

How To Start



Family Prayer Night Devotions

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# Preface

**Family Prayer Night Devotions** are a precise fulfillment of what Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother are asking of Bishops, priests, deacons, religious and families through the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. *Prayer by the family, for the family and with family*, at the parish level, is the key to the renewal and restoration of marriage, family life, the priesthood and episcopate and will help bring about that promised new springtime of the Church that Pope John Paul II spoke about so often. We can be confident that parish *Family Prayer Night Devotions* will bear good fruit in abundance since they draw upon the supernatural graces of the Sacred Liturgy and the Holy Rosary, that is, the extraordinarily powerful intercession of Jesus and Mary.

*Family Prayer Night Devotions* are weekly family friendly holy hours which usually consists of Eucharistic Adoration during which children and families share in leading the Rosary, singing beautiful hymns to Our Lady, songs of adoration and worship of Our Lord, praying the Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours with extended time allotted for intercessory prayers for families and family members in need of conversion and healing, and time for private, heartfelt adoration. When a priest is available, a special family Mass and individual Confession can be offered.

Often this beautiful devotion creates such a loving family atmosphere and spiritual energy that families remain after prayer for socializing, family-centered catechesis or organizing missionary outreach as families to other families and individuals in need. Many priests have also felt a renewed sense of family, priestly vocation and mission. *Family Prayer Night Devotions* establish a deeper sense of family, belonging and mission within the larger parish and provides the supernatural graces needed for the active promotion and defense of marriage and family life in apostolates and serves as a powerful assistance to parents in carrying out the mission of the spiritual formation of their children in chastity and holiness.

*Family Prayer Night Devotions* are organized, led and maintained by the lay faithful – parents, children, young adults and other members of the parish family – so that it creates the lightest burden and the greatest blessing possible for the parish priest. It is a response to the Holy Father’s request for family to family assistance in the spirit of *The New Evangelization*, when he said: “Prayer must become the dominant element of the Year of the Family in the Church: prayer by the family, prayer for the family, and prayer with the family.”<sup>404</sup> Since the transformation and renewal of holy marriages and families through prayer and chastity formation takes time, and is such an urgent need worldwide, we hope that the Church might propose a period dedicated to family evangelization of perhaps ten years. **A Decade of the Family** devoted to rebuilding, restoring and renewing the domestic Church would help renew the entire Church family and perhaps even transform entire nations and the world!

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# How to Start Family Prayer Night Devotions

## Introduction

**1** *Family Prayer Night* began in October 1990 at St. Agnes Catholic Church in Green Bay, Wisconsin. It is a Eucharistic and Marian<sup>1</sup> family devotion and a grass roots association of the laity for encouraging, fostering and supporting daily prayer within the home through weekly *Family Prayer Night Devotions* in the parish. The heart of the devotion is praying the family Rosary in the real presence of Jesus, particularly during Eucharistic Adoration.

**2** You can begin by inviting friends, family and parish members to form a core group of volunteers to help organize and start *Family Prayer Night* at your parish. The simplicity and beauty of the devotion make it easy to start. We recommend that you: (a) review the information below and decide upon the desired format for your *Family Prayer Night Devotion* prior to meeting with your pastor; (b) arrange to meet with him to present your ideas along with a copy of this booklet for his review, and; (c) assure him that his time and involvement will be minimal since you and your core group will be assuming full responsibility for it.

**3** Every *Family Prayer Night Devotion* is unique and can be modified to accommodate local and cultural customs, traditions and forms of Eucharistic worship, Marian devotion and family prayer that are in accord with Church directives on liturgical worship and true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The heartfelt expression of love for Jesus and Mary is manifested in many beautiful forms unique to particular nations and races and reflects the genuine personal needs of the local families. *Family Prayer Night* is intended to foster deep, moving, heartfelt prayer.

**4** The purpose of *Family Prayer Night Devotions* is to establish holy families and so we encourage you to entrust and consecrate your

*Family Prayer Night Devotion* to St. Joseph who will actively watch over, guide and protect it as he once watched over, guided and protected the Holy Family. Also entrust and place this devotion in the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary just as the Holy Trinity entrusted her, as Mother, with the mission of assisting in the restoration of the family and all things in Christ. God will richly bless and reward you for your time and effort. However, success can not always be measured in counting the number of people who attend but in the certainty and trust that Jesus and Mary are answering your prayers and they will heal and move the hearts of family members and all those whom you are praying for—one heart at a time. Therefore, even if only one person shows up and perseveres in prayer, then *Family Prayer Night* has been successful.

