

Father Albert Shamon

A Word for Sunday



Sunday's Readings: (R3) Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23; (R1) Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14; (R2) Colossians 3:12-21.

One of the great insights of Vatican II was the rediscovery that the Catholic family is "the domestic church" — the Church in miniature.

A rabbi once said the synagogue is a school where "people are taught to make their homes into sanctuaries ..." To sanctify that home should be the goal of every Catholic family. Families must focus on religion in the home. Canon Law states that "parents share in the sanctifying mission of the Church in a particular way" (Can. 835, #4). The home, therefore, as domestic church, must reflect the big Church.

The big Church prays the office morning and night; therefore the little church should say morning and night prayers.

The big Church reads the Scriptures; therefore, the little church, after any evening meal, ought to gather together to listen and discuss the readings for the next Sunday's Liturgy, with father or mother acting as lector. This column indicates what the readings are each week and offers a few reflections on them.

The big Church has statues and pictures; therefore, the little church should have a crucifix in the hallway and holy pictures throughout the home.

Devotions in the home beget devotion. Devotion, according to St. Thomas, is not a feeling good inside, but the will to do God's will readily.

That is why John Paul II called for practices like these in his Apostolic Exhortation on the Family (*Familiaris Consortio*, #61).

The big Church will be as strong as its weakest link — the little church, the family.

If the little church prays, the big Church will celebrate well.

If the little church teaches, the big Church will learn.

If the little church has faith and love,

the big Church will have vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Vocations begin 20 years before the child is born, with parents who have faith and embrace transcendental values, like self-sacrifice, generosity, human dignity, and so on.

Imagine — this country is now offering "The Money Management Camp for Kids" — a five-day course of how to earn, save and invest money. No mention is made of business ethics, nor of serving the common good. The result will be a generation of greed breeds. Corruption in capitalism, business scandals and corporate intrigue cannot be blamed on government alone; these things will continue to happen as long as we have godless homes, godless schools, godless people. Only when we bring God back to the home and nation will crime and violence dwindle.

Give the home fathers like St. Joseph, who protect their families from harm and who provide for them (R3).

Give the home mothers like Mary, who are faithful to their husbands even when things get tough, like when the Holy Family had to flee in the middle of the night, leaving family and friends behind.

Give us homes in which there is mercy, kindness, humility, meekness and patience (R2).

Give the home children who honor their fathers and mothers, care for them in old age and grieve them not (R1).

Yes, give us homes in which parents shield their children from all forms of aggression coming either from the mass media or from a purely biological sex education — which opens the path to vice.

Parents cannot isolate their children from the world, but they can insulate them, by giving them a spiritual base through making the home a domestic church, with mother and father in priestly roles.

If charity begins at home, so does godliness and goodness. And these will begin there, when families learn from the big Church to turn their homes into sanctuaries.

My Meaning Of Christmas

Christmas to me is giving myself to others. There are many ways that I can give myself to others. One is by helping my mother and father. Another way is by writing a letter to my grandmother and grandfather and saying, I love you. Jesus gave himself to others so that we may follow in the same way.

Chris Hunt
St. Patrick, Seneca Falls
Grade 3

How Jesus was Born

Jesus was born in a cold stable in Bethlehem. Because all of the houses and hotels were full already, Shepherds and three Wise men gave gifts to the baby Jesus. They gave gold and silver and sheep. That's how our Savior Jesus was born.

Jason Plate
St. Patrick, Seneca Falls
Grade 3

How to decorate a Christmas tree

When you decorate a Christmas tree you first have to get a tree, then you have to get some decorations. Then you get to put the decorations on the tree. And sometimes you put lights on the tree. In my family my Daddy, puts an angel on the top of the tree. I like to decorate Christmas trees, it's fun!

Katie Lester
St. John, Humboldt
Grade 2

We celebrate Christmas once a year and alot of people think it is just about Santa Claus, but it is not. The real reason we celebrate Christmas is because Jesus was born. Jesus was not an ordinary baby, he was a very special baby because he was Gods own son. And Mary and Joeph and everyone loved him alot and we should too. That's the real meaning of Christmas.

