



Finding God®

Our Response to God's Gifts

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WHAT'S INSIDE

PAGE 2: The Commissioning of the Disciples

Jesus commissions us to go and make disciples.

PAGE 3: The Poor and Vulnerable

We are called to pay special attention to the needs of those who are poor.

PAGE 4: How can I share my faith without imposing it?

Share your faith with actions, not only words.



3-Minute Retreat

In Good Company

When Jesus sent the Twelve to preach the Gospel, he sent them empty-handed: "He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick—no food, no sack, no money in their belts." (Mark 6:8) However, he did not send them out alone; he sent them out in pairs.



We are not solitary disciples; our mission, whatever that may be, is not ours alone. Rather, it is something we do with others.

Take a moment and rest in God's loving presence. Think of people who have accompanied you in your faith journey and those you have accompanied in theirs. Give thanks to God for the gift of their company. ■

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



Simple Acts of Kindness

On a beautiful spring Saturday, our family of six was enjoying a bike ride around the city. When we reached a shady spot along the bayou, we stopped to rest. My oldest son immediately ran to a grassy patch covered in dandelions. I watched as he carefully picked four fluffy flowers, one for himself and each of his siblings, to make a wish on as they blew the white flower seeds into the sky. As he

ran back, the wind blew the seeds off one of the flowers before he reached us. He looked down, a little disappointed. Without another thought, he gave the remaining flowers to his older sister and two younger brothers. After blowing her flower, his sister immediately ran to the grass covered in dandelions to pick one for her brother, who had given up his dandelion so that his siblings could each have one of their own. His face lit up when she returned with a flower for him. He smiled, made his wish, and blew his flower into the wind.

Watching this brought great joy to my heart. I love catching these small everyday moments of kindness. I've always taught my children the importance of acting as Jesus did. Showing kindness to one another through small, simple gestures is one of many ways to do this. When we take our children to Mass to hear stories of Jesus showing kindness to others, when we pray together as a family for our needs and the needs of others, and when we help our community in simple ways like food and diaper donations, my family cultivates kindness.

As we were getting back on our bikes, I told my son and daughter how proud of them I was for thinking about each other

before thinking about themselves; they both smiled. I pray our family continues to accept our call as missionary disciples through such simple acts of kindness. ✝

Charlotte Phillips lives in New Orleans with her husband and their four young children.

Saint Isidore



Use the QR code to [watch a video](#) about Saint Isidore the Farmer's kindness and generosity.

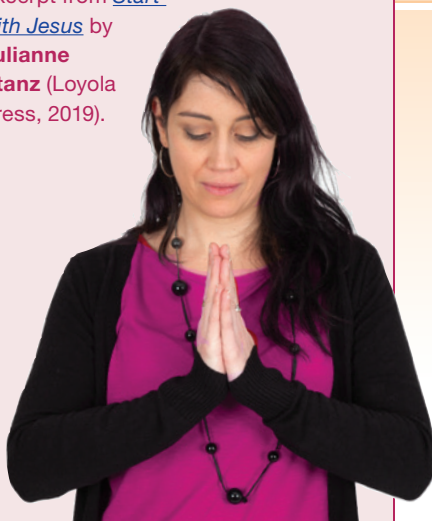


Nourish the Root

We might compare the Church to a tree. For many years, dioceses and parishes have focused on strengthening the trunk and branches of the tree. We did this by focusing on outcomes such as youth ministry and young adult ministry, for example. We believed that if we focused our efforts on a specific ministry—the branches of the tree—then the tree would be healthier. But this approach diverted energy and resources from the life of the tree, and the roots were left to wither. As a result, the trunk became weakened from the inside out, and the leaves, which should have been visible and healthy, started to decay and die.

The same is true of our lives. If we do not nourish our roots—our relationship with and love for Jesus—we will not bear fruit. Jesus tells us, “Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me” (John 15:4). And similarly, “whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers” (John 15:6). ■

Excerpt from [Start with Jesus](#) by **Julianne Stanz** (Loyola Press, 2019).