## Common Questions and Concerns

### 5 What is a *Family Prayer Night Devotion*?

*Family Prayer Night* is a Eucharist-centered<sup>2</sup> Marian devotion where individuals and families gather for a weekly holy hour and family Rosary in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. It draws families into the liturgical worship of the Eucharist and can include the Mass, Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours, and/or Eucharistic Adoration. It is *prayer by the family, for the family and with the family*, and includes reading Sacred Scripture, hymns and inspired songs, offering prayers for individual family needs, and interceding for the needs of others. **Family Prayer Nights always come under the supervision and direction of the parish priest and his Bishop, not the Global Apostolate.**

### 6 Are there a variety of formats for a *Family Prayer Night Devotion*?

Yes. We recommend three basic formats to consider: Mass with Adoration and the Rosary; Adoration with Evening Prayer and the Rosary, and; Adoration with the Rosary, Scripture and Intercessory Prayer. Adaptations can be made depending upon local circumstances, resources, and the availability of priests, deacons and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist. Availability of the Sacrament of Reconciliation as part of the devotion is also very helpful. Other ideas for in-home family prayer are proposed as well.

**7** Can a lay person expose and repose the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance for the purpose of adoration?

Yes. The Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship made provision in the Roman Ritual for permitting several kinds of authorized persons to expose and repose the Blessed Sacrament in the absence of a priest or deacon.<sup>3</sup> Authorization must comply with established diocesan requirements and be approved by your local pastor before exposition of the Blessed Sacrament can be conducted in the framework of *Family Prayer Night Devotions*.

**8** Was it the intent of the Second Vatican Council to discourage Eucharistic and Marian devotions?

No. On the contrary, popular devotions are encouraged and highly recommended. In fact, Eucharistic Adoration and the family rosary have been particularly insisted upon. Before and after the Second Vatican Council, all the Popes and Bishops in communion with him have taught that these devotions should be generously fostered by pastors<sup>4</sup> as the most effective means for family members to prepare for and more actively participate in the Sacred Liturgy.

**9** What can be done when the request to begin or participate in a *Family Prayer Night* is not accepted by the pastor<sup>5</sup>, the parish or family members?

Persevere in prayer, especially by praying the Rosary before the Blessed Sacrament<sup>6</sup>, in fasting and by extending charity to all who may oppose you. It will be through the powerful intercession of the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary and St. Joseph—that hearts will be opened to receive the grace of *Family Prayer Night*.

**10** Also, an opportunity to begin *Family Prayer Night* at another parish community may arise. Speak to that pastor, tell him all about *Family Prayer Night* and what you would like to do and ask him for permission to begin. If all else fails, simply begin *Family Prayer Night* at home and invite other families to join you for prayer. Eventually, God's grace will open hearts and bring *Family Prayer Night* into the church so families can pray before the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>7</sup>

**11** Does establishing a *Family Prayer Night Devotion* mean additional burdens and responsibilities for the pastor?

No. The whole-hearted support and commitment of the laity means the lay faithful take full responsibility for the devotion at the parish level. Rather than a burden, families praying together in the church for other families and for priests will be a source of great joy and support to the pastor and will help him promote the spiritual health of his parish family.

## 12 What are the spiritual benefits of *Family Prayer Night*?

- † Renewal of devotion and love for Jesus and Mary leading to increased participation in the Sacraments, especially Holy Mass and Reconciliation,<sup>8</sup> and in Eucharistic Adoration.
- † Grace for the conversion of hearts and reconciliation in all family relationships.
- † Marriages healed, restored, renewed and strengthened.<sup>9</sup>
- † Return home of Catholics who no longer practice the faith, deepening of faith in practicing Catholics and conversions to the Catholic faith.<sup>10</sup>
- † New areas of support to encourage and sustain prayer in the home.<sup>11</sup>
- † Unity with *Family Prayer Night Devotions* worldwide to pray for an end to abortion and the other evils destroying family life.<sup>12</sup>
- † Opportunities to practice spiritual and corporal works of mercy toward individuals and families in need.<sup>13</sup>
- † Deepened spirituality, faith, personal holiness and inner peace.<sup>14</sup>
- † Molding of family values in imitation of the Holy Family of Nazareth.<sup>15</sup>
- † Increased vocations to the priesthood and religious life.<sup>16</sup>
- † Greater peace, unity and love in the family, parish and diocese as one family of God.<sup>17</sup>
- † Renewal of society, culture and community life.<sup>18</sup>
- † Opportunities to catechize families in conformity with the Pope and Magisterium.<sup>19</sup>
- † New opportunities to witness to Jesus Christ and the Gospel message.<sup>20</sup>
- † Provides a spiritual family to those who have no family.<sup>21</sup>
- † Intercession and assistance for families suffering from difficulty, division or danger.<sup>22</sup>

## Procedures for Starting a Family Prayer Night

### 13 Establish a Core Group

When establishing a *Family Prayer Night Devotion*, it is helpful to have a core group of committed individuals, families and children to count on for mutual help, prayer and support, and to serve as set-up, greeters, lectors, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, family choir, and leaders of the Rosary each week.

### 14 Leadership

Select one or two individuals who will take responsibility for acting as coordinators or facilitators to help direct the weekly *Family Prayer Night* service, and to serve as a liaison with the pastor and the parish.

