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TO: Parish Secretaries and Bulletin Editors
FROM: Mark Mann
DATE: November 1, 2011 *All Saints* +
SUBJECT: Family Perspective Articles, 2011-2012
CYCLE B, the Year of Mark

Listed below are the *Family Perspective* articles for inclusion in your weekly bulletin.

ADVENT

November 27, 2011: First Sunday of Advent A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Today's gospel tells us to "Be watchful." This comes natural to families. Parents are watchful of their children's health, grades and friends. Children are watchful of parental moods. Today's gospel encourages us to use this ability to see God acting in the innocence, tenderness, love and forgiveness of your family. "Be watchful," the Lord is already with you.

December 4, 2011: Second Sunday of Advent A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Why is it so hard to forgive, yet so easy to get even? Listen to John the Baptist in today's gospel and repent of the anger and ugly feelings which block your ability to forgive. This Christmas give a gift which makes a difference. Give forgiveness.

December 11, 2011: Third Sunday of Advent A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Today's gospel reports "there is one among you whom you do not recognize." It is hard to believe Christ is present in a family with crazy schedules, suppers that start too late and end too early, cars that don't start, misunderstandings, frustrations, piles of laundry, unmatched socks and stretched food budgets. The list is endless. The words spoken at mass, "The Lord is with you," are not a hope, they are fact.

December 18, 2011: Fourth Sunday of Advent A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

QUESTION: What do you call a family which began with an unmarried pregnant teen and had a twelve year old son who ran away from home and was eventually executed as a criminal?

ANSWER: HOLY! Two lessons in today's gospel: (1) No matter what is happening in your family, "The Lord is with you." (2) "Do not be afraid" for "nothing is impossible with God."

CHRISTMAS TIME

December 25, 2011: Christmas Day A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

This Christmas remember your task as a parent is the same as Mary's: We must not let our doubts, fears and unfulfilled expectations get in the way of the loving ACCEPTANCE of our children.

December 30, 2011: Feast of the Holy Family A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

The gospel today shows Mary and Joseph weren't 'perfect' parents. If you have ever been 'amazed' and 'astonished' at what came out of your child's mouth, then you are in good company. If there were times you 'didn't understand' your children or felt 'anxious' about their behavior, so did Mary and Joseph. Parenting is tough, but it is also the stuff of holiness.

January 8, 2012: Feast of the Epiphany A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

The Magi in today's gospel were led to Jesus by a star. Who are the stars your children follow? Resolve in this New Year to be a guiding star in the life of your children.

ORDINARY TIME

January 15, 2012: Second Sunday (John 1: 35-42) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Jesus' question in today's gospel is still valid today: "What are you looking for?" What do you want from your spouse, children or parents? Families are populated with imperfect people. To expect perfection is unreal. To expect and accept imperfection is wisdom.

January 22, 2012: Third Sunday (Mark 1:14-20) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

It must have been difficult for Zebedee to watch his sons walk away and follow Jesus. It was the end of the family business. Our children were never ours. They are only on loan to us. We raise them to let them go.

Note: January 22 is also the anniversary date of the Supreme Court decision, *Roe v. Wade*.

January 29, 2012: Fourth Sunday (Mark 1:21-28) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Today's gospel reminds us 'unclean spirits' still haunt our families. These 'spirits' thrive inside our grudges, punishing silence, impatience and abruptness. Today Jesus offers you the 'authority' to cast out these spirits from your life and your family.

February 5, 2012: Fifth Sunday (Mark 1:29-39) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

In today's gospel Jesus went to the "house of Andrew and Simon" to relax but discovered that "Simon's mother-in-law was very ill." Like Jesus we come home to relax but can be confronted with problems. Take a tip from Andrew and Simon who "told Jesus about it at once."

February 12: Sixth Sunday (Mark 1:40-45) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Family life is about decisions. The leper in today's gospel knew this when he said to Jesus, "If you will, you can make me clean." Jesus knew this when he said, "I do will it." Love is not an emotion. It is a decision to be with and for another person in "good times and bad," even when we don't feel like it.

