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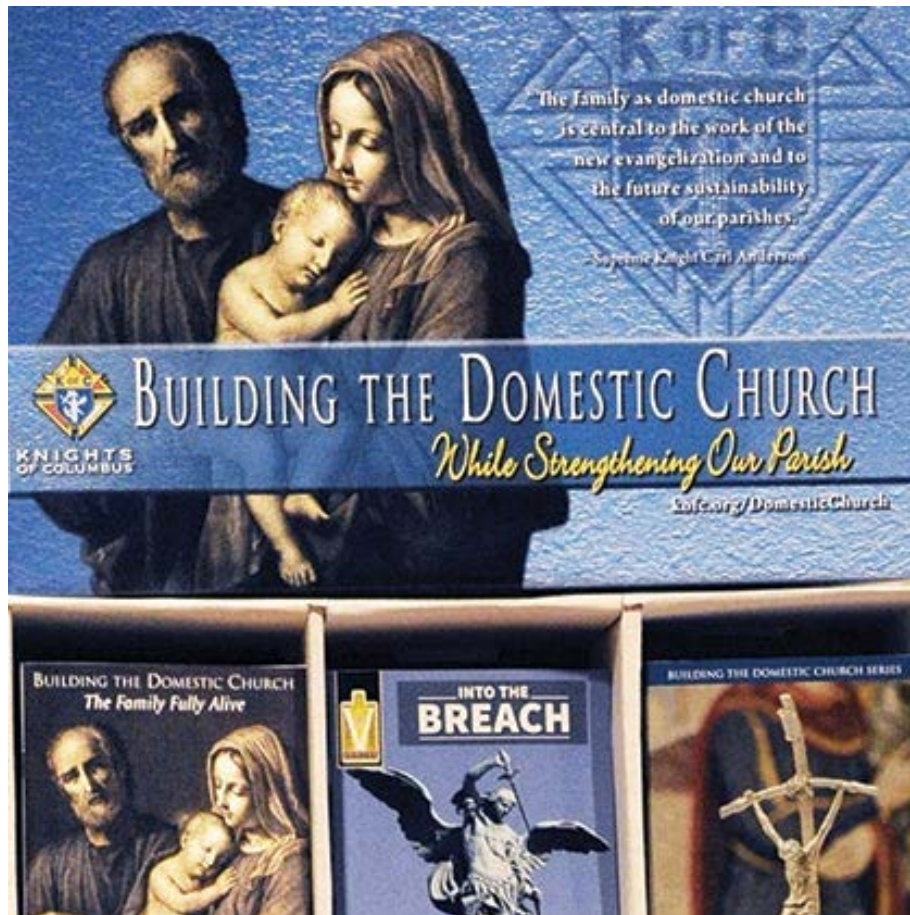


January 2022

NEWS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS ST. LOUIS COUNCIL 3335

## LET'S TRANSFORM OUR HOMES INTO DOMESTIC CHURCHES

We're devoting this issue to the Knights of Columbus campaign to build the Domestic Church of each of its members while strengthening our parish. The following is based on a talk I gave at the Gallia County, Ohio Family Fest October 22, 2020 the feast of St. Pope John Paul the Great. Council 3335 was one of its sponsors. This article is in observance of the recent Feast of the Holy Family on the Sunday after Christmas.



A national campaign of the Knights of Columbus.

According to the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church (Lumen Gentium) of the documents of the Vatican Council II (1962-65), “The family is, so to speak, the domestic Church.” The early Christians called the family the *Ecclesia Domestica* and originally had house churches. When the father would convert, the entire household including slaves would also convert. The home became an island of Christian life in an unbelieving world. Isn't that often true today?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1655-1666) emphasizes the

concept of Domestic Church and draws from Lumen Gentium: “It is in the bosom of the family that parents, by word and example, are the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children.” The most basic faith filled unit in society is the home. That makes your home a domestic church.

In a speech at a race track near New York City in 1995 St. Pope John Paul II advocated that “Catholic parents must learn to form their family as a *‘domestic church’*” *a church in the home as it were, where God is honored, his law is respected, prayer*

*is a normal event, virtue is transmitted by word and example, and everyone shares the hopes, the problems, and sufferings of everyone else.* All this is not to advocate a return to some outdated style of living: It is to return to the roots of human development and human happiness!” That’s a great definition! In other words Jesus Christ is the center of the home and together all grow in virtue. *The home should be a school of virtue.* The Holy Family must be held up as a model with bible stories about them.