### 15 Planning and Organization

Consider these three key points in planning:

- a. Select a night that will accommodate the majority of people in your parish (and/or surrounding parishes).
- b. Choose a night during the week when the church is least used so there will be minimal disruption of parish activities and the *Family Prayer Night Devotion*.
- c. Decide upon a starting time and ending time that takes into consideration the needs of parents and children; usually one hour is recommended.

16 Also, people appreciate beginning and ending on time but we found that it is helpful to also let everyone know it is flexible enough that they are free to arrive or leave anytime during the devotion due to family needs and schedules, and that any participation is appreciated. Attendance can be weekly or periodic but the important message is for them to know that like a family, *Family Prayer Night* will always be there and praying for them each week in good times and in bad.

### 17 The Ministers of Exposition

The ordinary minister of exposition is the priest or deacon. With the approval of the parish priest and in conformity with diocesan guidelines, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, acolytes, and

members of religious orders and/or of lay associations devoted to the Eucharist can expose the Blessed Sacrament in a Monstrance, place the Monstrance on the altar for exposition and adoration and later repose the Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle. However, they may not perform either a blessing or Benediction.<sup>23</sup>

## 18 Traditions

*Family Prayer Night* can easily accommodate approved local, national and cultural customs, traditions and forms of Eucharistic worship, Marian devotion and family prayer as a means to help create an attractive family atmosphere where the personal, heartfelt love of Jesus and Mary can be expressed. The intention of *Family Prayer Night* is to get children and families actively involved during the Mass and Eucharistic Adoration, in processions, leading the Rosary, reading Scripture, offering gifts, singing and playing music, lighting candles for loved ones, venerating sacred images and statues, in verbally or silently praying for families or others in need, etc.

19 Also, the core group should begin with the intention and commitment of establishing *Family Prayer Night* as a perpetual and permanent weekly devotion. A weekly *Family Prayer Night Devotion* in the parish is a tradition worth sacrificing for, and it will provide the richest inheritance and greatest blessing that you can pass on to your children and future generations.

## Family Prayer Night Formats

### 20 Holy Mass with Adoration and the Rosary

**Before Mass (about a half-hour for those who wish to come early)**

Pray One Mystery of the Rosary.  
Offer Confessions if possible.

**Holy Mass**

**Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Adoration**

Song or Hymn followed by a time of silent Adoration.

Pray One Mystery of the Rosary.  
Benediction if priest is available.  
Divine Praises and Repose the Blessed Sacrament.  
Closing Song.

**21 Adoration with Evening Prayer and the Rosary**

**Before Adoration (about a half-hour for those who wish to come early)**

Pray One Mystery of the Rosary.

**Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Adoration**

Song and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.  
A time of silent Adoration.  
Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours.  
Song or Hymn to Our Lady.  
Pray One Mystery of the Rosary.  
Divine Praises and Repose the Blessed Sacrament.  
Closing Song.

**22 Adoration with the Rosary, Scripture and Intercessory Prayers**

**Before Adoration (about a half-hour for those who wish to come early)**

Pray One Mystery of the Rosary.

**Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Adoration**

Song and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.  
A time of silent Adoration.  
Scriptural Readings - From the Liturgy of the day or others.  
Intercessory Prayers  
Song of Worship of the Blessed Sacrament or Hymn to Our Lady.  
Pray One Mystery of the Rosary (Scriptural Rosary suggested).  
Divine Praises and Repose the Blessed Sacrament.  
Closing Song.

**23**      Prayer Before the Tabernacle

If Mass and Eucharistic Adoration of Jesus during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament are not possible, *Family Prayer Night* can still be carried out in the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle using the elements of prayer in the above formats.

**24**      Family Prayer in the Home

A primary purpose of *Family Prayer Night Devotion* in the parish is to encourage continued daily family prayer within the home. If this devotion cannot take place in a parish, then families, individually and together with other families, can gather in the home in spiritual communion with Our Lord in the Mass and in spiritual adoration of His presence in all the tabernacles of the world. The formats and traditions above can be adapted for home. And like *Family Prayer Night* in the parish, this time of family prayer can provide a lead into a time of family catechesis, discussion of spiritual matters, socialization, and planning of missionary outreach in building up a culture of life which respects the sanctity of the family.

## End Notes

1. At Cana in Galilee, where Jesus was invited to a marriage banquet, his mother, also present, said to the servants: “Do whatever he tells you” (*Jn 2:5*). Now that we have begun our celebration of the Year of the Family, Mary says the same words to us. What Christ tells us in this particular moment of history constitutes a forceful call to a great prayer with families and for families. The Virgin Mother invites us to unite ourselves through this prayer to the sentiments of her Son, who loves each and every family. [*Pope John Paul II, Letter to Families, February 2, 1994, 5.*]

