

TIME IS ON OUR SIDE

We're never too busy for Faith and Family

By Deacon Thane

Labor Day is a time for us to celebrate all the hard work we've done over the last year, to take a break, and maybe enjoy one last cookout before winter returns. It also signals the end of the summer break and a start of the new school year. Return to school means that families get very busy. These days with kids involved in so many different activities, a family needs a full-time scheduler, dispatcher and transportation coordinator just to get everyone where they need to be. It's a constant game of go...go...go...and being that busy can make it difficult to take time out for the things like prayer and meditation.

The great thing about family, is that we're all in this crazy mess of life together. Whether it's just a husband and wife, or a family of eight, we have to spend *Family Time*, growing together as a family, not just rushing to our next appointment. Families need time with each other away from the hustle and bustle of daily life. One of the great traditions that is largely lost in today's world is the family meal. Most of us don't gather around the dinner table as often as we should. Coming together around the family table is a bonding experience, it's sharing in the breaking of bread which brings the community of the family together. This is why Jesus, when instituting the Sacrament of the Eucharist, did so with a communal meal, gathering His Church as a family, around the table of His Body and Blood.

Likewise, we have to take *Prayer Time* out for ourselves to grow closer to the Lord. God isn't yelling in our ear demanding our time, it's easy to neglect our faith life. With so many other voices fighting for our attention, we must make an intentional effort to listen to the voice of God in our lives. This means setting aside time for prayer...DAILY. It may seem impossible, but it is essential. I myself struggle with this all the time. Balancing my secular job, my responsibilities as a deacon, and nourishing my relationship with my wife, make it hard to squeeze in space to spend some quiet time with God. I have to intentionally make and maintain a habit of prayer, spending time with God and time with scripture. When I take the time out of my day to pray, there's always enough left to get done all that I need to do, and rather than making it harder to get everything done on time, things always seems easier to accomplish.

It's important to bring these two priorities, *Family Time* and *Prayer Time*, together in Family Prayer Time. The family is first and foremost, a Domestic Church. Parents are the children's first teachers in the faith, they are the example by which kids learn what it means to be Christian disciples. Praying together as a family is a powerful experience which serves many purposes. It unites the family closer through their love of the Lord, by sharing and praying for each other's intentions, and by growing together spiritually. Many sibling rivalries and family tensions can be overcome by gathering together and joining hearts and hands in prayer. Pray the rosary, pray the kids' favorite devotionals, read a few verses of the Bible. What you do is not as important as the act of taking time out and gathering together as a family before the Lord.

The squeaky wheel that gets the grease, and the things that are most important are often the ones that don't squawk at us when they are forgotten. We need to make a habit of taking time out for faith and family. Jesus said where two or more are gathered in my name, there I am. Whenever we take time out of our busy lives to join together as family, whether in prayer or around the dinner table, we can be assured that Jesus is there, present as the Sacred Heart of our families.