

BUILDING A CIVILIZATION OF LOVE

Official Family Newsletter of the Archdiocese of KCK



RESOLUTIONS: RESILIENCE VS SELF RELIANCE

BY ANNIE KYLE

With the New Year just beginning, a fresh sense of renewal and starting over fills the air! The holidays are over, and the New Year brings new opportunities for those resolutions we promise will stick this time. We pull out new budget guides, buy a gym membership, and tell ourselves that we will finally commit to that daily holy hour we've been wanting to do. Then what? We start off strong in the first few weeks, realize we have bitten off more we can chew, and then typically end up falling hard when we stumble on our lofty goals. We then become discouraged knowing we were unable to uphold our new year's resolutions yet again. We wonder what is wrong with us and typically go right back to the way we were living, now feeling disheartened and even more guilty than before. Sound familiar?

Believe it or not, this rollercoaster of self reliance and despair is not what we are called to as Christians. In fact, this silly "quick resolution" culture that we are surrounded by is a disaster waiting to happen for us every year we attempt it. While we know that God calls us to hard things and ultimately wants us to grow in discipline and virtue, He also fully understands the way He created us. Although, the resolution to pray more, or eat healthier this upcoming year are admirable notions, we must be aware of the way we go about them and upon whom we are relying. If these resolutions lead to us to self-reliance and despair when we fail then they are simply not worth pursuing. However, if we genuinely desire change knowing that we cannot do it on our own, we will find greater peace and perseverance when things ultimately get tough. These are resolutions of a true Christian!

This year, I encourage you to refocus your mind on the daily resolutions we can choose to change instead of the yearly. Challenge yourself to pick something small each day that you would like to grow in. Maybe it is to exercise more or setting aside time to intentionally pray. Begin with simple workouts and prayers that you know you are able to accomplish. Like any virtue, we grow as we continue to practice and persevere in them when times get tough. Accept that there will be times when you fail to eat healthy or fall asleep before finishing your rosary. This is not only normal but is simply part of the process! Let us not be discouraged in these times but rather find the humility to ask Christ for help and turn to His strength as we continue. With His grace and mercy we will be propelled to greater heights than we could ever dream of accomplishing! Above all, be assured of my prayers for you this year as I too continue to grow in virtue and health myself!

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A LOVE GREATER THAN CHOCOLATES

BY LIBBY DUPONT

“As Lent is the time
for greater love,
listen to Jesus’
thirst. . . He knows
your weakness. He
wants only your
love, wants only the
chance to love you.”

-SAINT TERESA OF CALCUTTA

Is all that fasting and abstaining putting a damper on your romantic plans? Here’s 3 reasons why we think it’s great that Ash Wednesday is on Valentine’s Day this year:

1. During Lent we are called back to the sacraments in order to grow closer to Jesus. Having Lent begin on Valentine’s Day reminds us that our marriages are a sacrament! Married people will grow closest to Jesus when they do so through their sacrament of marriage. Consider making a marriage enrichment part of your Lenten observance this year.

2. “Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.” Ash Wednesday reminds us of our mortality. When you are on your death bed, what will you regret holding back from your spouse? What will you wish you said, (or wish you had apologized for saying)? Make this Lent your chance to begin to live a marriage with NO REGRETS!

3. Are you choosing to move your Valentine’s Day celebration to a different day? If so, you will be reminded that we Catholics approach marriage differently than the rest of the world... it is a vocation, not just a situation! (Plus, easier to get a reservation at your favorite restaurant!)

PRAYER, FASTING AND ALMSGIVING: A MARRIED COUPLES’ GUIDE

PRAY

- Ask your spouse each morning what specific prayers they want, then pray for that intention all day.
- Share with your spouse any insights you have gotten in prayer.
- Pray together: the Rosary, Liturgy of the Hours, or read a devotional together.

FAST

- Offer your fasting for your spouse.
- Fast from something that distracts you from your spouse: social media, podcasts, etc.
- Volunteer the choice you know your spouse prefers (movie, music, food, etc).

