

## **CYCLE A: THE YEAR OF MATTHEW**

### **ADVENT**

#### **First Sunday of Advent**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

In today's gospel Jesus advises: "Stay awake, watch out, and pray for the strength to hold your ground" when "fearful and bewildering signs" appear threatening your family. Resist being "fearful;" fear cripples! Instead "pray for the strength" to be courageous.

#### **Second Sunday of Advent**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Like John the Baptist, every parent "prepares the way of the Lord" in the hearts of their children. Advent is a good time to ask; "Do I help or hinder my children to know Jesus?"

#### **Third Sunday of Advent**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

The question put to Jesus in today's gospel is also put to us today: "Are you the one?" Are you the one who will give guidance to the children in your life or must they look to TV sitcoms, films, videos and music lyrics for direction? Are you the one? Will you be the one?

#### **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

The child born to Jesus and Mary was named Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." Every child is EMMANUEL, reminding us "God is with us." Children are signs of God's continuing presence in our lives.

### **CHRISTMAS TIME**

#### **Holy Family**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Today's gospel says Joseph "made his home in Nazareth." A "home" is built on the foundation of love, commitment and a shared history and is decorated with forgiveness, acceptance, rituals, discipline and mutual support. The Holy Family challenges us today: Don't live 'anyplace', live at HOME!

#### **Epiphany**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Today's gospel tells us "all Jerusalem" was upset because "King Herod was deeply troubled." A similar ripple effect happens in families; one person's negative attitude can affect the whole family. If you want a peaceful and joyful home, it must start with you. Be peaceful and joyful!

#### **Baptism of the Lord / First Sunday of Ordinary Time**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

The words in today's gospel, "This is my beloved, with Him I am pleased," are words every child needs to hear often. Affirmation is important to raise happy and confident children.

### **LENT**

#### **First Sunday of Lent**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

In today's gospel Jesus cautions it is not enough to provide food for our children; "one does not live on bread alone." Let Lent 2011 be a time when you are "led by the Spirit" to explore new ways to be a moral guide to your children.

#### **Second Sunday of Lent**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Transfiguration is a common occurrence in families. When we commit to another, such as a spouse in marriage or a child in parenting, we are not committing to them only as they are today, but to the person they are becoming.

**Third Sunday of Lent**

A Family Perspective

by Bud Ozar

Our children are like the Samaritan woman in today's gospel. They need more than material things. They need the "living water" only the adults can give. It will teach them how to make decisions, take responsibility, respect themselves and others and live their commitments. With this "living water" they will "never thirst."

**Fourth Sunday of Lent**

A Family Perspective

by Bud Ozar

Failure to forgive blinds us to another's goodness. Lent provides an opportunity to wash away our blind-spots in the pool of forgiveness. Listen to Jesus in today's gospel: "Go wash and see."

**Fifth Sunday of Lent**

A Family Perspective

by Bud Ozar

Our families can become wrapped up chasing things we perceive will make us happy. Jesus' words to Lazarus, He says to us: "Come out" from what entombs you. In this fifth week of Lent "untie" yourself and be free from unnecessary possessions.

**Passion (Palm) Sunday**

A Family Perspective

by Bud Ozar

The cruel death of Jesus tells us bad things can and do happen to very good people. It also tells us God is present during the suffering. Bad things happen but God does not abandon us.

**EASTER TIME**

**Easter Sunday**

A Family Perspective

by Bud Ozar

Today's gospel instructs us Jesus "had to rise from the dead." The dying we experience with unmet expectations in marriage and parenting is normal to family life. Families must rise above disappointments and be Easter people all year long.

**Second Sunday of Easter/Divine Mercy Sunday** Family Perspective

by Bud Ozar

"Whose sins you forgive, are forgiven" means the grudges we carry only make us miserable. The Kingdom of God begins in your home where children learn the paths to peace promised in today's gospel through merciful and forgiving demonstrated by their parents.

