Partners *in* FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

November 2026

Curé of Ars Religious Education

## Thoughtful Moments

### St. Gertrude the Great

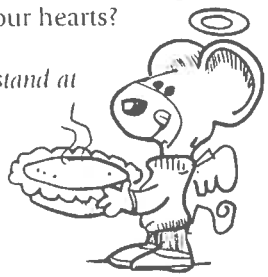


Born in thirteenth-century Germany, St. Gertrude was raised and educated by Benedictine nuns. Little is known of her family, and she may have been orphaned. A gifted student with a love of languages, she eventually entered religious life. Around age twenty-five, she began experiencing visions of Jesus that continued throughout her life. Known for her deep holiness and compassion for rich and poor alike, St. Gertrude was especially devoted to praying for the souls in Purgatory.

### Preparing for the King

Advent begins at the end of the month. This is a time of preparation. As we anticipate Christmas, the Church also calls us to prepare our souls for Heaven. Most importantly, we must welcome Christ daily through the Sacraments, by reading Scripture, acts of charity, and moments of prayer. Amid holiday preparations, are we making room for Him in our hearts?

*"Behold, I stand at the door and knock"* (Revelation 3:20).



# Become a blessing to others

Thanksgiving offers Catholic families a unique opportunity to do more than count their blessings. It is a time when we can turn gratitude into action. We thank God by sharing His love with others. This Thanksgiving, start with three simple family commitments.



**Name it.** Before the meal, invite each family member, young and old, to name one blessing from the past year and one person they are especially thankful for. Thank God, the source of all blessings.

**Serve one another.** Give everyone a role in preparing the celebration, from setting the table to helping with cleanup. Encourage family members to express appreciation for something specific another person has done. Small gestures teach children that love can be active.

**Share blessings.** As a family, choose one meaningful act of generosity. Deliver a meal to a neighbor, donate groceries to a food pantry, or invite someone who might otherwise spend Thanksgiving alone.

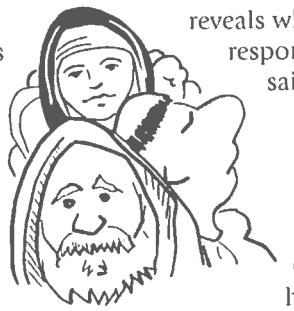
**Start a new tradition.** Invite each family member to choose one way to turn gratitude into action. Children can help a neighbor or make a card for someone lonely. Parents can support a family in need or spend more quality time with their children. Small acts of kindness can make gratitude a year-round family tradition.

The greatest Thanksgiving lesson children can learn is that gratitude isn't just spoken. It's lived.

## Why Do Catholics Do That?

# Why do Catholics honor the saints?

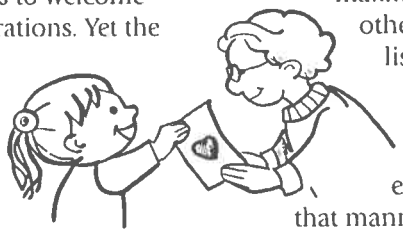
Non-Catholics may wonder why the Church honors saints with feast days, prayers, and statues. Catholics celebrate these holy men and women, whom the Church recognizes as being in Heaven, as models of lives transformed by God's grace. Their example reveals what is possible when we respond fully to His love. The saints reflect God's goodness, beauty, and holiness. Just as praising a masterpiece honors its artist, honoring the saints ultimately gives glory to God, the source of their holiness.



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# Holiday hospitality: Put people before perfection

The holidays offer countless opportunities to welcome others, from family dinners to parish celebrations. Yet the pressure to make everything perfect can overshadow what matters most: the people we are with. Here are three ways families can practice meaningful hospitality.



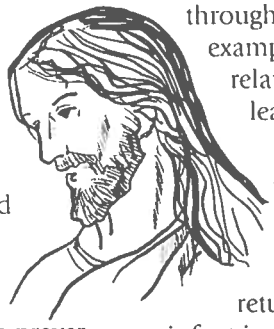
**Presence over presentation.** A welcoming atmosphere matters more than flawless decorations or spotless rooms. Involve children in preparing for gatherings, from setting the table to greeting guests. They'll learn that hospitality means making others feel comfortable and valued.

**Presence over performance.** Hospitality doesn't prioritize making the perfect impression. Place the focus on others by including someone who feels left out, listening attentively, offering help, and responding graciously when plans change. Small gestures often leave lasting impressions.

**Presence over presents.** Amid the excitement of gift exchanges, remind children that manners matter more than packages. Encourage them to read cards before opening gifts, thank the giver, and appreciate the thought behind each gesture.

This holiday season, remember that genuine hospitality isn't about perfection. It leads to kindness, generosity, and attention we offer others.

## Scripture LESSON — Mark 13:33-37, Be watchful, be alert



On the First Sunday of Advent, the Church invites us to prepare not only for the celebration of Christ's birth, His First Coming, but also for His Second Coming in glory.

Because we do not know when Christ will return, Jesus calls us to remain watchful and spiritually prepared. This means examining our lives, turning away from sin, and growing closer to God through prayer and the Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Penance. Living in a state of grace allows us to await His coming with confidence rather than fear.

Our preparation also has a missionary dimension. Having experienced God's love, we are called to share it through our words, actions, and example, inviting others into a relationship with Christ that leads to eternal life.

*What can a parent do?* Advent offers an opportunity to explain the Second Coming to our children. Jesus will return, not simply as the infant in Bethlehem, but as our glorious King. For those who love Him, this is a promise of hope and joy: the fulfillment of Christmas and the beginning of eternal life with God.

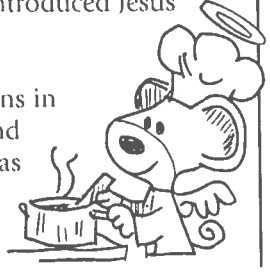
## Feasts & Celebrations

**November 21 – Presentation of the Blessed Virginia Mary.** This memorial honors the tradition of her parents dedicating her to God at the Temple, reminding Catholics to embrace lives of faith and service.

**November 23 – St. Clement I (97).** Arrested by the Emperor Trajan for refusing to worship pagan gods, Pope St. Clement I was sent to work in the mines in the Crimea. He comforted and encouraged the other Christians there until his own martyrdom.

**November 29 - First Sunday in Advent.** We anticipate Christ's birth in Bethlehem and His second coming in glory on the Last Day. Catholics everywhere light candles in an Advent wreath to signal the coming of Christ who said, *"I am the light of the world"* (John 8:12).

**November 30 - St. Andrew, Apostle (1st Century).** The son of a Galilean fisherman and brother of Simon Peter, he introduced Jesus to Peter. After the Resurrection, he conducted missions in Turkey, Greece, and Macedonia. He was martyred on a X-shaped cross.



## Parent TALK

"Why can't I have a Nintendo Switch like Ethan?" Eddie complained. It seemed every conversation lately circled back to his friend's cooler video games, bigger house, or better clothes.



One afternoon, I stepped into his bedroom and spotted an expensive Lego set abandoned on the floor. I sighed. Somehow, everything he had was becoming invisible next to what he wanted.

So, I taped a sheet of paper to the refrigerator and challenged each of us to write down one thing we appreciated each day. At first, Eddie's answers were simple: Legos, chips, books. But then he put more thought into his answers: A safe place to sleep, fun friends, people who loved him, and God's love.

After a month, Eddie was tickled by the more than thirty blessings he'd listed. His life hadn't changed, but the way he saw it had. Comparison magnified what was missing. Gratitude revealed what was already there.

**Our Mission**

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children

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