

St. Joseph's Family Activities



September 2021

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September, back to school, new routines, but the Church still offers us a range of readings, feasts and reflections to help us grow in faith in our families and schools.

September is a month of hope- a new school year and this year we have hope that the struggles of the last 18 months can be overcome. The feast of the exultation of the Cross on 14 September also gives us hope. Christ's death on one of the cruellest instruments of torture the world has known, reassures us that by His grace we can overcome every trial that we have to face. Some of us have enormous trials, but Jesus is always with us, there by our side and as He brought good out of evil then, He can still do so today.

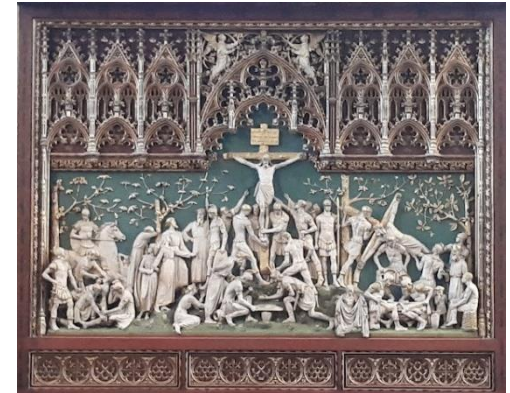
Aleteia, the online Catholic (free) magazine offers some more suggestions for September here: https://aleteia.org/2021/09/01/5-ways-to-honor-the-saints-and-devotions-of-september-in-your-home/?utm_campaign=NLEN&utm_content=NLEN&utm_medium=mail&utm_source=daily_newsletter

I was fortunate to be in York last week and have used some pictures I took of the chapter house floor for an activity – see below, and the altarpiece on the right comes from the Minster too. If you have photos of any churches taken on holiday to share, please do send them to me!

As ever, if you wish to see past copies of these sheets, please go to <https://www.stjosephsmalvern.org/j/> and then click on the dropdown box for past editions.

There are Four Dimensions of our Faith, and the activities all reflect one or more of each of these dimensions.

In the middle of September, we celebrate the Exaltation of the Cross. This feast celebrates the victory over death that Christ has won for us and although it may seem strange to rejoice in an instrument of torture, the cross gives us courage to know that God will always be with us in every trial that we face.



The family is the “domestic Church” and if we are not able to gather in person with the parish, it's a good idea to set aside special times to pray with the family, even if it is just 10 minutes two or three times a week. These are graced moments. Light a candle and have a few moments' silence and remind everyone that they are in the presence of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These times are very precious and even if it is just a few minutes after a meal, it can be a fruitful time. Don't bite off more than you can chew! Start with just a few moments and build up the scope and variety of prayers slowly. Give everyone the opportunity to voice their own prayers as well as reciting traditional prayers.

**Speaking/Learning the faith
(which the Church calls
“professing the faith”)**

**Living it (in Christ) – i.e. the
choices we make in
everyday life**

**Celebrating it in the Liturgy
and the Sacraments**

**Christian
prayer.**

First reading and Gospel for Sunday 5th September: 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

First reading: Isaiah 35:4-7

Say to all faint hearts, 'Courage! Do not be afraid. Look, your God is coming. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unsealed, then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy.

The word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel: Mark 7:31-37

Returning from the district of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, right through the Decapolis region. And they brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he sighed; and he said to him, 'Ephphatha', that is, 'Be opened.' And his ears were opened, and the ligament of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly. And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the more widely they published it. Their admiration was unbounded. 'He has done all things well,' they said 'he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: ***Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ***

Discussion on the Gospel

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

Introduction: Once again the first reading is worth reading as it shows what God would do when He came. The Jews were expecting a Messiah, a great leader, who would do wonderful things. It is no wonder that people rushed to Jesus and asked for healing! However, they did not pay much attention to the words of Isaiah, "your God is coming" and it took them longer to realise that Jesus is actually the God they were waiting for.

Q: In the first reading, what does the prophet say? (A: Courage, do not be afraid... your God is coming....)

Q: What will happen to the blind, the deaf and dumb, and the lame? (A. The blind will see; deaf will hear; dumb will speak; and the lame jump for joy.)

Q: If Jesus healed all these people, what does that tell us about Him? (A. That He is God.)

Q: In the Gospel, who did Jesus heal? (A: A deaf man who could not speak.)

Q: What did Jesus do? (A: He healed him by putting his fingers in his ear and spittle on his tongue.)