**Third Sunday of Easter**

A Family Perspective

by Bud Ozar

In today's gospel the disciples were returning home so "downcast" they did not recognize Jesus walking with them. In our homes we can be so overwhelmed with responsibilities we don't see God with us. Today's gospel tells us to stop and open our eyes to the blessings we are to one another.

**Fourth Sunday of Easter**

A Family Perspective

by Bud Ozar

In today's gospel Jesus tells us, HE IS THE WAY and warns anyone who offers "another way" to happiness is "a thief and a bandit." Strong words! Don't listen to the sales pitch of society for happiness. Look to yourself where God is present and "calls you by name and leads you to abundant life."

**Fifth Sunday of Easter**

A Family Perspective

by Bud Ozar

Jesus tells us in the gospel: "I am in the Father and the Father is in me!" The point is: God is in each one of us, in our relationships and in our homes. The vocation of the Christian family is to live the divine gift which is already in and around us.

**Sixth Sunday of Easter**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

In today's gospel Jesus prepared his disciples for his departure. Family life is a series of departures. As we mature and grow older we constantly transition from the familiar to the new unknown. Today Jesus assures us we are not alone in these transitions. "I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you."

**Seventh Sunday of Easter**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Jesus appointed apostles, he also appoints parents to represent Him in the family; "make disciples of your children, baptizing and teaching them all I have taught you. Don't worry, I am with you always."

**Pentecost Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Like the disciples in today's gospel, there are times we shut the doors of our hearts to people or events. It's how we create emotional distance. Permanent distancing is lethal and prevents the PEACE Jesus offers you today.

**First Sunday after Pentecost / Holy Trinity Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

As the Father "sent his son into the world" so parents send their children into the world "so that the world might be saved." This is the missionary role of the Christian family. Your family is a school where your children develop convictions which enable them to make a difference in the world.

**Body and Blood of Christ**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Parenting is a Eucharistic activity because from the first moment of conception children consume us, our flesh, blood, energy, time and resources. If we don't sacrifice ourselves, our children would not have life. This is the priesthood of parenting. Christ is present in this self sacrifice.

**ORDINARY TIME**

**First Sunday / Baptism of our Lord**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

The words in today's gospel, "This is my beloved, with Him I am pleased" are words every child needs to hear often. Affirmation is important to raise happy and confident children.

**Second Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Can you say "I have testified Jesus is the Son of God?" If you aren't talking about Jesus in your family, you aren't testifying. If you are not walking your talk, your children will see your words as meaningless.

**Third Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

When Jesus called his disciples, they came "immediately." Parents wish their children would respond as quickly, but they don't. Children grow slowly into responsibility. It is a process like walking, not done "immediately", but in small steps. Parenting demands patient encouragement.

**Fourth Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

It is in our family where we learn to be merciful and comforting to others. The Beatitudes of the Kingdom of God begin at home and depend on you. Parents lead the way.

**Fifth Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Today's gospel challenges us to be a "light" to our family. Parents shine their guiding light, not in front but behind them, inviting their children to follow their "good deeds."

**Sixth Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

To experience the peace which Christ promises we must shed our grudges, jealousy and feelings of being misunderstood, unappreciated or ignored. Peace and anger don't mix. Today's gospel warns, if you want peace in your heart and home, get rid of your anger. Anger is too costly.

**Seventh Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

Giving the shirt off your back, turning the other cheek or walking / driving the extra mile is normal stuff in families. We do that for one another. Today's gospel reminds us all people, even those we don't like, are our brothers and sisters. Our family should prepare us to be FAMILY to others.

**Eighth Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

Because we believe we can control and create our own world, we attempt to juggle multiple agendas and we pay a price of neglecting those closest to us. Too late we reach the point of asking "Was it worth it?" We really can't serve two masters.

**Ninth Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

Today's gospel challenges you to build your home on the foundation of fidelity to God, your family and yourself. Fidelity is the key to withstand the "rains, floods and winds" of life?

