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### Family Circles - Faith, Prayer, Life & Charity

The Adult Faith Formation Commission is organizing a diocesan-wide advancement of family faith formation. Family Circles Program is a Roman Catholic-based faith catechesis exploring the fundamentals of Catholicism and the promotion of devotions. It aims to connect families through prayers and family time activities. It also endeavors to unite families to concretize belief through charitable outreach.

Families interested in joining or knowing more about this initiative may contact the Adult Faith Formation Commission or email [bmjs1981@gmail.com](mailto:bmjs1981@gmail.com) or call 306-763-5677.

#### Suggested Materials:

- (1) *The Power of Truth: The Challenges of Catholic Doctrine and Morals Today* (book) by Cardinal Gerhard Müller;
- (2) *Grace & Truth: Twenty Steps to Embracing Virtue and Saving Civilization* (book) by Fr. George Rutler;
- (3) *Unplanned* (Movie) by Abby Johnson;
- (4) *Clare and Francis* (Movie) by Frabrizio Costa.

**For more resources:** [padiocese.ca](http://padiocese.ca) or [bmjsajonas.com](http://bmjsajonas.com)

### Scripture Meditation

Luke 12:13-21 18th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Luke 12:32-48 19th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Luke 12:49-53 20th Sunday of Ordinary Time

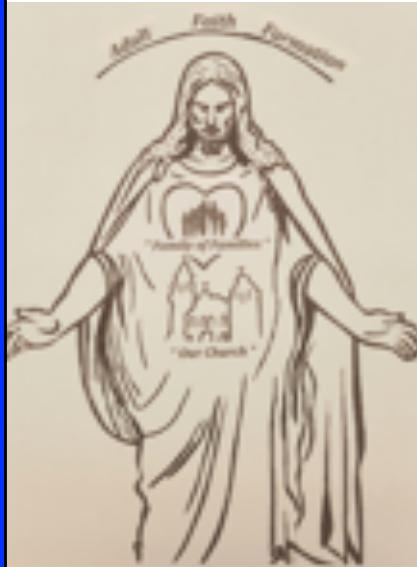
Luke 13:22-30 21st Sunday of Ordinary Time

#### Next issue's contents:

Matthew: 11:16-19 The Parable of the Children in the Marketplace; Getting to know a patron saint of our diocese; Bible Study, Resources for faith formation, and much more...

#### Editors:

Sr. Mariette Bilodeau (SK, Canada), Matthew Allen Newland, PhD (QC, Canada),  
Fr. Millan Sajonas (SK, Canada), and Very Reverend Maurice Fiolleau (Vicar General).



## ADULT FAITH FORMATION COMMISSION DIOCESE OF PRINCE ALBERT IMDVS July 2019

### Luke 13:6-9: The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

By Fr. Millan Sajonas

The context of our gospel passage is the Lord's invitation to repentance (Luke 13:5). Following the call to conversion and repentance, Jesus tells the parable of the barren fig tree. It is a story of a vineyard's master who plants a fig tree. For three years, he has been visiting it for fruits, but he finds none. His order is to cut the tree, but the caretaker pleads to leave it for another year. He promises to take care of it and fertilize it himself. The decision of cutting it down would take place if after a year it still does not bear fruit.

God is the master who is the source of everything. Jesus stands as the mediator who announces repentance. He is merciful and patient with everyone. Yet, after all the graces and patience of God, there will be the judgment. God's compassion and love have to be reciprocated with conversion and love.

Repentance is a life-changing decision. However, it is a life-long commitment and not a momentary action. It is a continuous promise to grow in love of God and neighbor. Conversion is a leap of faith to walk the path of holiness and righteousness. There will be challenges and failures, but at the same time, there will be joys and triumphs. Perseverance is the proper attitude on the journey to discipleship.

Now, the fig tree's barrenness or fruitfulness represents the human response to the grace of God. Our Lord has given abundant grace to all, and He is generously patient with us for yielding fruits of repentance, for producing a harvest of good works, and to advance in spiritual life. It is fitting that the story seems to be an open-ended story, where we, the readers, may visualize and reflect on our response to the gifts the Lord gives to us.

#### Reflection Questions

1. As an adult Christian, can you remember the moment when you decided to follow Christ? If so, what was the defining circumstance for your decision?
2. Can you describe your conversion story?
3. What are the continuous struggles that you encounter on your pilgrim journey?
4. When you encounter challenges and failures on the road to discipleship, how do you pick yourself up so as to persevere as a true follower of Jesus?
5. Have you experienced joys and triumphs in your decision to follow Christ? If so, can you cite some of these events or circumstances?

