



EWTN

Global Catholic Network

MOTHER M. ANGELICA, FOUNDRRESS

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Christmas '24

FAMILY NEWSLETTER

"[Jesus] was born in a stable – with cold and wind – with only the Silent Love of Mary, Joseph, and the Shepherds. The whole event was one of Silent Love."

Mother M. Angelica, PCPA



Dear Family,

As children of God, all of us are under the protection of our Blessed Mother. And the Christmas season is a wonderful time for us to reflect on her motherly love for her Son and each of us. Stories about Mary's intercession abound, and the "miracle of the flowers" described in this newsletter – with their annual blooming nearly every

Christmas season since 1336 – gives us hope and confidence in her care.

Parents, in turn, are the protectors of their own children. And today they have a tough course to plot when discerning what media offerings and messages are healthy for their children to consume on a daily basis. This thought is always with us at EWTN when we are making programming plans for people of all ages – especially the smallest and most innocent among us.

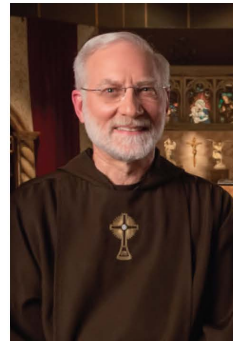
What society thinks is appropriate for children often is not, in fact, appropriate at all. So for a voice of reason in this area, I invite you to turn to the *Is This for Kids?* podcast as a valuable resource. The show's title speaks the question on the minds of parents, grandparents, teachers, and caregivers who are trying to ensure that the media influences on the children in their care are in sync with the values they are trying to teach them in life.

Hosts Jonathan Blevins and Katie Ruvalcaba present adults with the reality of what is influencing their children, from television and movies to social media and video games. Even Christmas programs are worth exploring through the lens of Catholic values. This podcast will help adults to be aware and be prepared.

Thank you for all you do to guide the children in your life to virtue, trusting in Mary as a mother. And thank you for your Christmas donation, which provides us with the financial resources to reach other families like yours so they, too, can surround their children with goodness.

I wish you and your families a very blessed Christmas!

Michael P. Warsaw
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer



Dear Family,

For a moment, pause and try to remember a time when you felt truly welcome. For some, memories of the family home will surface. Experiencing welcome in the ordinary and familiar is a great gift. For some, it will be a visit to an out-of-town relative where many preparations have been made: the fire is burning, the house is clean, and a favorite meal has been prepared.

Some experience a deep sense of welcome when amongst friends – having everyone call out your name, making a space for you, inviting you to share and to remain. And finally, for others, it will be a warm embrace, a silent look or smile that says: *I am grateful that you are here.* Being welcomed, *truly* welcomed, is a beautiful gift to receive.

So often when we think of the Baby Jesus' Birth in Bethlehem, we remember with sadness that He was not welcomed, was not received with love, hospitality, kindness, or gratitude. He came unto His own and there was no room for Him at the Inn.

But, let us take heart! Though not all welcomed Jesus, how splendid was the welcome He received from Our Lady, St. Joseph, and the shepherds. Amidst the poverty, darkness, and hiddenness of the cave, Jesus was welcomed with unparalleled love and adoration.

Our Infant Savior was welcomed first by the arms of His Mother. Let us imagine the scene when the newborn Jesus received His first warm embrace and was gazed upon with silent adoration by Our Lady. Her face must have been aglow with wonder, gratitude, and a most beautiful smile. Upon arriving in Bethlehem there was no time to make preparations, yet before time began, the Father prepared a perfect welcome for His Son – by preparing the perfect Mother, Mary Immaculate. No welcome on earth could be more beautiful than the one given by Our Lady.

Family, as we prepare to welcome the Babe of Bethlehem anew this Christmas, let us ask the Mother of Our Lord to make our hearts ready, that we may offer Him loving hospitality at our Inn.

In Jesus,

Fr. Joseph Mary Wolfe, MFVA
EWTN Chaplain

Is This for Kids?

Instagram, Mean Girls, Star Wars, Harry Potter, Fantasy Football, The Grinch.

As parents and grandparents, we often ask ourselves, “Is this for kids?”



That’s the reason for – and the name of – a new podcast that EWTN airs on demand. *Is THIS for Kids?*, hosted by Jonathan “Bearded” Blevins and Katie “MrsRuvi” Ruvalcaba, navigates the sea of programs, video games, social media outlets, and anything else that kids might see or hear and tells parents about the content, the possible age ranges for the programs, and the good (and bad) messages that are shared.

