

Finding God[®]

Our Response to God's Gifts

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MINUTE RETREAT

The Logic of the Cross

“Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple,” Jesus tells us. (Luke 14:27) Jesus is saying that we need to make sacrifices, sometimes even to the point of sacrificing everything. The logic of Jesus’ Cross shows us that when we sacrifice everything out of love, we gain eternal life.



Rest a moment and become aware of God’s presence within you and around you. Call to mind the things you have given up out of love; what blessings did you receive from that sacrifice? For example, maybe you gave up your seat on a bus or train so someone else could sit down and received heartfelt “Thank you!” Close with your favorite prayer. ■

For a daily online 3-Minute Retreat, go to www.loyolapress.com/retreat.

The “Queen of Creole Cuisine”

During the late evening of June 1, 2019, the world lost a matriarch. Ms. Leah Chase worked tirelessly, up until her death, to feed the world. Not only did she feed us with her great gumbo, fried chicken, and the many other cuisines she was honored for, she fed many with her wisdom. Her presence on this earth was a gift. Her restaurant, Dooky Chase, in the Treme neighborhood (the oldest black neighborhood in the country), served as a safe place for Freedom Riders, musicians, entertainers, and civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr., to eat and plan during the era of Jim Crow segregation.

She entertained various dignitaries, including U.S. presidents and other leaders. She was the inspiration for the Disney movie *The Princess and the Frog*, but most of all, she was a “mother” to many of us in the neighborhood. For me personally, Ms. Chase—or Ms. Leah as I would affectionately call her—was a personal support and cheerleader in my ministry. When I was younger, she would scold me, out of love, when she saw me not living up to my potential, but she would regularly tell me how she watched me grow into someone who made the whole community proud. She was not only a fellow member of St. Peter Claver Catholic Church, but also an avid supporter of the youth minis-



try program when I was the director of youth and young adult ministry for our parish pre-Hurricane Katrina.

Her words and presence shaped many of us in our community to believe in ourselves. Because she believed in me, I knew I could believe in many of the youth and young adults from my community, many of whom would have been cast aside by society. Ms. Chase’s wisdom will live on throughout the world because it was all motivated through her faith in Jesus Christ. Rest in peace, good and faithful servant. †

Dr. Ansel Augustine is a national speaker and works with youth and young adults in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.





MICROSHIFTS

Keep Prayer Simple

Jesus goes on to tell us how we should pray, giving us what has come to be known as the Our Father. It's a prayer we can all say as we rise from sleep. It's a great way to start the day by placing God at the forefront of our awareness. In this prayer, we honor God, we acknowledge the sacredness of his name, and we bow to the supremacy of his will. The Our Father asks that we are supplied with our daily needs, asks that our transgressions are forgiven, and asks for protection from evil. Praying this prayer is a nod to Jesus; it's an indication that we've heeded his advice and that, like him, we are OK with putting our lives in the hands of God.

What the Lord's Prayer demonstrates is that praying should be effortless and simple. God wants our prayers to be efficient, and then he wants us to go about our day doing what he asks all of us to do—namely, serve others and treat creation well. ■

Excerpt from *MicroShifts: Transforming Your Life One Step at a Time* by Gary Jansen (Loyola Press, 2019).



Spiritual Exercises for the Family

Saint Ignatius of Loyola taught a way of praying with Scripture called imaginative contemplation, in which you place yourself in the Gospel scene as if you were a participant in the event. The goal is to develop a deeper friendship with Jesus.

In this issue, I invite you to contemplate the mystery of Jesus' healings.

On another sabbath he went into the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees watched him closely to see if he would cure on the sabbath so that they might discover a reason to accuse him. But he realized their intentions and said to the man with the withered hand, "Come up and stand before us." And he rose and stood there. Looking around at them all, he then said to him, "Stretch out your hand." He did so and his hand was restored.

—Luke 6:6–8,10

Read. Read the Scripture passage several times so that you know the story well enough to share it with another person.

Imagine. Picture yourself in the scene. Where do you stand? What does the man's withered hand look like? How



does Jesus approach him? How do the scribes and Pharisees react to Jesus and the man with the withered hand?

Notice. Watch and listen as the scene unfolds. What happens as the man's hand is healed? How do the scribes and Pharisees respond? How do you respond?

Respond. What part of you feels withered? Where do you need healing? Imagine Jesus inviting you to be healed by him. How do you respond to his invitation?

Rest. Let God speak to you about what you saw, heard, and felt.

Reflect. What did this experience tell you about Jesus' ministry? How might you be a part of it? ■

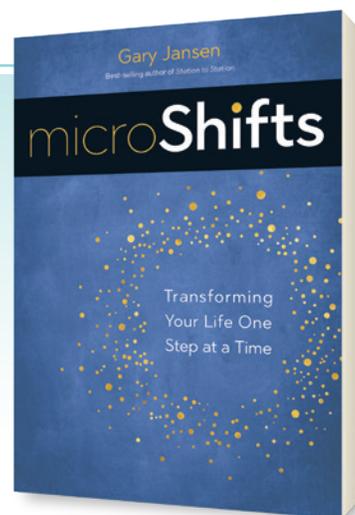
Becky Eldredge is a wife, mother, spiritual director, and the author of the book *Busy Lives & Restless Souls* (Loyola Press, 2017).