February 19, 2012: Seventh Sunday (Mark 2:1-12) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

The friends in today's gospel climbed onto the roof, took it apart and lowered the "paralyzed man." If friends would do this, how much more could we expect of family? Everyone is "paralyzed" in some way. In families we are called to carry one another and to make up for each other's deficiencies.

LENT

February 26, 2012: First Sunday of Lent (Mark 1:12-15) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Jesus went into the desert to put his life in perspective. This lent, take a fresh look at a difficult relationship in your life. Concentrate on the positive things that person does, not just the negatives. Try to understand why their behaviors 'bug' you. Can you honestly share your feelings with them without attacking them? Make Lent a time to MEND and FORGIVE!

March 4, 2012: Second Sunday of Lent (Mark 9:2-10) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

The apostles thought they knew Jesus, but when he changed in front of them at the Transfiguration, they were "afraid." In families we cannot freeze relationships; change and growth are inevitable. Children grow up; parents grow old; spouses change. Transfigurations are all around us and within us. Relationships can only grow when we embrace the new and let go of the old.

March 11, 2012: Third Sunday of Lent (John 2:13-25) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Today's gospel says Jesus chased the merchants out of the temple; it doesn't say He was angry. Jesus teaches us to act from conviction and not from anger. He didn't condemn the merchants, only their business practice. Attack the behavior and not the person.

March 18, 2012: Fourth Sunday of Lent (John 3: 14-21) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Today's gospel speaks of light and darkness. Often a parent is deliberately "left in the dark." Darkness can be comforting for it makes no demands on us. Light can be disturbing for it forces us to take action. Parents walk a delicate balance of when to "sit in the dark" and when to "turn on the lights."

March 25, 2012: Fifth Sunday of Lent (John 12:20-33) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Relationships come with a price tag. We must be willing to entrust ourselves to another, to let go of our autonomy and die to our independence. It is in dying to our independence that we find interdependence with others.

April 1, 2012: Passion (Palm) Sunday (Mark 14:1-15:47) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

The Passion of Jesus makes it clear: no one escapes suffering. Suffering is inevitable, but no one should suffer alone. That is one of the primary roles of families, to stand with and support each other in suffering.

EASTER TIME

April 8, 2012: Easter Sunday (John 20:1-9) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

That first Easter morning was confusing. Jesus was missing and Mary Magdalene, Peter and John "did not know" what to do. In family life there are confusing moments when "we don't know" what to do. Like the apostles we are Easter people when we believe and trust in each other even when all seems lost.

April 15, 2012: Second Sunday of Easter (John 20:19-31) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

In today's gospel Jesus teaches, "Blessed are those who have not seen and believe." Accepting someone as they are, without demanding they prove themselves or meet our expectations, creates a rich relationship. Without acceptance, a home is only a house and a family is just a group of house mates.

April 22, 2012: Third Sunday of Easter (Luke 24: 35-48) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

The apostles were afraid of Jesus until he ate with them and they touched him. In your family the ordinary acts of eating together, touching, embracing not only confirm our love for each other, but also celebrate God's presence in your family. These 'ordinary' moments contain the extraordinary.

April 29, 2012: Fourth Sunday of Easter (John 10:11-18) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Today's gospel is a job description for Christian parents. For most people, the most influential shepherds in their lives are their PARENTS. Every parent is called to be a "good shepherd" to "freely lay down their life" for their children, to "love" and "know" their children, and to "lead" them so "they know your voice."

May 6, 2012: Fifth Sunday of Easter (John 15:1-8) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Like the vine grower in today's gospel, parents must "prune and cleanse" the branches in their family if their children are going to be rooted. Discipline, limits and setting goals are a necessary part of parenting so our children will grow and "bear fruit."

May 13, 2012: Sixth Sunday of Easter (John 15: 9-17) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Today's gospel challenges us to "love one another as I have loved you." Jesus is our model and he asks us to "lay down our life" (our time, attention, opinions and needs) for each other. This is the sacrament of the family, when God is made visible in our sacrificial love for one another.

May 20, 2012: Feast of the Ascension (Mt 28:16-20) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Jesus was worried about his disciples and he turned to prayer. No matter how much time we spend trying to "guard and protect" our children, each day they become less dependent on us and we must let go and let God. Prayer and parenting go together.

