



Mission

Altar and Hearth Magazine is an ezine by traditional Catholic women responding to the need for a magazine reflective of our principles and values. We are focused on providing light-hearted, whimsical, and inspirational content within a Catholic moral and cultural context.

No more ads for contraceptives. No more ladies in painted on yoga pants and sports bra tops. No more impractical, expensive crafts directed toward two-child families.

Just quality content for the trad woman.

Unless restating established traditional Catholic teaching, the opinions found herein belong to the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Altar and Hearth Magazine. If you find yourself in disagreement, you are more than welcome to voice that opinion in a letter to the editor.



Managing Editor

Colleen Eldracher holds a bachelor's degree in Business Management, with a major in Marketing and a minor in graphic design.

She runs a home business making modest women's clothing, wedding dresses, and church vestments. From 2014-2016 she was also employed as a pre-algebra teacher for adult students. She has given modesty seminars in Michigan and Ohio and enjoys writing historical fiction.



Founder & Former Editor-in-Chief

M. Zapp is a mother, an avid fan of the British Regency, artist and freelance writer. After editing for her high school newspaper and working for a small town paper between college semesters, she never lost her love for the publishing world.

She is a multi-published author of both fiction and web copy and is currently working on the production of several ebooks and novels.

To read this magazine: This magazine can be read online, downloaded as a PDF, or printed. If you do choose to print it, select the option to shrink the pages to fit in the printable area of the paper - otherwise you will lose the outer quarter inch since most printers can't put ink all the way to the edge.

We welcome your input, opinions, and comments. You can post to our FB page or send us an email. For submission information or for information on how to support Altar and Hearth in other ways, please visit our website at http://altarandhearthmagazine.com/

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First, for those of you who are new or who didn't notice a small rearrangement on the previous page, the staff here at Alter & Hearth Magazine are going through some changes. Our founder and Editor in Chief, Maggie Zapp, is retiring - this time more than temporarily - due to the demands of taking care of her growing family. She has truly done a great job picking interesting content, keeping the tone of the magazine light and informative, and reigning in stray ideas. Without her initiative, none of this would be here.

That being said, since neither of us want to see this concept just die out after such a promising start and lots of wonderful feedback from readers and clergy, we talked things over and came to the decision that even though Maggie is stepping down, I will be stepping up to take over the role of Editor-in-Chief on top of the work I already do as Design Editor. I'll be wearing quite a few hats, but I'm definitely open to sharing them with others if any of you are interested in becoming regular contributors! The more the merrier!

As always, we can never have too many submissions. Don't worry about flooding us - we can always save "surplus" pieces to use in later issues. If a piece is a good idea but needs extensive polishing, we can then work together to fix it up in time for the next issue rather than cramming to meet the deadline.

If it eventually turns out that we have difficulty filling our regular categories, we may cull a few and add a few as needed, but for the moment we are hoping to keep everything as continuous as possible. Also, after much discussion and thought, we have come to the conclusion that we will no longer be providing free advertising services. The new price list is on the next page - you'll find that it is EXTREMELY reasonable compared to advertising in just about any other format out there. Our Catholic Directory listings for businesses will remain free of charge as a public resource. We will be accepting advertisements on a yearly cycle, so if you are interested, you must send us your ad before we release the Spring-Summer issue; it will then run for 2 issues. To make payments for advertising, please use the "Buy Us a Coffee" link on the website home page - I know it seems tacky, but it will keep everything in the same PayPal account and also alert us via the official email. Fees collected will be used for website maintenance, giveaways, occasional contest prizes, and small perks for contributors and staff.

If you are interested in receiving updates, such as the publishing timeframe for future issues, contests, and giveaways, please "follow" us by entering your email using the link on the home page. You do not have to have a WordPress account to be a follower; if you're worried about piles of spam, it doesn't seem like you need to be. WordPress does not appear to bombard its subscribers (even those with accounts) with junk. For our own part, we will definitely *not* be snowing you under with emails! However, the more followers, likes, and comments we get, the more visible the website becomes, and every little bit helps!

Pax Christi,

Colleen

Catholic Business Directory

Alex & Co - Photography - Brooksville, Florida

Colleen's - Custom clothing, wedding dresses, alterations - Yale, Michigan; online

Current Construction - Built to last - Johannesburg, Michigan

Keep It Light Art - Whimsical artwork - online

Pure Goat Soapworks - Handmade soaps - online

St. Apollonia Dental - Reliable family dentistry - Sterling Heights, Michigan

St. Jerome Homeschool Library - Spiritual and secular reading - online

St. Zita's Cottage - Catholic crafts - online

The Misty Mountain Boys - Live & recorded bluegrass music - Minnesota

Know someone who owns a Catholic business or offers professional services? Listings in the directory are absolutely FREE! To place an advertisement with us, contact us at altarandheartheditors@gmail.com. We provide design services by request; otherwise you can submit your own promotional pieces. We reserve the right to refuse objectionable ads or to modify ads to meet our criteria in terms of space and content.

Pricing

Full page: \$40 per year [11 in tall x 8.5in wide]

Half page: \$20 per year [Specify vertical (11 in x 4.25 in) or horizontal (5.5 in x 8.5 in.)]

Quarter page: \$10 per year [Vertical only. 5.5 in x 4.25 in]

Sidebar: \$15 per year [11 in x 3 in]





Polyester p.6 And Pimples



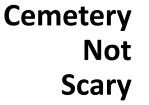
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The Silver Chair



p.18

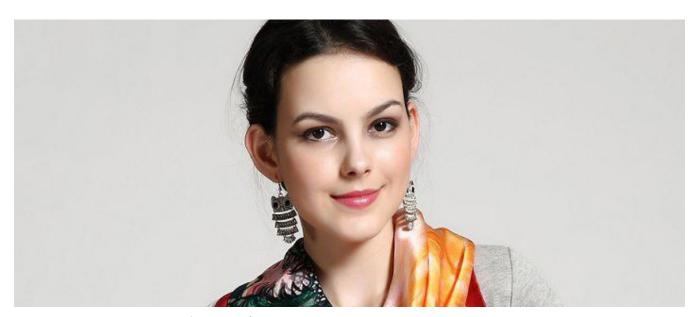




p.42

Easy Evergreen Sprays

************************** health ******************



Is what you're Wearing giving you Whiteheads?



've had trouble with acne for almost as long as I can remember. As a kid, I had small hard pimples on my upper arms that I scratched incessently, even after my Mom wallpapered my arms with band-aids. In gradeschool, I got full-blown acne earlier than my classmates and I had it with a vengeance. Huge whiteheads, medium whiteheads, small whiteheads, hard cysts that lasted for weeks,

blackheads — everything. By the end of high school I was starting to despair that I would ever get rid of them entirely. I tried all kinds of treatments, supplements, and cleansing routines — including one that we eventually realized was bleaching the hand towels that I dried my face with and discoloring the paint on the wall the bottles stood next to. Yeah, I threw that treatment out. Finally during my

************************** health *****************

senior year I was taking a vitamin complex that worked better than anything I'd experienced so far, allowing my high school graduation photos to be amazingly pimple-free. But a few months later the acne started creeping back, and eight years later I still have bad breakouts on and off and some lighter recurring acne.

Now, it's true that I have several factors stacked against me: oily skin, high hormone levels, and genetics (both of my parents had bad acne as teenagers). But I'm starting to really wonder if there might have been something else acting as an aggravating agent this whole time.

About a year ago, I started getting a crusty rash in a couple of places. It didn't itch, didn't hurt, and really didn't spread. It seemed like an incidence of bad dry skin – something my scalp experiences from time to time, so it didn't alarm me too much. Eventually I went to our homeopathic doctor for an accumulation of mild issues and he ran some tests to determine what was causing the rash.

The culprit: Polyester.

As he told me that, I was sitting in his office wearing nylon stockings, a polyester skirt, a poly-cotton blouse, a polyester sweater, and a filmy rayon scarf.

Every single health issue I was experiencing at the time was being exacerbated by contact with polyester, so for the next four months (up to the present), I planned my wardrobe to avoid manmade materials as much as possible. It was hard. Most underwear is stretchy, and thus has spandex or some other elastic in it. Socks have elastic threads. Slips and camisoles are usually a slippery polyester. Tops are often poly-cotton. Even leather shoes regularly have manmade insoles. Cotton dresses usually have plastic zippers. Wool jackets have synthetic linings.

Denim skirts were about the only polyester-free items in my closet. I bought a new sheet set for my bed in 100% cotton, and since I was looking for a new quilt anyway I made sure that was cotton, too. But even after changing the bedding, purchasing a few more cotton tops, and making a double-layer slip that's cotton on the inside and polyester on the outside, I'm still not completely polyester-free. Some things don't function right without

that touch of elasticene, or are just too expensive or hard to find. In spite of these small lapses, the original rash has completely cleared up.

However, now I have another issue - a new, ITCHY rash on the tops of my feet. This bugger definitely isn't passive, and once again polyester is a major cause.

