



BUILDING THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

Living the Faith at Home

SEPTEMBER'S THEME: THE HOLY CROSS

Introducing “Building the Domestic Church”!

“Building the Domestic Church” is a weekly newsletter from your Faith Formation staff at Holy Rosary (Sr. Stella Abellon in Children's Ministry, Bridget Bicek in Youth Ministry, Robert King in Adult Evangelization, with help from Deyette Swegle and Sarah Goins). We'll provide resources to live out your Catholic faith at home, especially when many of us are spending more time than normal at home.

We hope this weekly newsletter will help you to encounter Christ in your own homes, receive his love in your own hearts, and share his love with your family.

In Christ,

Bridget, Robert, and Sr. Stella

How Does it Work?

We recommend taking some time together as a household, although you can benefit from reflecting individually as well. You can take as little as ten minutes, or set aside a full hour, or anything in between.

1. Read the Scriptures out loud; take turns reading, if you can
2. Read the reflection on the readings
3. Discuss the reflection and the Scriptures, either as a household or in groups according to your age.
You can use the Questions as starting points for your discussion!

September's Theme: The Holy Cross

September's theme is the Holy Cross. Resources to help live out this month's theme, including individual and family activities, videos, and projects to enliven your home, are on our website here: <https://holyrosaryseattle.org/domestic-church>

This month's resources include:

- How to make a cross for your home
- Ways to "take up your cross" as individuals and as a family
- How to address the cross of loneliness, especially with teens

Readings for September 27, the 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time:

- **Ezekiel 18:25–28** — *If we turn from the wickedness we have committed, we shall live, we shall not die*
- **Psalms 25** — *Remember your mercies, O Lord*
- **Philippians 2:1–11** — *Have the attitude of Christ, who though he is God, emptied himself and came as a human, accepting even death on a cross*
- **Matthew 21:28–32** — *Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you*

The full text of the readings can be found at <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/091320.cfm>

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Reflection on the Readings by Sr. Stella Abellon

The gospel presents a dichotomy between those who respond positively, but don't follow through and those who respond negatively, but eventually do what is right.

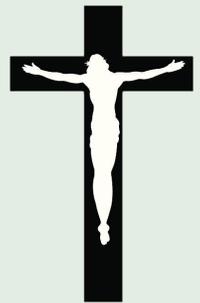
The actions of the first son were commendable: after saying “no” to the request of his father, he repented, had a change of heart, and worked in the vineyard. To reach this decision he must have spent some time thinking, contemplating and listening to his heart. He received the virtue and grace of obedience and was able to freely respect and act on the will of his father. This son's heart was open to change.

The second son's verbal “yes” became a “no” with his actions. We may often find ourselves in a similar situation. We too must spend time contemplating and listening to our hearts, so that we will have clarity of conscience and discern right from wrong. Jesus searches the heart and is not fooled with empty words and promises. Let us pause, pray and examine our actions daily. St. Ignatius developed a daily “examen” and encouraged his followers to do these five steps every day: <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/how-can-i-pray/> This week, make an effort to do this examen at the end of your day

Responding to God's will isn't easy. We possess both the first and the second son's attitude in responding to God's call. At the end our lives, our judgment will be based more on our actions, rather than the hastiness of our words. When our hearts are open and honest, we will find God's gift of courage to do the Father's will, both in this life and eternally.

September's Theme: The Holy Cross

Every month, we'll propose a theme that all the households of our parish can live out together. September's theme is the Holy Cross, centered on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on Monday, September 14. This feast celebrates both Christ's victory over sin and death that he accomplished through the cross, and also the recovery of relics of Jesus's cross by St. Helena.



Questions for Parents:

- As parents, you stand in the place of God in many ways for your children. How do you show God's love, justice, and mercy when your children don't do what they said they'd do?
- You also stand with your children as children of God. How do you ask their forgiveness when you don't keep a promise you made?

Questions for Children:

- Have your parents or teachers asked you to do something and your answer is "no", but then do what they asked you to do? How does it feel doing what you've been asked to do?
- Have you ever not kept a promise? When you didn't follow through, how did it make the other person feel? How did Jesus feel about it?
- Before making your choices, ask yourself: Is this a choice Jesus would make?

Questions for Adults:

- How well do you keep your word? Do you make promises you don't keep? Do you say "no" but do "yes"? How can you sync up your word and actions?
- How often do you examine your conscience? Have you ever tried St. Ignatius' examen prayer? Would you try it as a household?

Questions for Teens:

- Do you resonate with the first or second son's response to their father? Why is that?
- Sometimes we feel uncomfortable changing our minds and admitting when we're at fault. What lesson is Jesus teaching us about repentance and God's unconditional love?
- Remember a time you were wrong. How did you feel? (Some possibilities: shame, jealousy, sorrow.) How do you think God responds?