**A little back yard shrine of the Holy Family, the patron and model of the Domestic Church.**

**Usually what stands out in a true domestic church?** When you visit somebody's home, you can easily tell whether it is a domestic church or not.

- You can't miss a holy picture here and there on the wall.
- You might spot a Bible if it's well used.
- The children will have books with Bible stories or stories of the saints.
- You'd probably sense warmth and hospitality. Some of the members have the gift of being able to communicate love.

It's deeper than that, but it's a good start. I've gone into homes and saw no

indication whatsoever that the family is Christian because the faith wasn't there. The whole atmosphere was secular.....what you would expect in a pagan or atheistic home. When I visited a home of a Hindu family, there were images or statues of some of their gods.

You can observe contrasts in a First Holy Communion class. With some of the kids, the teacher has to start out at zero. They know nothing about the faith. It's the opposite with kids who are brought up in a domestic church.

**Is your home a domestic church as advocated by St. John**

**Paul II or simply a boarding house** where the family doesn't even have meals together. They just come home to eat and sleep. One meal all together each day should be a must. A true domestic church has a certain atmosphere, a deeper presence of the Lord. A solid domestic church has a Catholic culture which most homes have lost. This loss of Catholic culture is the main cause of our great shortage of religious vocations and an epidemic of fallen away Catholics within a crisis of faith. All of these problems are common all over the country.

A *Catholic culture* pervades the family of a strong domestic church.



Sunday Mass is part of what the family does every week, including babies, who add to the Mass in a beautiful way. A little crying adds atmosphere, especially some cooing. My son John-Paul as a baby over 30 years ago cried and cried during the homily; after the Mass I apologized to the priest and he replied: “he could probably give a better homily than I can”.

Every family member assists at Mass every Sunday (no excuses, not negotiable) no matter where they are, thus creating a lifelong habit. If you're in the boonies somewhere, [www.masstimes.org](http://www.masstimes.org) will give a list of Catholic churches, their locations, and

Mass times within a radius of 30 miles. The family often goes to Adoration and devotions as the Stations of the Cross. If the family sometimes misses Sunday Mass or is laid back about the Church, you can bet your bottom dollar that the kids will drift away as adults.

Family life revolves around the parish from Baptism to Matrimony to the funeral Mass.....the local priest hatches the kids in Baptism, matches the children in Matrimony, and dispatches them in the funeral Mass.....hatch, match, and dispatch. Family members belong to the Knights of Columbus, Catholic

Women's Club, and the parish youth group (YACHT Club). They participate in the Vacation Bible School, Sunday breakfasts, voluntary work, Mass, devotions, regular confession, etc. Christ is the center of the family and its members strive to become a holy family with the crucial help of the parish.

At family meals nobody eats until grace is said. The faith is often discussed at the dinner table; families are more solid when they have at least one meal a day together. The family often watches EWTN, the Catholic television channel.....papal events, documentaries, talk shows, kids

programs, movies, etc. Evening prayer together, perhaps family Rosary, is standard, at least while the kids are still small. “The family that prays together, stays together” as advocated by the Venerable Fr. Patrick Peyton.



A husband and a wife become one and a product of their holy union, self-giving, and deep love for each other is children (Theology of the Body) to form a family and a domestic church.

**How can you make your home a domestic church?** No home is perfect. But we can continually strive

to make our homes into domestic churches. The question is how do we do it?

*Bedtime stories* that promote virtue and others based upon the Bible and the saints are a must and the kids read them for fun. Our own parish library has many such books for children which you can borrow by simply signing them out. Catholic books, magazines, and newspapers are easily obtained for the home; some are available free in the back of our church. Musts in the family library are

a Bible and the official Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC).

Even *family vacations* can bring in the faith. The family can visit a shrine on the way to the beach or have a week long pray and play family retreat at Catholic Familyland in Bloomingdale above Steubenville (see [www.afc.org](http://www.afc.org)). A couple of families from our parish have gone and rave about how great it is for family fun and spiritual growth for all.