The shopping saga continues...

The closest I could find to an all-natural, normal-looking shoe is a clog with a rubber sole, a leather footbed, and a leather upper. But even in this pair, there's a thin lining of some sort in the toe area, and I'm willing to bet it's polyester because if I wear them for a long time they aggravate the rash. (I'm increasingly tempted to buy a pair of traditional Japanese geta, wooden platform sandals with padded cotton thongs. Boy, will those cause a stir!)

Anyway, the whole point of describing my antipolyester campaign in detail is that during these four months of avoiding it as much as I can, I have noticed a surprising side effect.

My acne has gotten noticeably better – as in not there.

It hasn't disappeared entirely, not by a long shot, but it's gotten to a point that when I pose for a closeup photo I don't experience the pressing need to Photoshop out the big red pimple on the end of my nose or right in the middle of my cheek ('cause hey, I don't

have pimples there all the time) like I used to. It happened so gradually that I only became aware of it by a coincidence.

I started to notice that if I wore polyester for a couple of days here and there, I would break out in acne *especially in the areas where the polyester touched my skin*. Noticeably break out, as in big whiteheads. When I would go back to wearing cotton, the acne would decrease significantly.

This experiment has really made me think.

First of all, manmade materials are EVERYWHERE. Absolutely everywhere, at least indoors. Carpets, curtains, bedsheets, fuzzy blankets, clothes, shoes, backpacks, coats, computers, chair and couch fabrics, linoleum – even the earpieces on our glasses – at every point in the day we are touching some sort of manmade material. (And everyone already knows that we don't spend enough time outside, where, coincidentally, there aren't as many manmade materials.)

Second, during the time in my life when I had the worst acne, I wore a school uniform that consisted of a poly-cotton blouse, a polyester tie, a polyester jumper (later a skirt and vest), and a polyester beret for daily Mass. Many of my classmates also experienced extreme acne during this period – not all of them, but a significant number. We wore polyester at least 75% of the time.

Third, at a family gathering this summer, my Mom was talking with my aunts and one of them happened to mention that she cannot wear polyester at all. Likewise for another woman we know. If you go online looking for hypo-allergenic clothing, you will discover that there is a whole rash of people out there who go into itching frenzies if they put on, sit on, or sleep on manmade materials. They can't even tolerate elastic when it is totally enclosed in a cotton casing!

Now, I'm not a doctor, a dermatologist, or anything like that. I'm just someone with about twenty years of first-rate first-hand experience with acne. I know many people, especially women, who still struggle with acne in their mid-twenties (when we all really hoped it might finally go away). I also know that the vast majority of women's clothing today, from high heels to hats, is made from polyester, rayon, spandex, vinyl, viscose...the list goes on.

Is it possible that we are allergic to manmade materials, and that our acne is trying to tell us something?

True, we don't start sneezing or blowing our noses the minute we put on our infinity scarves. If it is an allergy, it's not one that manifests itself in the accepted allergic ways, at least not for many people. But think about it. The skin is our largest organ. It's the part of us that has the most contact with the outside world – the most exposure to toxins, irritants, and allergens. If our skin is constantly breaking out and erupting in painful, unsightly miniature volcanoes of puss, might that just be a clue that it doesn't like something that is constantly touching it? That maybe our skin isn't designed to be in contact with petroleum products 24 hours a day?

Obivously, there are nevertheless plenty of other known causes for acne. Stress, hormones, genetics, skin conditions, and the like may still be present, and may not improve even if you do choose to experiment with eliminating or at least reducing manmade materials in your wardrobe. You may find after a couple of months that your acne has an underlying cause that has nothing to do with polyester.

On the other hand, you may find that these less controllable factors are being inflamed by an external trigger such as polyester – sort of like the straw that broke the camel's back. Get rid of the irritant, and the other factors may finally have a chance to breathe deeply, calm down, and fade away.

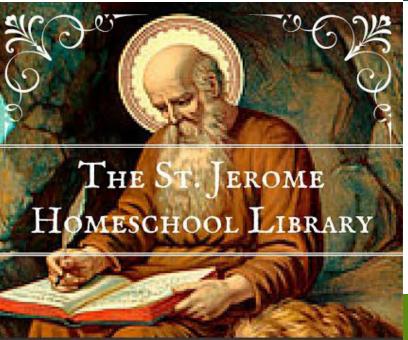
And maybe, finally, the acne will too. Ω

[Geta photo by Haragayato via Wikimedia Commons] [GFDL (http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html)]



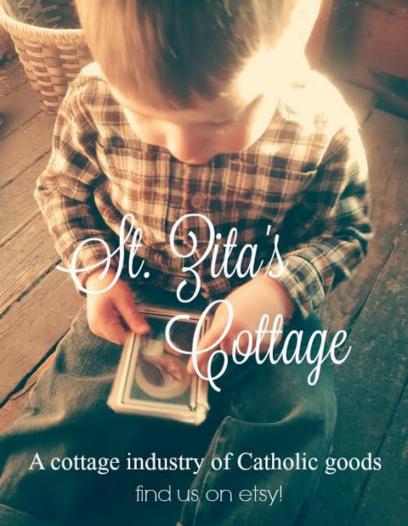
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Nicole McGinnis

dōTERRA

Wellness Advocate

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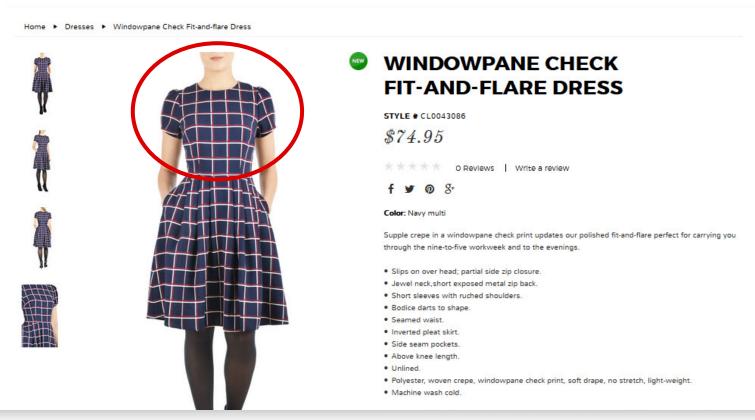
t least, not if you live in the United States or Canada. After complaining for the last generation that clothing options providing both modesty and style do not exist, we now have cute, affordable, and well-made choices for casual wear, day-to-evening wear, and even sleepwear.

Yes, you are reading this correctly!





NEW ARRIVALS DRESSES TOPS SKIRTS PANTS WEDDINGS SPECIALS SALE 40% OFF! OVERSTOCK



present, ladies, for your shoppping consideration....

.....eShakti.com!

eShakti is an online retailer based in India that is determined to pay fair wages AND provide customers with some seriously amazing options. They've been around since the early 2000s, but have only been discovered by the trad Catholic market within the last 2-3 years and their popularity is skyrocketing (the only downside is that they don't ship to Europe yet hopefully that's coming soon!).

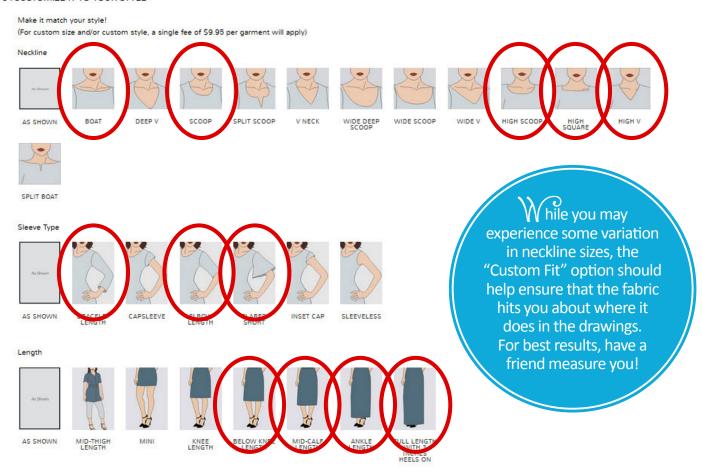
Their revolutionary principle is that almost every dress on their website can be extensively customized - in fit AND in style.

While even having a choice between buying standard sizes or providing your own measurements for a custom fit is a great improvement over most ready-to-wear retailers and etailers, the real gem in their

crown is style customization. *This* is the reason fans are so excited.

eShakti allows customers to choose the neckline type, sleeve length, and skirt length for nearly all styles. This means that if the display dress is sleeveless, you can add sleeves. If the neckline is too low, you can choose a modest scoop instead. If the skirt just barely skims the model's knees, you can have them extend it to mid-calf length, or even to full-length. And all this for only an extra \$10!

While not every dress on their website has the full range of customization options, there are enough of them that do to be exhilarating. The pictures above are from the actual eShakti website and give a good idea of the many options available to choose from. In general, the only dresses without additional neckline options are the wrap-front styles. Additionally, nearly all dresses have built-in pockets! While you can choose not to take advantage of this



feature, many women are happy to have the convenience.

