

Cousin visits, the miracle of popcorn, dot-to-dots, cooking every day, and local churches (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

It's summertime and the cousin visits are starting! Four cousins were in town for the weekend, and four more arrive tomorrow. We live in Baltimore because we love Baltimore, but it's nice that we have one set of grandparents, two aunts, an uncle, and two cousins who live here. And it's also wonderful that the 10 out-of-state cousins come to town to visit their grandparents from time to time and bring the fun with them.

Or maybe we are the fun, and they just join in. It's hard to say. We just know we're in for a good time.

~2~



Our children are ravenous in the late afternoon, and I can never get dinner on the table fast enough.

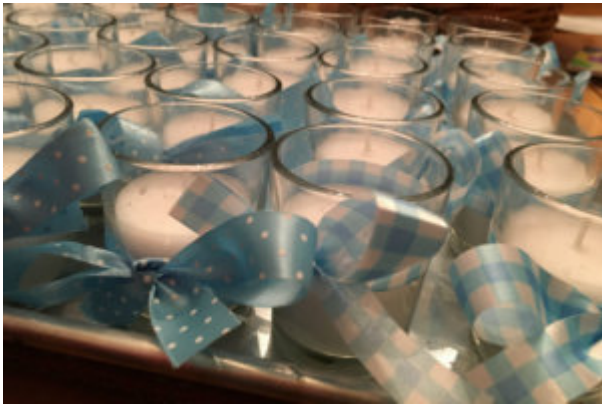
The other night Daniel desperately wanted popcorn, and we were out of the microwave version.

I found some kernels, put them in a pan with some oil, and popped it for him.

It doesn't matter how often I do it. It still feels like a miracle to me.

~3~

I have fallen into this rhythm of holding prayer gatherings for expectant mothers and their babies, and I held one today. We just get together, chat, pray a rosary, eat, laugh, talk, hug, eat some more, and head our separate ways.



Every time I say I'm just going to keep it simple. And every time I fail. Earlier this week I realized my mother kept asking me about the menu, and I had no answer, so I ordered a few trays of food from the grocery store.

Then I went to the dollar store and bought little candles and tied ribbons around them. I designed holy cards for the guests to take along.

And, after months of dragging our feet on moving furniture around, we redid the living room. I'll have to share photos sometime soon.

Nothing like a deadline to inspire a little last-minute interior design. And nothing like getting friends and family together to eat and pray. And nothing like celebrating new life.

~4~



This week our children discovered the dot-to-dot activity books we gave them a while ago.

They want to stay up late at night, flashlights in hand, working on the books in their beds.

We're just going to call it our math summer work since we aren't doing anything else math-wise for the summer.

Well, except, of course, trading Pokemon cards and saving up money to buy things they want and talking numbers in a whole bunch of ways.

Math and reading are everywhere! Who needs a bridge book or a math computer program?

~5~



The other night I was making dinner when Daniel came into the kitchen.

Usually he's looking for a snack, but this time he stopped and watched me stirring some meat sauce and said, "How do you cook every single day?"

I was surprised by his question. "I don't know," I said."

"It's like going to Mass every day, but way harder, I think," he said.

So true, so true.

~6~



We had the chance to go to our second Orioles game of the year, thanks to one of my father's friends, who gave us tickets.

It was so much fun. And it was so hot! But that's Baltimore in July.

And, even though I was happy to cool off in the car on the way home, I actually love summertime and the heat and everything that comes with it.

My theory has always been that people love the season of their birthday the most. I'm a July baby and a summer girl.

~7~

Last weekend I offered a reflection to members of the Baltimore Frassati Fellowship at Saints Philip and James Church in Baltimore. I know I've been there before, but I can't remember when. It is such a beautiful church, and I found myself taking photos of the statues and the stained glass windows and just the space with its striking architecture.

It reminded me how much beauty our Baltimore churches have. Maybe I will make it a goal to visit every Catholic church in Baltimore over the next few years.

Read more quick takes at Kelly's blog, This Ain't the Lyceum, and have a wonderful week!