While respecting the freedom of the children of God, the Church has always proposed certain practices of piety to the faithful with particular solicitude and insistence. Among these should be mentioned the recitation of the rosary: “We now desire, as a continuation of the thought of our predecessors, to recommend strongly the recitation of the family rosary... There is no doubt... the rosary should be considered as one of the best and most efficacious prayers in common that the Christian family is invited to recite. We like to think and sincerely hope that when the family gathering becomes a time of prayer the rosary is a frequent and favored manner of praying.” In this way authentic devotion to Mary, which finds expression in sincere love and imitation of the Blessed Virgin’s interior spiritual attitude, constitutes a special instrument for nourishing loving communion in the family and for developing conjugal and family spirituality. For she who is the Mother of Christ and of the Church is in a special way the mother of Christian families, of domestic churches. [*Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Familiaris Consortio, November 22, 1981, 61.*]

2. In the celebration of Mass the chief ways in which Christ is present in his Church gradually becomes clear. First he is present in the very assembly of the faithful, gathered together in his name; next he is present in his Word, when the Scriptures are read in the Church and explained; then in the person of the minister; finally and above all, in the Eucharistic Sacrament. In a way that is completely unique, the whole and entire Christ, God and man, is substantially and permanently present in the Sacrament. [*The Roman Ritual: Holy Communion and Worship*

*of the Eucharist Outside Mass, Forms of Worship of the Eucharist: Exposition, Benediction, Processions, Congresses, June 5, 1983, 6.]*

3. The ordinary minister for exposition of the Eucharist is a priest or deacon. At the end of the period of adoration, before the reposition, he blesses the people with the Sacrament.

In the absence of a priest or deacon or if they are lawfully impeded, the following persons may publicly expose and later repose the Holy Eucharist for the adoration of the faithful:

- a) an acolyte or special minister of Communion;
- b) a member of a religious community or of a lay association of men or women which is devoted to Eucharistic Adoration, upon appointment by the local Ordinary.

Such ministers may open the tabernacle and also, if suitable, place the ciborium on the altar or place the Host in the monstrance. At the end of the period of adoration, they replace the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. It is not lawful, however, for them to give the blessing with the Sacrament. [*The Roman Ritual: Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, Forms of Worship of the Eucharist: Exposition, Benediction, Processions, Congresses, June 5, 1983, 81, 85, 91, 92, 95, 96.]*

4. “The worship of the Eucharist outside the Sacrifice of the Mass is a tribute of inestimable value in the life of the Church. Such worship is closely linked to the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.” Therefore both public and private devotion to the Most Holy Eucharist even outside Mass should be vigorously promoted.... “It is the responsibility of sacred Pastors, even by the witness of their life, to support the practice of Eucharistic worship and especially exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament, as well as prayer of adoration before Christ present under the eucharistic species.”.... Before the Most Holy Sacrament either reserved or exposed, the praying of the Rosary, which is admirable “in its simplicity and even its profundity”, is not to be excluded either. Even so, especially if there is Exposition, the character of this kind of prayer as a contemplation of the mystery of the life of Christ the Redeemer and the Almighty Father’s design of salvation should be emphasized, especially by making use of readings taken from Sacred Scripture. [*Congregation*

*for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament, Instruction Redemptionis Sacramentum, March 25, 2004, 134, 137.]*

This most Holy Synod deliberately teaches this Catholic doctrine and at the same time admonishes all the sons of the Church that the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the Blessed Virgin, be generously fostered, and that the practice and exercises of piety, recommended by the magisterium of the Church toward her in the course of the centuries be made of great moment, and those decrees, which have been given in the early days regarding the cult images of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints, be religiously observed. [*Vatican II, Lumen Gentium, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, November 21, 1964, 66, 67.*]

5. If you find that you are asked: “How are we to attain the objectives of the Year of the Family?”, the exhortation to prayer contained in the Letter will show you the simplest direction in which to proceed. Jesus said to the Apostles, “Apart from me you can do nothing.” (Jn. 15:5). It is clear that we must “do as he does,” that is, pray on bended knee. [*Pope John Paul II, Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday 1994, March 13, 1994, 2.*]

The Ordinary should diligently foster Eucharistic adoration, whether brief or prolonged or almost continuous, with the participation of the people. For in recent years in so many places “adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament is also an important daily practice and becomes an inexhaustible source of holiness”, although there are also places “where there is evident almost a total lack of regard for worship in the form of eucharistic adoration.” [*Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament, Instruction, Redemptionis Sacramentum, March 25, 2004, 136.*]

6. In consequence, the devotion which leads the faithful to visit the Blessed Sacrament draws them into an ever deeper participation in the Paschal Mystery. It leads them to respond gratefully to the gift of Him through whom His humanity constantly pours divine life into the members of His body. Dwelling with Christ Our Lord, they enjoy his intimate friendship and pour out their hearts before him for themselves and their dear ones, and pray for the peace and salvation of the whole world.