May 27, 2012: Pentecost Sunday (John 15:26-27, 16:12-15) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Today, on Pentecost, we remember Christ has given us the Holy Spirit to assist us in raising our family and he expects us to use this personal gift. Let's turn-off the noise, apps and distractions in our lives and let the Holy Spirit "guide us to the truth."

ORDINARY TIME

June 3, 2012: Trinity Sunday (Matthew 28: 16-20) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

In today's gospel Jesus commands, "Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you." This command is meant for every Christian. In light of this command, parenting is not only the most difficult task a person can take on, it is also one of the most apostolic and missionary tasks. Jesus commands all parents to teach their children "all that I have commanded you."

June 10, 2012: Body & Blood of Christ (Mk 14:12-16, 22-26) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

One gets the impression there was always a lot of sharing, discussion and learning during the many meals Jesus and the disciples ate together. How does this compare to the meals in your home? Today's gospel challenges us to make our meals more than physical functions and more a time for sharing.

June 17, 2012: Eleventh Sunday (Mark 4:26-34) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Parenting is a lot like the story of the farmer in the gospel parable today. All growth is the Lord's work. We have no control over the process. In fact the farmer doesn't even understand it, for the seed grows even when he sleeps. As parents we can influence our children but nothing we do can guarantee results.

June 24, 2012: Birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1: 57-66, 80) - A Family Perspective by Mark Mann

What's in a name? Today's gospel tells the story of the naming of John, who becomes the Baptist. As parents we have the distinct *privilege* of naming our children – at the time of their physical birth and again at their rebirth in baptism. Take the time to retell the story of how your children were named, as well as recalling your own name's story. It reminds us all that God calls us each by name.

July 1, 2012: Thirteenth Sunday (Mark 5:21-34) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

The healing of the woman and the child in today's gospel is a reminder we are all wounded. We retreat to those we love - looking for acceptance, listening, understanding and support. Families must be healing communities where Jesus is present in our care for one another.

July 8, 2012: Fourteenth Sunday (Mark 6:1-6) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Today's gospel is so familiar, it hurts! The home town folks couldn't accept the presence of God in Jesus. After all, they had watched him grow up. We can easily make the same mistake if we don't see God present in the ordinary routines of our family. "The Lord be with you" is a statement of fact. Believe it. Live it.

July 15, 2012: Fifteenth Sunday (Mark 6:7-13) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Jesus sent out His apostles without a lot of "things" because THINGS distract. We collect, argue about and protect our "things." Garage sales only transfer "things." We even ignore each other because we have "things" to do. What "things" are separating you from your family?

July 22, 2012: Sixteenth Sunday (Mark 6:30-34) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

In today's gospel "the apostles gathered around and told Jesus all they had done." Listening allows the other person to express, understand and appreciate their experiences. Whether it is the excited chatter of young child or the repetitious stories of an aging grandparent, listening is important. It is not just time well spent; it is sacred time.

July 29, 2012: Seventeenth Sunday (John 6:1-5) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

In today's gospel Phillip worried about "enough food" for the crowd. What is ENOUGH? When does our ENOUGH deprive another family of their fair share? Jesus performed today's miracle because one child was willing to share and risk living with less. Can your family live more simply so that other families can simple live?

August 5, 2012: Eighteenth Sunday (John 6:24-35) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

In today's gospel Jesus tells us: "Do not work for what perishes." Give your life to what endures such as the family history you are creating, the love and mutual respect which bonds you together, the memories you share and the forgiveness generously given. These are the true treasures that are worth working and dying for.

August 12, 2012: Nineteenth Sunday (John 6:41-51) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

"Stop murmuring" Jesus told the disciples in today's gospel. Complaining is a dead-end and constant complaining is nagging. We might feel better, but others feel bitter. Silence or grumbling will not resolve the problem. Address differences honestly and respectfully. Don't make them personal attacks.

August 19, 2012: Twentieth Sunday (John 6: 51-58) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

In today's gospel, Jesus speaks of eating his flesh and blood. Parents can identify with this, for they often feel devoured by all the demands of family life. This is unavoidable for children grow in the soil of sacrificial love. Parenting is not part-time work. It is a consuming lifetime commitment.