**Tenth Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

Every family is imperfect. We fail ourselves and those we love. In today's gospel Jesus tells us, "I did not come for the righteous, but for sinners." By showing "mercy" we avoid the shame and blame game and discover love and acceptance in our family.

**11<sup>th</sup> Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

The "troubled and abandoned" children in our world are "sheep without a shepherd." Today Jesus asks our "hearts be moved to pity for these children" and reminds us. Without cost you received, without cost you must give. Go to the lost sheep"

**12th Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

Jesus says "Do not be afraid" three times in today's gospel and reminds us "all concealed secrets will be revealed." Do not be afraid to acknowledge problems in your family. If they remain "hidden in darkness" they will "destroy body and soul." Healing, understanding and hope are found only "in the light" of openness. "Do not be afraid."

**13th Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

Today's gospel challenges us to resist the individualism of our culture. Everything we are and have is pure gift which we are expected to share especially to the "lowly ones." What has been freely given needs to be shared freely. No strings attached.

**14<sup>th</sup> Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

Today's gospel is about missionaries. As Jesus received a mission today, parents accept the mission of raising a family. Parents are not alone in this exhausting and difficult mission. Today Jesus tells us "Come to me and I will give your rest."

**15<sup>th</sup> Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

The stress and anxieties of family life are like “thorns which choke off” any opportunity to reflect on God’s presence in our lives. Notice in today’s gospel Jesus “left the house” so He could connect with His Father. Grasp five minutes each day to appreciate God walking with you.

**16<sup>th</sup> Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

Parents plant values in their children anticipating the tiny seeds of honesty, respect, commitment and fidelity will grow with their child and one day become “a safe haven” to many.

**17<sup>th</sup> Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

The man in today’s gospel “sold all he had” for the treasure he found. Family relationships are “treasures” and demand our total personal investment. Invest yourself in the “treasure” of your family.

**18<sup>th</sup> Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

The apostles were just being practical when they asked Jesus to “dismiss the crowds to go buy food.” Jesus knew there is always enough when we place our trust in the Father, even with just 5 loaves and fishes. Trust is the bridge to miracles.

**19<sup>th</sup> Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

The demands of family can be so overwhelming we feel walking on water would be easier. When Jesus was pressured, He dismissed everyone, so he could be “by himself and pray.” When overwhelmed and stressed, go to a quiet place and surrender your pressured feelings to the Lord using Peter’s prayer in today’s gospel: “Lord, save me.”

**20<sup>th</sup> Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

The mother in today’s gospel persisted, even when she was ignored and insulted. She would do whatever was necessary to bring relief to her child. Parenting is more than bringing life into the world; it is also about sacrificing daily for your children.

**21<sup>st</sup> Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

Like Jesus in today’s gospel, we are seen by others in different ways. Perhaps the name our family gives us is closest to our true identity. They know us best. Who do they say you are?

**22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

Relationships live in a careful balance. If a person changes, the balance is altered requiring a shift in the relationship. In today’s gospel Jesus announced a change and Peter resisted. Sometimes, those we count on for support may actually get in the way. Jesus told Peter: “You are an obstacle to me.”

**23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

The key word in today’s gospel is “listen.” We cannot change another person; not alone, not with others and not with a whole Church. All we can do is state our position and “if he listens to you” then he / she can take the steps necessary to change themselves. Change comes from within.

**24<sup>th</sup> Sunday****A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

Unable to forgive another, means we are holding onto a past wrong and hoping for a better past. That is not going to happen. We must move on with our life by accepting we were unjustly treated and it will

not be corrected. We aren't condoning the injustice. We just don't let it control our lives any longer. Forgiveness is critical to living a healthy life in the present.

**25<sup>th</sup> Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Today Jesus is saying to us: "Why are you idle? Go into my vineyard." Family, where "the last will be first," is the "vineyard" entrusted to us in today's gospel. Successful families are constructed by "laborers," who work hard on family relationships, and not by couch potatoes.

