

Healing Your Family during Lent

Lk 6:43-44. “A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit.” **Goal:** be a good tree!
-We all need pruning from time to time in order to produce more fruit for the Lord.

Examine your life daily. Be gentle with yourself. Thank God for the good that you are doing, since He gave you the graces to do so. Also, be honest if you have some defects. After discovering patterns of sins, vices, negative attitudes or emotions, implement a program that has the following considerations:

1. Practice virtues that oppose the negative patterns. For example, pray the Act of Hope whenever you begin to be fearful. Trust in the Lord and have confidence in Him. If you have depression because you tend to be angry, practice acts of charity and being joyful. If you tend toward despair, practice acts of hope and confidence. If you are afraid of suffering, practice mortification (give things up such as entertainment) and replace it with doing something good for others.

See the back of this page. Practice a virtue for 30 days straight.

Also, to learn more virtues, search on YouTube:

a. Sensus Fidelium Virtues in the Family

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i59xwT_lvX0

b. Sensus Fidelium Common Pitfalls for Catholic Parents

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMt6Sc6kQ8g>

c. Sensus Fidelium Friends of the Cross

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OL1P3ktjm80>

2. Fast (from food, entertainment, computer time, and cell phone usage).

3. Pray specifically for negative patterns to go away. E.g., “Lord Jesus, please bind up criticism and passivity and complaining from my family and me, and drive them far away from us.”

4. Pray general prayers, such as the Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, and/or the Divine Office.

5. Make reparation. Do extra prayers, Adoration, and have Masses said for the repairing of the damage (1) when a negative pattern came into the family line; (2) for the sins of other people in the family tree and its subsequent negative effects; and (3) for your own sins. E.g., perhaps a great grandparent was the first

alcoholic in the family tree and alcoholism is prevalent. Pray for the repose of the soul of the great grandparent. Pray that the Lord will repair the damage that has resulted from the sin. Pray for those you have hurt and for the Lord to repair any damage.

6. Pray for healing for your family members and yourself. E.g., Healing Mass, or Prayer for Inner Healing. (Ask Fr. Michael for these prayers.)

7. Have a priest or deacon pray certain prayers over each person in your family. A husband, the royal priest of his family, should bless his wife and children. (Blessing prayers are on our website.)

8. Ask your Guardian Angel and patron saints to intercede. Whatever the patterns, ask the saints who are “enemies” of these patterns to pray. E.g., St. Clare will pray for you against betrayal (perfidy), if this pattern is in your family line. St. Mother Teresa will pray against pride. Think about the life of various saints who can pray against certain vices.

9. Use sacramentals. E.g., use blessed salt in your cooking or at meals. Use holy water and bless yourself and your house. Put a holy water font at your front door.

10. Practice “custody” of the eyes, mind, and tongue. If you start thinking about something negative or sinful, catch yourself immediately and do something positive (prayer, spiritual reading). “Run” from lust and deal with anger quickly. Do not let them “incubate.”

See 2 Cor 10:3-6 and Jas 3:1-10.

11. Again, examine your relationship with God daily. Go to Confession frequently and confess your sins, vices, and fears; and talk to the priest about defects (e.g., impatience). You and your family should confess the kind of sin and the number of times it was committed so that you can track your patterns.

12. Get rid of any negative influences in your home (E.g., bad movies, books, music and other media and objects that do not build up the Kingdom of God.)

Last word: This information looks overwhelming. So slowly move into a plan of prayer and works of mercy for your family. Gently move forward without “beating yourself up.” Try to live in the present moment. God is with you and wants you to do well. So do we! We only have one life to become saints.

Seven Capital Sins—Root Vices

Pride—putting oneself above God and others

Boastful * self-centered * self-important * superiority complex * arrogant * talking too much * stubborn * vain * entitlement mentality * rude * disobedient * wanting no advice * brooding over offenses * over-sensitive * fearful * self-pity

Greed—covetous; disordered desire for material things

Seeking security only in things of this world * stingy * hoarding * not realizing that you are passing through this world on pilgrimage to heaven * secretive * desiring wealth and power

Anger—disordered desire to be right or be treated better; desiring revenge

Aversion * resentful * bitter * hatred * silent treatment * un-forgiveness * impatient * emotional * temper * self-will * control * gossip * withdrawal * mean * critical * fault-finding * judgmental

Envy—resentful longing aroused by someone else's possessions, qualities, or gifts

Hateful * gossip * detraction * backbiting * joy at the sorrows/troubles of others * spiteful * do not care when others are praised

Sloth—laziness; avoiding doing God's will for the sake of comfort

Effeminate (= wanting a soft, easy life) * late for events * distaste for life * discouragement * moody * gloomy * inconsistent * dull to exhortation * lack of thanksgiving to God and others

Gluttony—eating and drinking to excess

Think and talk food a lot * complaining about plain food * too much snacking * immoderate use of alcohol * loudness * boisterous * can include immoderate use of electronic devices and media

Lust—desire for illicit sexual pleasure

Curiosity about sex * Over-familiarity with someone * carelessness in reading and viewing * not controlling imagination * comfort-seeking * pleasure-seeking * not open with priest-confessor * not using necessary means to control the flesh

-With God, choose to practice one virtue a month from the right side. Do not reinforce vices.

Ways to Overcome—Remedies for These Vices

Humility—selfless; recognizing that all skills, talents, and good qualities are gifts from God

Think about my dependence on God * thanksgiving to God * seeking ways to serve God and others quietly * quit complaining/gossiping * seeing Christ in others * Litany of Humility * Surrender Prayer

Generosity—giving of time, talents, and gifts freely; God is more important than possessions

Cultivate simple tastes * desire to imitate the poverty of Christ * seek first the Kingdom of God * habitually give others the better part * share your things with others * tithe

Meekness—acting with patience, mercy, and charity when resolving conflicts

Habitually keep Christ crucified in mind * do little acts of charity for those who annoy you, including prayer * live in God's presence * keep quiet when annoyed, and unite sufferings to Christ

Kindness—wishing the best for others; brotherly love

Thank God for others' gifts * pray for the one you envy * speak well of the one you envy * think of eternal life and that God wants all to be saved

Diligence—following God's will, even if it means discomfort (suffer for God's mission)

Faithful to prayer life * keep to a schedule * do immediately what you tend to put off * think of eternity constantly * do spiritual and corporal works of mercy as little acts of self-discipline

Temperance—taking all things in moderation

Decide how much food to take ahead of time and stick to it * eat or drink in God's presence * fast * reflect on the fact that 21,000 die of starvation daily * fast from using electronic devices and media

Chastity—properly ordered desires of the flesh

Develop a deep personal love of our Lord * flee occasions of lust * be hard on body—mortification * keep busy * live for others * pray the Angelic Warfare Confraternity Prayer frequently * meditate daily on a Gospel passage for 15-30 minutes