Q: Once the deaf man was healed, he could hear Jesus speaking to him. When does Jesus speak to us? (A: Various, e.g. Mass, prayers, reading the Bible, sometimes in "good ideas" we have when we are praying).

Q: Think about some of the things from the Bible that Jesus said. How many can you remember? (A: Again, various – may be write any suggestions down.)

Finish by reminding everyone that Jesus is God so when Jesus is speaking to us, God is speaking to us. Then read or repeat some of the suggestions, or the sentences on the next page and after each one, may be say "Thank you Jesus" or another appropriate prayer.

There are seven saying of Jesus here for you to cut out and put up (may be stick on the fridge) each day this week to learn by heart.

You shall worship the Lord your God and only Him shall you serve (Lk. 4:8)

Follow me
(Mk. 1:17)

Your faith has saved you, go in peace (Lk. 7:50)

Come to me ... and you will find rest for your souls (Mt. 11:28-29)

I am the Bread of Life (Jn. 6:35)

Take, eat, this is my Body... this is my Blood (Mt. 26:26-27)

My kingdom is not of this world
(Jn. 18:36)

**Gospel for Sunday 12th September: 24th
Sunday of Ordinary Time**

Mark 8:27-35

Jesus and his disciples left for the villages round Caesarea Philippi. On the way he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say I am?' And they told him. 'John the Baptist,' they said 'others Elijah; others again, one of the prophets.' 'But you,' he asked 'who do you say I am?' Peter spoke up and said to him, 'You are the Christ.' And he gave them strict orders not to tell anyone about him.

And he began to teach them that the Son of Man was destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and to be put to death, and after three days to rise again; and he said all this quite openly. Then, taking him aside, Peter started to remonstrate with him. But, turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said to him, 'Get behind me, Satan! Because the way you think is not God's way but man's.'

He called the people and his disciples to him and said, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.'

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: ***Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ***

Discussion on the Gospel

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

There are two parts to today's Gospel. St. Peter's declaration of faith leads us to reflection on who we say that Jesus is. In the second part, (which is not explored in the questions below) we have Jesus' prediction of His death and Resurrection, and St. Peter's arguing that that should not happen. We see that we do not think as God does. Parents can relate to this as so often we make decisions for our children which they don't understand or see the point of, but we know what is best for them. This is one way of helping them to see that God only wants the best for us even if things look really difficult at times.

Q: What does Jesus ask His disciples? (A: Who do people say that He is.)

Q: What answer is given to Jesus? (A: That Jesus is John the Baptist, Elijah or another prophet come to life again....)

Q: When Jesus asks the disciples who THEY say that Jesus is, what answer does St. Peter give? (A: That Jesus is the Christ.)

Q: What does St. Peter mean by this: (A: "The Christ" is the promised Messiah who is the Son of God).

Explain that St. Peter acknowledges that Jesus is God the Son, that Jesus is not just a good and holy man but that He is God here, on earth with them. This is an amazing step!

Q: WE need to think about who Jesus is. He is God and man, something which our human brains struggle to understand. To help us, He has a number of titles, or ways we can address Him. What are they? (A: Lord, Son of God, God the Son, Christ, the Word of God, Saviour, the King of Kings, Son of Man, the Good Shepherd, Bread of life...)

Pray this Litany to Jesus: responding with "***we love you, be with us today***" each time

Jesus Christ, we love you, be with us...

Jesus Christ, son of Mary, ...

Lord Jesus Christ, we love you....

Jesus Christ, King of Kings, ...

Jesus Christ, Son of God, ...

Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, ...

Jesus Christ, God the Son, ...

Jesus Christ, Bread of Life, ...

Jesus Christ, Word of God, ...

Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world, ...

Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, ...

Jesus Christ, (add any other title) ...

Glory be to the Father....

How many of these titles of Jesus can you unscramble in these boxes?

ORLD

TCSRHI

NOS FO GDO

NSO FO HET FHETRA

TEH OGOD DRHESPEH

NKIG FO SNIKG

RISAVOU FO TEH DWOLR

NOS FO YARM

EADRB FO EFLI

Discussion on the Gospel

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

Today we will focus on the second part of the Gospel as it is directly relevant to children and families.

Q: What were Jesus' disciples arguing about? (A: who was the greatest of them.)

Q: What did Jesus do when they refused to answer His question? (A: He sat down and called the twelve (His Apostles) to Him.)

Q: What must someone do if He wants to be "first" (the most important)? (A: They have to choose the last place.)

Q: What does Jesus mean by this? (A: He means that Jesus does not want us to be pushy or to say "I am the best" but to say to other people, "you go first".)

