



## Living in the World with Our Family

by Lydia LoCoco

I know why you are reading this: because not that long ago, I sat where you are sitting. I was embarking on the greatest adventure known to man—to follow Jesus Christ and his way and to meet him in the mysteries of his Church. The challenge for me was that the culture in which I lived was growing increasingly hostile to my little adventure. I had no training for this and did not have any real personal experience of Catholic family life.

I was terrified.

Fast forward and I am now the mother of eight millennials and the grandmother of thirteen little ones. I am only slightly less terrified, but I am writing this because each one of my young adult children is on their own journey to follow Jesus Christ and his way: four are married to wonderful Catholic spouses, one is a diocesan priest, two are single, and one is a postulant in a habited religious order.

I am living out my vocation as a wife, mother, nana, and as someone who works full-time in the office of an archbishop in a large American archdiocese. Yet all people want from me is the answer to this one burning question: “How did you raise your children to grow up and remain in the faith?”

I have a sneaking suspicion that what you want is what I wanted—the simple recipe. If someone could have told me the ingredients for the recipe called “a good Catholic family,” I would have sold all that I owned, bought the ingredients, and made the cookie dough. Nothing would have been too hard, no pious devotion too tiring, no curriculum too obscure. I was ready, bowl in hand, and all I wanted was to be told what to do. Oh, if it were only that easy.

People today write all kinds of books with various options as to what we are to do as members of his body, living as we do in a world that is pretty foreign to us. We know that we are called to engage culture. We want to be witnesses and shining lamps to light the way for others. However, we also very quickly learn that to be “in” culture and not “of” culture is a difficult task. There are no recipes and there are no easy options. It is not only about the right devotional or about pious practices. What came to be in my life, gradually and without my even realizing it, was the intentional creation of what my kids and I like to call, “the snow globe.” By that I mean that there was a feeling that our home, our family, our life, and our faith were somehow places apart. While we were in society and moved about in culture no different from the rest, we certainly felt different. We ran back to our quiet faith village where we spoke

a vocabulary of faith with one another, our friends, and within the community of our parish and other like-minded families. It was and is an enchanted place of security and peace, even amidst the trials of this world, because we have set ourselves apart for him and we know that this is not a lasting city. As Christians we are not called to leave the world, but to live in it; we must create homes—and faith communities—that allow our families to prosper and flourish.

In the end, you must know that you can do this! This is your vocation and it demands everything. What can you do?

- **Desire** to have a peace-filled home.
- **Give** this holy desire to Jesus Christ.
- **Ask** him to help you create a nurturing and loving home focused on him.
- **Surrender** all and see where the adventure takes you!



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