

Navigating Family Prayer

Post by “Joshua” of December 21, 2019 at 10:17 PM

As we come into the important holiday week of the Jewish and Christian calendars, this may be an issue for some of us in the coming days. I've recently planted myself nearer to family, and so for me, the problem of prayer has been a daily fly in the ointment. Tomorrow is a Mass day, which puts an exceptionally fine point on the problem.

Catholics these days get "Confirmed" in their faith at about the age of 16. I had no faith at the age of 16, but this was no obstacle. I would have called myself an agnostic at the time, and the path of least resistance was to show up, let the bishop put his hand on my forehead, and say the meaningless words.

Sometime years later, but still many years ago, I stopped taking the Eucharist. I haven't taken it since. If by chance I were asked, I could offer a citation from the Catechism—which I alone of my family have ever bothered to actually read—that would satisfy Catholic Canon Law and possibly silence a few wagging tongues.

But the truth, of course, is that neither the Catechism nor Canon Law mean a jot to me. I have always thought that there was something to be said for tact. From an Epicurean point of view, there is still more to be said for candor. Well, I realized today that what I needed was a very brief précis that avoided certain conversational landmines—*atheism*, as an example—and also promised mild pedantry, so as to disinvite further inquiry. Since I'm new to the area, and I haven't been so close to family since college, the time to save my Sundays is now.

And in the end it's rather simple; you may choose Athens, or you may choose Jerusalem. But you *must* choose.