Small Changes, Big Results

Author Gary Jansen knows how difficult it can be to create significant, sustainable change in our lives. With a blend of masterful storytelling and dozens of practical tips, *MicroShifts* suggests that simple, small changes across many aspects of our lives can generate big results physically, mentally, and spiritually. ■

MicroShifts by Gary Jansen (Loyola Press, 2019)



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Live Mercy Every Day

After college I worked as a full-time volunteer at a school for children with disabilities on the Navajo Nation. I wanted to jump-start a commitment to service. I hoped for a life-changing spiritual and cultural experience as well. I got it. What I didn't expect were my feelings of frustration, stagnation, and uselessness when the year was over and I returned home to "regular" life. I wondered if I needed to go to another far-flung location to feel of use again. But as I found new community and opportunities, I slowly realized that my new reality provided ample opportunity to be of service to others. I needed only to recognize it.



they are caring for a child at home or taking care of a sick parent. But these are, indeed, acts of service. The works of mercy we perform for our family have real value. The work to feed a child or care for an aging parent is sacred. It is seen by God, and it reflects God's love.

Mercy might look different at different times of our lives, and that's OK. It is

Venturing far from our homes is not a prerequisite for a life of mercy. Noticing the small things can play a big part in how well we are able to live lives of mercy because those small things are important. Even as we strive to do more for others, we can always take the time to notice and lift up those moments of mercy that come up in the course of our everyday lives.

helpful to pray for the ability to recognize these moments of mercy in our lives, to allow them to draw us closer to God and each other, to see where they lead us. It very well might be a life-changing experience. ■

Kerry Weber is the executive editor at *America: The Jesuit Review* and author of *Mercy in the City* (Loyola Press, 2014).

So many times I have heard people say they do not have time to serve because



A Family for Others

Feed Those Who Are Hungry

People go hungry for many reasons. When people's ability to access and consume nutritious food is limited, they are called food insecure. Being food insecure may force people to skip meals, eat less nutritious food, or rely on food pantries and soup kitchens.

Materials: Laundry basket, news articles

Directions: Talk about the reasons why people may become food insecure, such as natural disasters, armed

conflict, low income, and poor education. Share news articles that highlight some of these situations. Fill the laundry basket with food for your local food pantry.

Family Discussion: What questions remain unanswered about the causes of hunger and possible solutions? How can we as a family respond to food insecurity? ■

Activity adapted from "[Live Mercy: Feed the Hungry](#)" activity by Catholic Relief Services.





How can I keep my kids from being distracted during Mass?

a: *Many parents of young children sit as far back as possible in the church*

when attending Mass. This may be an effort to hide their children’s behavior or allow them to make a quick getaway should one or more of the children become unruly. While this makes sense, it also results in an unfortunate side effect:



the kids become more easily distracted because they can’t see what’s going on in the sanctuary.

In an effort to teach children how to behave at Mass, many parents of young children sit right up in front—even in the first pew. This may seem counterintuitive, but it allows children to see and hear the sights and sounds of the liturgy. They are less easily distracted because they come face-to-face with the movements, gestures, actions,

signs, and symbols of the Mass. Parents can tell children ahead of time what to look and listen for and then ask their children afterward what they noticed, saw, and heard. In this way, they are being formed into members of the assembly who know how to participate fully. ■

Joe Paprocki is national consultant for faith formation for Loyola Press and author of *Living the Sacraments* (Loyola Press, 2019).



Five Things I Learned From . . .

WEB • BOOKS • MUSIC • MOVIES • TV

Improv

Performing improv on a stage and in front of an audience is an act of sharing faith:



- 1. Saying “Yes, and . . .”** leads to better things. We are constantly gifted new and exciting experiences, which we accept, build on, and share with others.
- 2. It’s not about me, it’s about others.** Improv is fundamentally about creating community and fostering relationships among all participants.
- 3. Expect the unexpected.** Allow yourself to be surprised and have faith that you will be

revealed something new and wonderful.

- 4. There are no mistakes.** Mistakes are opportunities for growth and joy.
- 5. Listen actively.** By listening and focusing on the needs of others, I acknowledge their value and embrace who they are. ■

Edesio Sánchez-Gómez is a bilingual project editor at Loyola Press and an improviser in Chicago.

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A Young Church

Ahead of the Curve

Jeffrey Garcia joined his current parish only a few years ago. When his family joined, he immediately sought out youth ministry. Jeffrey knew from an early age that he wanted to be a leader in youth ministry. Through his Confirmation preparation, Jeffrey also completed the “Leader-in-Training” program and was accepted to the youth council that advises youth ministry leaders on programming. Jeffrey showed a tremendous amount of skill in leadership. When the Archdiocese of Chicago approached the parish for two representatives for the Archdioc-



esan Pastoral Youth Council (APYC), Jeffrey was one of the first names thrown into the mix. Jeffrey served on the APYC during his last two years of

high school. Jeffrey was a year ahead in his academics and finished high school a year early, and when he left for college, he said “Youth ministry has played a crucial part in my life. It has helped build my confidence and embrace my role as a young leader.” Jeffrey’s Confirmation catechist said, “Jeff has always been ahead of the curve. He is a rarity and we knew that right away.” ■

James Holzhauer-Chuckas, ObSB, is the regional director for youth ministry in the Evanston and Skokie region of the Archdiocese of Chicago and is an Oblate of the Benedictine Order.