August 26, 2012: Twenty-first Sunday (John 6: 60-69) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Even though many found the teachings of Jesus "difficult," He did not back down. In our families it is important to say what is difficult to hear, to speak the truth with kindness, to correct with love and guide with understanding.

September 2, 2012: 22nd Sunday (Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

In today's gospel, Jesus warns "what comes from within can defile" a person. Families need to worry about "outside influences" but also about "inside influences." The values our children carry for a lifetime are learned at home. "Habits of the hearth" are the most powerful influences on a child. That's the good news! That can also be the bad news!

September 9, 2012: 23rd Sunday (Mark 7:31-37) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Because the deaf man in today's gospel recognized his disability, he could seek help from Jesus. Deafness abounds in families: in our children ("Oh dad, not that again"), in parents ("It is just a stage"), and in spouses ("Are you listening?"). Before Jesus can enter your home and heal, you must first recognize your deafness.

September 16, 2012: 24th Sunday (Mark 8: 27-35) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

If we want to be happy at home we must commit (lose ourselves) to our family. If we try to be independent from others (save ourselves) we end up lonely and alone. Happiness is found in commitments. The gospel is true: We save our life by losing it!

September 23, 2012: 25th Sunday (Mark 9:30-37) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Disagreements are common in families. But what would you say if Jesus posed the same question, "What are you arguing about?" Is it silly and petty? Is it an attempt to impose your will and control on another. Today Jesus tells us and his disciples to give it up. We are meant to serve each other, not control.

September 30, 2012: 26th Sunday (Mark 9:38-43,45,47-48) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

The words in today's gospel, "Whoever gives a cup of water in the name of Christ will not lose their reward" hits home. As parents we gain our "reward" when we bring water to a frightened child in the middle of the night, or Kool Aid to parched five-year olds, or hold ice chips to the fevered lips of a spouse. It is that simple and that sacred. In our homes we give until it hurts "in the name of Christ."

October 7, 2012: 27th Sunday (Mark 10:2-16) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

In today's gospel, Jesus encourages married couples to throw away the marriage rule book. Rules are for those with "hardened hearts." Married couples are called to be a sacramental reflection of God's faithful and selfless love - a place where people live and love beyond rules and formulas.

October 14, 2012: 28th Sunday (Mark 10:17-30) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Having possessions is an illusion. In today's gospel Jesus told the young man to give up his need to control and put his trust in God. He couldn't let go! In families, our need to control destroys relationships. We can lead, teach and encourage, but we can't control anyone but ourselves.

October 21, 2012: 29th Sunday (Mark 10:35-45) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Advice books abound on marriage and parenting. Jesus tells us in today's gospel the real secret: satisfying relationships depend on how well we sacrifice our needs to serve others. It is not about "getting," it's about "giving" ourselves. If you feel like you are a servant to your children and spouse, then you are doing it right.

October 28, 2012: 30th Sunday (Mark 10:46-52) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

When Jesus asked the blind man "What do you want from me?" he asked for sight. If Jesus asked you the same question, what would you say? That then is your prayer.

November 4, 2012: 31st Sunday (Mark 12: 28b-34) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

In a family, children are taught to be respectful if they want to be respected; to share, if they want their fair share; to listen if they want to be heard. Family life rescues us from arrogance by teaching us to love others as we love ourselves.

November 11, 2012: 32nd Sunday (Mark 12:38-44) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

The widow in today's gospel gave only a little, and it counted for a lot. In our homes, there are many LITTLE MOMENTS which can have great significance and glue the family together. Seize the moment and give all you have.

November 18: 33rd Sunday (Mark 13:24-32) A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Today's gospel teaches us UNCERTAINTY is normal. There are some things in life which "no one knows... only the Father." Marriage and parenting are full of uncertainty. Like the fig tree in the gospel, the people we love grow and change.

November 25, 2012: Christ the King (John 18:33b-37) - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

When we are young, our parents "tell us about Jesus" and we believe what our parents believe. At some point, we must leave our parents faith and ask Pilate's question: "Are you the King?" Pilate is just asking these questions on our behalf.