In terms of fabric type and color there are just as many options. Solids, prints, stripes, plaids; woven cottons and comfy knits; retro-chic and cutting edge modern - eShakti offers them all. They're even rolling out a "silhouettes" option where you can change up the skirt outline - so if it has lots of gathers and you have a pear figure, you can choose a slimming A-line shape instead. Several of the more formal styles are also available in multiple solid colors, making them a great choice for casual bridesmaid dresses.

If you don't see something you like, don't fret. New styles are available weekly! Ω







Follow eShakti on social media for great promotions and style tips!

Customer Reviews

"I was a little skeptical about ordering a dress online, because usually they are too tight in the hips and too loose on top! What is nice about eShakti is that you can put in your own measurements. Their measurements are very easy to follow. I've ordered two dresses and they fit me so perfectly. If people ask what size my dress is I say, "MY" size!

"Good quality, timely delivery, nice fabrics!"

"I can't tell you how many times I have looked at a dress and said, "if only it had sleeves", "I wish that was longer" etc. I found so many that I want and I don't even DO online shopping.... until now."

[eShakti website screenshots are used with permission. The full details of this dress can be viewed at: http://www.eshakti.com/shop/Dresses/Windowpane-check-fit-and-flare-dress-CL0043086]





ove over, sweatshirts and hoodies the big girls are in town! Now is the time to break out the epitome of snazzy street style - the well-tailored jacket with just the right amount of pizzaz.

Sidle away from safe cookie-cutter blazers with mannish lines and no feminine flair and don a chic fishtail instead. Pair with a rustling silk skirt, accessorize with the perfect scarf, handbag, and shoes, and you send the message that you're a cut above ordinary. Go conservative with a gentle sweep or dramatic with a cascading mass of drapery, but either way, you're sure to make a statement!

If you choose to top your ensemble with a charming vintage hat, remember the wisdom of our grandmothers, who insisted that a tilted brim lends just the right amount of mystery to a lady's demeanor! Ω



HAT THIS BOOK IS: A fascinating, indepth explanation of how any Catholic can hear Mass with great (and easy!) profit to his soul, regardless of whether he be a great sinner or a great saint. Written in the early 1700s by Father Martin von Cochem, a Fransciscan priest better known for his popular The Four Last Things: Death, Judgement, Heaven, and Hell, this book has gone through several reprints and changes of title before reaching its present format.

Have you ever wished to understand the Mass better? Have you ever longed for some way to connect yourself more closely with What is happening on the altar? Have you ever desired a greater devotion to the Holy Eucharist? If so, then this is the book for you - even if you already think you have the answers to these questions.

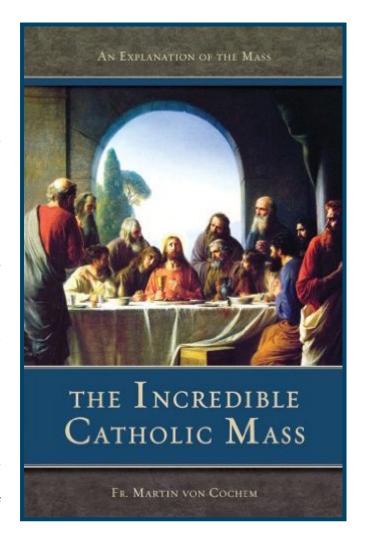
Broken down into short chapters ideal for daily spiritual reading, Father von Cochem takes the reader step by step through the many facets of the Mass; Its nature, excellence, mysteries, and much more. Offering practical hints for uniting oneself with Christ the High Priest and the assisting Angels, and rich with true stories of Eucharistic revelations and miracles, to read it is almost a prayer in itself.

The most important theme throughout is that during Mass, we essentially hold Christ a willing hostage for Whose ransom we can treat much

Book Review

more effectively with the Blessed Trinity. By allowing us to assume His infinite merits - those from His life, good works, Passion, and Death - Christ permits us and encourages us to offer them to God the Father in place of our own. By making frequent offerings of these infinite merits during the space of even one Mass, we can secure great graces, remission of the temporal punishment due to sins, forgiveness of our forgotten or lightly disregarded sins, assistance in our earthly needs, and much more.

Since the Mass is the greatest prayer that can be



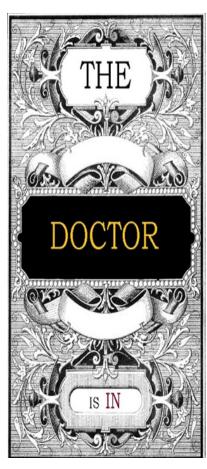
offered to God, and the most pleasing because the Victim is infinitely perfect, we cannot do better than to assist at Mass frequently and with as much devotion as possible. Even if we are dry

> and involuntarily distracted, we can ask the Sacred Heart to make up for what we are lacking. Fr. von Cochem makes the beautiful analogy that as someone who can sing beautifully

will naturally offer to take the part of someone who has a poor voice, the Sacred Heart is eager to offer the most perfect homage to God and to perfect our poor works.

Since it was written in the days before Missals were commonly available to the faithful, the methods explained are of special interest to the mother who must superintend children during Mass and to members of the choir who are frequently interrupted in their prayers. Ω

Available from TAN Books.



SYMPTOM:

You aren't outright coveting, but you can't help noticing a friend's trendy dress, stylish handbag, or perfectly decorated home. "I don't want *her* things," you tell yourself, "but I wish I could look that nice, live in a house on the same scale, etc." Your overall state, after comparing yourself to your peers, is a vague sense of dis-satisfaction.

DIAGNOSIS:

- Envy -

At rock bottom, you're not content with what God has given you. Envy is one of the Seven Capital Sins and is a close relative to jealousy. While its effects may seem mild and only occasional, it is nevertheless dangerous and is a distrust of the Wisdom of Divine Providence in choosing what is best for us.

TREATMENT OPTIONS:

1 Count your blessings. Seriously. We all get down once in a while, but if you're feeling like nothing is going your way and your life stinks, envy often follows. Take some time to consciously appreciate your health, your talents, your family, your education, your friends, your church, your Guardian Angel, your sense of humor...everything. Thank God for His many blessings!

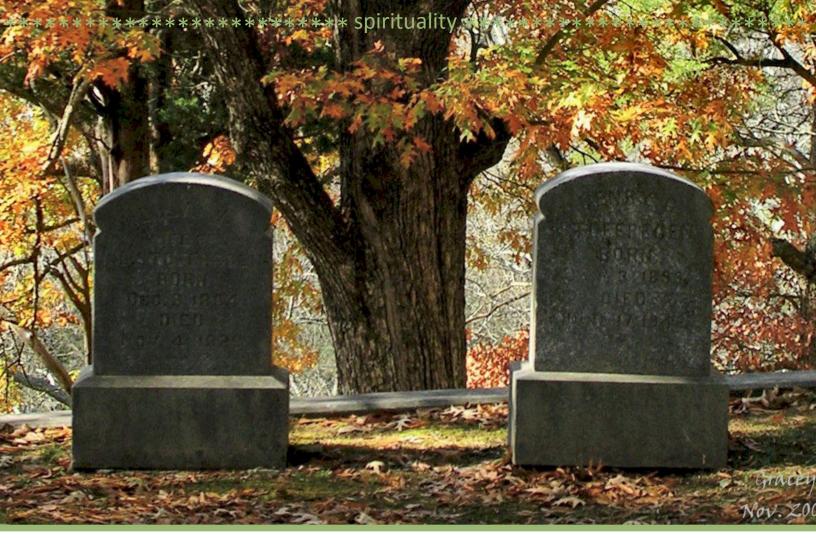
2 Visit or volunteer to help those less fortunate than yourself. Go to a local nursing home and chart with the residents. Volunteer at a soup kitchen or a local charity. Help an elderly lady at church with her shopping and housecleaning. There are few things that will help us put our own troubles in perspective better than talking to someone who goes through life in a wheelchair.

3 From a more worldly perspective, is your envy based on timidity or laziness? Do you really have a good excuse (like no money, or duties of state in life) for NOT improving your appearance,

fixing up those little things around your home, and even revitalizing your wardrobe? If the answer is "yes" to timidity or laziness and "no" to excuses, but you don't know where to start, ask a stylish friend for advice. Or a store clerk. Or the manager of the hobby/home decor section. Take a look at Pinterest or some blogs. Don't go binge buying, but put the effort into making positive changes, one step at a time. Envy is often manifested by sadness, so make it fun!

