

# Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

January 2025

St. James Church

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## Thoughtful Moments

### St. André Bessette

Born in Montreal, Canada, Alfred Bessette joined the Congregation of the Holy Cross at twenty-five, taking the name "André," and was the doorkeeper for their school for almost forty years. During an epidemic, everyone in his care was miraculously healed with blessed oil from a lamp burning before a statue of St. Joseph. With help and donations, he built a beautiful chapel to St. Joseph. He never saw its completion. The modern chapel still overlooks Montreal today.

### Honor the Lord's Name

When someone invites us to use his or her first name, it's a sign of trust and friendship. God honors us by allowing us to use His Name. Starting this month, strive to treat the Holy Name of Jesus with the love and reverence owed to Him and encourage others to do the same.

"If you pray together, you will stay together and love each other as God loves each one of you"

St. Teresa of Calcutta



## Celebrate your Catholic family

Catholics possess a profound and unique identity, one that strengthens our families and enriches the Church as a whole. As St. John Paul II reminds us, "Christian marriage and family build up the Church" (*Familiaris Consortio*, #15).

Embrace this sacred calling—celebrate your family's Catholic identity.

Catholic parents serve as living instruments of God's love.

Through us, our children first encounter the boundless love of God, shaping their relationship with Him and nurturing their faith.

In Catholic families, children learn self-respect and dignity. They understand their worth because we care deeply about their actions, hold them accountable, and guide them as followers of Christ.

Harmony is a pledge of Catholic households. Parents strive to create an environment of structure and support, fostering good manners, respectful behavior, and a shared sense of belonging.

Catholics are also called to practice modesty, controlling passions and upholding purity. As parents, we make challenging but essential decisions to ensure our children reflect the dignity of temples of the Holy Spirit.

Sacrifice is a hallmark of a Catholic family. We prioritize the needs of family, parish, and community over personal desires.

Catholic families center our lives on God. That means attending Sunday Mass, sacraments, service to the vulnerable, and observing the liturgical year. Living our faith joyfully, we become radiant signs of hope for the world.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why do Catholics have a long Christmas season?

For Catholics, Christmas is more than a single day—it is an entire liturgical season known as Christmastide. It begins on December 25, and ends on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (January 12) or, in older calendars, on the Feast of the Presentation (February 2, also called, Candlemas).

Second only to Easter, Christmas is one of the most significant celebrations

of the Church year. It commemorates the birth of the King of Kings, when God became man—sinless and perfect—to save and redeem humanity. Recognizing the profound joy, hope, and transformative nature of this event, the Church dedicates ample time to honor and reflect on its meaning.



## Simple acts of kindness

Jesus was clear that He wants us to be kind to everyone. In the famous parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus told of a man who was robbed and left for dead. The man was ignored by a priest and a Levite before a Samaritan man helped him. The Samaritan – supposedly an enemy – demonstrated true kindness. Jesus told us to do the same. (Luke 11:34)

**Teach children to value people first.** When Ashley tripped playing basketball and missed the game-winning basket,



her teammates gave her dirty looks and ignored her as she lay on the floor holding her ankle. It was a member of the other team who was kind enough to help her up.

**Encourage acts of kindness.** Gerry noticed that the new boy at school seemed sad. It turned out that Sammy’s dad lost his job and money was tight and they had to move to a smaller house far from friends. Gerry began packing an extra sandwich in his lunch for Sammy, sat next to him in the cafeteria, and played together at recess. Both boys made a good friend.

### Scripture LESSON

#### Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21; The Good News

In this passage, Jesus had returned home to Nazareth and taught in the synagogue. He read the prophecy of Isaiah about the coming of the Messiah, who would come to “bring glad tidings to the poor.” Then, to the surprise of his listeners, He said, “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.” He announced He was the long-awaited Messiah.

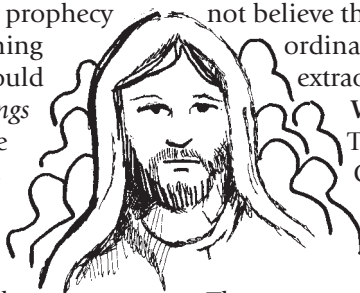
His listeners must have been shocked. Jews at the time expected the Messiah to be a powerful political and military leader who would liberate

them from Roman rule and restore Israel to glory. Jesus’ neighbors could not believe that someone familiar and ordinary could fulfill such an extraordinary role.

#### What can a parent do?

The Good News is that God came to save us, heal us, and set us free from sin. He wants us ready for love and eternal life.

There are people who need to hear the Good News of God’s saving love. Teach children that by helping those in need, praying for them, and doing what’s right even when it’s hard, they are sharing the Good News.



### Parent TALK

We are blessed to have a Perpetual Adoration Chapel in our parish. I wanted to bring my children for a visit but the idea of getting youngsters to sit quietly seemed impossible.

One Saturday, there was a gap in our schedule. On a whim, I drove us to church. I explained, “We’re going to visit Jesus for a few minutes. We can pray together or you can talk to Jesus quietly in your heart. Then we will go home.”



The children were amazed by how peaceful and quiet the chapel was. They were fascinated that “the King” was waiting for them in the “gold box,” and that they had all His attention.

After about seven minutes, they got antsy, so we left. At home, I asked if anyone wanted to visit Jesus again. Every hand went up. Now, they look forward to their private time with the King every weekend.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**January 12 – The Baptism of the Lord** (1st century). Jesus began His public ministry with baptism by St. John the Baptist. Jesus was free of sin, but He allowed Himself to be baptized to “fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). Thus, Jesus declared His willingness to fulfill God’s saving plan.

**January 17 – St. Anthony of Egypt** (c.356). St. Anthony gave up riches for a life of simplicity in the desert. Eventually, other men seeking the same lifestyle followed him and he formed a community of hermits, making him the founder of monasticism.

**January 20 – St. Fabian** (c.250). During his long reign as pope, St. Fabian organized Rome into seven districts, condemned a troublesome heresy in Africa, and founded churches in France. He was martyred during the Decian persecutions.

**January 28 – St. Thomas Aquinas** (c.1274). St. Thomas Aquinas was a Dominican friar and a great Catholic theologian whose writings on the Faith earned him the titles, “Doctor of the Church” and the “Angelic Doctor.” He taught and wrote extensively. His works are still fundamental to Christian education today.



#### Our Mission

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