

Ordinary Time: Saturdays

Early Church history and tradition teaches that each day of the week has a theme which can help us to celebrate ordinary time. Saturday is dedicated to Our Blessed Mother. Pope Paul VI's apostolic exhortation *Marialis Cultus* (56) states: "The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship." At Fátima, Mary asked all people to honor on the first Saturdays of five consecutive months by attending Mass and confession, saying the Rosary, and meditating for fifteen minutes on one or more of the mysteries of the Rosary. Even if you are unable to make this devotion, any special remembrance of Our Blessed Mother would be a step in the right direction. Fresh flowers at a central image, a decade of the Rosary after dinner, or any offering, will be gladly accepted by Our Mother, who longs for our love and affection.

Make a Marian Shrine

You'll need:

- an empty shoebox
- picture or small statue of the Blessed Mother
- a plant clippings or colored paper.

Set the shoebox on its side, inside the lid. Paste an image of the Blessed Mother inside the box and decorate around her using colored paper, or real flowers and greenery. This can become a centerpiece for dinner and be used as a focal point during your family's "after-dinner decade" of the Rosary.

Marian Pancakes

You'll need an empty squeeze bottle; pancake batter; blueberries; and simple pictures of Marian symbols to copy such as a lily; a crown; a heart; a rose; a star; the sun and/or moon; the letter M. (You might want to include blue food coloring.) Be ready to show the children detailed

pictures of the symbols on their plates and talk about what they mean!

Squeeze the batter out in shapes on the griddle, then cook. Use leftover blueberries or whipped cream for decoration. The pictures may need a child's imagination to be understood, but the image will be set in their mind's eye!

Start a Novena

Start a novena today to the Blessed Mother (choose one from the novena section). First decide on an intention (mothers, women, families, or a related specific issue), then choose a time of day for the rest of the week that would be best for all participating. Ideally everyone should be able to participate. Use your Marian shrine as a focal point during prayer, or a picture of Our Lady.

Make Mom Queen for Today!

One title for the Blessed Mother (found in litanies) is "Queen of the Angels and Saints." Our earthly mothers are "queens," too. You'll need paper; tape; crayons and/or markers; and scissors.

Make a crown for mom that says "Queen of the (Smith) House" and a heart to pin on her blouse listing all of the family names. Plan to take care of all of mom's chores for the day (including dishes after dinner!). A special prayer and/or blessing should be given before dinner by the eldest child or the father.

Thank a Spiritual Mother

All women are called to motherhood, whether it be physical or spiritual. Often there are many spiritual mothers in a child's life, and it is important for both the child and the spiritual mother to be aware of and thankful for this relationship. A spiritual mother might be a babysitter, a teacher, a family friend, an aunt, grandmother, confirmation sponsor, neighbor,

or any woman that fulfills a nurturing role in the child's life.

You'll need construction paper; markers and/or crayons; glue; large envelope. You might want to include pictures of spiritual mothers. Help your children identify the spiritual mothers in their lives (pictures would be useful for this). Each child should choose one person for whom to make a thank-you card. Write a thanksgiving prayer for the inside and invoke the Blessed Mother to help and guide the spiritual mother.

Prepare for Sunday!

Clean house and bake Edelweiss Coffeecake for tomorrow's brunch. It's a delectable coffeecake traditionally served with coffee to guests on Sunday afternoons:

Ingredients:

- 2 packages dry yeast
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. warm water
- 2 eggs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. sugar
- about 6 c. flour
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ c. milk
- 1 c. confectioner's sugar
- 1 stick ($\frac{1}{4}$ lb.) sweet butter
- $\frac{2}{3}$ -1 c. butter at room temperature
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- grated rind of 1 lemon
- 1 c. chopped or ground blanched almonds

Dissolve yeast in the warm water (100°-110°) in large bowl. Stir in one tablespoon of sugar. Let sit until frothy. In saucepan, scald the milk. Add the butter, remaining sugar, and the salt. Stir until butter is melted. Cool to lukewarm. Add

the lemon rind and cinnamon and beat in eggs. Add to yeast mixture. Stir in two cups of the flour and beat with wooden smooth until smooth. Gradually add enough of remaining flour to make a soft, non-sticky dough.

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead for about 10 minutes, until dough is smooth and elastic and blisters form on the surface. Place dough in a greased bowl, turning to grease the top. Cover with towel or plastic wrap and let rise in draft-free spot until doubled in bulk, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

Preheat oven to 350° . Punch dough down, divide into two or three parts (depending if you prefer two large or three small cakes). Grease two baking sheets or three pie pans. Form the dough into two large, round, flat coffeecakes on the baking sheets, or pat into pie pans.

Prepare the topping: Cream the confectioner's sugar with the butter. Stir in the vanilla and almonds. Sprinkle onto the dough. Let rise again until doubled in bulk, about 45 minutes.

Bake at 350° for about 45 minutes, or until golden brown. Yields: Two large or three small coffeecakes.

P.S. These coffeecakes freeze well. You can add raisins or currants, or substitute other nuts for the almonds. For tomorrow's menu, you may also make quiche, cut fruit, and bake muffins today. If possible, all preparations should be done today.

Discuss Justice

Justice is the moral virtue which consists in the constant and firm will to give due to God and neighbor. The just man, spoken of in the Sacred Scriptures, is one who habitually thinks rightly and whose conduct is upright towards his neighbor.

“You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor” (Leviticus 19:15).

Discussion: Since justice has to do with one’s actions, more so than one’s thoughts, discuss just actions. What do we owe God, in justice? (Everything!) What do we owe our neighbor, in justice? What would Christ say?

