

Smart Martha Presents: Simple and Meaningful Celebrations for your Family

January Celebrations

FOR YOU TO PRINT OUT AND PUT ON YOUR REFRIGERATOR

January 1st, Mary, Mother of God

This feast day actually has 3 feasts that are celebrated on this day. The first is the Octave of Christmas or the 8th day of Christmas. The second is the Circumcision of Our Lord. According to Jewish tradition, all male babies were circumcised on the 8th day after their birth. And finally, what we are most familiar with because it is one of the Holy Days of Obligation, Mary, Mother of God.

And we can all also include a 4th celebration, New Year's Day! These 4 celebrations all can be connected and serve a similar meaning. To state this simply, it is the dedication of our lives, particularly in this new coming year, to Christ through Mary.

To Do:

Attending Mass together either today or yesterday evening should be a focal point of this Marian celebration.

Dinnertime Conversation:

Don't forget those New Year's resolutions. There's nothing wrong with encouraging a new habit or breaking an old one, even though some may think that New Year's resolutions are trite. These make fun dinnertime conversations. Once a resolution is announced to the rest of the family, it makes it a little harder to break that resolution, at least while everyone still remembers.

To Pray:

The Glorious (or Joyful) Mysteries of the Rosary



January 4,
Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821)

Canonized by Pope Paul VI September 14, 1975
First American Born Saint-born in New York City
Patroness of Catholic Education, Death of Children, Problem with in-laws



As a married woman, mother, educator, and convert to the Catholic faith, I have found St. Elizabeth Ann Seton a personal inspiration for my life.

To Do:

If you are within an hour or Emmitsburg, Maryland, near Gettysburg, take a trip to the shrine. Here is their site, <http://www.setonheritage.org/>.

Or take the 5-minute virtual tour from their site which also gives you a little history of Elizabeth Ann Seton and the sisters of Charity. (Click the bottom right "Your Visit to the Seton Shrine.")

To Pray: Prayer by Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Lord Jesus, Who was born for us in a stable, lived for us a life of pain and sorrow, and died for us upon a cross; say for us in the hour of death, Father, forgive, and to Your Mother, Behold your child. Say to us, this day you shall be with Me in paradise. Dear Savior, leave us not, forsake us not. We thirst for You, Fountain of Living Water. Our days pass quickly along, soon all will be consummated for us. To Your hands we commend our spirits, now and forever. Amen.

Sunday, Epiphany "Three Kings Day!"

To Do:

The Epiphany Household Blessing: Chalking of the Door

Get your house blessed today. A priest can do this or just Dad. You need chalk. (Which you can also get blessed by your priest at church this Sunday. He'll know what to do.) You write these symbols on the side or over the doorpost of your front door. (20-C-M-B-12--the initials of the three wise men [Caspar, Melchoir, Balshazzar], which can also be interpreted to mean *Christus mansionem benedicat* [Christ bless this home]) You can go to my web page to see ours.

Leader: At the end of these days of Christmastide, we keep this Feast of Epiphany. We celebrate Christ made known to the Magi, to John in the River Jordan, and to the disciples at the wedding in Cana. Today Christ is made known to us! Today this home is a holy place!

Leader: Peace be to this house and to all who enter here.

Leader: Let us pray. O God, who by the guidance of a star didst on this day manifest Thine only-begotten Son to the Gentiles, mercifully grant that we who know Thee by faith may also attain the vision of Thy glorious majesty. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: Be enlightened, be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee—Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary.

All: And the Gentiles shall walk in Thy light and kings in the splendor of Thy rising, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee.

Take (blessed) chalk (of any color) and mark on the lintel of your front door 20 + C + M + B + 11 saying:

Leader: The Magi, **C** Caspar, **M** Melchior, **B** and Balthasar ...came from the east to Bethlehem to adore the Lord. "They went into the house, and when they saw the child with His mother Mary, they knelt down and worshiped him. They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and presented them to Him." [Matthew 2:11]

20 two thousand **12** years ago.

May + Christ (*Christus*), + our Home (*Mansionem*) + Bless (*Benedicat*) + and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.

Reader: A reading from Proverbs 24:3-4: "Through wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established; By knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches."

Reader: A reading from Isaiah 32:16-18 : "Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, And righteousness remain in the fruitful field. The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, In secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places, "

Leader: Let us pray. Bless, O Lord God almighty, this home, that in it there may be health, purity, the strength of victory, humility, goodness and mercy, the fulfillment of Thy law, and thanksgiving to God the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. May this blessing remain upon this home and upon all who dwell herein. May we never forget Christ is present in the love and care we manifest to each other daily. May all who come rejoice to find Christ living among us as we seek and serve, in everyone we meet, that same Jesus who is Thine incarnate Word. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: Lord, remember your children and teach us to pray:

All: Our Father...

People may make the sign of the cross in remembrance of their baptism.

Leader: May the Lord watch + over our going out and our coming in, from this time forth and forevermore.

All: Amen.

To Pray at your meal or bedtime: From the Collect of today's Mass

Collect: May the splendor of your majesty, O Lord, we pray, shed its light upon our hearts, that we may pass through the shadows of this world and reach the brightness of our eternal home. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.



Kings

Sunday after Epiphany, Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord

<http://christiananswers.net/kids/clr-jesus-baptized.pdf>



Here is the Catholic rite of Renewal of Baptismal Promises:

Do you reject Satan?

I do.

And all his works?