**26<sup>th</sup> Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

In today's gospel Jesus asked, "What is your opinion?" Why do we think our opinion is dogma or fact? An opinion is only how we perceive a situation or how we feel comfortable doing something. Don't argue over or become divided by "your opinion."

**27<sup>th</sup> Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Every family is visited by difficult times which can unite or divide. These hardships, which we would quickly reject, hold the potential to be the unifying "cornerstone" where we drop our pettiness and defenses and pull together, linked by a common bond and love for one another.

**28<sup>th</sup> Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Today's gospel speaks about "unworthy wedding guests." What makes a "worthy" guest? Presence and presents are not enough. The greatest gift we can give is support to the couple as they voyage through life together because marriage naturally contains within it the fields of disappointment. Think of the weddings you have attended. Have you been a "worthy guest?"

**29<sup>th</sup> Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Jesus was exasperated when he scolded: "Why do you put me to the test?" It is natural for children to test parents; this is how they learn and how we teach limits, rules and values. Be like Jesus in today's gospel; he was firm, honest and direct.

**30<sup>th</sup> Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

In today's gospel the Pharisee was talking about commandments (Something we are forced to obey by external pressure) and Jesus was talking about love (an internal exhortation to give our heart, soul and mind to another). One demands allegiance, the other requires personal commitment. In our families we daily lay down our lives for each other not because we 'gotta' but because love compels us.

**31<sup>st</sup> Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

In today's gospel Jesus describes the vocation of parents: "The greatest among you will be your servant." Children take our blood, genes, strength, name, patience and resources. A parent's servitude begins at the moment of conception. The Lord is present in each of our acts of selfless service.

**32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

The bridesmaids in today's gospel were considered 'foolish' because they let their lamps go out. Don't be foolish. Pay attention to the small acts necessary to keep the flame alive in all your relationships.

### **33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

AS the man in today's gospel entrusted his servants with his money, so God has 'entrusted' our family to us. Like the good servants we are expected, not to play it safe, but to selflessly and totally invest ourselves in each other.

## **RELIGIOUS FEAST DAYS**

### **Christ the King**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Families feed the hungry, give drinks to thirsty toddlers and welcome strangers and even estranged relatives into our homes. We clothe children and visit family members who are sick and imprisoned. The routine actions of family life are religious and priestly for we make Christ present in what we do. Family life is Beatitude life.

### **Feast of All Saints**

**a Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Anyone can be "saint" in front of strangers but the daily acts of patience, acceptance, forgiveness, listening, and dying to oneself within the family are religious acts. Family life is the turf of sanctity.

### **Feast of All Souls**

**a Family Perspective by Bud Ozar**

Our loved ones, who have stepped through the door of death, are now at rest, free of all burdens. In going home to the Lord they brought their love and concern for us with them. Death cannot totally separate families; our love binds us together forever.

**National Holidays:** If these holidays fall on or near a weekend, then the following articles might be used on that weekend.

### **Mother's Day**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Mothers are instruments of Christ's presence in the home. A mother's love reveals the attentive, thoughtful, serving, forgiving and concerned side of God's love. Thanks to all mothers for showing us the tender and loving face of God.

### **Memorial Day:**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Our decisions create our style of living and also what kind of person we are. That's the awesome power of free will. As we celebrate Memorial Day it is a good time to ask ourselves; "How do I want to be remembered?" The power is in your hands, or rather in your decisions.

### **Father's Day**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Fathering is an awesome responsibility and not for the weak or transient. Today we humbly recognize our need for courageous fathers to stand boldly in the face of the powerful cultural forces in our culture which threaten our children. Today we ask fathers to be the courageous leaders we need.

### **Halloween**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

It is cute when children pretend and dress in costumes but it is sad when adults hide behind false identities. In our families we don't need to pretend because we are loved, accepted, affirmed, appreciated for whom we are, and not for whom we want to be!

### **Thanksgiving:**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

As we gather to give thanks this week, we must also ask how well we share with "the least." Happiness is secured not by having, but by sharing.