



“Spring Cleaning”

By Joanna Mak

It’s that time of the year again: ‘spring cleaning’

For most of us, 2021 has been a bit of an unpredictable year with its challenges. We’ve been in our homes a bit more due to the covid 19 lockdown but as we hear news of the ‘roadmap out of lockdown’, this may also be a good time to ‘spring clean’ and renew our faith and ourselves.

St Paul says in **1 Corinthians 3:16**

‘Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?’

Reflecting on this, I am aware that God’s Spirit lives in me, but I don’t always feel this way. I know that there have been times when I haven’t been a living example of Jesus, when emotions get the better of me, or when I would rather scroll through social media instead of praying. But St Paul reminds us that we are individually God’s temple and also collectively, his Spirit lives in the Church.

So if I am God’s temple, how can I ‘clean up my house’ so I can be a living example of Christ?

Let’s take a look at a few of the important rooms in your house.

Dining room

This is the time we spend with our family.

How often do we spend quality time with our family; asking how their day has been and how they are feeling?

Having a strong relationship with our family is important because they will always support us. This is the same with our relationship with God. By spending time and listening to God, we experience God’s love more and more.

Guestroom/playroom

This is the time we spend with our friends and our relationships.

Do you take the time to ask how your friends are going? Do you make the effort to message or call up your friends, or catch up with them at youth groups. Do you volunteer or help those in need, such as the elderly or vulnerable?

Jesus tells us that we need to love our neighbours as yourself. John 13:34-35 *'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'*

Having a good relationship with our friends and helping our neighbours are essential to spreading the love of God to others.

Living room

This space is for our hobbies and entertainment.

Do we spend a lot of time on social media or watching TV mindlessly? Or is there something educational we can watch? Personally, I have found The Chosen and shows on Shalom World a helpful way to learn about God.

What we do in our spare time shape the way we think and what our values are, hence it's important to use our time wisely so we can be God's temple.

Bedroom

This is our personal space and our prayer space.

Do we include a prayer space in our bedroom for praying and listening to God? Do we have alone time with God and unwind after the day?

Matthew 6:6 *'But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.'*

I would say that this is the most important room. Our prayer and quiet time with God can help us to hear God speaking to us.

So these are some rooms in our house. What room can you 'clean' so that Jesus can dwell in you more fully?

Joanna Mak is the current Youth Minister for the Catholic Parish of Epping and Carlingford. She joined the Parish's Antioch youth group 6 years ago and travelled to the 2016 World Youth Day in Krakow which changed her life. She currently manages three youth groups; Cana (year 6-9), Antioch, (year 10-23) and Emmaus (23-30 years old). In her spare time, she enjoys running, hiking and rock-climbing.