 $\mathbf{4}$ Force yourself out of your familiar comfort zone. It is easy to slip into a rut without realizing it, or even noticing that we go to the same restaurant, order the same food every time, always drive the same route to work, etc. Do something different that is reasonably safe. Even a small "risk" that turns out well is a huge contentment booster. $\mathbf{\Omega}$





Cemeta Place of Fear Cery by Colleen Eldracher

UR MODERN CULTURE is obsessed with Halloween. With witches, wizards, goblins, ghouls, ghosts, spirits, monsters, skeletons, zombies, and every sick and twisted form of the macabre. Passing the "seasonal decor" displays at just about every retail outlet from the supermarket to the craft store (with the notable exception of Hobby Lobby) is enough to turn an adult's stomach, not to mention a child's. When I was still in gradeschool, there was a house in our neighborhood that had such a horrific Halloween display monopolizing its front yard

that my siblings and I would cross the street to avoid it as we walked to the small Catholic acedemy we attended. At night, it had lights, creepy noises, and fake mist - all surmounted against a big wrought-iron type fence, the kind normally seen in cemeteries.

It can be hard to believe that this celebration of the grotesque actually had Catholic origins - in All Hallow's Eve, the day before All Saints' Day. While the history of how this feast degenerated into a pagan holiday is both long and interesting, I would like to focus on just one thing that has suffered in the transformation

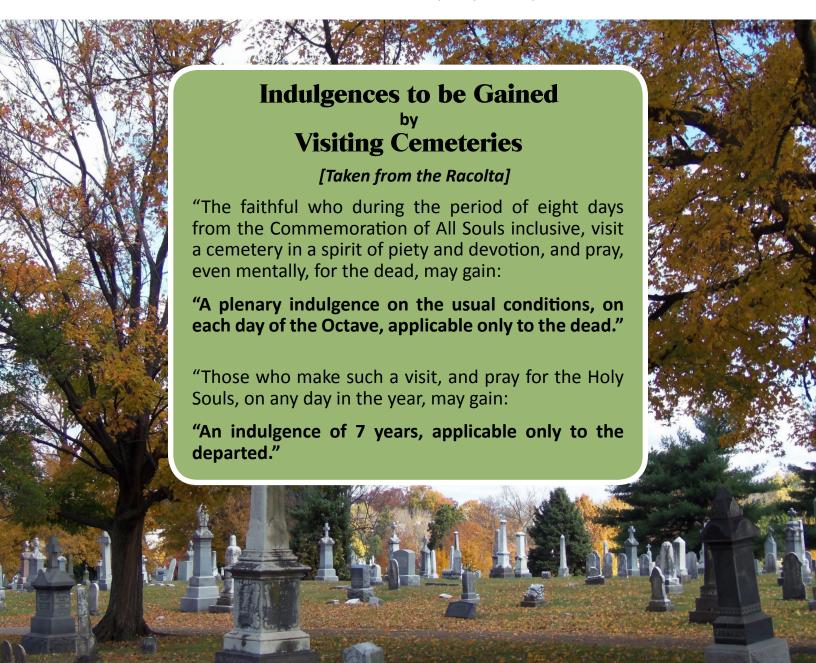
- the final resting place of our families and friends. A place that is present in nearly every small town in the world, and that occupies a sizeable section of many large cities.

Cemeteries.

How many little kids are now scared to so much as set foot in one unless accompanied by an adult, in broad daylight? How many teenagers freak out their friends by telling creepy tales about things they saw among the leaning gravestones, or dare them to pass through by moonlight?

Now, a non-Catholic cemetery, or one full of dead Masons, might admittedly be a scary place, or at least a sad one, considering how many of its residents are most likely lost forever. But what is there to fear in a Catholic cemetery, where the very ground is consecrated to the service of God and where the vast majority of the inhabitants died with the last sacraments and were buried with all the grave ceremony of the Burial Service?

As we drive by cemeteries on our daily commute, while shopping, or while driving to church, how often do we say even a prayer in passing for the Faithful Departed? While we may not have the time to physically pull in and park for a few moments, surely we can at least say "Eternal rest grant unto the Poor Souls, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them; may they rest in peace. Amen." Ω





ast night, I watched the 1990 BBC serial The Silver Chair, based off of the C.S. Lewis book by the same name. I have watched it several times before and I have read the book many times, but this night it was rather poignant. The premise of the story is that the Prince of Narnia's mother is bitten by a snake and dies. To avenge his mother's death, the prince rides to the spot of her poisoning so that he can find the snake and kill it. Instead of killing the snake, he is seduced by a beautiful lady in green, the snake in human form, and is led to her underground kingdom where he is kept as her prisoner to be used as part of her wicked plan to over throw the land of Narnia. Every night, for only a short amount of time, the enchantment from which the sorceress controls his mind breaks, and he remembers that he is a true and noble prince and that his captor is an evil witch and not his lady and his love. To keep the the prince from

killing her and ruining her plans, the sorceress locks the prince in a beautiful chair wrought of silver while his mind is his own. The prince is unable to fulfill his role as his father's heir because he is blinded by the cunning beauty of the green lady and is now stuck in the silver chair and unable to rescue himself.

I finished watching this TV serial at about 10:30 at night. I had been watching it since the afternoon. Before watching the Narnia series, I had also watched two other shows. It was a day long marathon of movie watching on the dear computer. There is no actual TV in my house and so the computer is used for movie watching, facebooking, and yada yada yada. So, I had spent the majority of my Sunday stuck in a chair and watching a screen. At the end of the day, my backside was sore from all of the sitting, as well as my spine from being in a slouchy pose for so long. Needless to say, once the screen went off, I was irritable and fat

feeling. Visions of me strangling kept running before my eyes when my mind was unoccupied with other matters, and I could hear myself choking and losing the ability to talk.

The whole day, I had been under the enchantment of my sorceress, the computer screen. The movies that I had watched were good ones. The main characters were noble, and usually ended up saving the world. I could pretend I was there with them, saving whatever mythical land I was virtually living in. But, I wasn't. I was sitting in a chair and not doing anything noble for myself. I did no laundry or cleaning (although it was Sunday) or writing. Crochet was in my hands, but this was just used as a means to keeps my fidgeting fingers busy. My mind was not in reality, it was checked out. Once the screen time ended, I realized my demise and that I had not had my own thoughts for hours on end. After so many hours of movie watching, I couldn't have my own thoughts and I went to sleep.

Early morning, while it is still dawn turning into day and I'm just on the cusp of rising, is the time when I am in my silver chair. My thoughts clear and I see the problem as it really is. I am attached to the screen and I spend hours on end in front of it rather than doing actual things in the real world and outside (maybe this might come as a shock to some of you

readers because you see all my other posts about hiking and the like, but I really do spend a lot more time screening away that it shows). It is also the time when I analyze my thoughts. Why do I sit back and watch myself strangling? I enjoy preserving my life. Is it maybe because my voice is silent. I am not saying my own words but letting others and the screens dictate them.

I have heard that overuse of the screen can actually lead to depression because humans are not interacting with people, but with machines. The computer is a machine that lends us a false sense of comfort. The glow is appealing and the friends on social media are just a click away. There are so many things to read and so many video clips to watch. It is ironic, but I am on the computer right now typing about how I'm held captive to it.

T.S. Elliot said, "I'm distracted from distraction, by distraction." That is what futile screentime is.

I want to start a challenge. For the next week, I will not click on any videos, or watch movies on my computer. Who is with me? Have time for real thoughts and real activities. Maybe videos don't seem like that big of a deal, but it will be the first step in breaking out of the Silver Chair. It will be one arm loosened from its bonds. Ω



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*********************** feature *****************



urricane. The word is enough to evoke images of widespread destruction and loss of life. It's with awe at the force of nature that people speak in hushed tones of Ike, Katrina or Sandy. In the United States alone, Hurricane Sandy wreaked havoc all along the eastern seaboard from Florida to Maine. It went inward as far as the Appalachian Mountains. The damaging winds and water cost the U.S. over \$71 billion dollars and became the second deadliest hurricane in history. No price can be put on the many human lives that were lost. Yet, if there is any good news in the memory of Sandy, it's the fact that many people were saved due to modern day weather forecasting. With today's technology, most of us know when a major storm is approaching long before it comes ashore. We're given time to take precautions or

to evacuate. Even if some ignore the warnings, they are given a choice. Stay or leave.

One hundred years ago, it was a different story. Hurricanes weren't given names or tracked as they are today. Weather forecasting was a new science. The U.S. Weather Bureau was in its infancy. Most storms were tracked as they'd always been- by seagoing vessels who happened to pass a storm and sent a message to shore. It became a matter of chance, not science. Sadly, this system would open the door to one of the worst natural disasters in U.S. history. A storm that would change the course of Texas history. Its human toll would eclipse the combined deaths from both the 1889 Johnstown Flood that preceeded it and the great San Francisco Earthquake of 1906 that would follow it.

The time was September, 1900. The boom town of Galveston Island enjoyed a warm and dry summer. The citizens congratulated themselves on their prosperous citynicknamed by some the "city of millionaires." Having become the nation's largest cotton port and providing the world with exports of U.S. goods, the city enjoyed immense success. The future looked bright and promising.... until September the 8th.

