

# Partners in FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

November 2016

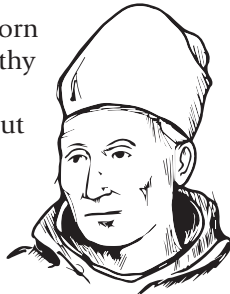
Saint Aloysius Religious Education  
Caldwell, NJ



## Thoughtful Moments

### St. Albert the Great

St. Albert was born in 1206 to a wealthy and powerful German family, but chose to join the Dominicans instead of following his parents' wishes for his future. He was a brilliant scholar excelling in many fields. As a theologian, he used Aristotle's philosophy to explain and defend Catholic theology—a practice also followed by his pupil, St. Thomas Aquinas. He was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1931, and declared a Doctor of the Church.



### Buddy System

The road to Heaven is hard but we don't have to travel alone. Jesus knew we would need a community where we could find support so he gave us the Church. Look around your parish for a prayer "buddy" and suggest that you pray for each other.

*"Lord, your mercy reaches to heaven; your fidelity, to the clouds. Your justice is like the highest mountains; your judgments, like the mighty deep"* (Psalm 36:6-7).



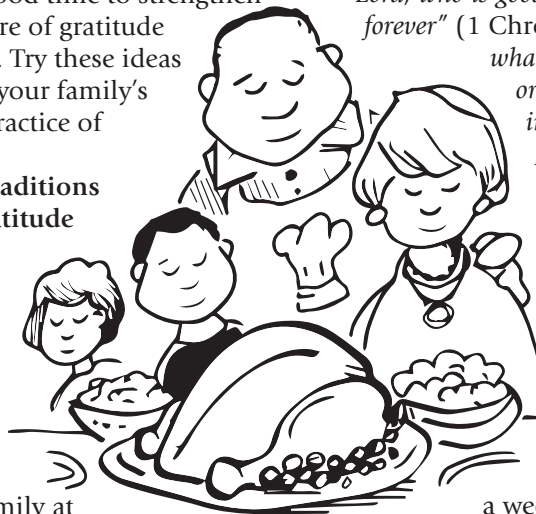
## Celebrate thankfulness all year round

Thanksgiving, when we thank God and share gratitude with family and friends, is a good time to strengthen the atmosphere of gratitude in our homes. Try these ideas for fortifying your family's culture and practice of gratitude:

**Establish traditions modeling gratitude to God.** A common practice is to offer thanks before meals as Jesus did (Matthew 15:36). Or, gather as a family at bedtime and give thanks for the day. Encourage each person to mention something specific for which he or she is thankful. Praise God for his goodness.

**Choose a scripture reference that expresses your family's love and gratitude.** *"The Lord is my strength and*

*my shield, in whom my heart trusts"* (Psalm 28:7). *"Give thanks to the Lord, who is good, whose love endures forever"* (1 Chronicles 16:34). *"And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him"* (Colossians 3:17).



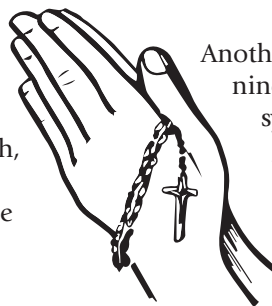
Memorize and pray it together regularly. **Love it by losing it.** Each choose to give up for a week a favorite toy, game, electronic device or something else of value. When reunited with it a week later, praise God for its creation and usefulness or entertainment value.

**Don't forget to thank God in the hard times as well as the good times.** That's modeling true gratitude.

## Why Do Catholics Do That?

### Why do Catholics pray novenas?

A novena is a cycle of prayers offered for nine days for a particular petition. In the early Church, nine days were prayed in commemoration of the nine days the Apostles spent in prayer between the Ascension and Pentecost.