Q: How and or when can we do this in our lives? (A: various answers possible... e.g. Not to rush to the front of the line at school, open doors/hold doors open for other people, not to be greedy and grab all the best food at a party.....)

Q: In the Gospel story, who did Jesus put His arms around? (A: A small child.)

Q: Why did Jesus do this? (A: To show that children are important and that all children are welcome in His kingdom/in Church/to show how much He loves everyone, including the smallest and the least important people in society.)

Q: This is very comforting, to know that Jesus loves every single person, even the smallest person. Who is the youngest person that you know? (A: Various, if you know of someone who is pregnant, you could remind the children about the baby in that person's "tummy".)

Q: Jesus loves all these people and of course He loves you too. Let's think about how much He loves us. Close your eyes and imagine that you are looking at Jesus. See Him looking at you and smiling at you. Imagine that you are the child in the story, and He is putting His arm around you. Feel His love as He does that. Keep your eyes closed and in the silence of your heart, tell Jesus how much you love Him.... When you are ready, open your eyes and come back into the room.

Gospel for Sunday 19th September: 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Gospel

Mark 9:30-37

Jesus and his disciples made their way through Galilee; and he did not want anyone to know, because he was instructing his disciples; he was telling them, 'The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death he will rise again.' But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him.

They came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the road?' They said nothing because they had been arguing which of them was the greatest. So he sat down, called the Twelve to him and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all.' He then took a little child, set him in front of them, put his arms round him, and said to them, 'Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: *Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ*

Draw a picture of yourself and all those you love around Jesus. Write their names underneath each of the pictures.



Jesus, I pray for all my friends and family. Bless them today. Especially I pray for...

(List the names of those you want to mention).

**Gospel for Sunday 26th September;
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Mark 9:38-43,45,47-48

John said to Jesus, 'Master, we saw a man who is not one of us casting out devils in your name; and because he was not one of us we tried to stop him.' But Jesus said, 'You must not stop him: no one who works a miracle in my name is likely to speak evil of me. Anyone who is not against us is for us.'

'If anyone gives you a cup of water to drink just because you belong to Christ, then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose his reward.'

'But anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who have faith, would be better thrown into the sea with a great millstone round his neck. And if your hand should cause you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life crippled, than to have two hands and go to hell, into the fire that cannot be put out. And if your foot should cause you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life lame, than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye should cause you to sin, tear it out; it is better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell where their worm does not die nor their fire go out.'

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: ***Praise to you Lord Jesus
Christ***

Discussion on the Gospel

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

Again, we have a collection of themes here as the Gospel is a gathering of Jesus' sayings. The questions will focus obstacles to growing in faith. If you have teens, you could chat about the difference between those who just go to church and don't live as if they have faith, and those who live a truly loving life, contributing to the community but who don't have faith in Jesus Christ. Don't conclude that going to church does not matter but say that our faith gives us the balance so that we can receive the grace live out our life of faith in a sustained way. In other words, both are important.

Q: Jesus gives warnings in the Gospel about how we can be an obstacle to others.

What is an obstacle? (A: Something in the way, e.g., a road or pavement closure, a fallen tree over a path...)

Q: If an obstacle is something that blocks the way, how can we be an obstacle to other people? (A: We can say or do something that does not help others to know and love Jesus.)

Q: What sort of things can we say or do that could be obstacles to people knowing or loving Jesus? (A: [Responses will be in childish language, but these are the essence of what could be suggested]. Not being loving, inviting them to socialise instead of going to Mass, saying that praying is not important, denying faith in Jesus.... .)









Q: What could we say or do that could help other people to grow in faith in Jesus Christ? (A: Various – invite them to come to Mass/other Church events, not being shy of saying grace before meals when we have guests or are eating out, saying that we will pray for other people... telling them that we can't do something on that day because we have Mass, talks about Jesus)

Q: How can we make sure that obstacles put in our path don't distract us? (A: Keep a regular prayer life, read the Bible regularly, go to Mass each week...)

Q: Who (which Divine Person of the Holy Trinity) particularly gives us the strength to avoid obstacles and keep close to Jesus? (A: The Holy Spirit.)

Say together: Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth.

Here is a game you can play: Cut out all these pictures (may be paste the paper on card first). The aim is to be the first to collect 5 different "onward" cards (coloured green) and discard all the "obstacle" cards (coloured grey). Shuffle the cards and deal each player 5 cards, placing the rest in a pile in the middle, facing down. Starting with the youngest, each player picks up a card and either keeps it or rejects it, placing it upside down in the middle. If a card is kept, another needs to be placed face down on the reject pile, keeping 5 cards in the hand. Once all the cards are used, shuffle the pack again and continue as before.

