

Family Ministry Assignment #1: First Semester 2024-2025

Please complete this activity with a parent/guardian, or another family member.

When we look at our spiritual life we are sometimes tempted to view it as something separate from the rest of life. Recently Pope Francis wrote about the spiritual benefits of reading literature, in part he said:

The spiritual power of literature

41. I trust that, with these brief reflections, I have emphasized the role that literature can play in educating the hearts and minds of pastors and future pastors. Literature can greatly stimulate the free and humble exercise of our use of reason, a fruitful recognition of the variety of human languages, a broadening of our human sensibilities, and finally, a great spiritual openness to hearing the Voice that speaks through many voices.

42. Literature helps readers to topple the idols of a self-referential, falsely self-sufficient and statically conventional language that at times also risks polluting our ecclesial discourse, imprisoning the freedom of the Word. The literary word is a word that sets language in motion, liberates and purifies it. Ultimately, it opens that word to even greater expressive and expansive vistas. It opens our human words to welcome the Word that is already present in human speech, not when it sees itself as knowledge that is already full, definitive and complete, but when it becomes a listening and expectation of the One who comes to make all things new (cf. Rev 21:5).

43. Finally, the spiritual power of literature brings us back to the primordial task entrusted by God to our human family: the task of “naming” other beings and things (cf. Gen 2:19-20). The mission of being the steward of creation, assigned by God to Adam, entailed before all else the recognition of his own dignity and the meaning of the existence of other beings. Priests are likewise entrusted with this primordial task of “naming”, of bestowing meaning, of becoming instruments of communion between creation and the Word made flesh and his power to shed light on every dimension of our human condition.

What is something that stands out to you about what the pope said?

Student's Answer:
Family Member's Answer:

What novel or short story have you found meaningful or inspiring? Why?

Student's Answer:

Family Member's Answer:

Is there something, not necessarily considered religious, that you find brings you closer to God?

Student's Answer:

Family Member's Answer:

If you were to do a family book club, which of these books would you be most interested in reading? Why?

- *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr: a historical novel set during World War II, weaving together the lives of a blind French girl, Marie-Laure, and a German soldier, Werner, as they struggle to survive in war-torn Europe.
- *A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman: Fredrik Backman's beloved first novel about the angry old man next door is a thoughtful exploration of the profound impact one life has on countless others.
- *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom: follows the journey of Eddie, a lonely war veteran and amusement park maintenance man, as he discovers the meaning of his life after his death.
- *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak – A deeply moving story of a young girl's love for books during Nazi Germany, highlighting the power of words.

Student's Answer:

Family Member's Answer:

Family Member's Name:

Relationship to the Student:

Signature:
