



ARCHDIOCESE OF  
**NEW ORLEANS**

Office of Marriage and Family Life

## **Family Day 2020, Sunday, September 27**

### ***“Finding a way...”***

**The purpose of Family Day is to promote and strengthen all families and the parish family.**

This is a particularly difficult task in these days of pandemic and social distancing. Family Day would normally provide our parishes an opportunity for families to gather together, to renew friendships, to form new ones, and to cultivate an appreciation for the importance and goodness of family life in the parish. As in all areas of ministry, the current environment calls us to new and creative solutions. Perhaps Family Day cannot be celebrated in the same way as the parish has in the past. At the same time, perhaps your parish feels a greater need than ever to reaffirm and celebrate the joy of the community of families that makes up the parish. This year we encourage and empower our families to “Find a Way” to respond to the social needs of the parish community to make Family Day an opportunity to try something different to help our families connect in this difficult time.

The **enclosed resources** are aids to assist your parish in planning for Family Day:

- Bulletin Insert Text\*
- Liturgical Helps for Family Day Celebration
- Suggestion for Prayers of the Faithful
- Family Blessing\*

Digital assets will be made available at <https://nolacatholic.org/digital-toolkit-1> by September 8.

\* These handouts can be copied and distributed to parishioners via the parish bulletin and school newsletter, in classrooms and at organizational meetings.

**Check our website [nolacatholic.org/mfl](https://nolacatholic.org/mfl), or call (504) 861-6247 with your plans for Family Day or for more information on ministering to/with families in your parish.**

## **Bulletin Insert text for Family Day: September 27, 2020**

### **“Finding a way...”**

We all know this is a challenging time. God in His providence for us has given us a difficult task in 2020! Fortunately, God has not left us alone. He has given us a tremendous resource to help us find a way to overcome our some of the uncertainty we face, a resource that has always been with us, but so often overlooked – our families!

Families have always lived and even thrived through difficult times. Family life is not easy. It isn't meant to be easy. It is meant to be a series of challenges, one after the other, that help us to grow in solidarity, virtue, and love with one another. What married couple, for example, hasn't come to a place where they say to one another “I don't know what we'll do next, but we'll find a way”? And with some creativity, some hard work, and the help of the grace of God, they usually do! It is amazing to look back on our family histories and see to our surprise how cooperating with God and using our wits we have indeed found a way!

Why is it that families can so often “find a way” during a challenging times? It is our love for one another, our sense of responsibility towards one another, that makes giving up on one another an impossibility. Nothing else will call from us a greater generosity and effort for the good of another than the love we have for our family. And that is just what is needed during this time! Your family life, in the midst of your parish and community, even though it faces many challenges and difficulties, is necessary and beautiful and a great source of goodness. In the past, you have found a way with the help of Grace to overcome many obstacles. Have confidence that your love for one another can teach you to find a way to overcome the difficulties that we are all facing together these days! Families that reach out to one another and respond to one another's needs for friendship, consolation, and help can contribute to overcoming the present difficulties in ways that no other institution can. It will take some grit, some effort, and a reliance on the grace of God to do it, but it can be done! It is a great and beautiful task that our Father has asked us to take on in this time and place. It may not always be easy, but do not be afraid to take up this challenge and find a way!

- **Think of a time in your family's past when you were unsure of where to go or what to do? Set aside some time to talk about it with each other, perhaps over a family meal. What were you worried about? How did God help you through that time? What doors were opened and which were closed? Were you surprised by how it worked out? You may be surprised to learn how others in your family experienced that time.**
- **God doesn't typically tell us beforehand how He plans to work things out. Rather, Jesus tells us “do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.” He wants us to stay focused on the good we can do now! Set aside some time to pray today. Ask the Lord to help you to trust him with your worries for tomorrow and ask him what he wants you to focus on today.**
- **People are separated and isolated more than ever before. Is there some way you can reach out to another family, to lend a hand or just to touch base? Is there a way you can help build or renew much needed friendships in your parish or community?**