The faithful should therefore strive to worship Christ Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, in harmony with their way of life. Pastors should exhort them to this, and set them a good example. [*Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, May 25, 1967, 50.*]

7. But it is characteristic of the Christian in his manner of life not to give in to circumstances but to overcome them, not to succumb but to make an effort. Families which want to live in full measure the vocation and spirituality proper to the Christian family must therefore devote all their energies to overcoming the pressures that hinder family gatherings and prayer in common. [*Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Marialis Cultus*, February 2, 1974, 54.*]

8. Family communion can only be preserved and perfected through a great spirit of sacrifice. It requires, in fact, a ready and generous openness of each and all to understanding, to forbearance, to pardon, to reconciliation. There is no family that does not know how selfishness, discord, tension and conflict violently attack and at times mortally wound its own communion: Hence there arises the many and varied forms of division in family life. But, at the same time, every family is called by the God of peace to have the joyous and renewing experience of “reconciliation,” that is communion reestablished, unity restored. In particular, participation in the sacrament of Reconciliation and in the banquet of the one Body of Christ offers to the Christian family the grace and the responsibility of overcoming every division and of moving forward toward the fullness of communion willed by God, responding in this way to the ardent desire of the Lord: “that they may be one.” [*Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, November 22, 1981, 21.*]

And the increased knowledge of Mary’s mission has become the joyful veneration of her and adoring respect for the wise plan of God, who has placed within His family (the Church), as in every home, the figure of a Woman, who in a hidden manner and in a spirit of service watches over that family “and carefully looks after it until the glorious day of the Lord.” [*Pope Pope Paul*

*VI, Apostolic Exhortation, Marialis Cultus, February 2, 1974, Introduction.]*

9. Experience teaches that human love, which naturally tends toward fatherhood and motherhood, is sometimes affected by a serious *crisis* and is thus seriously threatened. In such cases help can be sought at marriage and family counselling centres, where it is possible, among other things, to obtain the assistance of specifically trained psychologists and psychotherapists. At the same time, however, we cannot forget the perennial validity of the words of the Apostle: “I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.” [*Pope John Paul II, Letter to Families, February 2, 1994, 7.*]

10. Animated in its own inner life by missionary zeal, the church of the home is also called to be a luminous sign of the presence of Christ and his love for those who are “far away,” for families who do not yet believe and for those Christian families who no longer live in the accordance with the faith that they once received. The Christian family is called to enlighten by its example and its witness those who seek the truth. [*Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Familiaris Consortio, November 22, 1981, 54.*]

11. As preparation for the worship celebrated in Church and as its prolongation in the home, the Christian family makes use of private prayer, which presents itself in a great variety of forms. While this variety testifies to the extraordinary richness with which the Spirit vivifies Christian prayer, it serves also to meet the various needs and life situations of those who turn to the Lord in prayer. Apart from morning and evening prayers, certain forms of prayer are to be expressly encouraged, following the indications of the Synod Fathers, such as reading and meditation of the Word of God, preparation for the reception of the Sacraments, devotion and consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the various forms of veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grace before and after meals and observance of popular devotions. [*Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Familiaris Consortio, November 22 1981, 61.*]

12. One can never approve of abortion; but it is above all necessary to combat its causes. This includes political action, which will be

in particular the task of the law. But it is necessary at the same time to influence morality and to do everything possible to help families, mothers and children. [*Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration on Procured Abortion, November 19, 1974, 25, 26.*]

Filled with this certainty, and moved by profound concern for the destiny of every man and woman, I repeat what I said to those families who carry out their challenging mission amid so many difficulties: a great prayer for life is urgently needed, a prayer which will rise up throughout the world. Through special initiatives and in daily prayer, may an impassioned plea rise to God, the Creator and lover of life, from every Christian community, from every group and association, from every family and from the heart of every believer. Jesus himself has shown us by his own example that prayer and fasting are the first and most effective weapons against the forces of evil (cf. Mt 4:1-11). As he taught his disciples, some demons cannot be driven out except in this way (cf. Mk 9:29). Let us therefore discover anew the humility and the courage to pray and fast so that power from on high will break down the walls of lies and deceit: the walls which conceal from the sight of so many of our brothers and sisters the evil of practices and laws which are hostile to life. [*Pope John Paul II, Encyclical, Evangelium Vitae, March 25, 1995, 100.*]

13. It will fulfill this mission if it appears as the domestic sanctuary of the Church by reason of the mutual affection of its members and the prayer that they offer to God in common, if the whole family makes itself a part of the liturgical worship of the Church, and if it provides active hospitality and promotes justice and other good works for the service of all the brethren in need. [*Vatican II, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, November 18, 1965, 11.*]

14. Devotion to the Mother of the Lord becomes for the faithful an opportunity for growing in divine grace, and this is the ultimate aim of all pastoral activity. For it is impossible to honor her who is “full of grace” (Lk. 1:28) without thereby honoring in oneself the state of grace, which is friendship with God, communion with Him and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit....She shows forth the victory of hope over anguish, of fellowship over solitude, of peace over anxiety, of joy and beauty over boredom and disgust, of eternal visions over earthly ones, of life over

death. [*Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, Marialis Cultus, February 2, 1974, 57.*]

