



Finding God

Our Response to God's Gifts

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Be a Person for Others

Blessed are those who act in the best interest of others.

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Prayer is an act of compassion.

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Catholics emphasize a “we and God” approach.

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3-MINUTE RETREAT

No Limits

It can seem like we're surrounded by bad news—natural disasters, fraud, and violence of every kind. We may feel overwhelmed and helpless. We might even be tempted not to care. After all, what difference can one person make?

However, instead of feeling despair whenever you hear distressing news, allow it to lead you into prayer. Close your eyes and spend a few moments in silence. Ask God to shower his love and kindness on the person, group, or nation involved. Trust that his love has no limits. ■

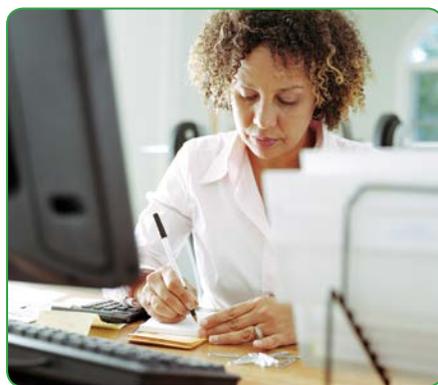


For a daily online 3-Minute Retreat, go to www.3MinuteRetreat.com.

God's Abundant Love

God's abundant love will guide and protect our children, as it has all along.

Today's mail brings an envelope from the high school, crammed with reminders about my son's upcoming graduation. I sort through it, jotting notes on the calendar and circling details to remember, then tossing much of it into the recycling bin.



It's an ordinary, straightforward task, but I find myself fighting back tears. I'm at once filled with pride in the person my son has become, while at the same time flattened by a sense of loss. He and I are nearing the end of a chapter in each other's lives. Soon he will begin to accumulate an entirely new network of friends and experiences—ones that have nothing to do with his father, his siblings, or me.

When our children are young, we can fool ourselves into believing that we have control over their lives. We orchestrate them—handing out vitamins, prompting “please” and “thank you,” monitoring

their grades, and listening to daily reports about the minutiae of their lives.

But there comes a moment—at the edge of adulthood, if it hasn't happened before—when we must relinquish the notion that we're in control. The truth is, our white-knuckled parenting wasn't ultimately what kept them safe or made them into the young people they are. Their lives have been in God's hands all along. And they still are.

With this new clarity, I turn to prayer, offering my best hopes and deepest fears to a loving God. I ask that God finish the work that was started in my child—work celebrated at Baptism, at Confirmation, and each time we received the Eucharist together. I utter a prayer as simple as a child's: “God, please keep him safe. Make your face shine upon him. Give him peace.” †

Jennifer Grant is the author of four books, including *Wholehearted Living*, a book of short reflections for mothers (Loyola Press, 2014). Find her online at jennifergrant.com.



15-MINUTE PRAYER

Who Is a Hero?

A hero is a person who takes action to help people. That is what the Holy Spirit calls us to do. When the Spirit descended on Mary after the angel Gabriel told her she was to be the mother of Jesus, what did she do? She took action. She packed her things and journeyed to her cousin Elizabeth. To do what? To serve her. When the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus after his baptism by John, what did he do? He took action and did what? He began his ministry and began serving. When the Spirit descended on the apostles at Pentecost, what did they do? They relinquished fear and began serving the people. Not just one group of people but all people, of all nations.

We too are called to serve, to not be afraid. With the Holy Spirit already dwelling in us, there is no time to waste. We need to take action now and assist those around us, whether it's a family member, a friend, a coworker, a stranger on the street, our environment, our nation, our world. ■

Excerpt taken from *The 15-Minute Prayer Solution: How One Percent of Your Day Can Transform Your Life* by Gary Jansen (Loyola Press, 2015).



SACRED READING/REFLECTION

The Word of God is within you. Rest in silence as you let God's love well up in your heart. When you are ready, read the following Scripture verse slowly.

Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but [also] everyone for those of others.

—PHILIPPIANS 2:3–4

1. Review your day. Begin by recalling all the people you encountered today. Allow the Holy Spirit to draw your attention to one or two people who seem to stand out from among the rest. Don't think about why your attention is drawn to these people. Instead, recall as many details as you can about them: What did they look like? What were they wearing? What were the circumstances surrounding this encounter?



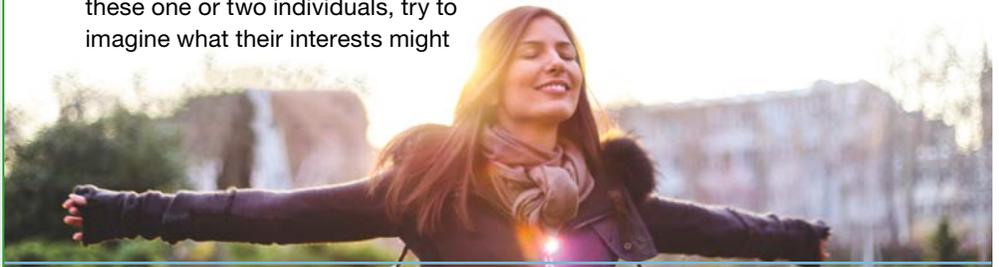
2. Read the Scripture verse again. With your attention still focused on these one or two individuals, try to imagine what their interests might

have been in the moment you encountered them. Consider your actions. Were you looking out for their interests? Were you unaware of them? Were you working against them? If any feelings—positive or negative—come up, notice how they feel in your body.

3. Read the Scripture verse a final time. Imagine that you are sitting next to Jesus. Talk to him about your actions and attitudes toward these people. What does he say to you? How do you respond to him?

