

IN HONOR OF ST. JOSEPH

Becoming a Better Catholic Father

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This guide focuses

on some of the duties of Catholic Fatherhood with the aim of helping a devout Catholic husband and father examine the areas of his life where he needs more of God's Grace to withstand the attacks of the enemy and to lead his bride, children and others to Heaven.

The 7 General Questions for Becoming a Better Catholic Father:

- 1. Build Unity with my Bride** – Is my unity with my bride in Christ strong and growing stronger?
- 2. Establish Authority, Order and Culture** – Have I established and maintained Godly paternal authority, order and a Catholic Culture in my family?
- 3. Lead the family in the practice of the Catholic Faith** – Am I zealously leading my family in the practice of the Catholic faith?
- 4. Evangelize and Catechize the Family** – Am I fulfilling my obligation to be the first evangelizer and catechizer of my family in the truth of God as taught by His Holy Catholic Church?
- 5. Protect the Family** – Am I protecting my family spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically?
- 6. Provide for the Family** – Do I provide for the material necessities of my family while avoiding materialism?
- 7. Cultivate Talents and Vocations of the Family** – Am I cultivating my family's spiritual and worldly talents and vocations?

1. Build Unity with my Bride

– Is my unity with my bride in Christ strong and growing stronger?

- Have I and my bride, made an explicit and continual commitment to grow in holiness daily?
- Do I and my bride seek to work as a team recognizing and appreciating our unique and complementary blessings as father and mother?
- Do I and my bride strive to set an example of love and unity by demonstrating the fruits of harmony, peace and joy in our matrimony to our children and others?
- Do I and my bride have a daily practice of prayer, individually and together, rooted in God's Word, in which we praise God, beg for forgiveness and ask Him to strengthen our marriage?
- Do I strive on a daily basis humbly and meekly to make loving sacrifices for my bride?

- Do I repent and ask for forgiveness from my bride when I have done things that hurt or offend her or have failed to do things that honor and serve her?
- Do I listen intently to my bride, consider and respond to her concerns and ideas?
- Do I support my bride in her struggle for happiness and holiness?
- Do I and my bride courageously correct and humbly accept correction with deep charity from each other?
- Do I regularly tell my bride of my love and my admiration for her many gifts and sacrifices?
- Do I engage in the offering of conjugal love, open to the blessing of children?
- Have I damaged our conjugal union through the use of artificial contraception or sterilization?
- Have I failed to reverently respect my bride's desires and body, but instead used her for my own sexual pleasure?

- Have I been unfaithful to my bride by looking at pornography, gazing at others as sexual objects, flirting, or behaving in inappropriate ways?

2. Establish Authority, Order and Culture – Have I established and maintained Godly paternal authority, order and a Catholic Culture in my family?

- Have I been faithful to my duty to act as the head of my Domestic Church, a man accountable to God for the family?
- Do I lead my household with a clear demonstration of the sacrificial love of St. Joseph, laying down my life for my wife and family?
- Do I continually uphold and honor the dignity of my bride to show my love and to ensure that our children show her proper respect?

- Do I make it clear that Christian truth is the guiding principle of our family?
- Do I exercise my paternal authority in a just way, balancing truth and mercy and always showing fatherly charity?
- Do our children have a clear understanding of the “rules of the home” with clear boundaries and rewards and punishments for their behaviors?
- Have I established and perpetuated a family Catholic Culture by honoring penitential days and holy days, and honoring the saints, especially Mary and Joseph?
- Do we speak about priests and religious with respect in our household? Do we honor our bishops and our Holy Father?
- Do we organize our time and activities to allow participation in the daily, weekly and seasonal celebrations of the Church, making a special effort to make the Lord’s Day a day of prayer, family time and avoiding unnecessary work?
- Does our home reflect our beloved Catholic faith with examples/reminders of the faith (Crucifixes, pictures, personal shrine, a place for prayer, etc.)?
- Would a person visiting our home come away with a clear understanding that our home is a devoutly Catholic home?

3. Lead the family in the practice of the Catholic Faith – Am I zealously leading my family in the practice of the Catholic faith?

