

# BUILDING A CIVILIZATION OF LOVE

Official Family Newsletter of the Archdiocese of KCK



## BRING HOME THE HIERARCHY

BY LIBBY DUPONT

A lot of change is coming to the Church of Northeast Kansas in the next few months, and with it, an amazing opportunity to help your kids experience their place in their Catholic faith family. The idea of “hierarchy” is something we democracy-loving Americans can struggle with. But the fact is that the structure of our Church is an amazing gift, an act of loving care for us by our Heavenly Father. Here’s a few ideas on ways to use current changes in Church leadership to help our kids connect to the Church.

### A NEW POPE!

The day Pope Francis was elected, I have vivid memories of my 8-year-old son running around the house yelling, “Habemus papem!” My husband stopped off for some Argentinian wine on the way home and we had an impromptu celebration with friends. A few ideas for this time around:

- Pick good news coverage. Most secular outlets will cover the conclave like a cutthroat presidential campaign. While we’re not naïve to the weaknesses of the cardinals, the conclave is primarily a work of the Holy Spirit. Instead try Vatican News or EWTN.
- Look up a list of popes. The fact that we have a record of every single pope since Peter is an amazing testament to Matthew 16:18. You can laugh at some of their weird names, count the number of saints among them, and recognize that not all were good men. Still, the Church continues, just like Jesus said it would.
- Share your own memories. I was blessed to see three popes at live gatherings in my lifetime so far, and my kids like to hear these stories. Ask grandparents for their perspective, too as it personalizes the papacy.
- Pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to choose the right pope for our Church, then to strengthen him for his mission.
- Celebrate. Once that white smoke pours from the chimney, make a plan to celebrate as a family! If you are reading this after the election, consider celebrating on his installation day or even Pentecost.

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“The Church is, in Christ, a kind of sacrament—a sign and instrument—of intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race... a family of God in the world.”

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II



## A NEW ARCHBISHOP!

Growing up, I was not aware of or connected to my Bishop. But after working for Archbishop Naumann now since 2011, I have so much admiration and filial love for him as our shepherd. So, as we prepare to welcome Archbishop-designate Shawn McKnight as his successor, it's been emotional around our house! Some ideas to mark this time:

- Learn with your kids. What does an Archbishop do all day? [Creed 101](#) and the [Archdiocese of Edmonton](#) have short YouTube videos on the topic, and the [USCCB has a great little FAQ about Archbishops](#). While the records aren't as impeccable as for popes, let your children know that every bishop or Archbishop is descended from one of the Apostles. Don't forget to read [The Leaven](#) for news on this transition as well.
- Connect to your family's story. Do you have personal stories about Archbishop Naumann or another bishop or archbishop that impacted your life? Share with your kids.
- Pray. Add both Archbishop Naumann and Archbishop-designate McKnight to your family's daily prayers.
- Celebrate. Archbishop McKnight will be installed on May 27th. While you may not be able to attend this mass in person, consider watching the livestream, going to daily Mass at your parish or just having a special meal with family and friends.

## NEW PRIESTS!

Many of us interact so frequently with our parish priests that we can begin to take them for granted. Yet, these men are there for us at all of life's most crucial moments and they provide the sacraments we need for our daily walk with Jesus. In this season, new priests are ordained and many move to new assignments. It's a great time to reflect on the gift they are in our lives!

- Learn & share. Take a little time to learn about [how a man becomes a priest](#), [what he does all day](#) and to also share stories of priests who have meant a lot to you personally. The best way to do this is to invite your own priest over for brunch or dinner.
- Pray. Add your parish priests to a part of your regular family prayer, especially if there is a transition this summer at your parish. Print off a list of our current seminarians and pray for them by name!
- Celebrate. You can [livestream the ordination masses](#) on the Archdiocesan website, or just make note of the dates and plan for a special dessert that night for dinner. Kids never turn down a treat, and the occasion is an opening for a discussion of the priesthood. You can also take time to write “thank you” notes to your current or outgoing priests and a “welcome” note to anyone new.

# 3 CONVERSATIONS TO HAVE THIS SUMMER

BY LIBBY DUPONT

The happiness of our children is important to us. We work hard to provide for them, get them coaches, lessons and tutors to develop their potential. We give gifts, throw parties and go on trips to create memories. Yet often we're so busy doing these things we miss one area that could make all the difference—marriage!

