



TRUST IN GOD

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

Christ is risen! Hallelujah! We have so much reason to rejoice during the Easter season, for Jesus conquers sin and death—there is nothing our God can't do! The Church continues to call us to grow in our trust in the goodness and mercy of God, especially through the feast of Divine Mercy Sunday. In the Gospel reading for that Mass, we are called to reflect on Christ's words to St. Thomas in **John 20:29: "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."**



It is a great opportunity to reflect on how much we trust God. It is easy to profess the beliefs of our faith at every Mass, but do we truly trust that God wants the very best for us? It is easy to forget the redemptive power of suffering. It is also very easy to become anxious or afraid—and that fear impacts how we parent. We can forget that the Lord has **"plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope."** - Jeremiah 29:11

FEAR AND THE ILLUSION OF SAFETY

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat [or drink], or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they?" Matthew 6:25-26



Evil exists, and it is every parent's worst nightmare that something bad could happen to our children. Unfortunately, this fear is exacerbated by social media and news outlets. Fear sells. Shocking and horrific stories receive more engagement, more clicks, and more views. That's why algorithms push them so heavily, but it's also why our parental anxiety is increasing. We can be tempted to believe that worst-case scenarios are commonplace rather than exceptions.

**Prioritize Family and values.
Delay Social Media.**

**Delay the Smartphone.
No Phones Used in Schools.**



Sometimes it is the fear of our children missing out, or the worry over their safety, that drives parents to give children smart devices before they are developmentally ready for them. We love our children, and we want what is best for them. We want them to communicate with friends, and we want them to be able to reach us in case of an emergency. But we see that this over-connection is leading to more isolation. Kids aren't going outside or experiencing the world that God created, and they can often fall into the trap of endless scrolling and content consumption.

We might think that it's not good for them to be constantly on their phone or device—but at least they are safe in their room. It isn't safer. People have more access to our kids than ever before, and they are being exposed to very harmful content. We can be allured by the illusion that smart devices are designed to keep our children safe, but unfortunately, they can rob them of developing important life skills and creating their own memories. **"God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (2 Timothy 1:7)**, and we need to be able to bring our fears before God and seek His wisdom and guidance.

"When I am afraid, I put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?"

Psalm 56:3-4

NO FEAR IN LOVE

Think back to your childhood. What are some of the memories that still bring you joy? What memories do you wish your children could experience? We all have fond memories of hanging out with friends, playing outside for countless hours, and inventing random games. Over the last thirty years, we have made great strides in making the world outside a safer place for families—and it is now safer for kids to go out, hang out, and play than it was when we were growing up. We can give our children those same experiences we cherished in our own childhood.

That doesn't mean bad things won't happen to us or our children, but we can have confidence that God will be there to lift us up and guide our decisions. We don't need to rush to give our children a device they aren't ready for. **As Proverbs 3:5-6 states: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, on your own intelligence do not rely; in all your ways be mindful of him, and he will make straight your paths."** God will help us make the best decisions for our families.

We will make mistakes as parents, but God doesn't want us to live a life full of fear, guilt, and shame. **As 1 John 4:18 states: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love."** We can go to God in prayer, in confession, and before Jesus in the Eucharist to receive His mercy, grace, and direction to get up and start again. No matter what choices we have or haven't made, God is always there for us.

LET US PRAY

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.



Smart Families is partnered with your church and/or school to educate, encourage and empower your community about the importance of delaying smartphones.

To learn more, visit www.smart-families.org