



Finding God[®]

Our Response to God's Gifts

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Humor is essential for a healthy spirituality.



3

MINUTE RETREAT

Be Vigilant

“Be sober and vigilant,” Saint Peter tells us. “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8) There are many obstacles to holiness, not least are the negative feelings and attitudes that lurk in our hearts.

Stop for a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to identify an action from your day that may have hurt someone. What feelings or attitudes prompted your action? Ask for the grace to replace those negative feelings and attitudes with ones that better reflect God's love, mercy, and compassion.

Repeat the words “Lead me not into temptation” for a few moments as you place your trust in God. ■

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



Everyday Holiness

I used to consider the faith of my mother, Prudy, to be somewhat naïve. It seemed simplistic to think God would take care of everything. I now find her faith remarkable. Prudy's faith allows her a freedom to share God's love and mercy—a freedom that most people strive for.

One of my first (of many) conscious experiences of Prudy's mercy was when my friends and I had cheated on a fifth-grade spelling test. Our teacher had us write a confession, and we were to return it Monday morning with a parent's signature. I tossed and turned that Friday night and woke up sobbing on Saturday morning. My mom surprised me by laughing, hugging me, and signing my confession. She forgave me.

I have known my mother to meet a supermarket cashier's rudeness with a genuine inquiry as to her well-being, followed by the gift of a lunch from a nearby deli upon learning the cashier hadn't had a break. I have known my mother to turn a misdialed phone call into an extended conversation with a lonely person in need of human connection.

Prudy brings a genuine piety to everyday tasks. She cooks and cleans, exercises, and rests in prayer. Chopping onions becomes an Our Father, “offering up” the stinging eyes. Rolling out tortillas



becomes a Hail Mary. Easing into sleep is a Rosary.

While I don't practice my faith in the same way as dear Prudy, she inspires me to find holiness in the everyday. Like my

mother, I consider cooking a prayer. I recognize holiness in my own family rituals—reading with my children every night, sending one another good night/good morning texts, encouraging empathy and practicing gratitude, and ever so importantly, granting one another mercy, forgiveness, and unconditional love, as we strive to extend the same to the folks we encounter each day. †



Maria Mondragón is the mother of two of Prudy's well-loved grandchildren and the director of curricula development at Loyola Press.



MICROSHIFTS

Get Some Sleep

If we deprive ourselves of sleep, we are in effect robbing our bodies and souls of the peaceful time that can become a time of communicating with God. As I looked back over the years I suffered from insomnia, I began to question whether or not the spiritual crises I experienced were perhaps just symptoms of sleep deprivation. It makes me consider whether Saint John of the Cross or Saint Teresa of Ávila, both of whom wrote about dark nights of the soul and feelings of spiritual desolation, might have suffered from insomnia. This is not to discredit their mystical experiences as a by-product of bad sleep. God works through our biology to teach us and guide us. Nonetheless, the question merits consideration.

As for my own experience, I can see that so much of what I struggled with in my spirituality may in fact have been directly connected to poor sleep patterns. Saint Augustine famously wrote that our hearts are restless until they find rest in God. Maybe he meant *rest* to include its literal sense. ■

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 Jesus' call to follow him.

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him.

—Matthew 4:18–22

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. See yourself walking by the Sea of Galilee.



Meet Leo

Leo is in search of a special talent he can share with the world. He wonders how he'll know what his unique gift might be. Filled with heart and hope, *Leo's Gift* will inspire kids everywhere to explore their passions, believe in themselves, and learn that not all gifts come wrapped in a box. ■

Leo's Gift by Susan Blackaby and Joellyn Cicciarelli (Loyola Press, 2017).

Do you see the fishermen and the boats along the shore? Do you hear the waves as they hit the shore? Do you smell the sea air and the fish? Do you feel the sand under your feet and the sea breeze blow against your skin?



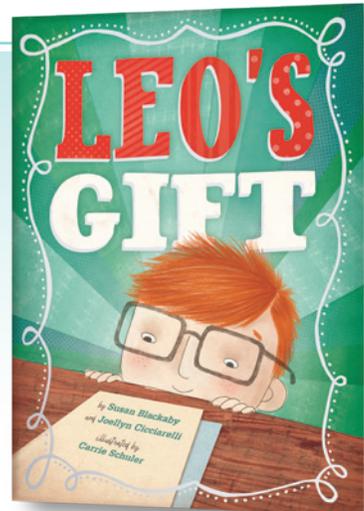
Notice. Watch and listen as the scene unfolds. Where are you? What do you hear spoken? What, if anything, is being said directly to you? As you hear Jesus calling the disciples to follow him, does he call you also?

Respond. How does it feel to know that you, too, are called to follow Jesus and to be one of his disciples?

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

Reflect. What did you learn about Jesus, God, yourself, or your children? How might God be inviting you and your family to follow Jesus? ■

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



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A PERSON FOR OTHERS

Baptism in Haiti

I was baptized as a baby at St. Gertrude's parish in Chicago, and I was baptized a few summers ago by a Haitian man named Roget in the hills of Lebelon, Haiti.

