



Finding God[®]

Our Response to God's Gifts

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Our vocation is to live holy lives.



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MINUTE RETREAT

Confirmation Bias

We are all prone to confirmation bias—that is, the tendency to believe what we want to believe. In our desire to be right no matter what, we ignore data that challenge our ideas and accept information that supports our ideas without critique. Such biases deceive us.

Place your hands in your lap, palms up, in a gesture of openness. Think of a situation in which you felt like you had to be right. Imagine instead that you were wrong. How do you react? Do you see yourself differently? Do you think



God sees you differently? Look past your need to be right and say to the Lord, "My refuge, my stronghold, my God in whom I trust." ■

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

Mary, My Grandma, and Me

If you had told me that I would share my grandma's devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, I would've laughed like my kids do when someone burps at the dinner table (which is usually one of them). For as long as I can remember, my grandma would kneel in her closet every night, using her hamper as a makeshift altar, and pray the Rosary for her intentions. I always thought it was weird: why didn't my grandma just pray to God directly? Yet, my grandma's adoration for Our Lady was so authentic and inspiring; her faith shone like a light so bright that it could have steered a lost ship through dense fog safely to shore.



One day after my grandma died, I found myself kneeling below a statue of Mary. I wondered why I never asked my grandma about

her devotion. Why Mary? I noticed that the church was filled with the scent of fresh flowers. "No way," I thought, "that's coming from the wilted flowers at her feet." I felt like I was meeting Mary for the first time, not as the mother of Jesus, but as the mother of all of us, the mother who would help me understand my vocation as a wife and mother. Mary shows me the humility and grace I need to see the joy of my vocation, especially when all I can see is so much laundry that it needs its own zip code. There

isn't room for selfishness and pride as a mother, because there's no time for it. The laundry is waiting.

The truth is, sometimes I feel like I'm terrible at my vocation. But I have the example and prayers of my grandmother and the Blessed Mother. They will help me find joy and confidence when I feel like I don't know what I'm doing. They'll always help me find my way—kind of like steering a lost ship through dense fog safely to shore. †

Christina Antus lives in Colorado with her husband and three cute but noisy kids.





MICROSHIFTS

Make a To-Live List

Some years ago, I inadvertently started making something I've come to call to-live lists. Unlike a to-do list, a to-live list focuses on the big picture. . . .



Whether we are seeking a new job or yearn for a deeper relationship with God, we should name it, but then detach from the outcome. In other words, try not to worry so much, but live life in

faith and truth, and really believe that God has our back. Of course, this does not mean we should become lazy or not put in the work, but maybe, in the end, less action can be more powerful. . . .

On a practical level, though, making to-live lists—or any lists, for that matter—helps us gain clarity about the things that are truly important to us. Lists help us focus. They help us take abstract ideas and dreams and give them a structure, a body. Our words, our thoughts, our soul's desires—are given form. ■

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



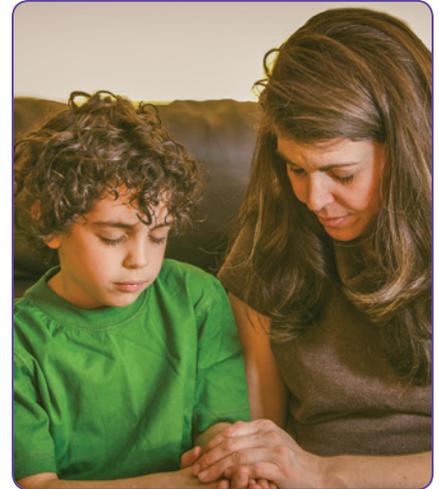
Spiritual Exercises for the Family

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 that you are one of Jesus' disciples.

He summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits. He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick—no food, no sack, no money in their belts. They were, however, to wear sandals but not a second tunic. He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave from there. Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you, leave there and shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them."

—Mark 6:7–11



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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. Imagine Jesus teaching before a large crowd. Where are you? Who are the people next to you?