ALMS

- Offer your time in a way that’s most important to your spouse—to knock out that “honey-do” item, attend an enrichment or just hang out and have fun!
- Skip a meal or treat and use the money to buy a small gift for your spouse.
- Give the gift of your undivided attention. Commit to eliminate distractions when talking to him/her.



A LETTER FROM AN ADULT CHILD OF DIVORCE

BY KIMBERLY F - A LIFE GIVING WOUNDS ATTENDEE

One of my favorite childhood memories of when my parents were still together was when we hosted La Nochebuena (Christmas Eve) at our home in Iowa. We would have family, friends, and neighbors come over and celebrate together. We would have a lot of food, games like the loteria (Mexican bingo), music, dancing, breaking the pinata, and gift opening. At midnight, the adults would open their gifts and the children could open one gift. It was more or less lived like a vigil, awaiting Christ's birth. We would play with other children and break the pinata outside as my dad swung the pinata around and my mom would sing the "break the pinata" song in Spanish. Christmas was my favorite time of the year with my family because of how we celebrated it together, as a family surrounded by friends and family. These memories are joyful memories and I give thanks to God for the time I had with my family to celebrate together in this way.

In 2008, when I was fifteen, my parents separated and these joyous celebrations came to an end. Instead, Christmas became a nightmare. The next two Christmases, my mom drank herself to oblivion. After her separation from my father and having a child out of wedlock that same year, she was unable to cope and found solace in alcohol. At fifteen, I had to learn how to take care of my mother and watch her cry and lament her heartbreak over her failed marriage.

My father, on the other hand, showed up with lavish gifts and we would celebrate at whatever hotel he was at that night. With my father, it felt like he was trying to buy love though expensive gifts. The same year they separated, I remember my dad gifting me a gold Guess watch with diamonds. As a fifteen

year old, it was hard not to show the excitement of receiving such an expensive gift, but soon those feelings faded and I felt empty. My dad was no longer in my life and what he left behind was me and this golden Guess watch as his replacement.

Now, as a young woman in her early thirties, I've learned the true meaning of Christmas. My mom, since then, has found her home in the Catholic church and through her conversion I have found my home, too. Sometimes, I celebrate Christmas with my family. We celebrate La Nochebuena at my mom's house or mine, then go to midnight mass. Other times, I celebrate Christmas with my religious community, the Community of the Lamb, of whom I am a lay member, and live a Christmas retreat. The Community, during one of those Christmas retreats, sang a song that touched me greatly: "Here I am, close to you O Mary, O Mother of the Word, and I welcome like you the child Jesus in the manger of my heart." Since learning that song, I try to create a little manger in my heart to welcome the Infant Jesus as Mary and Joseph had done that fateful night. It has been hard adjusting to the separation of my parents and how we celebrated the holidays, and sometimes it still is, but now I live Christmas with hope.

– If you or a loved one are an Adult Child of Divorce (ACOD) and are seeking a resource to dive deeper into this area of your life, Life-Giving Wounds is a ministry dedicated to serve ACODs by offering retreats, follow-up sessions, and plenty of resources. You can find out more or register [here!](https://archkck.org/lgw/)

-Kimberly F

[Life Giving Wounds: https://archkck.org/lgw/](https://archkck.org/lgw/)

THE POST HOLIDAY BLUES

The cookies are gone, the tree is down, and just like that the holidays have come to a close. While the stress of the holidays is now over, some of us can't help but wish we could jump right into Spring! However, we must first make it through two of the toughest months in the year: January and February. For many people, these can bring a sense of dread and gloominess. The weather gets colder, the days (while getting longer) still feel dark, and this time can be really difficult on our mental health. If you find yourself feeling this way about the post holiday season, then rest assured that you are not alone! Many people report feeling gloomier during this time of year and it is statistically known that 5% of adults have seasonal depression. This is why we hope to share some ways you can support your family's physical and mental health this Winter season. We hope you use this time to rest, reset, and give yourself some extra grace!