It's often called either the "1900 Galveston Hurricane," or "Isaac's Storm." Isaac Cline was the chief weatherman for Galveston's weather bureau. A confident scientist, he relied on the newest gadgets for predicting the weather. He'd even spoken against erecting a seawall to protect the city. A storm coming? It was an "absurd delusion." Isaac refused to prepare the people of Galveston - a mistake he would bitterly regret for the rest of his life.

The wind and waves hit the unprepared citizens with a vengeance. Wind speeds were clocked at more than 120 mph. The storm surge was more than fifteen feet high - and the elevation of the island was less than ten feet. In just a few hours, the winds damaged thousands of buildings and turned trees into splinters as water surged over the town. The flood waters would eventually submerge the entire island. Most estimates give the loss of life at over 6,000 citizens, over a sixth of the population. Other say that more, almost 10,000 to 12,000 might

have been lost and were never recovered. The stench of the bodies spread for miles as recovery work began.

The devastation left behind was described by Clara Barton, 78 years old when she arrived with the Red Cross, as "a scene from Dante's Inferno." It had taken over thirty-six hours for news of the hurricane to reach Washington, D.C. By the time Barton arrived, the citizens of Galveston had already begun to burn bodies, thousands of them, in funeral pyres in the street.



For the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, the memories of the 1900 hurricane bring a reminder of tragic loss. The Sisters had been called to Galveston by Bishop Claude M. Dubuis in 1866. Galveston had become a major port of entry into Texas and sisters were needed to care for the sick and injured. They opened St. Mary's Infirmary, the first Catholic hospital in the state, in 1867. They also opened St. Mary's Orphans Asylum to care for the many young children who had lost their parents in a yellow fever epidemic.

The orphanage operated out of the Infirmary, but later moved to beach front property.

It seemed an ideal location, away from town and the threat of yellow fever. Two large, twostory buildings provided a home to ninetythree children and ten Sisters. As the storm grew in intensity, the sand dunes behind the





Queen of the Waves

Queen of the waves, look forth across the ocean From North to South, from East to stormy West. See how the waters with tumultuous motion Rise up and foam without a pause or rest.

But fear we not, tho' storm clouds round us gather Thou art our Mother, and thy little Child Is the All Merciful, our loving Brother, God of the sea and of the tempest wild.

Help, then sweet Queen, in our exceeding danger, By thy seven griefs, in pity Lady save, Think of the Babe that slept within the manger And help us now, dear Lady of the Waves.

Up to thy shrine we look and see thy glimmer Thy votive lamp sheds down on us afar; Light of our eyes, oh, ne'er let it grow dimmer. Till in the sky we hail the morning star.

Then joyful hearts shall kneel around thine altar And grateful songs re-echo down the nave; Never our faith in thy sweet power can falter, Mother of God, our Lady of the Waves.

orphanage began to wash away "like flour." Storm waters surged against the fragile wooden structures. Fearing for the children's safety, the Sisters led them to the chapel of the Girl's Dormitory, the newer and stronger building. To calm the children, they began to sing a favorite hymn, "Queen of the Waves." One of the survivors would later say, "the children were very frightened and the Sisters were very brave."

The waters of the Gulf kept rising. In late afternoon, the Boys' Dormitory collapsed, the wood carried away by the storm.

As the waters rose, the Sister's led all the children to the second story of the Girls' Dormitory. Again they sang "Queen of the

Waves." As it became obvious that the second building would not fare much better, the Sisters cut clothesline rope and tied it to the cinctures they wore around their waists. Each of the ten Sisters then tied several children to herself in an attempt to save them.



Later that day, the flood waters claimed over one hundred lives at St. Mary's Orphanage. Three of the orphan boys were the sole survivors. They had managed to grab a floating tree and hold on for more than a day before being rescued. Over the next few weeks, the Sisters were buried where they were found,

still tied to the children they'd tried to protect. Two of them had washed all the way to the mainland with their charges.

St. Mary's Infirmary, a few miles away in town, fared better and remained standing, although its outbuildings were washed away. Many survivors with nowhere to go moved in temporarily, taken care of by the hospital sisters.

One year later, having repaired the Infirmary, the congregation opened a new orphanage in Galveston, determined to continue with their divinely appointed work.

Each year on September 8th, no matter where they are in the world, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word sing the hymn, "Queen of the Waves." It's a tribute to the holy sisters who died to protect the innocent children in their care.

It's also a lesson for us in these times – a lesson of selflessness, devotion, and sacrifice. Whether or not we are called to religious life, would we be capable of such heroism? Ω

[Source:http://www.1900storm.com/orphanage.html. Will Murney, one of the survivors, is shown in the portrait of the little boy in his First Communion suit.]



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fter taking care of the dress, the rings, planning the ceremony, choosing flowers, and all those other things that an engaged couple has to worry about, they may rightly feel daunted by the element that will be the favorite part for all the young, sweet-loving guests at the wedding – the CAKE.

Unless you are the oddity of our society who doesn't like cake – and maybe that's because you've never had a cake other than one from a box or a grocery store deli – you definitely have a vested interest in making sure that towering pile of pastry and frosting actually tastes good. After all, you are going to have to eat a piece of it in front of all your guests (and most likely be filmed doing it).

Many girls dream since childhood of a graceful, tiered cake decorated with flowers, pillars,

ribbons, fancy toppers – the possibilities are pretty well endless. You get the idea: big, pretty, romantic, cake. Awesome. And if it tastes HALF as good as it looks, everybody should be thrilled.

But while you're happily sampling cake flavors and checking out your cake decorator's portfolio, there is a generally forgotten factor to keep in mind that can severely curtail the options available to you.

The weather. Specifically, heat and humidity.

Different types of cake embellishment react to heat and humidity VERY differently; don't get your heart set on something that just can't handle your climate. You don't want everyone remembering that "the cake fell apart, didn't it?"

Here's what you need to know about the durability levels of wedding cake components.



Between the layers of cake is the place for some serious flavor in the form of jam, fruit curd, and those lovely classical creams. Fortunately, thin layers of fruit jam or soft, fudgy, chocolate can be used in almost any cake. Fruit curd - think lemon meringue pie filling - is a little trickier, but it's usually 'corralled' into the space between layers with a buttercream fence, and if something stiff like fondant is the outside coating, you're good to go. Just maybe don't put soft thick fillings between the bottom layers of a ten-tier cake. All that weight will cause some SERIOUS sliding and bulging issues!!

Sadly, mousse and Bavarian creams don't do well at room temperature. About the only time you could use these would be in the winter if you could display the cake on a patio outside somehow, or if your cake is kept in the kitchen until served.



Buttercream is NOT what you get on a supermarket cake. That's non-dairy stuff called Bettercream that is totally gross! Real buttercream is actually a cooked meringue with butter whipped into it. It has less sugar than typical homemade frosting, is very light and fluffy, comes in different flavors, and tastes AMAZING!!

Downside: it melts at 86 degrees Fahrenheit. As in slides off the cake melts. If your cake will be sitting in direct sunlight or outside on a really hot day, you don't want to use buttercream on the surface of the cake or for decorating.



Think sugar playdough that is rolled and stretched into shape over your lightly frosted cake. It's often rubbed with Crisco to keep it from cracking. It gives you a very smooth, clean finish that can be decorated in any number of ways. It holds up in hot weather and humidity (but not rain). It is practically impervious to deterioration.

Downsides: It's quite expensive. Most people don't like it because its SO sugary and gross. It's often peeled off the cake before serving, and in the end you're not eating it - 90 percent of the decoration on your cake. And we did just say it's expensive...



Glaze is usually half-and-half chocolate and cream that is poured over a cake to make a fairly thin coating that, once set, can be decorated in any number of ways. A cake can be done with either white chocolate (which can be colored), milk chocolate, or dark chocolate, or a combination of any two. White with a dark waterfall down one side and red accent roses is extremely striking. While glaze is not as heat resistant as fondant, it tastes WAY better, since it's thick and fudgy and chocolatey instead of being sickeningly sweet. You might have to ask specifically if your decorator can do glazing, since most cake shops don't seem to advertize it.



Royal icing is made of pasteurized egg whites and powdered sugar. When it's dry, it's hard and brittle, but dissolves easily in your mouth. It is often the decorating go-to for wedding cakes, and can be used for 3-D filigree work, as above; aerial drop piping (think frosting fringe, but fancier), and any other piped decoration you might like on your cake. Piped flowers and scrollwork can be made in advance, stored in airtight containers, and then 'glued' to the cake with more icing. Paired with fondant, royal icing would be the perfect decoration on a Florida wedding cake because it will take the usually deadly double whammy of heat and humidity in stride.





Brush embroidery is a technique where either watered-down fondant or royal icing is used to outline a design. Before the design can harden, a wet paintbrush is used to pull the inner side of the piped line in towards the middle, creating that feathery look. It can be done in many colors and designs, decorated with edible pearls, and is a largely free-hand technique. Say hello to understated elegance!

It works well on a stiffer surface such as fondant or glazing, but not on buttercream.