I stood with 10 students from a Catholic high school in the back of a pickup truck, in nearly unbearable heat, and traveled to the home of Madame Chevalier, mother to seven, living in one room with chickens and goats, no electricity, no beds, and until then, no access to clean water.



We were given machetes to cut down the wild cacti and tall grass that grew along the path to the new well. One of our girls, on her hands and knees, working to cut a tough, stubborn, prickly cactus, said she would never again complain about cutting the lawn at her home with the electric lawnmower.

Lebelon was getting its first well. Those who could afford 50 cents a month could walk a few miles to fill a bucket

with clean water twice a day. They no longer had to travel to the river, which was filled with sewage from people and animals who bathed and washed their clothes there.

It was a tremendous moment for the people of Lebelon. But it was their new friends from Milwaukee that they invited to be the first people in the well house. And as we pumped, Roget, kneeling, put his hand under the faucet, and splashed us with the cool, clean water.

I do not know if I cried at my first Baptism, but in the hills of Haiti I sobbed. The preferential option for the poor teaches us that, as a mother sits at the bedside of her sick child, Jesus lives among those whose need of him is greatest. I remain deeply grateful to the people of Lebelon for inviting me to serve them and to encounter Christ among them. ■

Judie Gillespie is chair of the theology department at Divine Savior Holy Angels High School in Milwaukee, WI.

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A Family for Others

Carry My Bucket

In many parts of the world, people travel long distances to wells or rivers to get water. This activity requires participants to carry water, joining in solidarity with people throughout the world who travel long distances to get the water they need.

Materials: buckets or gallon jugs, water, tape

Directions: Divide the family into

groups and give each group two buckets or gallon jugs filled with water. Use the tape to mark a starting point (the well or river) and a finishing point (home) for the groups to carry the water.

Family Discussion: Was it easy to carry the water? Could you do this for over a mile, three miles, or longer? How would this affect your life if you had to do this every day? ■

Activity adapted from "[Carry My Bucket Activity](#)" by Catholic Relief Services.





Why is having a sense of humor important to one's faith?

a: *Jesus said, "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and*

that your joy may be complete." (John 15:11) It's hard to imagine joy without laughter. Jesus' first miracle took place at a wedding and involved wine so there's a good chance that humor, laughter, and joy were a big part of that experience! In truth, a sense of humor is a very important part of a



It's hard to imagine joy without laughter.

healthy spirituality. Without it, we risk the temptation of becoming disillusioned pessimists.

Humor can lighten a mood and enable us to think more clearly. Humor can diffuse tense situations. Laughter and humor can help us heal and take ourselves less

seriously. It can help us shift from negativity to positivity. In other words, humor helps us put things in perspective. Finally, humor helps us enjoy life. God wants us to be happy. While Jesus' suffering and Death are serious realities, it is important to remember that, in his battle with sin and death, Jesus got the "last laugh" as a result of his Resurrection. ■

Joe Paprocki is national consultant for faith formation for Loyola Press and author of *Living the Sacraments* (Loyola Press, 2018).

5 THINGS

Five Things I Learned From . . .

WEB • BOOKS • MUSIC • MOVIES • TV

Tennis

I picked up a few hard-won lessons about my faith after learning the game of tennis as an adult.

1. Failure is crucial.

Each loss motivated me to improve, just as setbacks off the court motivate me to grow in my faith.

2. Patience is a virtue.

Sometimes the road to success is curved and painful, but with practice and faith, I know that I am growing into the person God created me to be.

3. Delight in the game.

When I play with

joy, my game and my attitude improve.

4. Tune in to the senses.

Paying attention to my senses helps me focus on my game as well as on God's presence in my life.

5. Play with confidence.

When I trust in the gifts God has given me, I play like no one can stop me. ■

Rosemary Lane is a freelance editor and writer living in Chicago.



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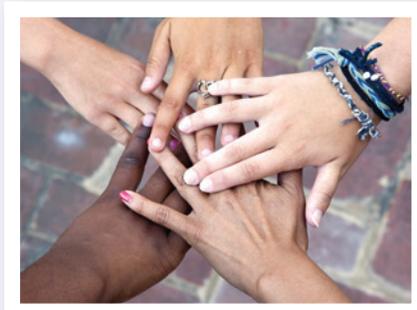
A Young Church

A Young Missionary Disciple

Madison McGuire is a sophomore in high school and very involved in her parish. Madison has been involved with youth ministry throughout its ups and downs and has stuck with it because she knows being part of her parish community is so important. "My faith is really important to me, and I choose to continue to stay involved in the church!" Madison said to a group of Confirmation candidates after Mass.

Madison's desire to be involved with youth ministry was reinforced at home. Her parents encouraged her to try

new things and were very supportive of her involvement. "Church isn't a static program where everything is the same." Due to her own desire to live her faith, Madison has kept up with youth ministry at her parish and has



been a living missionary disciple who goes out and is not afraid to say, "I am Catholic, and I am involved in my church." Madison's community as well as her family support her as a young Catholic. Their support attests to her willingness to give back to the parish that has welcomed her and has reinforced her sense of community outside the home. ■

James Holzhauser-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.