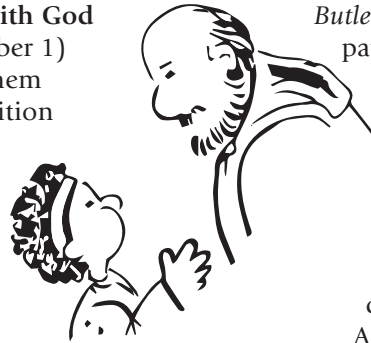


Another early custom offered a nine-day novena before Christmas, symbolizing the nine months Jesus spent in Mary's womb. Novenas are one of the ways Catholics show perseverance and trust in God through prayer. There are 36 novenas authorized by the Church.

## Welcome saints into your family

Saints are holy people who lived a life of extraordinary virtue and now celebrate with God in Heaven forever. All Saints Day (November 1) reminds us that we are still connected to them through the Communion of Saints. In addition to attending Mass on this Holy Day of Obligation, try these ideas for celebrating All Saints Day in your home:

**Adopt a new patron.** Choose a new personal saint for guidance and protection. One way is to select from the saints whose feast days correspond to our



birthdays. (Check the calendar at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) or *Butler's Lives of the Saints*.) Another is to choose the patron of a favorite hobby or interest.

**Litany of the Saints.** Write your own Litany of Saints by making a list of your favorites. Add those who have been recently canonized. Pray your Litany together each day.

**Saint diary.** Many saints kept diaries. For a week after All Saints Day, have each person write down his or her prayers in a diary every night. Ask your patron saint for guidance.

### Scripture LESSON

#### Matthew 24:37-44, "Is he here yet?"

We know Jesus came more than 2,000 years ago—an event we celebrate every Christmas. What we don't know is when he will return. In this reading, Jesus urged all his followers to prepare for when he comes again. He warned them that his second coming will be sudden and unexpected, like a thief in the night.

Jesus' next coming is what Advent is all about: anticipating our Lord, wondering at the mystery of his coming, and marveling at his glory when he arrives.

To be ready for Christ's return at any time, it is best to stay in a state of grace.



The Church offers the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation to help. Go often to keep sharp a sense of sin.

**What can a parent do?** Celebrate the wait during Advent. Light the candles in an Advent wreath and pray together each night during the season. Savor the story of Jesus' coming. Marvel over the Annunciation. Exclaim over the Visitation.

Celebrate the Birth. When Christmas finally arrives, the whole family will share in its wonder and excitement together.

### Parent TALK

Two years ago, a large plant in our town shut down and moved jobs out of the area. Families were hit hard and the atmosphere approaching the holidays was grim. Although my extended family loves big Thanksgiving feasts, I just couldn't bring myself to host a day of excess when so many of our neighbors were suffering.



Two weeks before Thanksgiving, I emailed my brothers and sister and asked if we could move our dinner to the

Knights of Columbus soup kitchen. They didn't hesitate to agree.

My entire family showed up on Thanksgiving to serve turkey, cranberry sauce, stuffing, cornbread, green beans, mashed potatoes and more to the needy of our town. When everyone had their fill, my family came home to a much smaller and simpler Thanksgiving meal than we had ever served at my house but there was no shortage of joy around our table that day.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**Nov. 20 – Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King.** God promised his people a king who would be triumphant over their enemies. Jesus is our King, who triumphed over the enemies of sin and death. In Baptism and Confirmation, we are brought under his kingship.

**Nov. 25 – St. Catherine of Alexandria (310).** Scholar, princess, virgin, and martyr, St. Catherine converted to Christianity after receiving a vision. She rebuked the emperor Maxentius for his persecution of the Christians. While in

prison, 200 people came to visit her and were inspired to convert. She is the patroness of philosophers, students, librarians and lawyers.

**Nov. 27 – 1st Sunday of Advent.** During this four-week season, we anticipate the Messiah's birth, remembering the time when he was awaited. During Advent we also look forward to Christ's reign and his coming on the last day. We light candles in an Advent wreath each night of the season to signal the coming of the true light of Christ.



### Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children  
Success Publishing & Media, LLC  
Publishers of Growing in Faith™ and Partners in Faith™  
(540)662-7844 (540)662-7847 fax  
<http://www.partnersinfaith.com>  
(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible.)