Notice. Watch and listen as the scene unfolds. Jesus calls the Twelve toward him. How does Jesus invite you to be part of his mission?

Respond. How do you feel about being sent forth as one of Jesus' disciples on mission in today's world? What gifts and talents has God given you to be part of this mission?

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

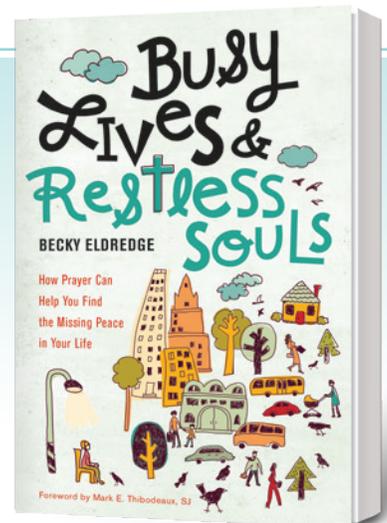
Reflect. What did you experience in this prayer time? How will you and your family participate in Jesus' mission? ■

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

Finding the Missing Peace

In *Busy Lives & Restless Souls*, Becky Eldredge provides prayer tools that are accessible and practical within the relentless realities of our daily routines. For all who sense that there is a missing peace in their lives, *Busy Lives & Restless Souls* will help them find it—right where they are. ■

Busy Lives & Restless Souls by Becky Eldredge (Loyola Press, 2017).



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A PERSON FOR OTHERS

God's Quiet Call

Teaching is a calling for me. I love being in the classroom, discussing philosophy and theology with my students. Often, I enter a “flow” where I am fully immersed in the moment. Still, I have sometimes wondered about whether teaching builds up God’s kingdom. Might I be doing more for the world if I were living in solidarity with the poor in Central America? Or working at a homeless shelter in Boston?

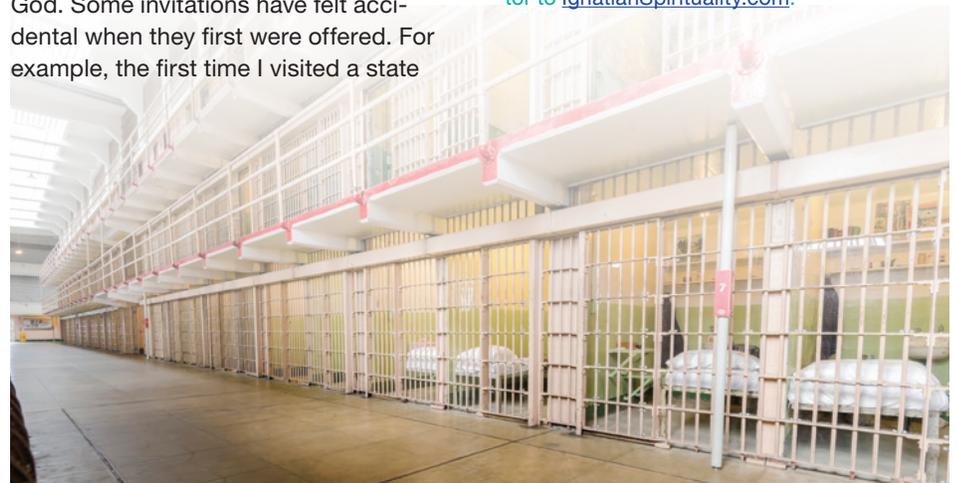
I suspect that I am not the only one with questions like these. We want our lives to be gifts for others. Yet we become increasingly aware that our own part in the world is relatively small. Moreover, we do not often see the effects of our actions. On occasion, a former student will come back to visit and let me know of my impact as a teacher or mentor. But many more do not, as it should be, as students mature and develop lives beyond college.

