

The appraisal

"The appraiser is coming on Tuesday," Patrick told me.

"But that's less than a week away!" I replied. "We have so much to do to get ready!" The re-fi papers had gone through. We couldn't turn back. A better mortgage could offer us a better life by saving us a sizable sum each month. But our approval would depend on the result of the appraisal.

I looked around my house and saw chaos.

Trucks and balls and plastic parts were strewn across the living room floor alongside a smattering of random socks. It was toy stew, and it had nearly consumed the couch. Crayon scribbles added a splash of color to my tan walls.

The cats had spilled speckles of kibble in a semicircle around their dish next to a refrigerator so covered in Collin's artwork that you'd never know it was white, and therefore "dated." The kitchen counters contained so many small appliances that the entire neighborhood would lose power if they were all turned on at once.



An ever growing, seldom shrinking mountain of clothing sat in a basket in front of the working dryer, while the dryer in need of repair assumed its temporary role as a landing place for displaced papers and would-be junk.

The powder room, though small, was the tidiest place and I wondered if it would be possible to encourage the appraiser to spend extra time in there.

I won't even begin to describe the upstairs, but here are two clues: overstuffed closets and bathrooms in serious need of updating.

The bad news: I'm in for five days of cleaning the likes of which we've only seen on HGTV. The good news: I have time to get ready.

As soon as I finish writing the last sentence of this piece, I will launch into a frenzy to make my house look like no one lives in it. In reality, five people do. And with that comes our stuff. And since three of the five inhabitants are too young to clean up after themselves, our house always looks a little disheveled. Getting rid of some of the excess should help, but after that I need a better routine for keeping my home in appraiser-ready shape on a regular basis.

Our lives are like our homes. We live in them, with others, and sometimes it gets messy. But just as we do in our homes, we should take the time to clean up our spiritual selves. To cut out the junk that isn't good for us on the inside. To obey the Commandments. To have a regular routine for worship by attending Mass and confession, by praying each day, and by sharing our gifts with others.

What would Jesus see if He stepped into your life today? What if He came to see

your loved ones? The truth is we never know when our real appraiser is coming. We won't have five day's notice to straighten ourselves up. So, we must always strive to meet God's standards for us, and hopefully, if we do we will be granted eternal life.