Another sugar playdough, but this one dries stiff and brittle. Gum paste is primarily used to make extremely realistic flowers, leaves, figures, bows, draping, and billowing. Sometimes gum paste decorations are eaten, sometimes they aren't. Gum paste flowers can be made months in advance and stored; they can also be purchased premade at specialty cake shops.

Warning: If it is very humid, decorations like the lilies shown here will start to wilt.



Modeling chocolate is a mix of chocolate and corn syrup that ends up being shapable, much like silly putty. It's easier to work with than gum paste because it stiffens after a minute at room temperature, rather than after several hours. Modeling chocolate can be used to make super-realistic roses and more unorthodox decorations like pocket watches, teacups, and cowboy hats.

The syrup does make it taste a little odd, and, since it's chocolate, it does melt!

Weather forecasts are therefore your best friends or worst enemies when you're cake shopping. Unfortunately, if you live somewhere like Panama, or are even planning a Mid-Western summer wedding in the United States, it gets a little tricky to balance taste with beauty. If it's likely to be super hot and humid, go with fondant, royal icing, maybe some smaller gum paste decorations that won't sag, and then rely on the cake itself for flavor. If your venue has air conditioning, you can be more flexible, switching to a tastier glazed finish, modeling chocolate, and larger gum paste pieces for wow factor.

The closest ideal gets to reality is if you end up with a 60 - 70 degree day but you're indoors or in the shade. Then you can go that last extra mile of scrumptiousness and

have a buttercream covered cake with gum paste, royal icing, and modeling chocolate decorations. However, if you're planning a cold, mid-winter wedding, you can have just about any kind of cake and decoration you want. If your reception hall has glass doors out onto a lighted patio, you could even display an otherwise too-fragile cake outdoors in the snow and wow everyone with your layers of mousse....okay, maybe not *quite*.

Then, just when you think you've got the cake of your dreams finalized, there's always the killer - price.

Many brides are shocked to discover that wedding cakes are generally sold by the slice; even more shocked to learn that prices usually start at about \$3 a slice, going up with the

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addition of specialty fillings, fondant, or even chocolate fondant. However, that usually doesn't even take into account the amount of decoration or piping that might be on that cake. It could be as simple as a graceful fondant ribbon bow, or it could be covered in sprays of delicate gum paste flowers that your guests have to spend considerable time

studying to figure out if they're real or not!

Know what to expect before you start, and then hopefully you can get to the finish without unpleasant sticker shocks, sliding disasters, or melting decorations, and your guests will say for years afterward: "the cake was AWESOME!!!" Ω



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nyone who's made jam or jelly, regardless of the type of fruit, has no doubt been astonished at the quantities of sugar called for by conventional preserve recipes. The amount of sugar is regularly 2 to 4 cups more than the amount of prepared fruit. More daring canners will attest that trying to reduce this quantity of sugar is fruitless - it affects the set of the jam for the worse and can result in no set at all, meaning wasted time, effort, and ingredients.

Several years ago, my mother was shopping with a friend at a natural foods co-op store in Minnesota when she chanced across a display of Pomona's Universal Pectin. While she didn't try it right away, once she did, she started raving about the sugar savings.

Pomona's claim to fame is that their pectin works very differently than standard pectins,

allowing sugar-conscious housewives to make jam that actualy tastes like the original fruit. In the information packet contained in every box, directions are given for making jam, jelly, marmalade, and jello with low sugar, honey, stevia, and even no sweeteners at all! Also included are recipes for mouth-watering freezer jams. If you've never had peach or strawberry freezer jam, you truly don't realize what an amazing flavor experience you're missing. They're fabulous!

To watch videos with step-by-step instructions and find great recipes, information is available in several formats:

Website: www.pomonapectin.com.

Email: info@pomonapectin.com

Jamline: (413) 772-6816



PUNCE DE LA CROWD DE LA CROWD

- 4 eggs
- 1 2/3 cups sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 can (16 oz) pumpkin
- 2 cups flour
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt

Beat eggs, sugar, oil, and pumpkin. Combine flour, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, and salt; gradually add to pumpkin mixture; mix well. Pour into ungreased 15 in x 10 in x 1 in baking pan.

Bake at 325 degrees Fahrenheit for 25-30 minutes. Test with a toothpick like a cake. Let cool and top with cream cheese frosting. Best when slightly warm!

cream cheese frosting

- 1 package (3 oz) cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 2 cups powdered (confectioner's) sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 to 2 T of milk

Beat cream cheese, sugar, butter, and vanilla. Add milk until it is the consistency you prefer.

This recipe was shared years ago by an aunt's mother-in-law. The light, fluffy, cake-type bars are full of flavor and the cream cheese frosting really makes them kick. Quick and easy to make and can be served right out of the pan. If taking them to an event, make sure the frosting sets up a bit before trying to cover them with plastic wrap.



In this day and age of liberalism, hedonism, socialism, and other "isms," many Catholic singles, couples, and families come to feel a bit isolated. We've already set ourselves apart by our beliefs, by the way we dress, by the way we raise our children. An entire week or more may pass without our seeing a single person with whom we feel that we have much in common. It is with some social anticipation, then, that we look forward to the weekly trek to church.

Obviously, the main attractions are Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the other sacraments. But on a purely human level, there is also an instinctive sense of belonging. We have come to worship God together with the rest of the parish. For once, we are a part of a body that thinks, acts, and prays the same. We can express our Faith without dreading eye rolling, strange looks, or contempt. Everyone here is on the same page, even if a few may be running off into the margins.

Mass being over, we make a brief thanksgiving and then gather our things to move out to the vestibule, the social hall, or the bookstore. But by the time we've cleared the doors, we experience a bit of a psychological letdown.

Where is everyone?

Restoration Reader in which one of the founders made the very apt comment that it was "the regularly observable 10% of any given parish that does *everything*: picking up and returning clergy who travel by plane or train, maintenance and cleaning of linens, setup and break-down of the altar and 'pews,' flowers, cleaning, arranging for 'coffee and donuts,' collection, altar serving, singing... I've attended the True Mass on four continents and in over thirty locations and I can attest that this...is pretty accurate (it can sometimes be as... high as 20%)" [Heiner, 2016].

This absolutely coincides with my own observations of parish life, but I would add further that in many cases it is only this 10 to 20% of a Catholic parish that actually takes the time to get to know each other as well. Everyone else, for reasons known only to themselves, flees the church premises like a plague has just been announced mere minutes after Father has left the sanctuary.

In many cases, they won't even stay for free (or mostly free) food. You hold a coffee social, and who attends? Thirty people out of a parish of 200. You throw an All Saints party – the same 30 people. There's a parish potluck at a local park – the same 30 people. And if you want young people between the ages of 20 and 40 to come, well, go fly a kite. As one of the very few adults in that age bracket that actually shows up for these things, I've tried to make a point of mentioning these events to others, tried to make them sound fun (because they would be if more people attended, especially young couples with kids). And while they may smile politely or whatever, they just never come. Period.

So, why not?

Do they feel that they have a sufficient social life outside the parish that there's no need to attend? Do they make reservations every week at some expensive restaurant that they don't want to cancel? Do they never read the bulletin (or think announcements don't apply

to them?) Or are they just too lazy to make any effort to be sociable?

Now, I could see that in some cases people (especially parents) might be leery of taking their children to an event where they would have to mix socially with an unknown group of people, where the morality level may be on a bit of a sliding scale. But this is your own CHURCH, for goodness sake! If you can't hang out with these people once in a while without detriment, then who CAN you hang out with? Is the local (and completely secular) sports team or 4-H group such a safer option, where the kids come from broken homes and watch all manner of garbage on television? If you're single, do you prefer to hang out at some bar casually flirting with non-Catholics who may have had any number of sinful live-in relationships? Or are you just going home to veg out on social media or Netflix?

Sheesh. It's not like there's a parish event EVERY weekend.

Then there seems to be a mindset that if you're under 40 and aren't married (with children, no less) you can't possibly volunteer to take charge of any parish functions or fundraisers, or share your talents in flower arranging, sewing, etc. Good grief, it's the parents with children that have the least amount of time on their hands to be organizing and contributing to these things! In our parish, the annual All Saints Day party for the kids was passed down from older women to a young mom, who managed it until her increasing number of children (she now has 6) and frequent pregnancies (along with a couple of moves) made it just too much and I ended up taking it over. It's really not that difficult: print sign-up sheets, divide the kids into age groups, prepare a sheet for the judges, and update a PowerPoint with the kids' names and saints on it. Oh, and make sure that there are enough paper products and prizes. Everyone brings food, and hey presto! a nice party.

It takes maybe three hours and a couple of phone calls for me to get everything purchased, printed, and ready on my end. Sure, I don't ******************* relationships ***************

have much of a social life. But if you live above the poverty level and can't spare even a couple hours every year for extracurricular church activities, there is something wrong with your priorities. The same applies for your talents. If you can quilt, crochet, do counted crossstitch, or embroider monograms, you can make small altar linens. And you can probably do it more easily than the 90-year-old granny who can barely see to thread her needle anymore. Just talk to your pastor — I'm sure he would be overjoyed to hear that you are willing to turn out even 2 or 3 corporals or purificators a year, and he can supply you with dimensions and linen (just make sure to wash and shrink it first).