According to sociologist Brad Wilcox, the odds of being “very happy” with life increase by 545% for those in a good marriage. How can we set them up for success in this crucial area? Here's three conversations to have with your teen NOW and some tips to get you started.

COHABITATION. Despite its widespread cultural acceptance, the statistics still tell us that living together decreases your chances of a happy marriage. Don't wait until your young adult asks to borrow your truck to help them move in with their boyfriend or girlfriend... spend some time now helping them understand the sociological and theological reasons avoid this practice.

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING. Couples who use NFP have lower rates of divorce and higher rates of happiness in marriage, but often they don't hear about it until marriage prep. Teaching our daughters how to track their cycles is a means of helping them grow into healthy young women—physically, psychologically and spiritually. Teaching our sons some basics about the goodness of fertility can help them appreciate the beauty of women. For both, fertility awareness can lead to greater respect for the gift of sexuality.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS. What qualities make a good spouse? How can you build the virtues you need to become one? What is the point of a dating relationship and what does a healthy one look like? If we don't discuss these questions with our kids, their vision will be shaped by our culture.



## TIPS FOR HAVING DIFFICULT (BUT FRUITFUL!) DISCUSSIONS WITH TEENS:

- Aim for multiple, short conversations rather than one big lecture. Listen before talking.
- Is some of this info new to you? Are you intimidated to bring some of this up based on mistakes you made in the past? That's okay! Be not afraid to learn with your kids, and give them some of the tools or info you wish you would have had as a teen.
- Use movies, TV, music or even people you know to bring topics up naturally. Ask them what they think of it, and see if they can think ahead to any unintended negative consequences.
- Read a book together such as “How to Avoid Falling in Love With a Jerk” by John Van Epp or “Gift and Grit” by Dr. Andrew and Sarah Swafford.
- Use [www.compassforparents.org](http://www.compassforparents.org) --- a resource produced by the Archdiocese of Detroit for resources on these and other important topics, as well as more tips for having difficult conversations with your kids.

# RUNNING TOWARDS HEAVEN TOGETHER: FEATURED MARRIED SAINT OF THE MONTH

It's often said that saints come in clusters, but few clusters shine as brightly as the family of St. Basil the Great — a lineage of saints spanning three generations, shaped by the faithful love and witness of parents and grandparents.

At the root of this holy family is St. Macrina the Elder, a remarkable woman born in Asia Minor and spiritually formed by St. Gregory the Wonderworker. When persecution came under Emperor Diocletian, she and her family fled to the wilderness, surviving by foraging and hunting for seven years. Her unwavering faith in such hardship left a lasting impression, especially on her son, St. Basil the Elder.

Basil the Elder, shaped by his mother's courage and conviction, became a respected teacher and a man of deep virtue. He married St. Emilia, the daughter of a martyr, and together they raised ten children — six of whom are known saints. Though Basil died while the children were still young, his influence endured. After his death, Emilia moved the family to Macrina the Elder's estate, where grandmother and mother worked together to raise the next generation in deep Christian faith.

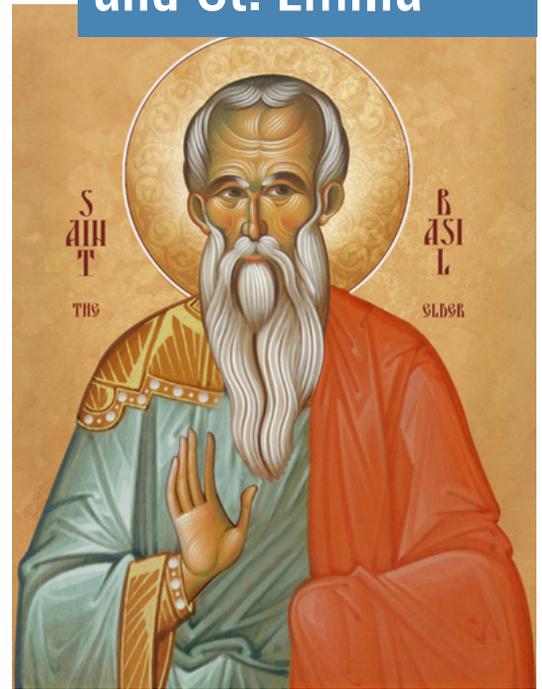
St. Emilia, known as the “mother of saints,” passed on not just the faith but a living witness of perseverance and trust in God. She struggled with grief and the temptation to idolize her children, but her daughter, St. Macrina the Younger, helped guide her to a deeper surrender to Christ. Macrina the Younger, the oldest sibling, became the spiritual center of the family, inspiring her siblings toward lives of holiness. She founded a monastic community with her mother and mentored her brothers — most notably St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory of Nyssa, both bishops and Church Fathers.