So I try to “let go and let God” when it comes to the results. For me, to be a “person for others” is to accept God’s invitations while entrusting the results to God. Some invitations have felt accidental when they first were offered. For example, the first time I visited a state

prison was as a favor to a friend, but now I have been blessed to discuss spirituality with a community of incarcerated men for more than 13 years. These men also teach me about God, forgiveness, and love. Service connects us to a larger community. But I would never have known had I not first accepted God’s quiet call.

God can make all of us people for others when we accept God’s invitations and let God take care of the rest. ■

Marina McCoy is an associate professor of philosophy at Boston College and a contributor to IgnatianSpirituality.com.



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A Family for Others

How Will You Serve God?

God has given each of us gifts and talents. We are called to use these gifts to help build up the Kingdom of Heaven by serving God and others. This activity will help children discover how they can be a person for others.

Materials: Pencils, writing paper with a profession or job written on top, one for each member of the family

Directions: Give each member of the family a sheet of paper with a job or profession written at the top. Ask each person to describe the ideal person for that job without saying what it is. Have the other members of the family try to identify the job.



Family Discussion: Which job would you most like to do? How might that job help you serve God and others? ■



We're told as parents to encourage our children's vocation. I doubt that my children have much interest in priesthood or religious life. Why should I encourage them to consider their vocation?

a: *When we hear the word vocation, it is natural for us to think of priesthood or religious life.* In previous times, discussion of vocations was limited almost exclusively to these states of life. Since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, however, the Church's understanding of vocation has greatly expanded. A vocation is very simply a calling. The Council emphasized that all human beings have a vocation—a calling—to a life of holiness. We may live out that vocation in a variety of careers and states of life: as a single person, a married person, an ordained priest, or a religious brother or sister. Each of us is called by God to recognize our gifts and to place them in the service of others. In this way, we “resemble” God, whose love



is completely selfless. To encourage your children's vocation is to encourage them to pay attention to how God is calling them to live a life of holiness, no matter what career or state of life they choose. ■

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

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THINGS

Five Things I Learned From . . .

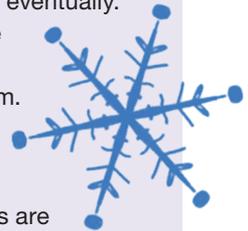
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Winter

Winters in Chicago can be brutal. Yet I still find God's grace among the ice and snow.



- 1. God has a gentle touch.** When I watch snowflakes fall slowly and softly until they come to rest on the ground, I imagine that's how God's grace falls upon us.
- 2. God is good even during harsh times.** Harsh winters are good for Lake Michigan—the colder the winter, the greater the ice cover, which leads to a healthier ecosystem.
- 3. God wants me to serve others.** During the winter months, I can be a person for others by shoveling the sidewalks and driveways.
- 4. God gives me hope.** I know that spring will come, eventually. That hope keeps my heart warm.
- 5. God is beauty.** Few things are as beautiful as sunlight that sparkles on a fresh blanket of snow. ■



Bob Burnham is a Secular Franciscan and the author of *Little Lessons from the Saints: 52 Simple and Surprising Ways to See the Saint in You* (Loyola Press, 2017).

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A Young Church

Living the Faith

Edwin started his Confirmation preparation in high school, which is later than most. Edwin joined a class of other high schoolers who were also going to begin Confirmation preparation. Though he was quiet at first, Edwin quickly opened up to the class and became more vocal. Edwin's class was taught by the parish youth minister, and after a couple of classes Edwin and his classmates were invited to youth group. A little reluctantly, Edwin and his siblings, who were also in the class, attended, and they left feeling welcomed and having had a lot of fun.

“Youth group,” he explained, “isn't just sitting around reading the Bible for two hours. That was what we thought it was but found it to be much more.”

In the course of the two years he was in Confirmation preparation, Edwin took on a leadership role in his youth



group and was even invited to be on the youth advisory council; he now serves his youth group as a peer minister. “Now that I am confirmed, I don't have to be told that I am not done with my faith. Over the past two years, I have just learned to live it, which means it will never end.” ■



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.