Dawn Larzelere
St. Patrick, Seneca Falls
Grade 3

Father Paul J. Cuddy

On the Right Side



I used this Christmas meditation in my column a couple of years ago and like it very much.

The stable of Bethlehem has no tree, no decorations, no blinking lights to prettify, nor pretty boxes with toys and socks.

The Baby's bed is not bedecked with a baby boy's blue blanket. It has no varnish. It smells of dry grass and other feed for sheep and donkeys.

And yet this cave so dark and stark God's tranquil spirit pervades. For Infinite Love is incarnated in a tiny Baby.

And God's Spirit joins together Jesus and Mary and Joseph in one great love — not with stuff that perishes, stuff that TV ads seduce us to believe brings happiness, but the gift that perseveres — the gift of the heart. This is God's love, never to corrode or rot or dissipate.

In Christian homes throughout our country, the memory of that stark night is recalled — alas, celebrated strangely by pretty cribs so clean and colorful, so odor-

less; celebrated by stuff piled high as if love were measured in things material.

In dull incomprehension, these seem to say: expensive toys and costly liquors, sparkling trinkets, exotic smells, laden tables and every flesh-satisfying comfort — these are the Gospel of Bethlehem.

But the Gospel of the cave is otherwise. It is a divine protest against utter poverty and unconcern in the scandal that a Child however loved should be so born in starkness. It is a lesson that even in poverty, happiness abides where there is love and self-giving.

And by inversion there is a lesson this affluent nation has yet to learn: that material stuff corrodes and rots and dissipates, but the things of the spirit, love and truth and beauty, flow eternally from the Incarnate Christ "from Whom and through Whom and in Whom all good things come."

And our greatest Gift is the Word made flesh Who still dwells amongst us. That Word continues enfleshed in men who love and serve in the spirit of God's love and service.

How to tell Santa what you want for Christmas

You write it on an envelope to the North Pole. Then you bring it to the North Pole. All the elves make toys there and Santa Claus brings them to you.

James Yatteau
St. John, Humboldt
Kindergarten

Rut a list. Put it undr the Christmas tree. He wil reqit.

Patrice Judson
St. John, Humboldt
Grade 1

How to decorate a Christmas tree

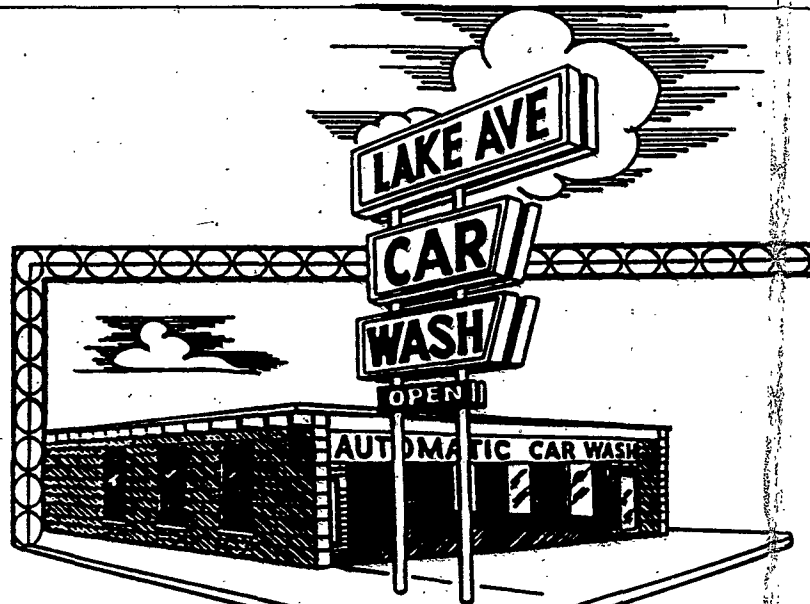
First, you wash the tree. 2. you take the Star and put on the top of the tree. 3. you take the lights and gut them on the tree. 4. you take the bulbs and put them on the tree. The End.

Deanna Gates
St. John, Humboldt
Grade 1

How to choose a gift for mom or dad

I like to give my dad present. He likes to get ties and watches. My Dad love me and I love him all the time.

Andrew Schermerhorn
St. Michael, Newark
Grade 2



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