As a lifelong Catholic, husband, and father of four (including one on the way), Blevins has strong ideas about why parents should be aware of what media their children consume. “Parents [need] to understand what’s happening with their kids, what their kids are watching, what they’re talking about, so that we can give [the kids] the best tools to be the best human beings that they’re created to be,” says Blevins. “And [the parents] can’t do that if they don’t know what their kids are even watching or seeing.”

Ruvalcaba and her husband are Catholic converts and parents to five children. She firmly believes that parents should have conversations with their children about media. “The world wants us to *not* connect with our kids. So much of the media that we have out there is [saying], ‘Parents don’t understand you.’ And it has been this way for generations upon generations,” says Ruvalcaba. “It’s so tempting for parents to just check out of their kids’ media lives. But if you lean into it, ... if you know what your kids are into, you can bond with them on that front.”

Given the nature of the topics, Ruvalcaba says this podcast is for adults. “We are absolutely trying to give parents a clear, unvarnished look at what it is that their kids might be consuming,” she says. “We’re gonna talk to you very frankly about what [your children are] being exposed to because if we can’t talk about it as parents, then we can’t ... defend ourselves.”

This podcast isn’t just for Catholics. The hosts want to reach people of all faiths or no faith at all. Blevins

says, “We try to weave in the good, the true, and the beautiful throughout the podcast, but we want to reach enough people that it can be ‘pre-evangelization’ instead of just an exclusively Catholic evangelical podcast.”

However, at EWTN On Demand, the podcast has an extra Catholic segment at the beginning, particularly mentioning the topics as they relate to the Church.

No matter the audience, the hosts want to help real people. “[St.] Teresa of Calcutta said she was talking to somebody and told them, you don’t need to go on a mission to find people who are hurting and suffering. You can find Calcutta right where you are,” says Ruvalcaba. “There are a lot of people hurting and suffering and needing someone to relate to them, especially parents right now who want to help their kids, but they’re lost and they don’t know how to even start these conversations.” This is one of the main reasons for the podcast. Ruvalcaba continues, “My heart is for those people. We want to be there for them.”

And both hosts want the world – starting with their own families – to know where happiness is. “The content that’s out there now, it’s so depressing. If you don’t believe in [Jesus] or His Church, the Catholic Church that He gave us and in the Sacraments and in Heaven, it’s just miserable,” says Blevins. “I never want that for my family. I want them to know how much they’re loved by God and that His Church ... is the only place you’re ever going to truly find joy.”

You can watch ***IS THIS FOR KIDS?***
at ewtn.com/ondemand.

Are you watching Christmas movies with kids this year? *Is THIS for Kids?* has episodes on *Home Alone*, *Spirited*, *The Santa Clause*, and more!

A Miracle Every Christmas?

Our Lady of the Flowers

A young woman, nine months pregnant, gave birth to her firstborn child in a difficult place and situation. This might bring to mind the story of the first Christmas, the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

More than 13 centuries later in Italy, a little-known Christmas story began the same way. And the story continues to be remembered to this day.

During the Octave of Christmas in 1336, a young bride, Egidia Mathis, was on her way home, walking alone through the snow. She approached a roadside pillar that displayed an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Child Jesus. A pious woman, Egidia stopped to pray.

Just then, two mercenaries came forward to attack her. Egidia called out to the Blessed Mother for help. When she did, a woman suddenly appeared. She was shining brightly, and the men were scared away.

After the incident, Egidia immediately went into labor. The woman helped her deliver her baby and then disappeared. The woman who appeared to Egidia was understood to be the Blessed Virgin and was later given the title Our Lady of the Flowers.

Even though Egidia had just given birth, she hurried home with her newborn. When she recounted the amazing story to her husband, family, and friends, they wanted to see the place where this happened.

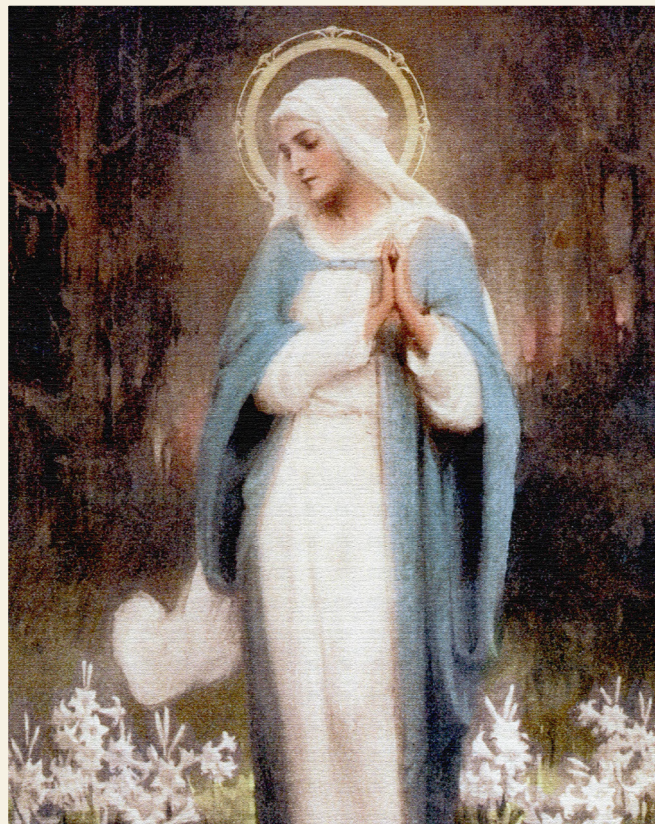
When they arrived at the spot, they all saw that leafless blackthorn bushes were blooming with beautiful white flowers. These should only flower once a year in the spring – there was no reason they should have been blooming in the winter. The people believed the story, and a church, Sanctuary of the Madonna dei Fiori, was built there.

