYv4BUwytA0>

<http://chicago.cbslocal.com/2015/11/05/kids-technology-addiction/>

Short Article: My kid, the Ipad Junkie

<http://whispersintheloggia.blogspot.com/>

All of Pope Francis' US talks are found on this website with YouTube channel links

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jx447QYpwF8>

(4 minute video about how to be aware of the reality that God is acting in your life... so that you can hear his voice)

Fr. Albert Haase's short video link will give you some insight about how we can become aware of God's presence in our daily life.

<http://www.aleteia.org/en/religion/article/afraid-to-celebrate-halloween-dont-worry-its-very-christian-5862367938215936>

Short article on some Christian links with Halloween

<http://www.aleteia.org/en/religion/video/video-jesuit-priest-talks-about-real-life-exorcism-5832751722790912>

A Jesuit priest reflects (3minutes & 45 seconds) on the actual person possessed in the movie the Exorcist

### **Reminder about a basic "God Plan" for the New Year:**

So what's your plan for the New Year? It's that time of year when we make new diet plans, exercise plans, spring vacation plans and maybe a new house budget. How about a God plan? I know you are intentional about all of the areas above, otherwise nothing new would ever happen in your family. I would like to invite you to consider putting some New Year's energy into a God plan. God waits patiently for us to take steps towards Him in response to the many graces he presents to us in our daily lives. Grace is all around us; assuring us that one of the characteristics of God is his omnipresence(He is everywhere). In other words we are never not in the presence of God. The challenge to each of us is to recognize these ongoing daily encounters and their meaning for our lives and families!

Here are a few simple steps I personally use each day. They may help you and your children become more aware of God's presence in your daily life:

1. Morning: when you get up encourage yourself and your children to say hello to God and to be grateful for something or someone! Encourage yourself and children to say something complimentary to others before they go to school – build up a habit of thinking positively of others!
2. Gospel for the day: Usccb.org it takes a minute to read the daily Gospel. Here's an online link. <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/011716.cfm>
3. At night thank God again for your day, food, good results at work, a moment of fellowship etc. Review your various encounters with others and any insights you had

during the day. Take a look at the next day's Gospel passage (will just take a minute). This could be done on your own and/or with your children.

4. Next day – Repeat.
5. Bonus points: consider reading a Catholic book (a little at a time) or joining or beginning a discussion group focused on some aspect of the faith or spirituality. I am happy to offer suggestions for resources. I am just an email away: [amacdonnell@arcol.org](mailto:amacdonnell@arcol.org)

The fruit of regular daily reflection is: “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness” **Galatians 5:22**