

*May  
Challenge  
Reduce  
clutter.  
Reduce  
stress.*



# Teaching the Way of Love

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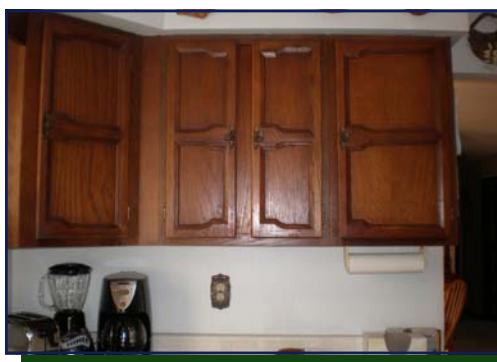
MAY, 2015

## PLEASE PRAY THAT

- The Catholic Church will be a sign of trust and hope in the world.
- The Catholic Church is recognized by all as faithful to God and trustworthy .
- Parents will be open to learning about and God's plan for love and life.
- Parents will model the beauty and the benefits of a God's plan for love and life.
- Young people may have the courage to forge life-long, faithful commitments.
- Children will trust their parents and approach them with their questions and concerns about love and life.
- Parents are able to provide for the health and well-being of their family.

## When Less really is More

Whoever penned the quote 'less is more' was definitely onto something. These three words should speak volumes to every parent across the globe because they are truthful and life giving. Let me explain.



Today's advertising agencies spend billions of dollars trying to convince us that we need more stuff. They are persistent. It is very difficult to go through a day without being enticed to buy this object or that. From the 'talking ads' that appear on store aisles to discount codes sent to your smart phone, it is nearly impossible to escape media's reach and the message to "buy more and have more."

The deceptive underlying theme here is that the more you have, the happier you will be. More equals a better life. Even though our gut tells us this isn't true, it sure catches our attention. We fall prey to the 30% coupon from our favorite stores and the 'close-out' offers promising deep discounts. Sadly, most of us have cast an envious eye towards people who have bigger homes and cars and bank accounts. Yep, we have been sucked in by today's culture that super fluency trumps simplicity.

Here is reality; accumulation doesn't bring about happiness. Having excess prevents us from having the time to go deeper into the true meaning of life. That's right. The more earthly possessions you have, the less time you have to enjoy life and develop relationships. Let's look at some concrete examples.

Clothing – Obviously, everyone needs clothes. But, how many pants and shirts do you really need? The more clothing that you have the more time it takes to organize it, clean it and decide when to wear it. If you had only a few pairs of pants and shirts, it is likely that you would have less to care for and more time for other activities.

Toys – Children do need toys, but how many are truly necessary? Must every child have her own set of toys? Having less requires a child to spend more time interacting with others. Fewer toys force children to negotiate, fight smarter and share. Having less also requires them to be more patient and careful with what they have.

***Because humanity passes by way of the family...***

Homes and Household Items – Running a home is easier when certain comforts are present. We do need linens and pillows, plates and glasses, tubs and toilets. But how many of each do we really need? With each additional bathroom and bulging closet comes a corresponding need for scheduled cleaning and tidiness. And remember that each thing you own also requires time and money to repair and maintain, and that can add a lot of stress.

Doing more with less is more than a catchy phrase. Reducing the stuff we have compels us to look at our priorities and think about what really matters. Are we accumulating things that we need or that will impress others? Are we buying things that help us have more time as a family or are we purchasing stuff that actually splits us apart? Do we buy because we can or because we should?

## Here is your May Challenge

Spring is a perfect time to conduct a clean sweep of your worldly possessions and to evaluate what you really need. The TWL Challenge for May will help you assess your earthly possessions and decide what adds value to my life and what doesn't. Each week during this month we challenge you to give away items either by donating them, selling them or trashing them. You can find the complete directions for the challenge at: <http://www.twl4parents.com/challenge-may-activity>.

Remember, the primary benefit of living with less is finding more time to be together as a family. The secondary benefit to decluttering is reducing the stress attached to having too much stuff. And the third benefit is the satisfaction that comes with refocusing your priorities. Enjoy reducing your earthly possessions and increasing your ability to create more memories and good times with those you love.

*Clearing the clutter from life's path, makes room for the most important aspects of life.*



Are you ready to meet this month's challenge? Give it a try! You'll find that simplifying your life not only reduces stress in your own life, but it also brings more order and peace to your entire family. This challenge is just a small part of good Catholic parenting. Visit [www.twl4parents.com](http://www.twl4parents.com) for more strategies that will help you become the best parent you can be. And for the best systematic approach to parenting, consider purchasing the Teaching the Way of Love program, which can be found at the same website.

This article series is brought to you by Alice Heinzen and Jeff Arrowood, authors of the Teaching the Way of Love home study series for parents. Find out more at [www.twl4parents.com/teaching-the-way-of-love](http://www.twl4parents.com/teaching-the-way-of-love).