



St. Anthony de Padua

Catholic Parish · Established 1948

March 16, 2020

Dear St. Anthony de Padua Parish Family,

The extraordinary circumstances we've suddenly found ourselves living in actually give us a tremendous opportunity to reconnect with our families in beautiful, intimate ways that may have been lost over the years amidst the world's many distractions. At the present time, the people of Italy, the country currently most deeply affected by the pandemic, are singing, playing musical instruments, and conversing with one another from their balconies. One Italian citizen said, "This is the most alive I've ever seen my block!" Let us use this time to build the Domestic Churches that are our families, our remote, St. Anthony's apart from our St. Anthony de Padua Catholic Parish. I want to thank Fr. Andrew Budzinski, a priest of our diocese, for assistance in coming up with this spiritual action plan. Here are a few suggestions:

PRAY TOGETHER AS A DOMESTIC CHURCH: I encourage every family and individual of St. Anthony de Padua Catholic Parish to pray a daily rosary. Do this together as a family. Let your family members take turns leading the decades. If you need a refresher course, Google it. Ask Our Lady, the Mother of Divine Love and Health of the Sick, to intercede with us for the life of the world.

COOK AND EAT TOGETHER AS A DOMESTIC CHURCH: The entire family eating together at the dining table has been lost over the years. Get the kids involved: teach them how to cook, family recipes, chopping and dicing. They'll love eating food they made.

READ THE SUNDAY GOSPEL TOGETHER AS A FAMILY: Visit [52Sundays.com](https://www.52Sundays.com), a website of the Archdiocese of Detroit, for the Sunday Gospel, dinner recipes, and more.

RESIST THE PHONE AND SPEND TIME TOGETHER IN COMMON AREAS: The last thing we need right now is more isolation of the unhealthy sort. Don't let the phone exile each family member to separate rooms or eliminate conversation. Set a time limit for phone use and enforce it.

WHATEVER YOUR USE OF TV AND COMPUTER FOR NEWS, REDUCE IT BY 90% AND DO SOMETHING REAL. The 10% of time remaining to keep yourself informed day by day will be more than enough to remain updated without becoming enslaved to the endlessly recycled negative feedback loop of the media environment. Be an active participant in real life rather than a passive, terrified consumer of misery.

PLAY MUSIC: One of the reasons why people are tempted to sing less and less in church is because many of us have stopped playing music in our homes. Give your neighbors a pleasant surprise and stick the speakers in the window. If you play a musical instrument, play it on the front porch as weather allows.

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHTS: I hear Disney+ is releasing Frozen 2, but actually you can do better! Go for the gold: Seek out the best, most edifying and inspiring movies you can find or other people can recommend, films that leave you feeling ennobled and inspired rather than washed-out or otherwise diminished.



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BOARD GAMES: Not just “Bored Games.” My family and I played Trivial Pursuit a couple weeks ago before all this mess. It was the most interaction we’ve had with one another in a long time. Most of it was civil.

READ: I hear people say all the time, “I’m so busy. I wish I had more time to read.” Here’s your opportunity.

LEARN ABOUT YOUR CATHOLIC FAITH: Visit formed.org for an abundance of great Catholic videos, courses, movies and other resources. It is for free this month on our parish website.

DECORATE YOUR DOMESTIC CHURCH: Is the Crucifix prominently placed in your home? Do you have a pictures of Jesus, Mary, and the Saints, on the walls? Commission your children to be modern-day *Michelangelos* and *Raphael*s and have them draw, color or paint. Let them paint the living room ceiling like the Sistine Chapel. What’s the worst that could happen?

DADS, YOU ARE THE PRIESTS: Our kids are giving up the faith in droves. Statistics show that when dads do not practice the faith, only 2% of their children will practice the faith. Even if mom practices, if dad does not, in those cases only 3% of children practice the faith. Dads are the key. Dads, you are responsible for getting your wives and children to Heaven. Our kids are leaving the faith in droves---that’s the worst pandemic! It’s time to step up. You are to lead your family in your daily rosary, in daily prayer, reading of the Sunday Gospel together. You are the priests of your family, your domestic church. The salvation of your family literally depends on you.

FINALLY, A TIP FOR EVERYONE: USE THE CALENDAR AS AN INSTRUMENT OF PRAYER, SETTING ASIDE TOGETHER A NEW, WORKABLE SCHEDULE ADAPTED NOT JUST TO THE LIMITATIONS BUT THE ADDED OPPORTUNITIES OF THESE DAYS. If we don’t actively order our time, we will waste it and feel distracted and miserable. Now is the time to be more creatively involved in educating our children about what is most important and the best ways to learn it.

KEEP CHECKING OUR WEBSITE---STASB.ORG---FOR MORE PARISH UPDATES AND RESOURCES. IN AND FOR CHRIST, WE ARE IN THIS TO WIN THIS. AS THE HYMN SINGS, “WE’LL TRIUMPH THROUGH OUR SORROWS AND RISE TO BLESS HIM STILL!”

God Bless,

Fr. Bob Garrow