15. May Nazareth serve as a model of what the family should be. May it show us the family's holy and enduring character and exemplifying its basic function in society; a community of love and sharing, beautiful for the problems it poses and the rewards it brings; in sum, the perfect setting for rearing children—and for this there is no substitute. [*Pope Paul VI, Address at Nazareth, January 5, 1964.*]

16. The family must educate the children for life in such a way that each one may fully perform his or her role according to the vocation received from God. Indeed the family that is open to transcendent values, that serves its brothers and sisters with joy, that fulfills its duties with generous fidelity and is aware of its daily sharing in the mystery of the glorious Cross of Christ, becomes the primary and most excellent seed-bed of vocations to a life of consecration to the Kingdom of God. [*Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Familiaris Consortio, November 22, 1981, 53.*]

17. The person principally responsible in the diocese for the pastoral care of the family is the bishop. As father and pastor, he must exercise particular solicitude in this clearly priority sector of pastoral care.... It will be his particular care to make the diocese ever more truly a “diocesan family,” a model and source of hope for the many families that belong to it. The setting up of the Pontifical Council for the Family is to be seen in this light to be a sign of the importance that I attribute to pastoral care for the family in the world, and at the same time to be an effective instrument for aiding and promoting it at every level. [*Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Familiaris Consortio, November 22, 1981, 73.*]

18. The Second Vatican Council has pointed out how the family, the primary and vital cell of society, “shows itself to be the domestic sanctuary of the Church through the mutual affection of its members and the common prayer they offer to God.” The Christian family is thus seen to be domestic Church if its members, each according to his proper place and tasks, all together promote justice, practice works of mercy, devote themselves to helping their brethren, take part in the apostolate of the

wider community and play their part in liturgical worship. [*Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, Marialis Cultus, February 2, 1974, 52.*]

In this great endeavour to create a new culture of life we are inspired and sustained by the confidence that comes from knowing that the Gospel of life, like the Kingdom of God itself, is growing and producing abundant fruit (cf. Mk 4:26-29). There is certainly an enormous disparity between the powerful resources available to the forces promoting the “culture of death” and the means at the disposal of those working for a “culture of life and love”. But we know that we can rely on the help of God, for whom nothing is impossible (cf. Mt 19:26). [*Pope John Paul II, Encyclical, Evangelium Vitae, March 25, 1995, 100.*]

19. Priests and deacons, when they have received timely and serious preparation for this apostolate, must unceasingly act toward families as fathers, brothers, pastors and teachers, assisting them with the means of grace and enlightening them with the light of truth. Their teaching and advice must therefore always be in full harmony with the authentic Magisterium of the Church, in such a way as to help the People of God to gain a correct sense of the faith to be subsequently applied to practical life. Such fidelity to the Magisterium will also enable priests to make every effort to be united in their judgments in order to avoid troubling the consciences of the faithful. [*Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Familiaris Consortio, November 22, 1981, 73.*]

20. Without repeating everything that we have already mentioned, it is appropriate first of all to emphasize the following point: for the Church, the first means of evangelization is the witness of an authentically Christian life, given over to God in a communion that nothing should destroy and at the same time given to one’s neighbor with limitless zeal. As we said recently to a group of lay people, “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” [*Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, Evangelii Nuntiandi, December 8, 1975, 41.*]

21. For those who have no natural family the doors of the great family which is the Church—the Church which finds concrete expression in the diocesan and parish family, in ecclesial basic communities and in movements of the apostolate—must be open even wider. No one is

without a family in this world: The Church is a home and family for everyone, especially those who “labor and are heavy laden.” [*Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Familiaris Consortio, Novmeber 22, 1981, 85.*]

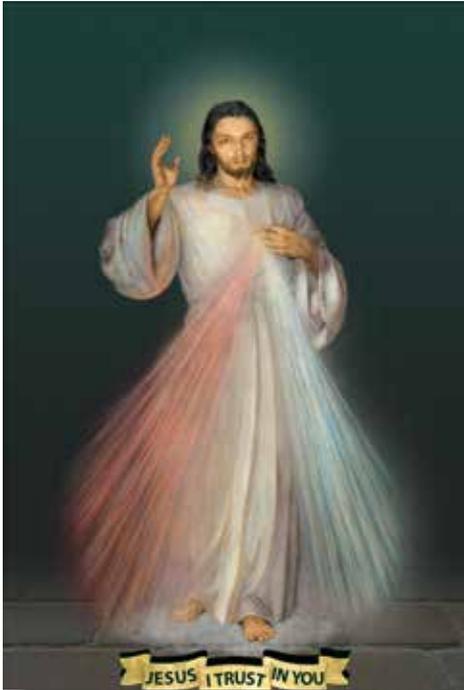
22. May the Year of the Family become a harmonious and universal prayer on the part of all “domestic churches” and the whole people of God! May this prayer also reach families in difficulty or danger, lacking confidence or experiencing division, or in situations which *Familiaris Consortio* describes as “irregular.” *May all families be able to feel the loving and caring embrace of their brothers and sisters!*