SLEEP SCHEDULE

What would happen if we leaned into the slow routine of Winter instead of fighting it? What if we gave our bodies the rest they need to be rejuvenated? It is averaged that an extra 1.75 to 2.5 hours per night is not only normal during this time but can help you feel better. This along with setting a healthy and regular sleep schedule for ourselves can be a life saver. This means going to bed earlier and at a reasonable hour (8-11 pm). Studies show that people who go to bed later than 11 pm are not only more likely to have a higher risk of psychological disorders but can even be more prone to heart disease! Getting adequate sleep also decreases cortisol levels which in turn puts less stress on our bodies. So stop the caffeine by 1 pm, put away the phones and blue light 2 hours before bed, and consider taking magnesium or chamomile tea to help you get the sleep you need and deserve!

A HEALTHY DIET & SUPPLEMENTS

As the saying goes, "You are what you eat!" But did you know that certain foods can help boost your mood this Winter? By supporting ourselves with a good diet we can not only help our immune system fight sickness but can significantly improve our mental health. Some great options include fatty fish (salmon/trout/tuna), lean protein, nuts, seeds, egg yolks, grass-fed beef, beef liver, lentils, beans, leafy green vegetables, berries, bananas, and even dark chocolate! Warm soups and teas can also help soothe our bodies and give our digestive systems a break to recover! This in turn gives us energy and something warm to drink! Talk to your doctor about what supplements you might want to add to your routine based on your diet and health needs.

EXERCISE

Medical News Today cited a study by Dr. Ben Singh which found 30 minutes of moderate exercise per day to be "1.5 times better at reducing depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders than psychotherapy or medication." It can also increase heart health, strengthen bones, and even reduce your risk of developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and even some cancers! That seems like no brainer to us! Regardless of how you move, be sure to choose activities that are sustainable. 30 minutes of brisk walking is a great start!

Other Remedies For Seasonal Depression

Light Therapy

- Sitting by a special lamp called a light box, usually for around 30 minutes to an hour each morning to help circadian rhythm
- Get as much natural sunlight as possible – especially early morning light. Go outside and soak in as much sun during the day as possible. Sit by windows when indoors.

Aromatherapy

- Using essential oils can help boost mood! Try Bergamot, Cardamom, Cedarwood, Jasmine, Orange (Sweet), or any comforting oil blend! We like [Plant Therapy](#) for their clean and affordable oils! You can diffuse or smell them straight from the bottle. Note: Do not put oil on skin without a carrier oil mixed with it!

Cut the Alcohol & Sugar

- Cutting Alcohol and Sugar not only eases fatigue but can help reduce blood sugar issues. Give it a try!

Professional Help

- Seeking help from a professional for counseling or antidepressants is nothing to be ashamed about. Check out our [Catholic Counselors List HERE](#). You are not alone!

FASTS & FEASTS!

"ON THE FEASTS OF THE SAINTS CONSIDER THEIR VIRTUES, AND BESEECH GOD TO DEIGN TO ADORN YOU WITH THEM."

-ST. TERESA OF JESUS

January 1st, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (**Holy Day of Obligation**)

- Celebrate by throwing a Mother and Daughter/Son Tea Party with Our Heavenly Mother! Decorate the house and dress in floral patterns or white and blue. Fill the house with flowers, set aside a shrine for a statue of Our Lady, and spend the afternoon eating finger foods and teas named after Our Lady's titles. You can come up with your own ideas or follow along with Catholic Cuisine's menu [here](#).

January 4th, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

- We owe this saint honor for founding the United States Parochial school system back in the early 1800s. Celebrate this colonial saint by making traditional colonial recipes. Warm up with [Beef Barley Soup](#) and [Apple Dumplings](#) for dessert!

January 6th, The Epiphany of the Lord

- The tradition of eating [King Cake](#) for the Epiphany has its roots from 1800s France and was later brought to Louisiana. It is a tradition in New Orleans to eat this cake to kick off the Carnival season which begins on Epiphany and ends on Mardi Gras. So you can make this cake from Jan 6th to Feb 13th! The cake is shaped like a crown to symbolize the three kings who visited Christ after his birth. The colors on the cake symbolize faith (green), justice (purple), and prosperity (yellow or gold). A small plastic baby toy is often hidden in the cake and whoever receives the piece with the hidden Christ Child is crowned King or Queen for the day. It is also their job to make the cake next year. Recipe [here](#)!