Even the lesser-known siblings, like St. Peter of Sebaste, a bishop, and St. Theosebia, a deaconess, lived lives of service and faith. The entire family shows how sanctity isn't accidental — it's nurtured in homes where parents live out their faith and pass it along not only through teaching but by example.

Three generations of saints didn't happen by chance. It began with a grandmother's bold faith in persecution, was nurtured by a mother's love and sacrifice, and came to full bloom in children who were taught, challenged, and inspired to live for Christ. Their story reminds us that holiness begins at home — in prayerful kitchens, in shared suffering, in quiet witness — and that each generation can build on the faith of the last.

St. Macrina the Elder and St. Emilia are celebrated together on May 30 — a feast of faith passed on, and of families made holy.

## St. Basil the Elder and St. Emilia



“It is not right for a Christian to  
mourn as if they have no hope.”

-ST. EMILIA

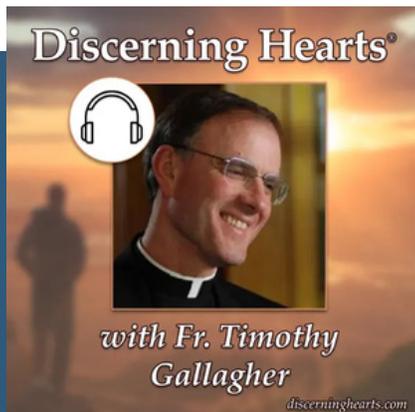
Source: [Aleteia](#)

# The Striving Saint: Resources that Inspire the Road to Sainthood

## FEATURED PODCAST

DISCERNING HEARTS

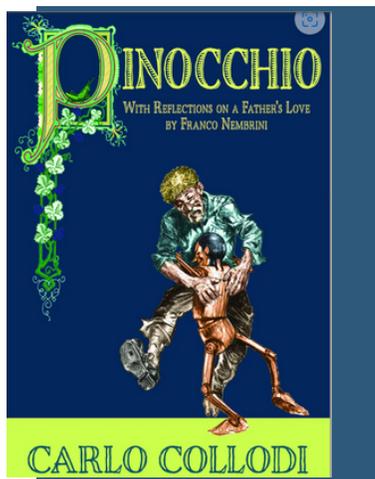
Fr. Timothy Gallagher leads this apostolate dedicated to evangelization and spiritual formation through new media. Discerning Hearts' mission responds to the Church's call to use the media for evangelization, catechesis, and spiritual renewal.



## FEATURED BOOK

PINOCCHIO WITH REFLECTIONS ON A FATHER'S LOVE

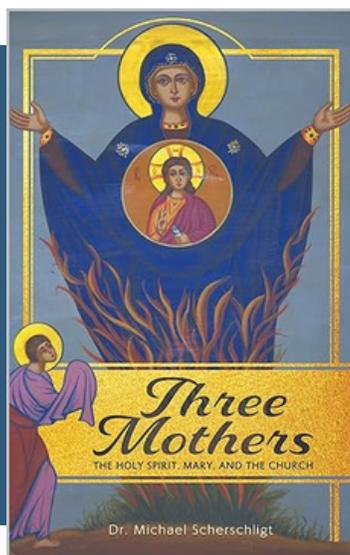
The magic of this book is the reflections written by Franco Nembrini in which he explores this classic tale from the lens of the love of God the Father. Insightful and poignant, you will see yourself in this famous puppet and come away with more appreciation of our Heavenly Father.



## FEATURED BOOK

THREE MOTHERS: MARY, THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

Local theologian Dr. Mike Scherschligt has written a little book on the amazing link between Mary and the Holy Spirit, which is perfect for this month in which we celebrate Mary, Pentecost and a new pontiff! A series on this topic is also available on the School of Faith rosary podcast.