In gradeschool catechism we learned about the Communion of Saints – the souls of the blessed in heaven (Church Triumphant), the souls in Purgatory (Church Suffering), and the souls of the living faithful on earth (Church Militant). While you may feel that you can get along just fine without the help or friendship of the Church Militant right now, once you move into the next stage you may start to regret that you don't have any Catholic friends to pray for you or offer Masses for your soul. In our parish, for example, we have a large percentage of elderly parishioners. I don't know 60% of their names, even if I recognize their faces, because they do not participate in parish events or say more than "hello" if I pass them in the vestibule. When Father announces a funeral, we sit there

struggling to even picture who he's talking about. And because we don't know them, we forget them. We may pray in a general way for "the deceased of the parish" but it's a lot different from praying for close friends and deceased family members. It's sad, but that's the way it is.

So please, don't be a hit and run Catholic. Don't do the bare minimum of showing up for Mass on Sundays and Holydays and then racing off as fast as you can. Make the effort to get to know your fellow parishioners and to help out once in a while. Who knows? A simple conversation may lead to a friendship spanning several generations, a true friendship that helps all of you get to Heaven. Young couples, your kids have little chance of forming good Catholic social relationships if they never meet other Catholic children. Please step out of your own little worlds and join the broader spectrum of Catholic humanity. Learn from older couples; make friends with couples your own age who have kids the ages of your kids. And singles, please don't disappear. Too often, it's the disappearing singles who never come back, who end up in mixed marriages, who lose the Faith, because they have no Catholic support group, no good friends - and no parish ties. We're at a time in our lives when our time and money are our own to dispose of. Let's make sure that we are spending them where it matters. Ω

"If we all did the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves."

- Thomas Edison





When my husband and I chose godparents for our four children, we were members of a trad group where we received no real instruction regarding the choice of godparents. It was only after being forced to look more deeply into the Church's teachings by other circumstances that we realised it is actually a far more important decision than we had understood. When I was a young parent, I thought the only role of godparents was that in the event of the death of the parents they would be required to step in and see that their godchildren were instructed in the Faith.

I have since discovered that there is far more to it than that.

Godparents contract a special spiritual relationship with their godchildren - similar to the blood relationship in the human sense. The spiritual relationship even precludes any marriage between godparent and godchild (however, the godfather and godmother may

still marry each other, if they are single). It is a great honor to be chosen as a godparent because you are essentially becoming a second parent to a child of God.

Therefore, for parents, the choice of Baptismal sponsors should not be made lightly, or based on superficial or worldly considerations. If I were starting out all over again, I would look at the firmness of Faith and the piety of the individuals. I would look for people with a good understanding of Church teaching who hold the same convictions as my husband and myself with regard to the importance of tradition and orthodoxy.

Now, unfortunately, people can still change for the worse over time! The choice is not guaranteed to be infallible. You can pick godparents who seem like models of Catholic life and still watch them get divorced ten years later or fall away from the Faith. It happens. You just have to do the best you can.

****************** relationships **************

The other potentially tragic outcome is that the family that selects you may become the problem. I have many godchildren now and because some of them are adults I have reached my "use-by" date as a godmother. They make their own decisions these days and are responsible for themselves. Sadly, some of them have strayed from the Faith and do not want to maintain a relationship with those of us who have not. Regardless, I consider it a duty to keep all my godchildren in my daily prayers and to keep in touch with as many of them as I possibly can. I think it is a good practice to have a Mass offered for one's godchildren from time to time, especially for those who have strayed from the Faith. They might never receive the grace to convert if they are not prayed for or have Masses offered for them. I do not want to be answerable for not praying for my spiritual children. In return, I like the idea of children being encouraged to pray for their godparents. I have been known to call upon my godchildren for prayers at certain times, especially the little ones whose prayers are so powerful with God.

After the purely spiritual considerations, it is also a good idea to keep the age of potential sponsors in mind. For the sake of an enduring relationship, I would recommend choosing people who are not too old. I would think that ideally godparents should be either about the same age as the parents of the child, or younger. Godparents should at least have the reasonable potential to live until their godchildren are young adults.

All of this taken into consideration, you may be wondering how my now-grown children are profitting from all this hindsight.

So far I only have one married child, and my two grandchildren have been assigned good Catholic godparents (this makes Nanny very happy!). Interestingly enough, the young man who is Godfather to both of them has become a Seminarian. In the event of his eventually being ordained, the children will be guaranteed numerous prayers and Masses offered for them for many years to come

(ordinarily, however, current Seminarians and members of Religious Orders are not permitted to become godparents).

When my grandchildren were Baptised, we had a celebration after the ceremony, complete with a beautiful cake and the giving of little holy gifts. Many family customs and traditions can be built around the reception of the Sacraments within our Holy Faith, so why not start at the very beginning with Baptism? Make it a visibly joyous event...after all, the baby has just become a new member of The Catholic Church!

With my grandchildren and godchildren living close to us, I think it is good to try to remember their Feast Days as well as their birthdays and to take a special interest in observing them. Little age-appropriate books about their patron saints are always great gifts, as are statues and religious coloring books.

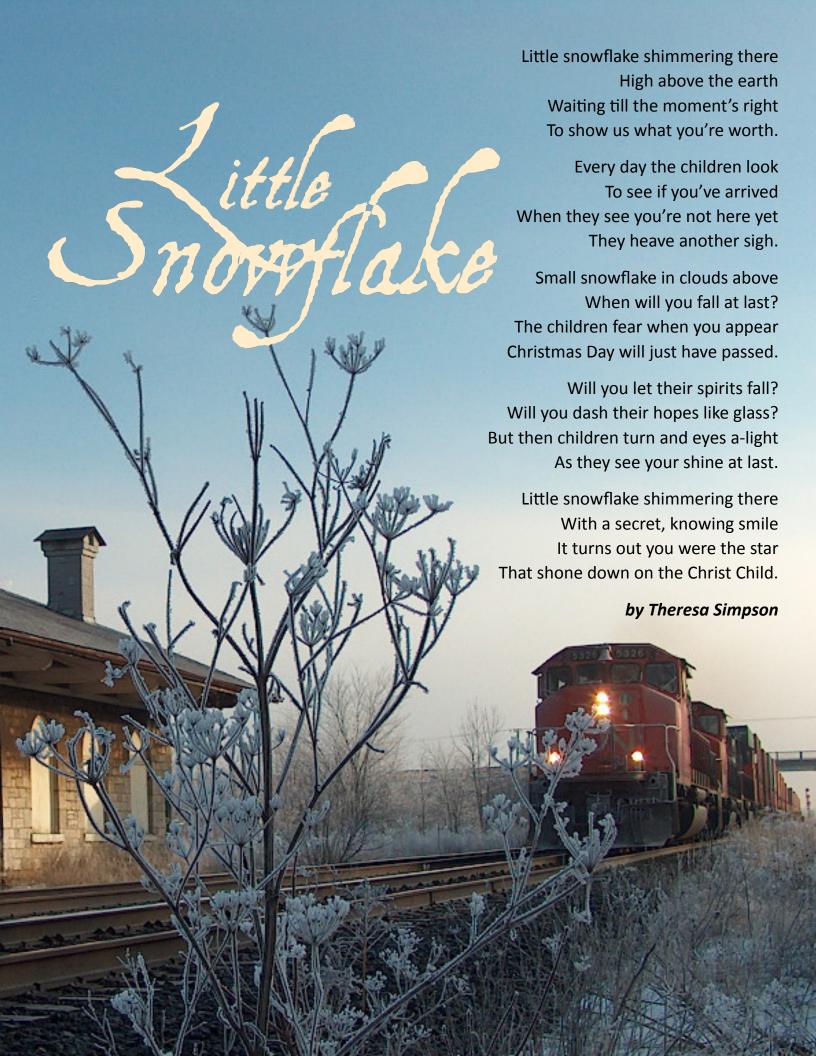
And on the subject of names, the Church strongly recommends that a Saint's name be given to the child. If not as the first name, one should at least choose a Saint's name for the middle name - as it is good for the child to have a patron saint to develop a devotion to. Any name that is obviously in opposition to the Faith cannot be used, such as "Satan" or "Luther." Such names would never be acceptable.

I sometimes wonder why some of the more unusual Saints names are not used. People today are so crazy for "different" names, and yet they ignore the rich treasury of the Church. For example, when did you last hear of a baby girl baptized "Praxedes" or a boy named "Cassian"?