### Getting to know...St. Thomas, the Apostle.

The name of St. Thomas appears in the list of apostles in the synoptic gospels (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:15-19; Luke 6:14-16) as well as in the book of Acts (Acts 1:13-14). Jesus chose him as one of the 12 apostles. Thomas is also called "Didymus," meaning the "Twin" (John 11:16; 20:24). When Lazarus died and Jesus wanted to go to him, Thomas, perhaps aware of Jewish hostility (John 10:31), said to the other disciples that they should also go to die with the Lord. In the farewell discourses at the Last Supper, Thomas said to the Lord that they didn't know where he was going, so how could they know the way? (John 14:5) However, Thomas the apostle is renowned in the story of Jesus' appearance to his disciples (John 20:19-29) where he is popularly known as "the doubting Thomas."

When Jesus appeared to the apostles for the first time, Thomas was not with them (John 20:24). Thus, he did not immediately believe their account of the resurrected Christ. After 8 days, Jesus reappeared to the disciples and this time, Thomas was with them. Jesus invited Thomas to touch the marks of the Lord's crucifixion. He freed Thomas in his unbelief. The latter proclaimed a great profession of faith to the risen Christ "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

In the apocryphal document, *The Acts of Thomas*, it is said that he went to Persia and India. Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* mentions that Thomas evangelized Parthia. In India, he is recognized as the founder of the Syrian Malabar Christians or Christians of St. Thomas. He was martyred in Madras (now Chennai) but supposedly his relics were transported to the west and enshrined at Ortona, Italy (**Source:** [Britannica.com/biography/Saint-Thomas](http://Britannica.com/biography/Saint-Thomas)).

St. Thomas the Apostle's feast is observed on July 3. He is the patron saint of India and of architects. He is the patron saint of the Roman Catholic Church in Makwa that bears his name. Let us pray that through the intercession of St. Thomas our East Indian people in the Diocese of Prince Albert may continue to grow in the faith, sharing their beautiful culture and traditions in our communities. We also pray that through the intercession of St. Thomas, people who are having difficulty believing in God because of their challenges and tribulations may be helped in their unbelief.

### Are you interested to join a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land?

There is a pilgrimage going to the Holy Land from January 7 to 20, 2020. It is organized by Fr. Millan Sajonas and Biyaheng Kapamilya sa Holy Land. The theme is "**A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land: This is Holy Ground.**"

For further details, visit [www.kapamilyaholyland.com](http://www.kapamilyaholyland.com) or <https://www.bmjsajonas.com/upcoming-activities> or call Fr. Millan at 306-763-5677/ email: [bmjs1981@gmail.com](mailto:bmjs1981@gmail.com)

### A Teaching of the Church about Family

In the plan of God, the Creator and Redeemer, the family finds not only its own identity, what it is, but also its mission, what it can and should do. The role that God calls the family to perform in history is derived from what the family is; its role represents the dynamic and existential development of what it is. Each family finds within itself a summons that cannot be ignored, which specifies both its dignity and its responsibility: Family become what you are.

The family has the mission to become more and more what it is a community of life and love in an effort that will find fulfilment, as will everything created and redeemed, in the kingdom of God.

But if they are to achieve the full flowering of its life and mission, the married couple must practise an affectionate sharing of thought and common deliberation as well as eager cooperation as parents in their children's upbringing. The active presence of the father is very important for their training: the mother, too, has a central role in the home, for the children, especially the younger children, depend on her considerably; this role must be safeguarded without undermining women's legitimate social advancement.

Looking to its roots, we must say that the essence and role of the family are in the final analysis specified by love. Hence the family has the mission to guard, reveal, and communicate love, and is a living reflection of and a real sharing of God's love for humanity, and the love of Christ the Lord for the Church, his bride.

Every particular task of the family is an expression and concrete actuation of that fundamental mission...Thus with love as its point of departure and making constant reference to it...these are the four general tasks for the family:

- 1) Forming a community of persons;
- 2) Serving life;
- 3) Participating in the development of society;
- 4) Sharing in the life and mission of the Church.

(cf. *Familiaris Consortio, Gaudium et Spes*)

(**Source:** [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/family/documents/rc\\_pc\\_family\\_doc\\_01021997\\_rio-themes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_01021997_rio-themes_en.html))

### Adult Faith Formation Commission Upcoming Events

**Family Faith and Music Event: Family Love**

**September 27, 2019** Friday at St. Joseph Parish, Prince Albert

**September 28, 2019** Saturday at St. Joseph Calasanctius, North Battleford

Further details TBA