January 7th, Baptism of the Lord

- One symbol of John the Baptist is the shell. Celebrate the Baptism of our Lord by St. John with this delicious [Stuffed Shells](#) recipe! Read the story in the Bible and bless yourselves with Holy Water to be reminded of your own baptism in the church.

January 14th, Infant Jesus of Prague

- The Infant of Prague is known as the patron of those struggling with money problems. Pray this powerful [novena](#) for his intercession when money is tight!

January 21st, St. Agnes

- Celebrate this saint and martyr by making these traditional German cookies called [Agnesenplätzchen](#) (St. Agnes Cookies).

January 31st, St. John Bosco

- Honor this Italian beloved saint by making [Torta di nocciole](#) – hazelnut cake, a traditional Turin dessert! Pair it with your favorite Italian dinner of your choice.

February 1st, St. Brigid

- Celebrate this Irish saint by making her signature cross! This craft is fun for the entire family and is a great way to honor her. Find instructions on how to make it [here](#)! Then enjoy a traditional meal like [Irish Colcannon Soup](#) with [Irish Soda Bread](#).

February 3rd, St. Blaise

- St. Blaise is the patron of sufferers from throat diseases. It is tradition to have a priest hold two blessed candles over parishioner's necks and call upon his intercession for healing. Many times churches offer this blessing at a weekend masses around his feast. If your parish does not, feel free to inquire about it with your parish priest.

February 8th, St. Josephine Bakhita

- This incredible and brave saint is known for escaping slavery and devoting her life to Jesus. Find fun activities and her story [here](#)! You can also celebrate Bakhita's Sudanese roots by making this traditional dish of [Kamounia](#) (Beef/Liver Stew). Serve with rice and flatbread to make the perfect meal.

February 11th, Our Lady of Lourdes

- Celebrate our Lady with this fun and edible craft of creating a rice crispy grotto! You can use regular rice puffs, fruity pebbles, or even cocoa pebbles for your design. See a great example by "Catholic Icing" [here](#)!

February 13th, Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday)

- Celebrate the last day of Ordinary time before Lent! Enjoy your favorite sweets, treats, and other goodies that will soon be given up tomorrow. Try adding a traditional New Orleans meal to your day like [Gumbo](#), [Muffuletta Sandwiches](#), or [Beignets](#)!

February 14th, Ash Wednesday/Valentines Day (**Day of Fasting and Abstinence**)

- The first day of Lent begins today! Don't forget to fast and abstain today! Read more about this [here](#).

The Striving Saint: Resources that Inspire the Road to Sainthood

FEATURED PODCAST

THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

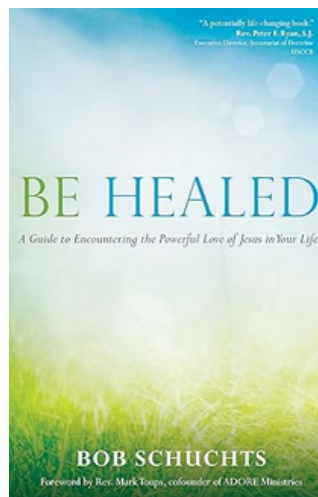


“Archbishop Naumann interviews Craig Soto and Kimberly Flores about the healing they received at [Life Giving Wounds](#) and how they are now helping lead the upcoming [January 2024 LGW Retreat here in Kansas City](#). The Life-Giving Wounds retreat is a unique opportunity for young adults (18+) and adults with divorced or separated parents to reflect intentionally on the wounds caused by their family’s breakdown, together with others who know this pain and knowledgeable, compassionate retreat leaders.”

FEATURED BOOK

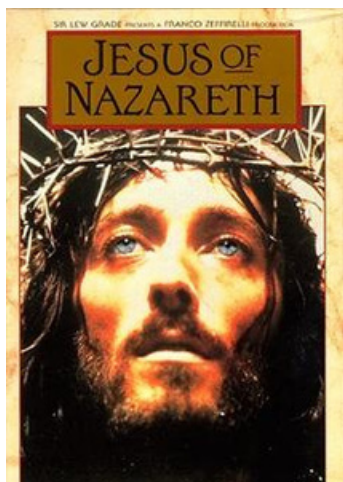
BE HEALED BY DR. BOB SCHUCHTS

“Somewhere deep inside each one of us is a burning desire to finally become the person God created us to be.” Do you suffer from spiritual or emotional wounds that are keeping you from reaching that goal? The bestselling book *Be Healed* is based on retired Catholic therapist Bob Schuchts’s popular program for spiritual, emotional, and physical healing. Incorporating elements of charismatic spirituality and steeped in scripture and the wisdom of the Church, this book offers hope in the healing power of God through the Holy Spirit and the sacraments.”

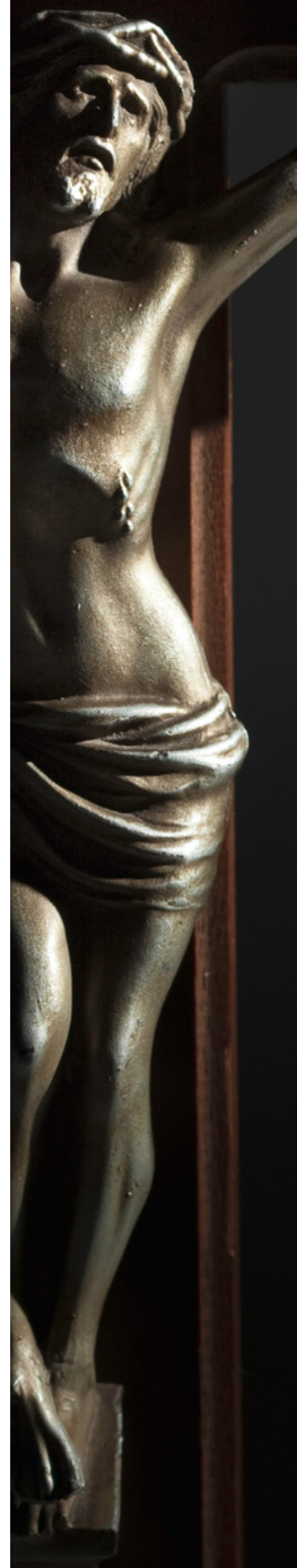


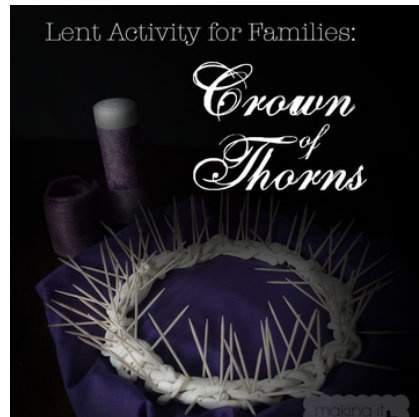
FEATURED MOVIE

JESUS OF NAZARETH



“Acclaimed director Franco Zeffirelli and an all-star cast come together to deliver a powerful adaptation of the Gospels in 1977's *Jesus Of Nazareth*. From the Nativity to the Crucifixion and Resurrection, the life of Jesus (played by Robert Powell) is presented with stunning depth, gravity, and emotion.”





FEATURED LENTEN ACTIVITY

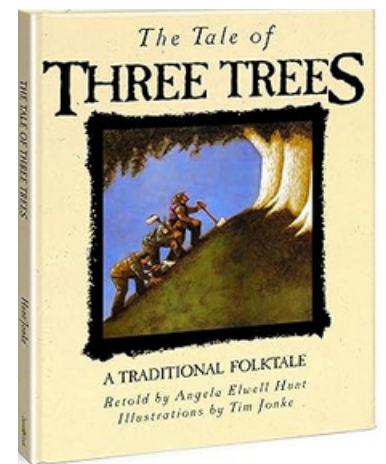
SACRIFICIAL ACTS - CROWN OF THORNS

“Need a meaningful way to bring the whole family together this Lent? Want to encourage the true meaning of Christ’s passion with your little ones? Create a Crown of Thorns this Lent and participate in small acts of service and sacrifice as a family to remove all the thorns by Easter. Then decorate the crown with jewels and gold to celebrate our King!”