I picture saints like Praxedes and Cassian just waiting for someone to employ them. Imagine how willing they would surely be to assist those few souls assigned to their patronage! Ω



ose Forde is a happy grandmother from the Land Down Under. She is an enthusiastic promoter of international matchmaking among Trad singles.





at the city tree lot or at the U-cut tree farm, we end up with a few extra branches to throw out. Maybe we need more room for the tree stand at the bottom, or for the angel at the top - it's always something! One year when we had a particularly large pile of extras, I decided to see if I could make anything out of them. Now I do these pretty sprays every year!



• Leather gloves [unlined]

Supplies List

- **Snips** [or small saw]
- Wire cutters [pliers or cutters jewelry-making tools work well]
- Stiff wire [16-20 gauge steel wire is good, but you need to be able to bend it with your fingers]
- Thin, soft wire [light floral wire or "wrapping wire" from the jewelry section]
- *Pine cones* [Partially opened cones are best any variety]
- Decorative ribbon or twine [burlap baling twine, glittery wired ribbon, gingham check, etc.]





Perfect sprays are just 6 symmetrically distributed branches - 3 big ones pointing down (L) and 3 smaller ones pointing up (R).

Lay the downward-pointing branches out first and cover their thick cut ends as much as possible with the smaller upward-pointing branches. If the branches are lopsided, or you're doing large sprays, you'll need extras to fill in the bare spots. Add branches from random pines in your yard if desired. Play with everything until you are happy with the proportions, size, and spread. If doing pairs, lay them out side by side at the same time for symmetry's sake.

Use stiff, fairly thick, but finger-pliable wire to fix the branches together. Keep the wires in the narrower center section where the branches overlap. Make a fairly large loop of wire at the back for hanging the spray [this should definitely be toward the top third of the spray].

The whole thing needs to be sturdy enough to be picked up by the loop and moved around without falling apart instantly. Try not to flatten the needles too much in the wired areas, and keep the big twists at the back out of sight [you may need to flip the whole spray over at some point to do this]. WEAR LEATHER GLOVES or your hands will HURT. Been there, done that, and it was not fun. Plus there is pine sap.



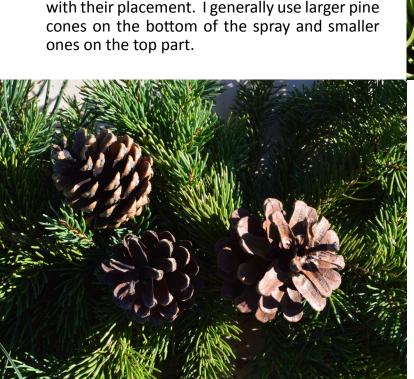
Once the basic bones of the spray are set up and secured, start wiring pine cones. Take the thin, soft wire and hook it in a roughly circular loop around and under the bottom knobs of a pine cone. Twist the short end around to secure. Leave a tail of wire about 4 inches long for fastening the pine cone to the spray.

I like medium to small-sized cones with sturdy, distinct knobs/flanges/whatever they're calleds. While you can use storebought cinnamon cones, frosted cones, or teensy soft cones from the spruces in your backyard, just make sure they won't shred from the pressure of the wire.



Attach the pine cones to the spray using the wire tails. Make a loose hook in the wire tail and thread around a branch before twisting securely right beneath the pine cone's base.

If you do the wires carefully, no one will see the wires and it will look like the pine cones just happened to grow there. Cut off any excess wire from the tail. You can always untwist the wire and move the pine cones if you're not satisfied with their placement. I generally use larger pine cones on the bottom of the spray and smaller ones on the top part.



Put on or tie any bows at the narrow center part of the spray where the top and the bottom join.

I usually use baling twine tied in simple bows for a rustic look because we live on a farm, but you can use any type of ties or ribbon that you like. Glittery embellished or sheer ribbon shaped into pouf bows would give a glam, upscale look, especially if you're using the "frosted" pine cones. Gingham check or plaid ribbon could lend a cabin flair. Red velvet ribbon with gold edges is always good for Christmastime, and burlap ribbon is popular. If you do use ribbon rather than a narrow cord tie, the wired kind is best. Ω



5 Add any additional decorative sprigs, branches, or pine cones and make sure they are pointing the right direction.

Pine cones and extras, such as sprigs of holly, white birch twigs, and the like should "point" in the same direction as the half of the spray they are on. If they're on the bottom, they point down. If they're on the top, they point up. They should be attached with wire but you can use the thinner wire from the pine cones since the decorations are not structural to the spray. If you're planning to leave the spray out all winter, try to pick extras that will last about as long as the evergreens, which, if you live in a cold climate, will usually last until spring.







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LOVE IT vs. HATE IT

"Used judiciously,
makeup boosts my
confidence and brings
a little color to my
face. I wear it for all
important occasions - it
is the finishing touch."



"Using makeup can lead to excessive concern about looks - not to mention that it's a significant waste of time and a larger waste of money."

[makeup]

YOU SAID: I can live with and without it. It totally depends on my mood, but I do feel it will

enhance some 'beauty features' and I personally feel it can be done without it being vain! It can make me feel better when I feel like a run down mom some days and it can make me feel better after a week of being sick- it can actually perk up my mood. I think it is fine when you don't over do it.

- Missy, MI

Love it. :) - Brenna, WI

In my opinon makeup should have one fundamental requirement: people shouldn't detect it. - Stefano, UK

I think concealer is always appropriate, and subtle touches of eye make up or lipstick are nice. However, I'm cheap and laid back. I had only a touch of blush and some lipstick at my own wedding! I love the look of mascara, but then I rub my eyes...Oops!

- Julia, WI

Hmm, well makeup is definitely not good if you use so much that your face looks all powdery or clownish. Yes, we guys can tell when your face is loaded with "stuff."

-Alexander, FL

I dislike makeup because it clogs my pores and cause blemishes on my face. Also,



"I believe that
all women are pretty
without makeup
and
can be pretty powerful
with
the right makeup."
- Bobbi Brown

[quotesgram.com]



makeup is filled with toxic chemicals. I cannot and will not wear makeup everyday. Makeup should be reserved for special occasions. I wear light facial power and lip gloss on special occasions. Women should lean how to enhance their natural beauty without relying on makeup. - Bernadette, TX

Love it. Just like a pretty scarf or jewelry, used modestly. It is like the frame on a picture. - Jeanine, MI

In my opinion, make-up in itself is not bad, as long as it is used in moderation. As long as a woman is very comfortable going out of the house without make-up, I think it's fine to wear it on special occasions or just whenever the woman feels like it.:)

- Theresa, QLD

Join the Love It vs. Hate It fun in the next issue:

Nylons

Is your outfit not complete until you put on some form of stockings, either pantyhose or knee-highs? Or is this whole thing with hosiery a piece of the past that needs to go?

altarandheartheditors@gmail.com Subject: NYLONS

mily's Etiquette Essentials





Dear Mrs. Emily,

I am invited to a baby shower. No official gender announcement, but the invite is pink-ish. It's her first baby, so I already bought a mix of stuff - some blues, some pinks, and some neutrals. Will it seem weird if I still give her the blue items?

Sincerely, Loaded in LA

Hi Loaded,

Believe it or not, the gendered baby shower has really only become fashionable in the last ten to fifteen years as ultrasound technology has become much more reliable. Forty years ago, new moms and dads just had to "wait and see" if their newborn was going to be a boy or a girl! Even twenty years ago, couples who were desperate to know would peer at grainy, blurry ultrasound pictures and could sometimes learn the answer. Doctors and nurses would ask if they wanted to find out rather than just volunteering the information. Many parents would simply say, "We don't want to know." They wanted to be surprised.

Today, nobody wants to be surprised. In part, this attitude rises from an unhealthy cultural focus on family planning - if a couple is only going to have two children, the gender becomes much more important.

The gendered baby shower has been a natural consequence of this shift toward abnormally small families, and has come to be seen as common sense and even economical. "Don't

buy what you won't need." Certainly it's not immoral. But for a Catholic couple that is open to allowing God to decide the number of their children, a gendered shower is actually impractical. Your friend may have a girl this time, but what if her next five children are boys? All she will have are pink onesies, pink crib sets, a pink carseat, a pink diaper bag you get the idea. If that next baby is a boy, she's going to need a whole new shower, and that's where she may come up against an awkward rub. The vast majority of Catholic women raised in and raising large families see absolutely no reason why a woman could need a baby shower for every pregnancy. "We already gave you all that stuff," is their mentality. "You want more?"

In times past, baby showers were focused on practical needs. Diapers. Onesies and sleepers in neutral colors. Serviceable car seats. Soft blankets in green and yellow. The extras were the cute little pink or blue outfits that you just couldn't pass up on. Since the new mom didn't know what would be worn immediately any more than the donor did, she could honestly enjoy every gift, even if she might have to save it for a few years. Baby clothes rarely go out of style, after all!

So there is no reason to race off to Kohl's or Babies-R-Us to do a bunch of last-minute returns and exchanges. Even if your friend ends up someday passing the little blue things on to another family unworn, there should be no awkwardness in accepting them.

Sincerely, Mrs.Emily

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