



SHUTTERSTOCK

Lenten Living & Easter Gifting

Presents for Sacramental Occasions

BY KATIE WARNER

Let's start our journey through Lent on the right foot. Here are some simple ideas for adults, couples, families and children to make the most of this penitential season:

For the Whole Family

Pray the Stations of the Cross together at least once a week. Your local parish may pray together on Fridays, but you can also pray together at home. Children will love the *Stations of the Cross* CD (1) from *HolyHeroes.com*; and adults will enjoy meditations on the Stations of the Cross at *FORMED.org* (check with your parish for a subscription code, but know it's worth every penny if you subscribe yourself). If you really want to enhance your Stations experience at home, display the beautiful and durable plates from the **Emmerich Stations of the Cross Set** (2) inside or in your backyard and move from station to station together as you pray; available to order at *EWTNRC.com* or call (800) 854-6316; Item: 415Q, \$84.

Get a Catholic Family Crate box or subscription (4): Sink into the meanings, teachings and blessings of the Church seasons and feast days with this ready-to-use box of beautiful books, activities, prayer guides and suggestions to live the liturgical year meaningfully as a family; *CatholicFamilyCrate.com*.

Use sacrifice beads/good deed beads: The practice of using "good deed" beads helps form a daily habit of giving and sacrificing for Our Lord, moving a bead from one side of the string to the other, toward the crucifix. The idea actually comes from St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and Lent is the perfect time to start it. *Etsy* has some great choices for both adults and children, and you can find tutorials online to make your own beads.

Create a Works of Mercy Tree as a family: Lent is an ideal time to form a habit of discussing and practicing the works of mercy together. The Works of Mercy tree activity is a great way to learn and practice as a family; <https://bit.ly/20wxR3C>.

Grab some trash bags and get cleaning: Donate items you do not need or use regularly to a worthy organization or to someone who does need them.

Do the Jesus Tree together (5): Walk with Jesus through Lent and Easter with this beautiful ornament set and accompanying readings; <https://etsy.me/2vld225>.

For the Adults

Improve your marriage during this Lent. Pray for each other using these prayer journals* (<https://amzn.to/37o7Nu>). Or join Cana 90 together (*MessyFamilyProject.org*). If you're not already doing FIAT90 (women; <https://bit.ly/2TWVCFa>) or Exodus 90 (men; *Exodus90.com*), use their guidelines to inspire fasting and prayer goals you can work on together.

Watch a FORMED series together. This six-episode course on prayer (30 minutes per episode), specifically about *lectio divina*, makes a great Lenten study (6). (Again, if your parish has a FORMED subscription, you can access the course for free with your parish login information. Otherwise, at least sign up for a free trial. You can also buy the course from their market; *FORMED.org*.)

Read the wisdom of Fulton Sheen (7): Use a daily devotional for Lent and Easter, which begins Ash Wednesday and journeys through the first week of Easter, providing reflections, Scripture passages, prayers and Lenten actions for each day. *Lent and Easter: Wisdom From Fulton J. Sheen*, also from *EWTN Religious Catalogue*. Item: 1118, \$12.

Think outside the box when deciding how to fast: Here is a great list from *Dynamic Catholic* (<https://bit.ly/2Rn0nXj>) and another from *Ascension Press* (<https://bit.ly/2TUUe6h>) with creative ideas for fasting this Lent that go beyond cutting out the chocolate.

Try "My Favorite Thing to Do for Lent": Tens of thousands of people have considered or undertaken this awesome prayer challenge over the years: praying for a specific person. It's my favorite thing to do for Lent (<https://bit.ly/37lvSql>).

For the Kids

Print this Lenten calendar from Catholic Icing: Kids can color the black-and-white version of this Lenten calendar (<https://bit.ly/2GnItxu>) day by day during the Lenten season. It's an easy activity that helps track the time from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday.

Have a giving jar or rice bowl: Having some sort of visual, physical way to collect monetary donations as a family throughout the Lenten season is especially helpful for everyone in the family to be reminded of the need for increased almsgiving. Be creative in how you want to contribute to the jar/bowl.

Make a home altar (8): If you don't have an



altar table (<https://bit.ly/2Rn0nXj>) or a daily prayer habit with the kids, do it this Lent. Cover it with a purple cloth and top with devotional items for a great Lenten prayer space.

Do the Holy Heroes Lenten Adventure: A great resource for the elementary-aged group, with activities, audio and video, and games; *HolyHeroes.com*.

Get some "Brother Francis" Lent resources (3): The Stations of the Cross DVD is a wonderful visual resource for children to learn to pray through the stations. Also check out the devotional fan (shown above), coloring storybook and poster, too; *BrotherFrancisStore.com*.

Read children's picture books for Lent: Some of our family favorites include *The Tale of Three Trees*, *The Donkey That No One Could Ride* and *The Colt and the King*.

Be creative in your sacrifice: Your older child or teen will find something on this long list, from *LifeTeen.com/blog/102-things-really-give-lent/*.

At the beginning of Lent, Easter can feel far away, but before you know it, the glorious Resurrection season is here, and it's time to celebrate the sacraments!