**A little domestic chapel in a corner of the house for spiritual reading and praying.**

My daughter and son-in-law have a small room (it can be a corner) which they've turned into a prayer room or mini-chapel with icons for prayer, spiritual reading, etc. We have a little altar with a picture and a candle in our living room.

**The most effective teaching is the example of parents conscientiously living the faith.** On the other hand the example of parents neglecting their faith does immense harm to the children, perhaps for the rest of their lives and eternity too. Most effective in the spiritual formation of young Karol Wojtyła (now St. Pope John Paul II) was observing his widower father fervently praying late at night. He didn't have to preach. Dr. James Dobson, the retired founder of the Focus on the Family radio program, told his children: "I'll be waiting for you in heaven. **YOU BE THERE!**"



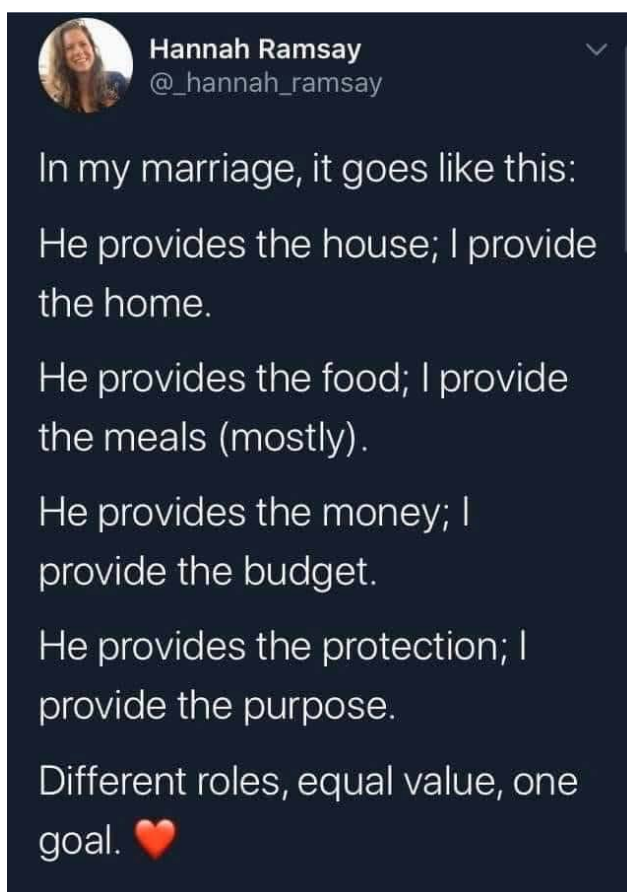
Grandparents also have an important role in handing down the faith with their example, stories, and advice, especially if the parents are failing in their duty. Fr. Thomas Loya's father was an Archie Bunker type. He once told his five children: "God put me on this earth for one reason and that's to get you guys to Heaven!"

**So many students lose the faith in secular colleges.** Much of what is taught at the Newman Club or Catholic Student Center is cancelled out by what they are forced to learn in the classroom by liberal professors who

not only teach concepts contrary to our faith, but often are even hostile to it. Thus it is most important for parents to live modestly and make the sacrifices necessary to *send their kids to a bona fide Christ centered Catholic College* such as Franciscan University of Steubenville, Christendom, Thomas Aquinas College, and Ave Maria University.

Be careful because many traditionally Catholic colleges have lost their original Catholic mission and are very secular. I can lend anybody interested the “Newman Guide to

Choosing a Catholic College” and/or go to [www.NewmanGuide.com](http://www.NewmanGuide.com). If there’s a will; there’s a way to send children to a truly Catholic college. Garret Frazee is a student at the Franciscan University of Steubenville and his sister Cara will follow.



**In a good marriage husband and wife work together as a team. Both are unique and indispensable in the family. The God-given masculine and feminine gifts that make men and women so different, beautifully complement each other for the common good of the family, the domestic church.**

My cousin has a family of eight kids. His wife related: “People tell me that my kids are so good. How do you do it?” She simply answered, “I spend time with my kids and only work as a nurse on weekends when my husband can watch the kids. Stay at home Moms, “you and your family are richly blessed”. If someone asks: “What do you do?” Stand up with pride and tell them: “I’m a full time mother”.