<p>You say good morning to Jesus</p> 	<p>You say thank you to Jesus</p> 	<p>You say goodnight to Jesus at bedtime</p> 	<p>You remember that Jesus loves you</p> 
<p>A friend is lonely so you play with them</p> 	<p>You teach a new skill to a brother or sister</p> 	<p>You light a candle and say a prayer for someone who is sick</p> 	<p>You light a candle and pray for someone who has died</p> 

You read a bible story



You read a Bible story to someone else



You learn a new prayer from a prayer book



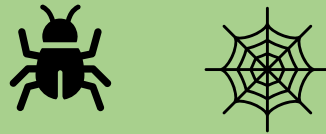
You try to follow the prayers and readings at Mass



You thank God for the beautiful countryside



You look out for many different kinds of creatures and thank God for them



You thank God for the sunshine and the rain



You are asked to help look after a younger child and you say yes at once.



You give some flowers to someone who is lonely



You bring some flowers to Church to put by the statue of Mary



You give your Mum some flowers



You see a field of wheat and it reminds you of Jesus' teachings



You see a field of wheat and it reminds you of Holy Communion



You hand make a card for someone



You draw a picture of someone because they need cheering up



You realise that you did something wrong and said sorry



You realised that you had hurt Jesus so go to Confession



A family member is unhappy and you help and comfort them



You say grace before meals



You said grace after meals



You put some food in the foodbank



You washed your hands to prevent spreading disease



You washed your hands before a meal without being told to



You decorated an egg as a gift for an older person



You went to play sports instead of going to Mass



You invited someone to play so they could not go to Mass



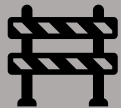
You sat in the chair and didn't help



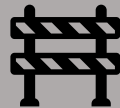
You didn't offer a seat to an older person



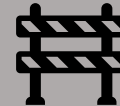
You don't answer questions anyone asks you about your faith



You pretend that you are not a Christian



You say that it does not matter if we go to Church



You get up too late to go to Mass on Sunday



You arrange to meet up with a friend when you should have been at Church



You always expect people to buy you treats



You don't bother to fast for an hour before Holy Communion



You say something unkind about someone else



<p>You repeat something unkind about someone else</p> 	<p>you are grumpy and cross for no real reason</p> 	<p>At Christmas you only think about what you want</p> 	<p>At Christmas you don't help tp the house to get ready</p> 
<p>You play your music too loud</p> 	<p>You don't bother to join in with the hymns at Mass</p> 	<p>You don't help at home when asked</p> 	<p>You ignore Jesus</p> 
<p>You don't get out of bed when you are asked to.</p> 	<p>You say that you will help at home but then don't.</p> 	<p>You don't say your prayers</p> 	<p>You don't go to bed when you are told to.</p> 

Some September Feasts

14th September, The Exaltation of the Cross

Why would we be exalting - rejoicing in - an instrument of torture? We do first because we realise that something terrible has been transformed into the means of redemption (salvation) for the whole human race. This shows us that God who went through so much torture, pain and agony can bring good out of the most awful of situations.

Secondly, the Cross is a reminder that Christianity is not an abstract and spiritual religion. It is about God's intervention in the lives of every single human being. Jesus' death and Resurrection is a real historical event involving real people. As St Paul said, if we take away the cross, Christianity is irrelevant (I Cor. 1:23).

The Cross is the sign of our faith. We wear crosses or crucifixes (a crucifix has a figure on it); our churches have them, we have them at home, graves are often cross-shaped, church buildings are often cross-shaped, and crosses are used in intricate designs in church buildings.

Activity:

Below are some floor tiles from York Minster. Can you cut them out and make a cross-shape with them? Maybe stick them onto some card for display. Send in a photo of your design as there are lots of different ways in which the tiles can be arranged.



21st September, St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist.

St. Matthew was born in Capernaum and was one of the hated tax-collectors, when Jesus called him. Some people thought that he wrote an early version of his gospel in Aramaic, the language that Jesus spoke, a “first edition” which was then produced in Greek, which is the version that we now have.

St. Matthew wrote his Gospel for the Jews and so refers to the Scriptures (the Old Testament) a lot, to show that Jesus is the promised Messiah whom the Jews were expecting. He also uses Jewish phrases, such as “kingdom of Heaven” instead of “Kingdom of God,” to avoid using the sacred word “God” in His texts.