<https://themerrybeggars.com>

## FEATURED PODCAST

### THE MERRY BEGGARS

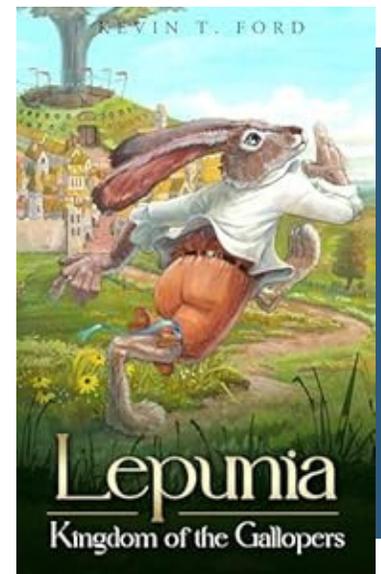
As the entertainment division of Relevant Radio, this podcast delivers high quality stories from a Catholic perspective. From engaging biographies of saints to an epic train adventure, there is enough stories here to fuel your summer road trip!

## FEATURED BOOKS

### THE LEPUNIA TRILOGY

Looking for a well-developed story for your kids or grandkids that will reinforce our Catholic worldview without being preachy? Dive into the world of the jackrabbits of Lepunia, written by local Catholic author Kevin T. Ford. Whether you read these loud or offer them for summer reading, you will be impatient for the arrival of Book Three!

<https://lepunia.com/>



## FEATURED MOVIE

### THE KING OF KINGS

This Angel Studios animated feature film is a beautiful telling of the story of Jesus for children. Based on Charles Dickens' version of the life of Jesus, it presents the basics of Jesus' birth, ministry, death and resurrection. The use of Dickens himself as a character, as well as his young son and cat allows us to encounter Jesus through the eyes of a child. Catch it while it is still in theatres or check back with Angel Studios for home viewing.

<https://www.angel.com/movies/king-of-kings>



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## HEAR WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT THE RETROUVAILLE MARRIAGE WEEKEND

“ We have been living separately for over 6 months. We wanted to figure out how to rebuild our marriage and we are slowly doing so using this program. ”

### THE OFFICE OF MARRIAGE & FAMILY LIFE



**BRAD DUPONT**  
LEAD CONSULTANT  
bdupont@archkck.org  
913-647-0301

**LIBBY DUPONT**  
CONSULTANT  
ldupont@archkck.org



**SR. MONICA BERNADETTE ARGUELLO, SGTJM**  
CONSULTANT  
marguello@archkck.org  
913-647-0329  
(Habla Español)



**ANNIE KYLE**  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT  
MFLadmin@archkck.org  
913-647-0345



**FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM!**  
**@MARRIAGEANDFAMILYLIFEKCK**

♥ **EVERMORE IN LOVE MARRIAGE PREP WEEKEND RETREAT**  
**SAVIOR PASTORAL CENTER - KANSAS CITY, KS**  
SEVERAL WEEKENDS AVAILABLE THROUGH JANUARY 2026  
@SAVIOR PASTORAL CENTER - REGISTER [HERE!](#)

♥ **RETROUVAILLE MARRIAGE WEEKEND**  
MAY 16-18, 2025 KANSAS CITY, KS  
Our primary goal is to provide help for couples who live in the disappointment and pain of marriage problems. The Retrouvaille weekend provides a safe setting encouraging couples to learn communication in marriage in a respectful manner.

♥ **CALL TO LOVE AGAIN CATHOLIC DIVORCE SUPPORT**  
MAY 31, 2025 WINERY SOCIAL  
For more information email: [info@thecall2love.com](mailto:info@thecall2love.com)

♥ **ENCOUNTER MINISTRIES HEALING SERVICE**  
JUNE 8, 2025 6-8PM ST PATRICK, KCK  
Our healing services are free and open to the public and will consist of a time of worship, a gospel presentation on healing, corporate prayer for healing, and individual prayer for healing.

♥ **A LOVE THAT NEVER FAILS**  
A WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE  
JUNE 13-15, 2025 IN LIBERTY, MO  
Discover the graces of your Sacrament of Matrimony and to explore the tools and daily practices that lead to enduring love. This is a non-residential experience (no overnight stay). To apply for the experience visit [www.wwme4youandme.org](http://www.wwme4youandme.org). Email [greaterkc.wwme@gmail.com](mailto:greaterkc.wwme@gmail.com) for more information.

♥ **EVERMORE IN LOVE WEEKEND IMMERSION RETREAT**  
JULY 19-20, 2025 Sts. PETER AND PAUL, SENECA  
Questions? [bdupont@archkck.org](mailto:bdupont@archkck.org) Register [HERE](#).

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ON OUR FLOCKNOTE!**



