



# Seek First the Kingdom

*Parents in Partnership with God – Sharing Faith with Children*

*A Ministry of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Immaculata, Pennsylvania*

## PARENTS – FIRST TEACHERS OF PRAYER Part 2 of 6: Parent Blessings

As the *First Herald of the Gospel* to children, it is the parent-privilege to introduce a child to God and to prayer-ways that engage the child in conversation with God.

Conversation leads to knowing;  
knowing leads to loving;  
loving leads to serving.

This bulletin is one of six newsletters:

- Prayer Prompts
- Parent Blessings
- Love for Scripture
- Blessed Sacrament Prayer
- Participation in Mass
- Sunday Gospel "Take-Aways"

May the suggestions that follow support you, the parent, to fulfill this divine task.

Heart-lessons can come from any source. For instance, in the Shakespeare play, *The Merchant of Venice*, the character Portia told Shylock that mercy is a gift that keeps on giving. She said that mercy "is twice blest: it blesses him that gives and him that receives."

Parents exercise that dynamic when they BLESS their children. A blessing calls on God to gift another. And while gifting, the blessing binds a parent closer to the child and visa-versa.

Though ordained priests are universally viewed as dispensers of blessings, all baptized persons are charged to imitate Jesus – the High Priest – who is priest, prophet, and king. Baptism and the promises that parents made at the baptism of their children commission parents to live the role of parent-priest within the family.

A blessing is a form of prayer. Imagine the effect if a child routinely heard his/her parent recite the words: *"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."* (Deuteronomy 6: 24-26)

Blessings can take any form. Some examples follow:

1. **Upon wakeup** the parent says, "Good morning, Hart. You are a gift from God." Hart responds: "And everything God makes is good!"
2. **At bedtime** the parent says, "Good night, Brennan, and God bless you. May God watch over you and keep you, and may you grow up to be a good and healthy girl." (Kiss) "I love you, Brennan."
3. **Upon leaving the house** the parent signs the child's forehead with a cross. Perhaps saying, "Represent our family well and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand."
4. **At the sound of sirens** pray something like, "O God, we beseech you to help your servants whom you have redeemed

*with your precious blood." Or "Come to their aid, O God of the universe!"*

5. When **beginning a conversation of substance**: "May the word of God be in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts." Trace the Sign of the Cross on the forehead, on top of the lips, and over the heart while saying the blessing.

6. Have at-the-ready abbreviated **scripture pocket-phrases** like "Go in peace! May God be your rock, your refuge, your shield" (2 Samuel 22:3-4). "May the peace of God, which transcends all understanding guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). "May the God of all comfort, comfort you in your situation" (2 Corinthians 1:3-5). "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope" (Romans 15:13).