During this year may the prayer of the Church, the prayer of families as domestic churches, constantly rise up! May it make itself heard by God and then by people everywhere so that they will not succumb to doubt, and all who are wavering because of human weakness will not yield to the tempting glamour of merely apparent goods, like those held out in every temptation. [*Pope John Paul II, Letter to Families, February 2, 1994, 5.*]

23. Such ministers may open the tabernacle and also, if suitable, place the ciborium on the altar or place the Host in the monstrance. At the end of the period of adoration, they replace the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. It is not lawful, however, for them to give the blessing with the Sacrament. [*The Roman Ritual: Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, Forms of Worship of the Eucharist: Exposition, Benediction, Processions, Congresses, June 5, 1983, 81, 85, 91, 92, 95, 96*]

## Reverse Side of Free Blessed Image of Jesus the Divine Mercy

The **Blessed Image of Jesus the Divine Mercy** is distributed to anyone of goodwill who will accept and display it in their home as a means to receive special graces for strengthening, healing and/or restoring marriages and families.



**Chaplet of Divine Mercy**  
*Said on Rosary Beads*

### **Our Father, Hail Mary & Apostles Creed**

**Our Father Beads:** Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ; in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

**Hail Mary Beads:** For the sake of His Sorrowful Passion; Have Mercy on us and on the whole world.

**Closing Prayers:** Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One; Have Mercy on us and on the whole world. (*Say 3 times*) Jesus, I Trust in You! (*Say three times*)

The **Blessed Image of Jesus the Divine Mercy** is distributed to anyone of goodwill who will accept and display it in their home as a means to receive special graces for strengthening, healing and/or restoring marriages and families.

The Image of **Jesus the Divine Mercy** is a representation of how Jesus appeared to a devout nun in Poland, in the early 1930's. Sister Faustina Kowalska, now Saint Faustina, was entrusted with bringing Christ's message of Divine Mercy to the whole world. Our Lord's plan to accomplish this was through the Image of Jesus the Divine Mercy. This version of the Merciful Jesus was painted in 1944, is displayed at the Shrine of Sr. Faustina in Krakow, Poland and is most recognized throughout the world.

### **The Global Apostolate of Family Prayer Night Devotions**

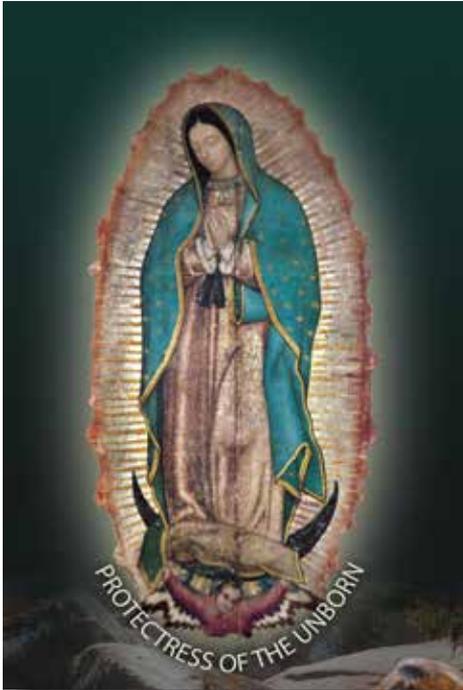
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[www.FamilyPrayerNight.org](http://www.FamilyPrayerNight.org)

## Reverse Side of Free Blessed Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe

The **Blessed Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe** is distributed to anyone of goodwill who will accept and display it in their home as a means to receive special graces for strengthening, healing and/or restoring marriages and families.



**The Blessed Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe** is distributed to anyone of goodwill who will accept and display it in their home as a means to receive special graces for strengthening, healing and/or restoring marriages and families.

The miraculous Image of **Our Lady of Guadalupe** is seen 8 ½ months pregnant, bearing in her womb the gift of life, and the very source of life, the Infant Christ child. She is in profound prayer awaiting the first advent of Christ. In Mexico, from December 9-12, 1531, Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to Saint Juan Diego and herself created this miraculous Image. This picture of a thousand words spoke to the hearts of the Aztec Indians, who were at that time offering innumerable daily human sacrifices to a pagan god. Within seven years, the Mother of God put an end to the human holocaust and converted over 8 million hearts to the Gospel of life. We are certain that Our Lady can and will once again bring about an end to the culture of death, to abortion and all the crimes against the sanctity of life through this miraculous Image.

**Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life of the unborn baby that I spiritually adopt who is in danger of abortion.**

*The late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen recommended this prayer to adopt an unborn child to help end abortion in the world. He asked that it be prayed for one year.*

*If you accept this invitation, during your earthly life this spiritually adopted child of yours will be known only to God, but in eternity you will meet the child whose life you saved by your prayers and spend eternal happiness with them.*

*Please pray one Hail Mary for Our Lady's intentions.*

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## Parish's Family Prayer Night set to mark 25 years

By Jeff Kurowski | The Compass  
January 13, 2016

St. Agnes Parish hosts weekly family prayer which includes Rosary, Mass and exposition of Blessed Sacrament

GREEN BAY — Many of the faces have changed and recently, the day of the week changed, but over the past 25 years, the mission of Family Prayer Night at St. Agnes Church has remained the same. The weekly gathering provides a vehicle to spend time with the Lord in a prayer-rich environment.

