

June Reflection

The Domestic Church

By Deacon Thomas A. Moses



The Greek word for “church” is *ekklesia* meaning “to call out” or “to be called together.” So, the “church” is the assembly of believers “called together,” “called out” of unbelief, darkness, and sin into the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. In particular, the church is “called together” through the Eucharist. The family or the “domestic church,” is called together in the home and is a microcosm of the “church,” a “mini-church.” As Christ is present among us at every Divine Liturgy, so Christ is present among us in our homes every other day of the week.

What signs of the presence of Christ do we have in our homes, in the “domestic church?” First, selfless love, humility, and mutual submission for the good of one another is an essential sign of the Lord’s presence among us. Second, physical signs of the presence of Christ in our homes allow us to remember that Christ is among us. Set aside a particular corner, in a room that the whole family frequently gathers, preferably a corner facing toward the East. Place in the corner a few icons: of Christ, the Theotokos and a patron saint of the family. The icons remind us of the presence of Christ, and all the saints, in our home. A candle, frequently lit for prayer (or if the family is attentive and full of care, an oil lamp often burning or always burning) is a sign of the light of Christ, the light of the commandments, shining within the heart of the family. Keep a Bible and prayer ropes, accessible and frequently used, to allow the family to grow spiritually in the home together. Third, Christ’s presence is safeguarded by developing strict and consistent rules about television, video games, computers, and cell phones, according to the needs and zeal of the family. For example, leave televisions, laptops and cell phones out of bedrooms and limit their use to particular rooms in the house, to be used only at certain times. This will prevent the “domestic church” from fracturing into an assembly of isolated individuals. Finally, Christ is made present in sharing meals together each day, having begun each family meal with the appropriate prayers.

Our homes, our families called together, the Domestic Church,¹ can and should be a mini “Garden of Eden,” a mini Paradise, where our families walk together with God “in the cool of day” (Gen. 3:8), where we frequently remember together that Christ is present and dwelling among us.



¹ A Guide For the Domestic Church, 2nd Edition was published by the Melkite Greek Catholic Eparchy of Newton in 2012 and is a wonderful guide for incorporating Byzantine spirituality into our homes. The book can be purchased here: <https://melkite.org/products-page/oes-general-interest/a-guide-for-the-domestic-church-2nd-edition>