Movie Time

Rent the movie Song of Bernadette, or get a children’s movie about the Blessed Mother such as The Day the Sun Danced or Bernadette from CCC Video. Watch as a family.

“The Most Important Person on earth is a mother. She cannot claim the honor of having built the Notre Dame Cathedral. She need not. She had built something more magnificent than any cathedral – a dwelling for an immortal soul, the tiny perfection of her baby’s body. . . . The angels have not been blessed with such a grace. They cannot share in God’s creative miracle to bring new saints to Heaven. Only a human mother can. Mothers are closer to God the Creator than any other creature; God joins forces with mothers in performing this act of creation. . . . What on God’s good earth is more glorious than this: to be a mother?” – Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty

Honor Mary

Do a small sacrifice in honor of Mary today such as: saying a Memorare, three Hail Marys, and the Angelus at noon.

Attend Mass as a Family

One of the titles of the Blessed Mother, found in the Litany of Loreto, is “Health of the Sick.” After Mass today would be a good time to visit a nursing home or any housebound parishioners. Ask your pastor for information on these. Bring flowers to cheer the day of the sick and housebound!

Make a Rosary Shrine

Set up a special shrine inside or outside your home at which to say the Rosary together. Say the Rosary (Joyful, Sorrowful, or Glorious Mysteries) as a family. Look up the Bible references for the mysteries and read them before each decade.

Joyful Mysteries

- Annunciation – Luke 1:26-38
- Visitation – Luke 1:39-47
- Nativity – Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-7
- Presentation – Luke 2:22-40
- Finding in the Temple – Luke 2:41-52

Mystical Rose

You'll need any number of fresh roses in various colors (if not possible, then a picture or two will do); watercolor paints in the colors of the roses; and watercolor paper or construction paper.

One title of the Blessed Mother is "Mystical Rose." Using a pencil, sketch one or more roses, then paint them to look "mystical." Hang the pictures near a statue or shrine of the Blessed Mother. Put the fresh roses in vases around the statue or picture.

Review Your Week and Celebrate

Review this week of imitating Mary. How did you do? Celebrate with a special dessert called Scrumptious Sundaes. It used to be that this ice cream dessert was only eaten on the Lord's day, thus the name "sundae."

You'll need one or more kinds of ice cream and/or sherbet; chocolate, hot fudge, butterscotch, and/or marshmallow sauce; fresh or frozen fruit; and various toppings, such as nuts or

candy.

Let everyone concoct their favorite combination in fancy cups or bowls, and serve.

Weekend Retreat

Plan to spend a weekend together at home or away. Come up with a theme that relates to your family's own spiritual journey. This is an especially good time to have discussions with your children on things that concern them deeply and intimately, such as the mysteries of childbirth, or, for older children, dating and marriage. Whatever the topics of discussion, the atmosphere should be prayerful, reflective, and somewhat structured.

A sample schedule might be:

- 7 a.m. Mass
- 8:15 a.m. Breakfast (together)
- 9:15 a.m. Introduction to the plan and purpose; father leads
- 9:45 a.m. Discussion of "Family Motto"; mother leads
- 10:30 a.m. Write family motto on poster board and decorate (all)
- 11:30 a.m. Silent prayer and reflection (in church if possible): How do I live the family motto? How can I?
- Noon Angelus
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 2 p.m. Split into groups: boys with Dad, girls with Mom (if all children same sex, one parent gets further reflection time). Discuss the parent's particular role as men or women in the family.
- 3 p.m. One-on-one time with parents to talk about each child's particular spiritual/moral life
- 4 p.m. Silent prayer and reflection
- 5 p.m. Dinner
- 6 p.m. Rosary

- 6:30 p.m. Family reading
- 7 p.m. Inspirational movie such as The Miracle of Marcelino or A Man For All Seasons (older children and adults).

Sunday – Continue your family retreat following morning Mass. Sunday's schedule can be less intensive and more celebratory. Be sure to give closure to the family motto and individual discussions. Set family and individual goals and plan when to check on them, such as during a family meeting.

Memorize a Mary Prayer

Memorize a new prayer to Mary such as the Memorare or the Hail Holy Queen:

Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

(The Memorare is attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux.)

Perform an Act of Charity

Remember the Visitation, when the Blessed Mother visited her cousin Elizabeth in her time of need. Is there anyone you know who would appreciate a visit and some help?

Write a Mary Poem

As a creative family project, write poetry together in honor of Our Lady. A poem written in the cinquain style is constructed as follows:

Cinquain

- Line 1 – Consists of a noun with two syllables
- Line 2 – Uses adjectives totaling four syllables
- Line 3 – Words ending in “ing” totaling six syllables
- Line 4 – Sentence or phrase using eight syllables
- Line 5 – Synonym of line one, also with two syllables

Example:

Mary

Pure and gentle

Waiting, loving, giving

Let us honor and imitate

Mother

Now, in your family time, try to write some of your own.

Some more suggestions:

- Make a pilgrimage to a nearby Marian shrine or cathedral.
- Do a sacrifice in her honor for reparation.
- Read about Our Lady of Fátima, Our Lady of Lourdes, or another apparition of Our Lady.
- Following Mary’s requests in her appearances in Fátima, follow the guidelines of the First Saturday Devotion: On five consecutive first Saturdays, attend Mass and confession, meditate on some part of the mysteries in front of the Blessed Sacrament, and say a Rosary. (See May, Mary’s month.)
- Read about the history of St. Dominic and the Rosary. How did it start and why?
- Research the Brown Scapular and the promises that go with it.