I do.

And all his empty promises?

I do.

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

I do.

God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven all our sins. May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ for ever and ever.

Amen.

And the collect from Mass today that you could say at dinner:

Collect: Almighty ever-living God, who, when Christ had been baptized in the River Jordan and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him, solemnly declared him your beloved Son, grant that your children by adoption, reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, may always be well pleasing to you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

January 21, St Agnes

To Do: Here is a short biography from HolySpiritInteractive.net to read to you family:

St. Agnes was a Roman girl who loved Jesus so much that she chose only him for her husband. She was very beautiful and when she was just twelve years old, many young men wished to marry her. But as Agnes had given her heart to Jesus, she would always say, "Jesus is my only husband."

She even turned down the governor's son, who became very angry. He tried to win her affection with gifts and promises but Agnes said to him, "I am already promised to the Lord." Agnes was accused of being a Christian and brought to the governor.

Then she was taken to a Roman temple in Minerva (Athena), and asked to sacrifice to pagan gods. When Agnes was led to the altar, she made the Sign of the Cross.

The governor tried to scare her by putting her in chains, but even then she refused to turn against God. Agnes suffered other tortures. Finally, she was condemned and killed for her faith at the young age of twelve in 304.

St. Ambrose and other well-known early Church saints have written about this brave girl. Agnes is buried in a cemetery named after her. In 354, Emperor Constantine's daughter built a large church there and had Agnes' body placed under the altar.

Color the beautiful picture of St. Agnes from Waltzing Matilda's webpage:

<http://tiredtwang.blogspot.com/p/coloring-pages-month.html>

To Pray: Collect: Almighty ever-living God, who choose what is weak in the world to confound the strong, mercifully grant, that we, who celebrate the heavenly birthday of your Martyr Saint Agnes, may follow her constancy in the faith. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.



January 22 Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of the Unborn Child

This is the designated day because it is the anniversary of “Roe vs. Wade,” the case which made abortion legal in the United States.

Say the Rosary today. Attend Mass. If you have an abortion clinic in your city stop by and say the rosary there. This could be a short “field trip” after dinner. This is a type of penance—giving up some of your evening. Are there other penances your family could do?



January 28, St. Thomas Aquinas

Share this brief summary

Saint Thomas Aquinas was born around 1224 in Roccasecca, Kingdom of Sicily. Defying his family's wishes for him to become a monk, he joined the Dominican Order while attending the University of Naples. His studies introduced him to the teachings of Aristotle, which greatly influenced his work and ideas. He is now considered one of the Roman Catholic Church's foremost theologians. Despite being referred to as a “Dumb Ox,” he wrote the *Summa Theologiae*, an explanation and summary of the entire body of Catholic teaching, that has been standard for centuries, even to our own day.

Teens and young adults should know and appreciate the story of St. Thomas chasing the prostitute from his room with a burning log. (She was sent by his wealthy family to tempt him away from the religious life.) After he drove away the temptress, two angels came to him and fastened a mystical chastity cord around his waist.

To Pray: St. Thomas Prayer for Students:

Creator of all things,
true source of light and wisdom,
origin of all being,
graciously let a ray of your light penetrate
the darkness of my understanding.

Take from me the double darkness
in which I have been born,
an obscurity of sin and ignorance.

Give me a keen understanding,
a retentive memory, and
the ability to grasp things
correctly and fundamentally.



Grant me the talent
of being exact in my explanations
and the ability to express myself
with thoroughness and charm.

Point out the beginning,
direct the progress,
and help in the completion.

I ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

January 31, St. John Bosco

Short biography quoted from Catholic-forum.com:

St. John Bosco was born in Piedmont, Italy in the year 1815. He was raised in a Catholic family but was too young ever to know his father who died when John was only two years old. John's mother raised four children and taught them the importance of their faith.

At the age of four, John began to do small jobs to earn money to support the household. As a child, John's favorite pastime was going to fairs and carnivals and watching the jugglers, tumblers and magicians. When he returned home, he practiced their tricks until he had mastered them, and then he would go on the street and perform asking only prayers as payment. From his childhood, St. John Bosco had a great desire to become a priest and help young boys who like him were not afforded all the pleasures in life. He worked hard so he could afford to leave his family and attend school. Eventually John entered the seminary. He excelled in his studies and served as a model to other

seminarians on how to live a holy life of happiness. At the age of 26, John was ordained to the priesthood and set out to take his message to the world.

St. John began his ministry to the young by first forming catechism classes that met after Sunday Mass. At these classes he would offer schooling in the faith for free and he soon had a group of over 400 children to teach. St. John's enthusiasm and emphasis on teaching boys drew ridicule from some of his peers who did not see its value, but John saw the need to train the future of the Church and allow their youthful energy to be put to work for the greater glory of God. John's catechism school grew into a full-fledged school where boys could receive an education, learn a trade, and love Jesus. As much ridicule that John received, he also received assistance in the form of money and he also began to attract followers to his ideals. With the encouragement of Pope Pius IX, John gathered 17 men together into a community and founded the Society of St. Francis de Sales in 1859. This society is better known as the Salesians and concentrates on education and missionary work, especially aiming at the needs of the young. St. John Bosco died in 1888 after spending his whole life working for youth and is the patron of editors.

Collect: O God, who raised up the Priest Saint John Bosco as a father and teacher of the young, grant we pray, that, aflame with the same fire of love, we may seek out souls and serve you alone. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

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