



Seeds of Faith

Supporting families growing in faith

November 2015

Family Life

Family life is about connections. Have you ever looked at two cousins and thought they were sisters rather than cousins? Have you ever looked at a child and been amazed the way he walks like his grandfather or the way she wrinkles her nose like an uncle or aunt? We see signs of our connections in so many ways. Visit any new baby and you will hear people debate whose eyes, nose, chin and even ears the child has!

Our genes connect us in often visible ways. Through baptism we have another connection which is just as important. We are all part of the body of Christ. Because of our baptism we belong to one another. We are all sons and daughters of God who loves us. What's more nothing can break that bond of belonging.

In his letters to the Christian community in Rome St Paul says,

"I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Not even death can separate us from the love of God or from the love of each other. Nothing can break our love but it still hurts to be apart. Grief is when we think "I must tell granny about this" or "John would love that if I gave it to him" and we are struck again, realising all over again that the person we love, the person we want to talk to and visit and hug is simply not there.

It is good and healthy and healing to talk about the people we love and miss. It is good for our children to know that we feel sadness and loneliness—they are not alone in feeling lost. It is good to remember, to tell stories, to laugh together and to cry together when we think of people who have gone to God before us. The love we have is still there—nothing can take that away. The connections cannot be destroyed—even by death.



Praying as a family

In this month of November it is good to stop and think about those people who have died belonging to us and to pray for them.

It is a nice tradition to go to the church and light a candle for the people we love who have gone to God.

You might also like to celebrate the lives of those who have died—think of one person you want to remember

- Search out some photos
- What does each family member remember about this person
- What stories can you tell about this person?
- How has this person made a difference in your life?
- What would that person like to be remembered for?

Gather up all your thoughts and memories and thank God for the life of this person maybe by praying the Our Father—a prayer which reminds us that we are all part of God's family.



Anam Cara is an Irish organisation which supports parents and siblings after bereavement. See their website at www.anamcara.ie or email them at info@anamcara.ie

Living with Grief—walking the spiral is a book which may help you and your family to explore the journey of bereavement. It is available from www.rpbooks.co.uk



We would love to hear your comments. What's useful for your family? Would you like to receive this newsletter each month by email? Send your email address to

bairbre.cahill@gmail.com

NOVEMBER GOSPELS

Mostly this year we have been reading from Mark's Gospel. Now we are coming to the end of what Jesus said and taught. Linking with the November theme of remembering our beloved dead, a good way into talking about these gospels might be through the memory of 'last words'. Are there any precious memories in your family of last words shared before someone died? Why do last words mean so much? What is special about these words of Jesus, which are among his last words to us? And then there are those other last words of Jesus that we remember at every Mass: This is my Body. This is my Blood. Do this in memory of me.

01/11 Matt 5:1-12 A challenging sense of what it means to be blessed and happy—The Beatitudes.

08/11 Mark 12:38-44 The poor widow who trusts God completely.

15/11 Mark 13:24-32 Jesus will gather all his chosen ones at the end of time.

22/11 John 18:33-37 Jesus—a king of a very different kind.

29/11 Luke 21:25-28,34-36 The First Sunday in Advent. Stay awake! Be aware!





Prayer Space

This month why not gather up pictures of people you know who have died—family or friends and put them in your prayer space. You might have other special things too—a granny’s ring, a child’s teddy bear—whatever helps you to remember these special people. Whenever we are sad and lonely it can feel like the world is a very dark place so put a candle in your prayer space too. The paschal (Easter) candle is lit during a baptism—and lit again during funerals. The candle reminds us that because of Jesus who died and rose from the dead nothing can break the bonds of love we have with people who have died. Jesus is our light in the darkness of our grief.



Jesus, our light
 When we are sad and lonely
 When grief is hard to carry
 Help us to know
 That the people we love
 Who have died
 Are held safe
 In God’s hands
 And that together with all
 The angels and the saints
 They watch over us.
 Amen

We are so connected!

- To God
- To family
- To friends
- To people who live in our area
- To people all over the world



Why not use wool to make a big spider’s web, stick it up on the wall and then use clothes pegs to attach the names or pictures of people you feel connected to onto the web. And then remember to pray for all these people!



Stepping stones on the journey of faith

We begin our celebration of the Eucharist (mass) by gathering. This gathering is important. We have already seen this month in Seeds how through baptism we become part of one body. Christianity is never a solo run. It is never just about a relationship between me and God. Each of us becomes, through baptism a member of a faith community, part of the people of God. So when we gather for mass we gather as a community. The mass can never be just about my private prayer, my relationship with God. The mass is the prayer and the work of the whole community gathered together on that day, in that place. This is why many parishes make a real effort to build community so that people can get to know each other and feel that they belong.



Relationships matter in our Christian faith. Jesus became like us because God really cares about his relationship with us and about how we get along with one another. We all know that while friendship and family are a gift, they can also sometimes be a challenge. We talk about ‘finding’ a friend, but we also talk about ‘making’ friends. Our relationships sometimes need work. That applies to our relationship with God and our relationships with one another.

At the beginning of mass as we gather, we get a chance in the penitential rite to ask God’s help with our relationships. We do this as a community—think of the words we use “I confess to Almighty God and to you my brothers and sisters”.

There is something very healthy about checking that things are right before we sit down together. Think of how difficult it is in family life to share a meal or discuss something important when there is tension and bad feeling around. So we check in with each other and with God in a humble and honest way, and then we are better able to put our hearts into the ‘Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of goodwill’ and more ready to listen to the Word of God in the readings.

One of the great things about coming to mass is that we get to gather with a great range of people, many of them that we would not otherwise meet regularly. As we gather for mass this month, let us really look around us to appreciate all the different people who share in our gathering. By baptism we all belong together and we all share in the one Eucharist.

What’s happening?

The 1st of November is All Saints Day and the 2nd is All Souls Day. These are special days to pray for all the people who have died and to thank God for their lives. It is good to pray for people who have died and to trust that they will be wonderfully happy with God in heaven.

November 22nd is the Feast of Christ the King. This is the end of the church’s year—a new church year begins with the start of Advent on 29th November. When we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King we are being asked to say—yes I want the person and the teachings of Jesus to be the most important influence shaping my life and that of my family. Then in Advent we are invited to live out that desire.