Opposite is a painting by Caravaggio, called “the inspiration of St. Matthew”.

Q: What is happening in the picture? (A: St. Matthew is being inspired to write his Gospel by the Holy Spirit – shown here as an angel.)

Q: How do we know that the angel/Holy Spirit is speaking to St. Matthew? (A: He seems to be listing things to put in the Gospel.)

Q: Describe what St. Matthew looks like. Why has the artist shown him like this? (A: The artist has painted St. Matthew as a real person, not just as a pale holy person, to show that the Gospel is written by real men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. St. Matthew wrote his Gospel from his own perspective as someone who came from and knew the Jewish culture.)

Q: What is St. Matthew wearing, and on his feet, and why? (A: The reddy-brown cloak bare feet are artistic signs of humility. Humility means that St. Matthew is relying on God’s grace.)

Q: What is happening to the stool that St. Matthew is using? (A: It's falling off the edge of the picture, coming into our space, so to speak.)

Q: Why do you think the artist has done this? (A: It's a way of showing that the Gospel is for us – St. Matthew is not just writing for the people of His day but for all of us, in our time too.)

Look up something from St. Matthew’s Gospel and write it in the banner below. Cut it out and put it up to share.



A large, hand-drawn orange banner with a wavy border, intended for students to write a quote from St. Matthew's Gospel. The banner is currently empty.

27th September, St. Vincent de Paul

(1581-1660)

He was a priest who spent his whole life serving of the poor. He founded a congregation of priests for missionary work and organised groups of lay people (those who are not priests) to help and look after the poor. Today the SVP (society of St. Vincent de Paul) continues his work with those who are needy.

To do:

Think about how as a family you can help those who have less than you, e.g.:

- Sort out some toys and clothes that you no longer need and give them to a charity shop (if they are in good condition).
- Put some of your pocket money aside to buy some food for the food-bank.
- Think of another fundraising activity to help a recent appeal, such as those in Haiti.

Let us know what you did - and send photos!

Why don't you sing this good old song – may be members of the family can play it on a musical instrument!

Good King Wenceslas looked out,
on the Feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about,
deep and crisp and even;
Brightly shone the moon that night,
tho' the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
gath'ring winter fuel.

“Hither, page, and stand by me,
if thou know'st it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?”
“Sire, he lives a good league hence,
underneath the mountain;
Right against the forest fence,
by Saint Agnes' fountain.”

“Bring me flesh, and bring me wine,
bring me pine logs hither:
Thou and I shall see him dine,
when we bear them thither.”
Page and monarch, forth they went,
forth they went together;
Through the rude wind's wild lament
and the bitter weather.

Sire, the night is darker now,
and the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know not how;
I can go no longer.”
“Mark my footsteps, good my page.
Tread thou in them boldly
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
freeze thy blood less coldly.”

28th September, St Wenceslaus (907 - 935)

We think of St. Wenceslaus at Christmas because of the song “Good King Wenceslas” about his actions of the feast of Stephen (26th December). However, his feast day is in September!

Wenceslaus was born into the Bohemian royal family, in what is now the Czech Republic, and was brought up as a Christian by his aunt. When he became king, he worked hard to promote order in his kingdom and said that people should be free to be Christians and live as Jesus taught. He showed this by example and although he was the king, he served the poor as much as he could.

Not everyone was happy about this and one day he was murdered by some men, paid by his brother, who wanted to be king. Wenceslaus was immediately acclaimed as a martyr and is the patron saint of the Czech republic today.

In his master's steps he trod,
where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod
which the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure,
wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor,
shall yourselves find blessing.

29th September, The Archangels.

Holy Michael gives his name to this time of year- it used to be called "Michaelmas". Today we celebrate the three great archangels:

St. Michael, who threw the devil out of heaven and is called upon to protect us in our faith, **St. Gabriel** who announced to Zechariah that Elizabeth would have a child (John the Baptist) and that Mary would be the mother of Jesus, Son of God. Finally, we read about **St. Raphael** in the book of Tobit in the Old Testament, where he healed Tobit of his blindness. Raphael means "God heals".



The archangel Gabriel is announcing to Mary that he comes from God (notice the finger pointing up) and that she will bear the Son of God (notice the finger pointing across at Mary).



PRAYER TO ST. RAPHAEL

"O St. Raphael, whose name means 'Remedy of God' help us to be pure in mind, heal us of all ailments, and protect us from all evil which may come our way."

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/THECATHOLICROSE

This is a very good prayer to learn by heart to say when tempted. St. Michael really does help us!

"Holy Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil; May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; And do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen."