Have you ever reflected on what Christmas was like for her, as a wife and mother?

Did you know that Christmas is a Solemnity with an Octave? For eight days the Sacred Liturgy celebrates the Mystery of Christmas. The last day of the Octave is the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God, (a Holy Day of Obligation) which acknowledges the divine motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It celebrates Our Lady's role in the Mystery of the Incarnation and gives Catholic mothers everywhere reason to pause in their own vocation of motherhood. Many moms are struggling to live out their Catholic faith in the here and now, fervently trying to pass down the faith to their children in a world turned upside down. We would benefit tremendously if we enrolled in the School of Mary, turning to her frequently asking her to teach us how to mother during these troubled times.

The Christmas Octave also includes the Feast of St. John the Evangelist, to whom our Lord entrusted our Blessed Mother. Christ, dying on the Cross, entrusted His mother to John and also gave John to Mary. In reflecting on John 19:25-27 : “Woman, behold your son... behold your mother.” we are reminded that Mary, the Mother of God, is our mother too.

As Catholic mothers, we need to be mothered, to be nurtured, to be inspired and to be supernaturally guided. This Christmas season, let us turn to our Blessed Mother, asking her for her help and intercession. Let us pray that she guides us in our own journey of mothering and being a wife.

We at CatholicMomsGroup.com are on a mission to revive the vocation of motherhood by helping parishes start Catholic Mothers Groups. We encourage you to find a group or start a group and discover the joys of Catholic motherhood.

Mothers turn Advent into a Sacred Time!
Children Need Your Prayers!
better yet, until the Presentation of the Lord (February 2nd). This would definitely send a counter cultural message to your family as well as spreading the joy and the social visits over the entire Christmas season.

MAKE CHRISTMAS SPIRITUAL NOT COMMERCIAL

Make Advent a spiritual season, not a shopping spree. Schedule time for the entire family to go to the sacrament of reconciliation. Set up an Advent wreath and introduce Advent prayers to your family’s ritual. Consider visits to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament or going to a weekday Mass. Celebrate the entire Christmas season, remembering the liturgical feasts of the Feast of the Holy Family, the Solemnity of Mary, the Feast of Epiphany and the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. Acknowledge other special days like the Feast of St. Nicholas, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Feast of the Holy Innocents. Discover the powerful novena to St. Stephen. Remember to give your children religious gifts. Over time your children will learn to treasure that special gift.

CREATE NEW MEMORABLE TRADITIONS

Resolve to start new memorable traditions. There are many new traditions to consider. Have you ever had your house blessed in association with the Epiphany? This year, help your children discover St. Nicholas. Celebrate his feast day by putting chocolates into their shoes on that day. Do your children know that the original Santa was a saint? Visit www.stnicholascenter.org and learn all about him. Another new tradition could be baking a birthday cake for Jesus. Sing Happy Birthday to Jesus Christmas morning. Host an evening of singing Christmas carols with family and friends. Consider volunteering at your parish, or helping the poor in your community. Why not help to co-ordinate a Christmas pageant? Host a Christmas cookie exchange for moms in your neighbourhood.

MAKE CHRISTMAS LESS COMMERCIAL

Challenge yourself to buy fewer gifts per family member. Remember Christ the son of God got three birthday gifts! Why should anyone get any more than Jesus Christ himself? Making Christmas gifts or baking is always fun. Help your children experience the joy of focussing on others. Help them make a list of people that might be lonely or sad during the Christmas season and brainstorm ways that your family could help them. Take the family to Mass of the Feast of the Holy Family and get a family blessing.

KEEP CHRISTMAS FOCUS ON JESUS, MOTHER MARY AND JOSEPH

While many families are focussed on Santa and the exchanging of gifts, it is important for Catholic moms to remind our children about the true meaning of Christmas with a focus on the central figures. Remind children that Jesus is the reason for the season! His mother Mary, the Mother of God and foster father Joseph had to overcome many trials before Jesus’ birth. Venerating the Nativity scene at church, setting up a creche at home and teaching children to bring gifts to Jesus in the crib by their good works and sacrifices would be a great way to keep the focus where it belongs. Don’t forget to talk to children about why Christ was born and how He helps us!

CELEBRATE THE ENTIRE CHRISTMAS SEASON

Remember Christmas is not just one day long. Many moms are putting themselves under an incredible amount of stress trying to make December 25 perfect. Having so many demands, coordinating family and friend visits can be less stressful when we remember that the official end of the entire Christmas season is the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord (January 7). Keep your nativity scene displayed and Christmas tree up through this day, or

Five Tips
FOR CATHOLIC MOMS AT Christmas

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KEEP CHRISTMAS FOCUS ON JESUS, MOTHER MARY AND JOSEPH

Two

CELEBRATE THE ENTIRE CHRISTMAS SEASON

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MAKE CHRISTMAS SPIRITUAL NOT COMMERCIAL

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CREATE NEW MEMORABLE TRADITIONS

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MAKE CHRISTMAS LESS COMMERCIAL
Parishes in Mothers Group Directory

- All Saints Parish, Etobicoke
- Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Toronto
- Christ the King Parish, Etobicoke
- Holy Family Parish, Bolton
- Holy Family Parish, Whitby
- Immaculate Conception Parish, Sutton
- Merciful Redeemer Parish, Mississauga
- Our Lady of Grace Parish, Aurora
- Our Lady of Peace Parish, Etobicoke
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Toronto
- St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Brampton
- St. Benedict Parish, Etobicoke
- St. Bernadette Parish, Ajax
- St. Casmir Parish, Toronto
- St. Christopher Parish, Mississauga
- St. Francis de Sales Parish, Ajax
- St. Jerome Parish, Brampton
- St. John XXIII Parish, Toronto
- St. Justin Martyr Parish, Unionville
- St. Leo the Great Parish, Brooklin
- St. Marguerite d’Youville Parish, Brampton
- St. Martin of Tours Parish, Mississauga
- St. Mary Immaculate Parish, Richmond Hill
- St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish, Mississauga
- St. Patrick Parish, Toronto
- St. Patrick Parish, Mississauga
- St. Roch Parish, Toronto
- St. Peter and Paul Parish, Mississauga
- St. Matthew Parish, Oakville
- St. Margaret Mary Parish, Hamilton
St. Andrew’s Christmas Anticipation Prayer

Starting on St. Andrew the apostle’s feast day, November 30, this prayer is traditionally recited fifteen times a day until Christmas. This is a contemplative prayer that puts the focus of Christmas where it belongs. It helps prepare ourselves spiritually for Christmas.

Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires, through the merits of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of His Blessed Mother. Amen.

It is piously believed that whoever recites the above prayer fifteen times a day from the feast of St. Andrew, on November 30th, until Christmas will obtain what is asked.

[Imprimatur: +Michael Augustine, Archbishop of New York, New York, February 6, 1897.]

The Mothers Group Starter Kit

Our mother’s ministry has worked diligently to create a Mothers Group Starter Kit for parishes that are interested in starting a Mothers Group. The kit includes everything a parish needs to launch a Mothers Group. Our workshop How to Start a Mothers Group along with the kit, on-going coaching from our ministry staff, coupled with much prayer and constant petitions to Our Lady, have been fruitful.

THINK ABOUT IT The New Year is a perfect time to start a Mothers Group. We have had many priests help us identify moms who would be great Mothers Group Leaders. Many moms have come to us directly. Why not start a Mothers Group at your parish? Identify leaders and register them for our training program.

Mothers, Stressed, Stretched, Pulled in 101 Directions

Motherhood has changed dramatically in the last two decades. Mothers are stressed and stretched like never before in history. In most cases, not only are they working full time, managing the household, driving children to and from a frenzy of activities, they are faced with a constant bombardment of secular messages. Ministering to Catholic mothers is of paramount importance. For the most part, mothers are still holding the fort and are responsible for their children’s spiritual development and formation. We at CatholicMomsGroup.com are on a mission to revive the vocation of motherhood.

Church Bulletin Announcement

Why not get the ball rolling by putting this announcement in your church bulletin? It will help you gauge interest and identify prospective leaders.

Looking for Leaders!
Do you want to make a difference here at (your parish)? Have you ever considered becoming a Mothers Group Leader? We have exciting volunteer opportunities for moms with a big heart who will host a monthly meeting for moms here at the parish. An archdiocesan approved mothers ministry at www.CatholicMomsGroup.com will help provide the training, resources and support you’ll need. Join our growing ministry and touch lives in your community!