FEATURED BOOK

THE TALE OF THREE TREES- A TRADITIONAL FOLKTALE

“Featuring the wonderful illustrations of Tim Jonke, this best-selling children’s book tells the Easter story from a new and unusual point of view. Children will be deeply touched as they understand, perhaps for the first time, the significance of Christ’s life and his atoning sacrifice on the cross.”



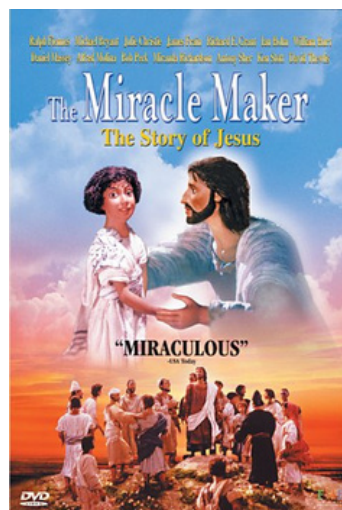
FEATURED MOVIE

THE MIRACLE MAKER

RATED G

“Starting with his birth in Nazareth, Jesus goes on to meet and inspire his apostles, perform various miracles and reveal his teachings. His baptism by John the Baptist is shown, as well as his meeting with Mary Magdalene. Christ must eventually face the betrayal of Judas, and succumb to Herod’s vendetta against him.”

Available on Prime and Youtube



UPCOMING EVENTS

HEAR WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE LIFE GIVING WOUNDS RETREAT

“ Life Giving Wounds provided me the opportunity to reveal my wounds, especially the trauma of my parent’s separation, to God. The more I uncovered the depths of my wounds with Christ, the more I experienced the depth of the Father’s love for me. ”

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♥ -LIFE GIVING WOUNDS RETREAT: SAVIOR PASTORAL CENTER, KCK
FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JANUARY 12-14, 2024
Retreat for Adult children of divorced or separated parents. The weekend is presented by trained peer leaders and includes insightful talks, Reconciliation/Adoration, time for prayer and optional small groups. Limited scholarships available upon request
Register today at: archkck.org/LGW

♥ -RETROUVAILLE KC MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT WEEKEND
FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JANUARY 26-28, 2024
Retrouvaille is a lifeline for marriages...to help couples heal and renew their hurting marriages. It’s a practical program to improve communication, and help couples reconnect. Presenters are not marriage counselors, but rather couples sharing their personal stories of marital struggles and the tools they used to rediscover their love. It’s Catholic in origin, but all faiths are welcomed.
Registration closes January 24th! Register today at www.retrokc.com

♥ -"EVER MORE IN LOVE" MARRIED WEEKEND IMMERSION
SACRED HEART OF JESUS CATHOLIC CHURCH- SHAWNEE, KS
FEBRUARY 24-25, 2024
Formerly called the Living in Love retreat, this weekend is packed with insights and exercises that will help you experience the wonder of being more in love! Registration ends February 23rd!
Use Discount Code **ARCHKCK** at checkout to register for only \$50!
Register [HERE!](#)

♥ -WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND, SAVIOR PASTORAL CENTER, KCK, FEB 16-18, 2024
The emphasis of the weekend is on the communication between husbands and wives. It provides a conducive environment for couples to spend time together, away from the distractions and tensions of everyday life, while encouraging them to focus on each other and their relationship. Register [HERE!](#)

♥ -LENTEN MARRIAGE MINI-RETREAT, OL GUADALUPE, TOPEKA, FEB 17
Kick off Lent by spending a Saturday with your spouse. Learn how romance can make you holier! Register [HERE!](#)