Family Prayer Night's origin dates back to October of 1990 when a group of people wanted to pray together and continue a special devotion to the Blessed Mother. Their inspiration included pilgrimages to Medjugorje, prayer at Holy Hill in Hubertus, Wis., and a rosary rally at the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Help in Champion. The group began meeting in the Lobus Lounge at St. Agnes. By January of 1991, it moved to the crying room. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament was added with the permission of Fr. Richard Getchel, pastor.

A statue, "Mother of All Peoples, Mother of the Eucharist," was a gift to St. Agnes Church carved from wood by Leo Moroder of the Province of



A one-of-a-kind statue represents the devotion to Mary. The statue, "Mother of All Peoples, Mother of the Eucharist," was a gift carved from wood by Leo Moroder of the Province of Bolzano in Italy. An image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is also displayed.

Bolzano in Italy. It represents the devotion to the Blessed Mother, which has been a part of Family Prayer Night since the beginning. (Submitted photo)

The group prayed the rosary, and a vigil candle rack was added to represent each family's intentions. They outgrew the space, so on Jan. 15, 1991, Family Prayer Night was held in the church. Mass was concelebrated by Fr. Getchel and Norbertine Fr. Tim Shillcox. More than 800 people attended the Mass to pray for an end to the Gulf War.

Family Prayer Night was held each week on Tuesday evenings prior to a move to Mondays in November 2015. Two hours of prayer are scheduled. Each evening begins at 6:30 p.m. with the rosary and confession. Mass is celebrated at 7 p.m. Quiet prayer before the Blessed Sacrament follows the liturgy. Some continue praying the rosary or the Chaplet of Divine Mercy together.

Val Bessert, who facilitates Family Prayer Night along with Paul Defnet and Joan Ross, said the group is grateful for all "graces and blessings received for ourselves and families over the years and for all answered prayers." She also offered thanks to Fr. Getchel, succeeding pastors at St. Agnes, Norbertine Fr. Dane Radecki and Fr. Patrick Beno, for their support, and for the "many dedicated priests who have graciously served on our weekly Mass schedules."

"I have a respect and appreciation for the fact that we've had such a longstanding devotion in our parish," said Fr. Beno, current pastor at St. Agnes.

He added that he is also thankful for the Divine Mercy Sunday celebration at the church, which always draws a large number of people. The annual tradition at St. Agnes began in 1995 with a celebration sponsored by the Family Prayer Night group.

Defnet said that he first started with a family prayer group at SS. Peter and Paul Parish in Green Bay. Bessert invited him to help at St. Agnes.

“Val is the driving force behind it. She is the lead,” he said. “We rotate nights. We make sure the volunteers, readers and (extraordinary ministers of holy Communion) are there. We make sure the priest is there. We’ve been fortunate to have a lot of retired priests and priests in active ministry.”

Some of volunteers have been a part of Family Prayer Night for most of the 25 years. Ron Waldvogel, a member of St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Green Bay, has been an altar server since the beginning.

“There are a lot of good people who are a part of it,” said Waldvogel, 80, who also serves at Mass at St. Philip. “We all do this together. There is a core group of 30 to 35. A lot of people have come and gone. We have a few young people, but could use more. It’s a gift from the Lord.”

Waldvogel arrives early to set up for Family Prayer Night. He credits his wife, JoAnn, for having supper ready at 3 p.m. so he can arrive at church by 4 p.m. The doors open at 6:10 p.m.

“I don’t get home until around 9 p.m.,” he said. “It’s a long night, but very enriching. I like to help out. I had a great mom. She taught me well. The Lord has been good to me and I appreciate the people.”

Family Prayer Night is a part of the Global Apostolate of Family Prayer Night Devotions, an international ministry to families, which provides resources ([www.FamilyPrayerNight.org](http://www.FamilyPrayerNight.org)). Participants may come for all or part of the two hours of prayer. Some come for reconciliation. Others arrive in time for Mass.

The facilitators invite newcomers to attend, especially in response to Bishop David Ricken's call for a deeper prayer life and to exercise mercy through prayer in this Year of Mercy, declared by Pope Francis.

"It's been a great blessing in my life," said Bessert, a member of St. Louis Parish, Dyckesville, and former member at St. Agnes. "We do feel like family. It's been a great strength for the people who come here. There are a lot of trials and tribulations in life. We pray for one another."

"At the end of the day, you can be so tired from work, but when you go there, you feel a lot better," said Defnet, a member of Resurrection Parish in Allouez. "You have to believe in the Holy Spirit. We will keep going to see what direction the Lord wants us to go."