



# Boston Catholic Journal



NIHIL NISI IESUM

Dedicated to Mary, Mother of God

Salus Animarum Suprema Lex Esto (Canon Law 175)

The Salvation of Souls is the Supreme Law in the Church

## 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 of 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 of perfect motherhood) through each of you.

- **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 quick (*lest, forbid, anyone see it!*) 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** (that 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.

- **Pray with your children every night before bed** — once 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 hear and learn these prayers in English and Latin, see: <http://www.boston-catholic-journal.com/basic-catholic-prayers-in-latin-and-english-in-audio-format.htm>

- **Always bless each of your children at bedtime:** it is your right as a father, and your duty as a Catholic. Trace the Sign of the Cross over each child’s forehead, lips, and heart, while invoking God’s blessing over them:

**“May the blessing of Almighty God be with you (name the child): the Father †, and the Son †, and the Holy Ghost. †”**

- **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 pointless 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 (as Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen exhorts us say “I die with Thee, O Christ on Calvary!”).

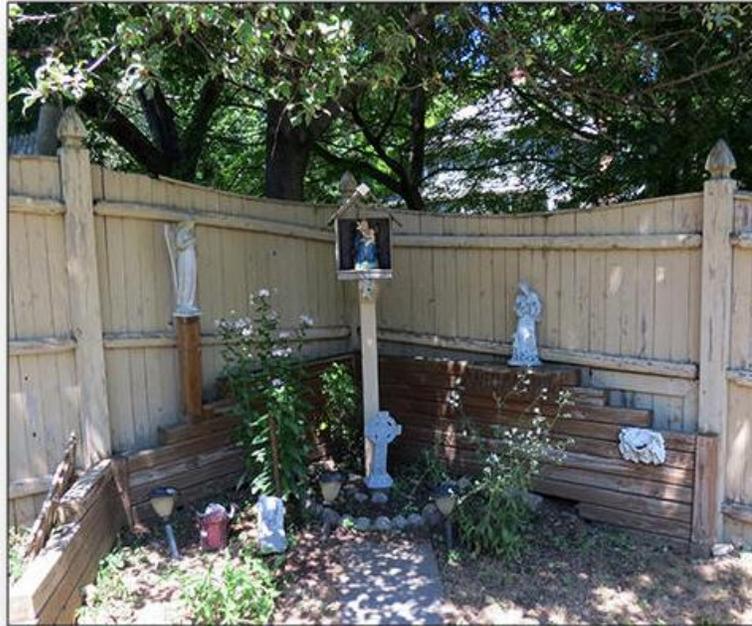
- **Your house should be blessed by a priest** (there are specific prayers for a house, each room, and even your car!) There is a formula for this which a priest should have (and a Traditional priest *will* have one), or lacking one, his blessing in his own words.
- **You should have a small container** Holy Water and Consecrated Salt protect your house from the evil one.
- **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.

- 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 humblest arrangement is as pleasing to God and our Holy Mother Mary as the grandest one possible. It should be blessed by a priest.



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**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 *also* **celebrate the day of their Baptism.**

- **A careful record should be kept with the names, dates, and the priests and bishops who conferred the Sacraments on your family members:** including 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 so much more to celebrate in a Catholic home than in 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.

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