## **Homily Suggestion for Family Day, Sunday, September 27, 2020**

*Reading 1 EZ 18:25-28*

*Responsorial Psalm PS 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14*

*Reading 2 PHIL 2:1-11*

*Gospel MT 21:28-32*

Jesus tells the story of a father who asks his sons to “go out and work in the vineyard today.” One says “I will not” but later thinks better of it and goes. The other says “Yes, Sir” but fails to follow through. Jesus asks, “Which of the two did his father's will?” It is curious that Jesus doesn't present to us a third son, the one that says both “Yes Sir” and goes to work. Wouldn't it be this one who truly does the will of the father? What father or mother doesn't long for the day when they will give their child a task, hear them say “Yes Sir!”, and then see them go get it done. That would be amazing!

But that's not what always happens, is it? No, in the real life of a family children rarely listen carefully to instructions, understand what needs to be done, diligently work through the task and complete it correctly and thoroughly – all on the first bounce without any help. Children are not typically so competent and they need from their parents a lot of instruction, and encouragement, and patience before they can fulfill their duties well. That's what parenting is all about!

So it is not surprising, really, when a child says “I will do it” and then gets distracted or neglects their task. That happens all the time with children (and very often with adults!). It is also not that surprising for a child to sometimes stamp their foot and say “I will not!” even when they know they know better. Nobody likes being told what to do, so we all rebel from time to time. A good father or mother knows this about their children and doesn't expect anything different from them. But that doesn't stop them from giving their children responsibilities and assigning them tasks. They do this because they have hope! They hope that by calling them again and again to ever greater responsibility, their children will eventually gain fortitude and courage and grit. It is the task of parents to call children out of themselves and teach them to put forth an effort for the sake of the others. In a word, parents give tasks to their children, knowing all along that that they will be bad at accomplishing them, because what they want isn't so much for the tasks to be done, but to teach them to love.

This is how the first son truly accomplishes the will of the father. The work that the first son completes isn't the work in the field, but the work in his heart. He is able to see what he should do and has the humility, courage, and grit to change. When does, he goes into the field, not as a servant who is simply obeying orders, but as a true son who has learned how to cooperate with his father in doing the work of the family. His work in the field becomes an act of love!

This is the will of the Father for us: that our work, whatever it is that God is asking us to do from day to day, become an act of love for Him and for one another. He invites us to cooperate with him with the gifts and the freedom that He has given us for this purpose. And he asks us to be patient with one another, just as he is patient with us, when we fail or stray down the wrong path.

Today is Family Day in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. On this day, let us give thanks for the life that comes to us through our families. Let pray for one another that we will allow the love and patience of the Father to soften our hearts and give us the courage of the first son to turn back and cooperate in the good work of His family.

### **Prayers of Intercession:**

- For world leaders that they may prioritize families as the sacred foundation of human development.
- For the Church, that our pastors may work to guide families to understand their great mission and to receive the mercy and help that God provides.
- For all families, that we may be moved to give ourselves without fear in love for one another.
- For families who are deeply wounded by brokenness, abuse, and neglect, that they may experience the healing and hope that only God can provide.
- For all those affected by the COVID 19 pandemic, the sick, the quarantined, and those experiencing isolation and uncertainty, that they may experience security and love through the openness of families from our parish community.

### **Family Blessing:**

We bless your name, O Lord,  
for sending your own incarnate Son  
to become part of a family,  
so that, as he lived within its sufferings and its joys,  
he would be present and provide newness of life  
to all families.

We ask you, Lord,  
to protect and watch over these families,  
so that in the strength of your grace  
and in the depth of your mercy  
their members may enjoy prosperity,  
possess the priceless gift of your peace,  
and as the Church alive in the home,  
bear witness in this world to your glory.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

[adapted from the Book of Blessings]