Here are some gift ideas for your sacramental celebrations during the Easter season:

For Baptism

First Faith Treasury board books (9): Good, beautiful, true catechesis and colorful and fun to boot; *FirstFaithTreasury.com**

Saint softies: Handmade, beautiful saint dolls with many to choose from; <https://etsy.me/2vd9qRZ>.

First Bible (10): The Catholic Child's Baptismal Bible from the *EWTN Religious Catalogue* is a great pick: Item: 14001, \$20.

Personalized holy water bottle makes such a beautiful gift that a child can use for years to come; <https://bit.ly/36qanDi>.

Chews Life Rosary (11): Check out the chaplets and bracelets, too; *ChewsLife.com*.

For First Communion

Rosary or rosary bracelet (12): The *EWTN Religious Catalogue* has a number of options, including the First Communion Swarovski Wrap Rosary Bracelet. Item: \$4C, \$50. Or design your own custom rosary for your first communicant at The Catholic Woodworker; *CatholicWoodWorker.com*.

MagnifiKid Subscription: What child doesn't love getting mail? Invite your child to deeper faith through great content, comics, coloring pages and activities; <https://bit.ly/2GxYtqx>.

The **Lego Catechism of the Seven Sacraments** (13): This book is a huge hit at our house and provides the perfect building blocks to the faith — literally — for this age group; *EWTN Religious Catalogue*, Item: 8701, \$34.95.

Gift card to your local Catholic bookstore: Provide a special opportunity for your first communicant to pick out something uniquely important to him or her, while also supporting your local Catholic shop.

For Confirmation

Made for Greatness (14): This growth mindset journal for "courageous Catholic youth" will inspire your recent confirmand to live a life of virtue and growth in the Holy Spirit; <https://amzn.to/2turgPZ>.

Jewelry (15): A medal of their confirmation saint, a Miraculous Medal, a crucifix ring or necklace all make long-lasting gifts. You can find a huge variety of choices in the *EWTN Religious Catalogue*.

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An Encyclopedia of Miracles

BY JOSEPH PRONECHEN

Ever wonder about extraordinary mystical phenomena such as “miraculous transport,” exhibited by St. Hyacinth, who was seen walking on water by more than 400 people; or “invisibility,” experienced by St. Martin de Porres, who became invisible when enemies entered his room to harm him, and by miracle worker St. Francis of Paola, who became invisible when overenthusiastic fans surrounded him and tore at his clothing; or telekinesis, when consecrated Hosts have left a priest’s hands and flown directly into the mouths of such holy people as Sts. Catherine of Siena, Anna Maria Taigi and Margaret of Hungary?

Compendium of the Miraculous outlines such phenomena, making for a fascinating read detailing not only cures and healings associated with saints but also lesser-known powers such as cardiognosis (reading of hearts), levitation — and much more. This generously illustrated book is indeed *An Encyclopedia of Revelation, Marian Apparitions and Mystical Phenomena*. Deacon Albert E. Graham of the Archdiocese of Washington took many years to research and write this encyclopedia, offering the Catholic faithful a tome filled with intriguing insights.

How could anyone not be fascinated to find out which saints experienced bodily elongation and shrinkage; or to learn what role luminous radiation played in the life of a saint; or to see how the odor of sanctity and the odor of sin differ; or how some saints had the charism to multiply substances?

The book covers 40-plus mystical phenomena, wonders given to saints who were so close to God that they were granted some aspect of his omnipotence. The introduction details how God speaks through his Son, his Mother Mary and the saints. The sections on how to distinguish divine, public and private revelation and on the rules for discernment to make sure the revelation is truly supernatural — various steps, begin-

COMPENDIUM OF THE MIRACULOUS

An Encyclopedia of Revelation, Marian Apparitions and Mystical Phenomena
By Deacon Albert E. Graham
TAN Books, 2019
482 pages, \$59.95
To order: tanbooks.com or (800) 437-5876; or amazon.com

ning with examining if the revelation is contrary in any way to faith and morals as taught by the Church — help lay the foundation.

This compendium continues with a short section on some of the major Marian apparitions, including Guadalupe, Lourdes, Fatima, Beauraing in Belgium (1932-1933) and Our Lady of Good Help in Champion, Wisconsin (1859). Each account is outlined in less than a page.

What particularly makes this book a page-turner is that it does not have to be read chronologically. Some readers might be first drawn to those entries spotlighting saintly visions of heaven, highlighting the experiences of Sts. Faustina Kowalska and Clare of Montefalco to Gertrude the Great, or the saintly visions of hell, from those of the well-known children of Fatima, to John Damascene, Frances of Rome, “who could not speak of it without sobbing uncontrollably,” and Teresa of Ávila.

This compendium addresses purgatory, too, including an enlightening section explaining Protestants in purgatory and the reason for their disbelief in it. One section describes the extensive vision of Maria Magdalena de’Pazzi’s journey to the depths of purgatory and the sufferings on each level in vivid detail.

Other saints, such as Thomas



LIFE RESTORED. The intercession of St. Teresa of Ávila revived her 6-year-old nephew, Don Gonzalo Ovalle, the son of her sister, Doña Juana de Ahumada. It was her first miracle. This and other miracles are recounted in a new encyclopedia. Luis de Madrazo, 1855 painting

Aquinas, learned that their relatives were in purgatory. This section concludes with a few pages of supportive, hope-filled directives on helping souls in purgatory and how souls on earth can avoid it.

Engrossing descriptions and factual details are clearly written and easy to understand. Not to be missed is a nearly 180-page section, presenting more than 210 saints, blessed and venerables, with an overview of their particular mystical experiences and visions, like those of St. Bridget of Sweden and St. Catherine of Siena, who experienced “heavenly apparitions almost on a daily basis. On one occasion, during a deeply moving vision, the Virgin Mary allowed Catherine to hold the infant Jesus in her arms.”

In addition, readers learn that St. Joseph of Cupertino “flew eight feet into the air to kiss a statue of Jesus, and then carried it to his cell, where he floated about with it.” He also “knew of the consciences and sins of those with whom he came in contact. He would often approach people to remind them to confess hidden sins. When they replied that they were not conscious of any hidden sins, the saint would reveal the time, place and circumstances of the

offenses against God.”

The story of St. Lydwina of Schiedam is particularly interesting. As Deacon Graham recounts, “Our Lord first appeared to her as a child and then was transformed into a man whose face was disfigured and scarred. During this vision, luminous rays darted from Christ’s wounds and pierced Lydwina’s hands, her feet and her heart. Upon receiving the stigmata, her body began to smell like that of fresh roses, violets, and lilies.”

One after another, holy stories parade through the pages in riveting detail.

For those who want to pursue learning more about these saints, there are appendices, plus an extensive bibliography and list of Catholic websites. Because the book does not have an imprimatur, not all the information provided in this section may be reliable. Prudence dictates caution in any examination based on sources not officially approved by the Church.

Overall, this hefty resource offers inspiring tales of the fantastic mystical experiences of holy lives.

Joseph Pronechen is a Register staff writer.

Gifts

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including a St. Thérèse medal (Item: 7210S, \$59.50) and a St. Michael medal (Item: S1601, \$50). My Saint, My Hero bracelets are a favorite, too; MySaintMyHero.com.

A hand-lettered mug with a prayerful reminder: Faith-inspired mugs make beautiful gifts; <https://RoseHarrington.com/collections/mugs-2>. Or grab a “handmade cozy for Christ” for your teen’s coffee mug or tumbler from this large selection (which includes custom choices, too); Etsy.com/shop/theozywife/.

Books: EWTN Religious Catalogue has a wide variety.

Faith-inspired phone cases (16): fun, colorful, and inspirational; PronetoWanderLA.com.

For Weddings

Love & Marriage-themed print (17): There are so many beautiful quotes available from the store at JustLovePrints.com. All would make great home décor.

Catholic marriage devotional

(18): *Forever* by Jackie and Bobby Angel is a great book choice for newlyweds; EWTN Religious Catalogue, Item: 4336, \$15.95.

Hanging wall rosary (19): These wall rosaries come in a gorgeous variety of colors and display beautifully in any room; <https://etsy.me/2NZF6AV>.

Mass intention: Have a Mass offered for the happy couple, an inexpensive but spiritually rich gift.

Set of sacred candles: A perfect indulgence, and you’ll support a Catholic small business in the process when you grab some of the lovely saint and spiritual life-themed candles from CordaCandles.com.

Holy water font (20): All of the offerings at EWTN Religious Catalogue make great choices, especially the Holy Family one, or this Cherub Angel Holy Water Font: Item: 75762, \$36.

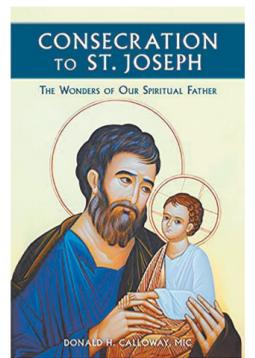
Katie Warner writes from Georgia, where she lives with her family, writes children’s books and home educates. She is online at KatieWarner.com.

*denotes products by the guide’s author.

CONSECRATION TO ST. JOSEPH

The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father

By Father Donald Calloway
Marian Press, 2020
\$14.95, 326 pages
EWTN Item: 4316



Drawing on the wealth of the Church’s living tradition, Marian Father Donald Calloway calls on all of us to turn to St. Joseph, entrust ourselves, our Church and our world to our spiritual father’s loving care, and then watch for wonders when the universal patron of the Church opens the floodgates of heaven to pour out graces into our lives today. Definitely a book for our time, *Consecration to St. Joseph* is dedicated to meeting the challenges of the present moment and restoring order to our Church and our world, all through the potent paternal intercession and care of St. Joseph. This book has everything you need to take your love and devotion to St. Joseph to a whole different level: a thorough program of consecration to St. Joseph; information on the 10 wonders of St. Joseph; and prayers and devotions to St. Joseph. Accessible and motivating, this book will kick off a great movement of consecration to our spiritual father and change the world.

Source: EWTNRC.com

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