

# "Families & the Gospel"

*Bud Ozar and his wife Sue are working in Kenya rescuing orphans from the street. In appreciation for the use of these blurbs, if you wish you may donate directly to this project by going to: [www.friendsofkenyanorphans.org](http://www.friendsofkenyanorphans.org).*

## CYCLE B – THE YEAR OF MARK

### ADVENT

#### 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.

#### 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.

#### 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 a fact.

#### 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

#### Christmas

#### 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 our loving ACCEPTANCE of our children.

#### 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.

#### 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? Don't let it be the tabloid stars. Resolve in this New Year to be the guiding star in the life of your children.

## **Baptism of our Lord**

**1st Sunday of Ordinary Time** (Mark 1:7-11)

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

The gospel today points to Jesus' humanity; like us He needed RECOGNITION ("You are my Son"), AFFECTION ("My Beloved Son") and AFFIRMATION ("With you I am well pleased."). In our families it is easy to focus on irritating behaviors and take for granted all the positives. This New Year take a lesson from God the Father, be an AFFIRMER and not a BLAMER.

## **LENT**

**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!

**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 because change and growth are inevitable. Children grow up, parents grow old and 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.

**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.

**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."

**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.

**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**

**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.

**Second Sunday of Easter**

**Divine Mercy Sunday** (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.

**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.'

**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."

**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."

**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.

**Seventh Sunday of Easter** (John 17:11-19)

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Jesus was worried about his disciples and he turned to prayer. No matter how much time we spent 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.

**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."

**First Sunday after Pentecost**

**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."

**Body & Blood of Christ** (Mark 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.

## **ORDINARY TIME**

### **First Sunday**

**Baptism of Our Lord** (Mark 1:7-11))

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Even Jesus needed RECOGNITION ("You are my Son"), AFFECTION ("My beloved") and AFFIRMATION ("I am pleased.") It is too easy to focus on irritating behaviors in our family and take for granted all the positives. In this New Year take a lesson from Our Father and be an AFFIRMER, not a BLAMER.

**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.

**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 'Zebedee and Sons Fishing, Inc.' Our children were never ours. They are only on loan to us. We raise them to let them go.

**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.

**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 are confronted with problems. Take a tip from Andrew and Simon who "told Jesus about it at once."

**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.

**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 should 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.

**Eighth Sunday** (Mark 3:18-22)**A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

Over time a family changes because needs change. Old routines and traditions must give way to new ways because "No one puts new wine into old wine skins." We must release the old ways to cherished memories of times spent together and delight in the new ways to express our love and commitment to one another.

**Ninth Sunday** (Mark 2:23-3:6)**A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

"The Sabbath was made for man." These words of Jesus in today's gospel are addressed to our culture where the GNP is the carrot on the stick pulling us to longer working days and fewer family hours. "Sabbath Time" is any time you can pry free to deliberately relax, recharge and recreate your soul and body. Jesus reminds us today, you are "the master of the Sabbath."

**Tenth Sunday** (Mark 3:20-35)**A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

Jesus reminds us in today's gospel "a house divided against itself will not stand." Are the tensions and issues which divide your home worth the struggle? Even if you win an argument you lose a relationship. Don't let pride and pettiness divide your home.

**11<sup>th</sup> 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.

**12<sup>th</sup> Sunday** (Mark 4:35-41)

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Just as the apostles in today's gospel were amazed at the power of Jesus so our children are amazed at our lack of fear of dark rooms or monsters in closets or under beds. As the apostles depended on Jesus, children depend on us to restore quiet to their lives. Getting out of bed at night to quiet a child's fears is the stuff of holiness.

**13<sup>th</sup> 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.

**14<sup>th</sup> 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.

**15<sup>th</sup> 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?

**16<sup>th</sup> 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.

**17<sup>th</sup> 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?

**18<sup>th</sup> 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.

**19<sup>th</sup> 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.

**20<sup>th</sup> 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.

**21<sup>st</sup> 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.

**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 life time 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!

**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.

**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!

**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.

**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 us at home. As parents we gain our "reward" when we bring water to 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."

**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.

**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.

**29th Sunday** (Mark 10:35-45)**A Family Perspective****by Bud Ozar**

"Advise" 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.

**30th Sunday** (Mark10:46-52)**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? Okay, that is your prayer.

**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 and to listen if they want to be heard. Family life rescues us from arrogance by teaching us to love others as we love ourselves.

**32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday** (Mark 12:38-44)

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

The widow in today's gospel gave only a little, but 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 moments.

**33<sup>rd</sup> 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 for like the fig tree in the gospel, the people we love grow and change.

## **RELIGIOUS FEAST DAYS**

**Transfiguration**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

The apostles were "afraid" when Jesus was transfigured in front of them. CHANGE is often frightening, especially in relationships, but inevitable. The child grows up, a parent ages and people mature. The only constant is our commitment to one another.

**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.

**NATIONAL HOLIDAYS:** If these holidays fall on or near a weekend, then the following articles might be used on that weekend.

**Mother's Day**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

The words of Jesus in today's gospel, "Abide in me," are appropriate on a day we honor mothers because there is a special bond connecting mothers and their children, extending beyond birth and death. They will always "abide" in each other. It's a lasting presence.

**Memorial Day**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Memorial Day is a good time to remember family members who have gone home to the Lord. These memories are sacred for they rekindle our faith and hope for a future reunion. We were born from their love and will return to their love.

**Father's Day**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

It is interesting we call the first person of the Trinity, Father. Our dads help us understand God as Father in the way they love, protect, teach, discipline and spend time with us. What an awesome responsibility, to be the window through which children view God.

**July 4<sup>th</sup>**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Prophets are not popular because they tell us things which are true but we don't want to hear. That is why we treat prophets so poorly. This week we celebrate our national independence. Who are the National Prophets we are trying to ignore? What message are we trying to ignore?

**Labor Day**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Labor Day is a good time to examine our work life. Are your work, career and projects so consuming that you are "deaf" to those around you?

**Halloween**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

Masks are common at Halloween. Is your family hiding behind the mask of The Conforming Family and quietly blending into the culture? A Christian family is baptized to be different and to make a difference.

**Thanksgiving**

**A Family Perspective**

**by Bud Ozar**

As you prepare for Thanksgiving, look back on this year to all the moments God visited your family in unexpected blessings, or disasters avoided, or kindness and compassion received. Realize and give thanks for “The Lord is with you.”