**The home must be a school of virtue** where members of the family love each other and care about each other and help each other. There are

many teaching moments as for example, when a parent has to intervene in bickering or quarrels, or even physical fights. Consistent loving discipline without blowing up is a big help. Cheating, telling fibs, meanness, etc. are constant issues that offer teaching moments. It's a lot of teaching backed up by a lot of love and the example of the parents. Sharing in chores with cooperation and responsibility for the common good of the family is most important.

**What problems have you encountered in building your**

**domestic church? How did you solve these problems? How about kids getting mischievous and sabotaging the rosary? Some families have done very well with the family rosary and others not so well. Should the kids be forced? Taking turns to lead a decade or making up meditations such as Bible quotes might help. One large family forced their children to participate in the rosary and some of the kids hated it. Half of them are solid Catholics today and the other half has drifted away. So I would say don't push too hard.**

The big question is how do you get all the kids on board? It's not easy.....a lot of love; a lot of patience. Look at the olive tree. Olives straight off the tree are poison. They have to be treated.....too much or too little is poison. Too little discipline or too much discipline hurts the kids.

**Our children depend so much upon their parents to pass down the faith especially in secular America.** When our homes with the help of our pastor become domestic churches within the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, parish renewal will be

complete. No family has achieved the ideal domestic church, but we can aspire to it. Only a step or two in that direction is progress.



**Passing Down the Faith in Baptism**

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our homes with the help of our pastor become domestic churches within the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, parish renewal will be complete. No family has achieved the ideal domestic church, but we can aspire to it. Only a step or two in that direction is progress. So don't forget.....EACH ONE OF YOU HAS A MISSION.....you may have already helped to build your parish church or a chapel, a little church.....now build the domestic church in your homes.....parents and kids together.

The mission of every parent is not only to build your domestic church, but also to pass down the faith. Go for it! Heaven and everlasting happiness is the prize!.....for your children, grandchildren, and your great grandchildren too. We can see the legacy in many of the great grandchildren of Harriet Davison who lived to be 99.

## APPENDIX

**Building the Domestic Church Kiosk** sponsored by the **Knights of Columbus**. It's in the back of our St. Louis Church. Help yourself. Take as many as you want, but you have to read what you take. They are all free, although you can give a donation for the replenishment of the books through [www.kofc.org](http://www.kofc.org).

### **List of Booklets in Our Knights of Columbus “Building the Domestic Church” Kiosk Proclaiming the Faith in the Third Millennium**

- 1) The Family Fully Alive.....10162 5/17
- 2) Into the Breach By Bishop Thomas Olmsted of Phoenix  
An Apostolic Exhortation to Catholic Men..... 340 8/18

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| 3) The Gift of Fatherhood.....   | 10168 | 1/19 |
| 4) Lord, Teach Us to Pray.....   | 304   | 8/18 |
| 5) Prayer Time: A Collection of Catholic Prayers.....  | 309   | 8/18 |
| 6) Letter to Families By St. Pope John Paul II.....  | 310   | 8/18 |
| 7) The Good Life, God's Way.....   | 315   | 8/18 |
| 8) The Family in the Modern World By St. Pope John Paul II.....  | 318   | 4/18 |
| 9) A Scriptural Rosary For the Family.....   | 319   | 9/18 |
| 10) Becoming a Real Man of God.....  | 322   | 4/18 |
| 11) Mary, the Mother of God.....   | 324   | 9/18 |
| 12) St. Benedict For Busy Parents.....   | 327   | 8/18 |
| 13) St. Joseph: Our Father in Faith.....   | 328   | 8/18 |
| 14) God's Plan For Love and Marriage By Dr. Edward Sri.....  | 333   | 8/18 |
| 15) Complete My Joy By Bishop Thomas Olmsted of Phoenix<br>An Apostolic Exhortation to Husbands & Wives, Mothers & Fathers | 388   | 5/19 |

For more information go to [https://www.kofc.org/en/news-room/knightline/special-edition/week-of-april-13/ideas-building-domestic-church.html?utm\\_source=knightline-aristotle&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=knightline-aristotle-2020-04-14](https://www.kofc.org/en/news-room/knightline/special-edition/week-of-april-13/ideas-building-domestic-church.html?utm_source=knightline-aristotle&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=knightline-aristotle-2020-04-14)