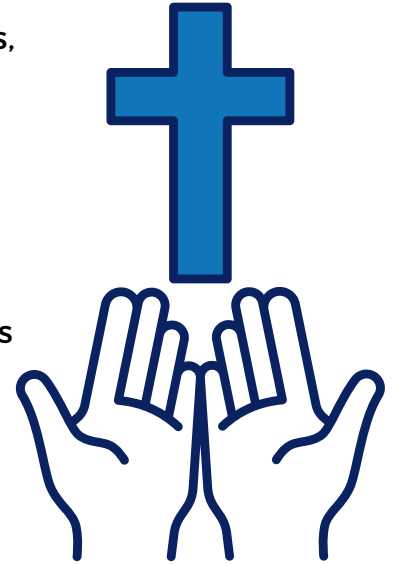




OVERCONNECTEDNESS AND GOD'S WHISPER

As Catholics, prayer is the source of faith. It is the lifeblood of our souls, nourished by the Eucharist. Smartphone and social media use is directly attacking our prayer life and our relationship with God. Technology has stolen the two most important things we can offer God, our time and attention. Boredom should be an invitation to turn to God in prayer, instead we quickly turn to our phones to be entertained. **God isn't going to follow you on social media;** He wants you to come to Him in prayer. He desires a real connection and it takes time to cultivate that relationship.



OVERCONNECTED TO TECH, DISCONNECTED FROM GOD



Manipulative technologies, such as smartphones, are engineered to be addictive and distracting. There is nothing wrong with you because you respond to a stimulus in a predictable way. This is human nature. Your brain doesn't care if the stimulus is a pill that you swallow or a video you watch. The reasons why people enjoy social media and short form videos is not a mystery. The real mystery is why people are not tuned in constantly. Perhaps it is a miracle that God preserves even a sliver of our attention in this overconnected world.

We know technology use is subtle and silently damages our relationship with God. Our phones are the first thing we reach for in the morning and the last thing we set down before we sleep. **Our first fruits are being laid at the altar of Meta.** We are constantly distracted, notified, and begged to swipe through endless content; it is exhausting and unsatisfying.

When God spoke to Elijah, the prophet was not in the strong wind, the earthquake, or the fire. Elijah was in the light, silent sound. (1 Kings 19:11-12) This is how God speaks to most of us. If we are constantly in the noise, consumed with videos and posts, we will not hear God's voice in the silence. We will not stand firm when called for a purpose or in the face of temptation.

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

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



GOD'S DESIRE AND OUR RESPONSE



Sacred Scripture is all about God's immense love for us and is most perfectly revealed through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. "In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through Him." (1 John 4:9) God repeatedly extends the invitation, yet it remains our responsibility to respond. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20)

Our response is through prayer. "For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy." (St. Therese of Lisieux) Prayer is how we communicate with God. Prayer takes time and work, in the same way it takes time and work to build any Earthly relationship. Through prayer, our relationship with God grows and develops. "Rely on the mighty Lord; constantly seek his face." (1 Chronicles 16:11)

THE WEDDING INVITATION

Jesus is desperate to come to our aid, but too often we are too connected to this world and too disconnected from Him. "How many times I yearned to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her young under her wings, but you were unwilling!" (Matthew 23:37) God is inviting us to have a relationship with Him for all eternity. It is easy to make excuses for our behaviors but these excuses can have eternal consequences. "Some ignored the invitation and went away, one to his farm, another to his business... Then he said to his servants, 'The feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy to come.'" (Matthew 22: 5,8)

How will we respond to manipulative technology? What steps can you take to ensure you have more prayer time over the next month? Can you commit to treating your phone like your laptop, rather than a constant extension of your being? Knowing our nature and how our brain responds to technology, we need to take concrete preventative steps to safeguard our relationship with God and the souls of our family.

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