But that's not the end of the story!

Almost every year since then, white flowers have bloomed on the spot during the Christmas season, sometime between December 25 and January 15. The exceptions have included 1914 and 1939, the first years of the World Wars.

Many experts, including botanists and other scientists, have studied this phenomenon. No one has discovered a reason why these flowers bloom every year in the winter.

But many people of faith see this “miracle of flowers” as confirmation of the story of Mary's intercession on this cold night in the Christmas season.



The Blessed Virgin knew what it meant to give birth under difficult circumstances and to rely on the Lord in the midst of catastrophe. She also knew what it meant to hold her dear baby to herself and thank God for looking out for both of them.

With this blessed solidarity with Egidia Mathis, the Virgin Mary frightened the young woman's enemies, cared for her through delivery and birth, and left a sign to witness to the story's truth.

Just as Mary did on this winter's night years ago, she will intercede for any of us, her children, when we ask for her help.

DO YOU WANT TO DISCOVER MORE MIRACULOUS STORIES? Please listen to Michael O'Neill's program, *The Miracle Hunter*, on EWTN Radio on Saturdays at 1:00 PM Eastern. It's also available anytime at ewtn.com/podcasts.

GIVING TO EWTN

Transform hearts and souls by becoming a **Monthly Donor**



Our beloved Foundress, Mother Angelica, wanted people around the world to know Jesus and grow in their love for Him – and for EWTN to help them on their journey of faith. That's why she asked the EWTN Family to “keep us between your gas and electric bill.”

Monthly donations provide reliable funds that make it possible for EWTN to offer spiritual content and life-giving programs that strengthen our relationship with Jesus. We do not receive money from the Church, advertisers, corporations, cable companies, or satellite providers. EWTN is brought to you *by you!*

To become a monthly donor, go to ewtn.com/monthly, call 1-800-447-EWTN (3986), or mail your checks to EWTN, 5817 Old Leeds Road, Irondale, AL 35210.

NEW: You can now set up automatic payments from your bank account* using our online donation form. This secure option costs less for us, meaning that more of your monthly donation will go to EWTN!

*This option is available for donations made from a U.S. bank account.



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Donating appreciated securities, including stocks or bonds, is an easy, effective way for you to make a gift to EWTN.

When donating appreciated securities to EWTN, you will:

- Avoid paying capital gains tax on the sale of appreciated stock
- Receive a charitable income tax deduction
- Further the mission of EWTN

Gifts of appreciated securities can also be used to fund life-income agreements – like charitable gift annuities – providing a consistent stream of income while also minimizing capital gains taxes.

Remember: it's important to consult with your personal advisors on whether this giving strategy is right for you.

To discuss this strategy in more detail, please contact EWTN's Legacy Giving program at legacygiving@ewtn.com or 205-271-4522. You may also visit ewtnlegacy.org.

Christmas NOVENA

December 16 – December 24 (Feast Day: December 25)



O Adorable Infant Jesus, my Savior and my God, Who art so good and Who hast loved me so much!

In this night in which Thou bestowest great Graces on so many souls, grant Thy heavenly consolation to this poor soul of mine also.

I ask of Thee the grace to love Thee always, from this day forward, with all my heart.

Set me all on fire with Thy Holy Love.

I love Thee, O my God, Who hast become a Babe for love of me. Never let me cease from loving Thee evermore.

Dearest Jesus, Our Lord and God, deign to grant me, during this joyful season of Christmas, (*mention your request*), if it be Your Holy Will. Amen.

To learn more about the Christmas season, please visit ewtn.com/christmas. On the page, you can sign up for a free eBook, *The Franciscan Crown Rosary*, that will help you meditate on the Seven Joys of Mary.

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CHRISTMAS 2024