- Do I, my bride, and my children seek to grow in faith, hope and charity as our primary mission?
- Have I and my bride ensured that each of our children has received the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation?
- Do we have a daily family practice of prayer (Rosary, prayer at meals, bedtime)?
- Do I lead the family in the reading of Scripture on a regular basis?
- Do I lead the family on at least a monthly basis to the Sacrament of Confession?
- Do I prepare and lead the family to Sunday Mass and strive to set aside the Sabbath as a day of rest, prayer and family time?
- Do I have a regular ritual of giving each member of the family the “father’s blessing”?
- Do I regularly gather with other men, couples and families in parish activities to build strong Catholic bonds between my family and others in our parish?
- Do I understand and deliberately practice the Spiritual Works of Mercy with my spouse and children?
- Does our family have a commitment to regularly practice the Corporal Works of Mercy?
- Would my wife and children say that I am a man of prayer who loves the Catholic Church?

4. Evangelize and Catechize the Family – Am I fulfilling my obligation to be the first evangelizer and catechizer of my family in the truth of God as taught by His Holy Catholic Church?

- Have I shared with my family my own conversion and commitment to Jesus Christ and His Catholic Church and how Christ has changed and blessed my life?

- Do I regularly acknowledge God’s Grace and the power of the faith in an explicit way in my daily life?
- Have I personally discussed with each of my family members, whether together or individually, how God is working in our lives?
- Do I demonstrate the centrality of the Catholic faith on a regular basis to my family by my words and deeds?
- Have I taught my children how to pray?
- Do I regularly discuss the power of the Sacraments and the essential need to receive God’s Grace?
- Do I regularly discuss the power of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and the need to grow in the Fruits of the Holy Spirit?
- Have I surrounded my family with other strong supports of the faith?
- Am I spending time each week helping my children grow in understanding and love of the Catholic faith?
- Do I routinely help my children grow in the Theological, Cardinal and Heavenly Virtues and battle against the opposing vices?
- Am I with my bride fulfilling our duty as primary educators in the faith, including prayerfully and prudently considering the blessings of making the sacrifice to send our children to authentically Catholic schools?
- Do I monitor what my children are learning in school and correct evil/confusion when necessary?

5. Protect the Family – Am I protecting my family spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically?

- Am I continually vigilant to spiritually protect my family against the attacks of Satan?
- Have I taken appropriate steps to keep my family safe from physical danger?
- Have I taught my family how to protect themselves from danger and how to act when danger occurs?
- Do I and my bride ensure that our children get proper nutrition, exercise and healthcare?
- Do I and my bride help our children learn to use their emotions in healthy ways?
- Do I ensure the types of media and entertainment which come into the daily life of our family are morally appropriate?
- Have I put in place and regularly monitored pornography defense software on our devices?
- Have I protected my family from overuse of/ addiction to technology?
- Do I ensure that my children are modest in their dress and lifestyle?
- Do I and my bride protect our children against substance abuse, and do we bear witness to the virtue of temperance in the use of alcohol?
- Am I vigilant in my protection of my children by knowing their friends (and parents of friends), paying special attention to the faith and morality of their friends?
- Have I screened and approved of any prospective romantic friendships for my children?

6. Provide for the Family – Do I provide for the material necessities of my family while avoiding materialism?

- Do I lead my family in avoiding looking to material things for our happiness as we seek to live simply?
- Have I established a financial plan that ensures the ongoing material support of my wife and children?
- Have I sought to reduce debt and financial obligations to others and to live within our financial means?
- Do I and my bride contribute in accord with our means to the support of the Church and the care of the poor?
- Am I vigilant in avoiding excess purchases and indulging myself, my wife and my children?
- Have I sacrificed my personal desires to ensure my family’s material needs are met?
- Do I actively manage my career to provide for my family while also avoiding overwork/careerism?
- Do I demonstrate frugality, simplicity and good stewardship in the management of our finances and possessions?

7. Cultivate Talents and Vocations of the Family – Am I cultivating my family’s spiritual and worldly talents and vocations?

- Do I spend a significant time with each child each week to ensure that they know they are loved by their father?
- Do I and my bride have regular discussions about each child’s strengths and weaknesses and develop plans to help them grow in holiness?
- Do I and my bride recognize and cultivate each child’s talents?
- Am I thoughtfully and vigilantly guiding my sons to build masculine strengths and virtues and learn how to be good Catholic husbands and fathers?
- Am I thoughtfully and vigilantly guiding my daughters to mature in their feminine beauty, virtues and gifts and learn how to be good Catholic wives and mothers?
- Am I nurturing, educating and preparing each child to discover his or her vocation in the service of God and His Catholic Church with a deep exposure to the priesthood/religious life?
- Have I established with my bride a plan to help each child transition into a competent and confident Catholic adult?
- Do I support, but avoid indulging, my children as they become independent?
- Am I playing an appropriate role in the guidance of my adult children?
- Am I actively demonstrating the Catholic faith to my grandchildren?

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