4. Look forward to tomorrow. What virtues will help you look out for the needs of others—patience, strength, generosity, courage? Imagine how you would behave tomorrow if you lived out this virtue at all times. Ask God for the grace of this virtue. ■

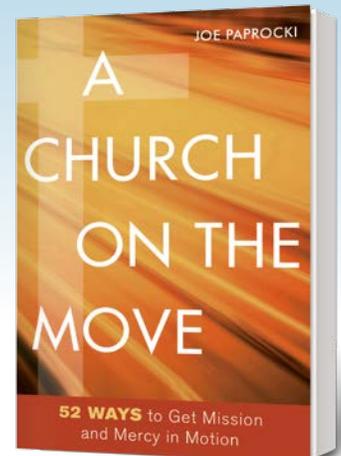
Bob Burnham, OFS, is the councilor for youth and young adults for the Mother Cabrini Region of the Secular Franciscan Order.



The Future of the Church

Best-selling author Joe Paprocki, D.Min., shows how the Catholic Church—and the local parish specifically—can not only survive, but thrive. *A Church on the Move* offers 52 practical strategies for moving parishes forward, principally by focusing on the one thing the Church can offer that the world at large cannot: Jesus Christ. ■

A Church on the Move by Joe Paprocki (Loyola Press, 2016)



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praying with the Saints

"Make Us Worthy"

*Make us worthy, Lord, to serve our
fellow men throughout the world who
live and die in poverty and hunger. Give
them through our hands this day, their
daily bread, and by our understanding
love, give them peace and joy.*

— SAINT TERESA OF CALCUTTA



Simple Prayers for Busy Families

MORE THAN A PRAYER

At a recent youth ministry gathering, I asked each young person to write a special prayer of intention. They shared their prayers with the larger group, and some of their intentions touched my heart:

"Please let Grandma be pain-free."

"Lord, give me the courage and strength to get up when someone knocks me down."

"I pray we learn to accept others' flaws."

These are more than prayers. Through them we learn the concerns and worries of our youth. They open the door to a conversation that may be needed. Prayers of intercession give us an opportunity to take time out of our busy days to think of others and to practice compassion, empathy, and gratitude. Who in my life is in need of a prayer?

You will need:

- Craft sticks
- Markers
- Jar

1. On a craft stick, have each family member write the name of a person who needs prayers.
2. Family members can write as many names as they want, but there should be only one name on each stick.
3. Put all the prayer sticks in a jar in the kitchen or in another common space and encourage family members to take one stick each morning.



4. Encourage everyone to find time in his or her day to pray for the person whose name is written on the stick.
5. Families can pray together for all the people whose names are on that day's sticks before dinner or at bedtime.



Spend time as a family talking about the people they prayed for. It is a good way to share the joys and concerns of everyone in your family and to understand the gift of prayer. ■

Michelle Cook is a busy mother of three and the director of youth ministry at Resurrection Catholic Church in Wayne, IL.



Why do Catholics feel the need for intercession? Can't we go straight to God with our prayers?

A: *We human beings rely on intercession in our everyday lives.* For example, a teenage boy may want to ask out a girl he hasn't officially met. While he can ask her directly, if he finds out that one of his friends knows her and can introduce him to her, he'll take advantage of the opportunity. In a similar way, while we can go directly to God in prayer through Jesus



Christ—we need no other mediator—we may feel an attachment to someone who has already entered eternal life, whether that person is a loved one or a famous saint we admire. We, in a sense, take advantage of their nearness to God by asking for their intercession. Likewise, we ourselves can intercede for others who are finding it difficult to pray on their own. This notion of intercession

reinforces our understanding of the Communion of Saints. As Catholics, we emphasize an approach to God that is more “we and God” than “me and God.” ■

Joe Paprocki is national consultant for faith formation for Loyola Press and author of *A Church on the Move* (Loyola Press, 2016).

5 THINGS

Five Things I Learned From . . .

WEB • BOOKS • MUSIC • MOVIES • TV



Cooking

I love food and love to cook—so much so that I made a career out of it for 20 years as a food writer. Cooking teaches me so much about God: patience, wonder, joy.

- 1. Finding treasures.** Black raspberries are proof of God—tiny little compartments of extraordinariness, fleetingly available for just a few weeks.
- 2. Chopping is meditation.** You can't eat the stew until you chop the onions. Stay in the moment.
- 3. It always works.** Mix eggs, sugar, butter, and flour together and something delicious will come out of your oven every time.
- 4. It takes a village.** Everything on your plate started with a farmer or producer, then was transported and sold at a store. Give gratitude to all of them.
- 5. Opening doors.** Nothing draws people together like sharing food. ■



Robin Davis is the author of *Recipe for Joy: A Step-mom's Story of Finding Faith, Following Love, and Feeding a Family* (Loyola Press, 2013).

{ RAISING *prayerful* KIDS }

EMPATHY IS THE FUNDAMENTAL BUILDING BLOCK OF THE MORAL LIFE. Before your children can face more complex and difficult moral and ethical questions, they must first master the fundamentals of empathy and compassion. Here are a few ways to foster empathy and compassion in your children:

1. Make it a clear expectation that sharing is part of living in a family as well as living in society.



2. Ask your kids to imagine themselves as one of the characters in a book they're reading or a TV show they're watching.
3. Stop your kids when you see them acting cruelly or unkindly.
4. Open your home and your world to a variety of people; build honest relationships based on mutual interest and trust.



5. Review situations at your kids' school and talk about situations from your daily life that call for empathy and compassion.

Pray for other people regularly at meals or bedtime; over time, children will develop the capacity to imagine the plight and the feelings of others. ■



Tom McGrath is the author of *Raising Faith-Filled Kids* (Loyola Press, 2000).