Go and Make Disciples

Saint Ignatius of Loyola taught a way of praying with Scripture by using our imaginations. Praying this way helps us “love Him more and follow Him more closely” (*Spiritual Exercises*, #104). As we pray with the Gospels this way, it reveals the many aspects of Jesus’ life that show us a model to live out our call as missionary disciples.

I invite you to contemplate Jesus’ call to go and make disciples.

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

—Matthew 28:16–20



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

Imagine. Picture yourself in the scene. Imagine yourself standing on the mountain with Jesus and the other disciples.

Notice. Watch and listen as the scene unfolds. How do you feel as Jesus approaches you? How do you react to his words of comfort? What is it like to be trusted with his mission? How do the other disciples react?

Respond. Where do you sense Jesus is sending you to go and make disciples? How are you being invited to teach Jesus’ message in your family? Where

do you sense that Jesus is closest to you and your family?

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

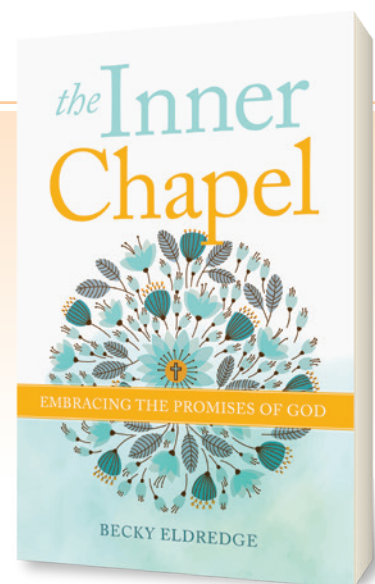
Reflect. What did you learn about Jesus, God, or yourself? How can you make disciples in today’s world? How can you say yes to your commissioning? ■

Becky Eldredge is a wife, mother, spiritual director, and the author of the book [The Inner Chapel](#) (Loyola Press, 2020).

Draw Closer to God

Becky Eldredge invites you to discover a deeper and more fulfilling prayer life in *The Inner Chapel: Embracing the Promises of God*. By drawing on the wisdom and practices of Ignatian spirituality, *The Inner Chapel* demonstrates that a relationship with a loving God is available to all who seek it. ■

[The Inner Chapel](#) by Becky Eldredge (Loyola Press, 2020).



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Contributors: Bob Burnham, OFS; Charlotte Phillips; Julianne Stanz; Becky Eldredge; Joe Paprocki; Kevin Perrotta

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The Gift of Generosity

Annaliza and Danilo Leban live in the town of Baganga in the Philippines. In December 2012 they were in a hospital several hours away from home, waiting for Annaliza to give birth to triplets. And then a major typhoon struck Baganga. The Lebanes were relieved to hear that their five older children made it safely through the storm. But when they returned, they found their home and the whole town destroyed. Danilo built a shelter from what was left of their home, but it could not protect the family from the heat, rain, and mosquitos. The newborn babies grew sick.

Then Catholic Relief Services arrived to help them build new homes. The townspeople held a meeting to plan how they would rebuild their town—and to vote on which family should receive the first new house. All of the homes in Baganga had been destroyed, but every person in the meeting voted that Annaliza and Danilo should receive the first new house.

“This is a good house,” says Annaliza, “and a community full of good people who waited for their own homes because they believed our family needed a dry place the most.”

Danilo and other community members were hired to build the new houses. Danilo was proud to help his neighbors, who had been so generous to his family.

Jesus always spends time with those who are most in need, including the sick or those who are considered

outcasts. The people of Baganga followed Jesus' example by choosing to give the Lebanes the first house since they were in the most need. We too are invited to follow Jesus' example and show a special care for those who are most in need.

As a family, share stories of how you have had to give up something you needed or

really wanted to help someone else. Was it hard to give this up? How did it feel? ■

Adapted from “Option for the Poor and Vulnerable Lesson Plan: The Philippines” by Catholic Relief Services (www.crs.org).



A Faith That Does Justice

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

As Catholics, we are called to pay special attention to the needs of those who are poor. We can follow Jesus' example by making a specific effort to defend and promote the dignity of those who are poor or vulnerable and help them meet their immediate material needs.

Here are some ideas for service to the poor and vulnerable. Determine the activities that are the most

practical for your family: Volunteer at a homeless shelter; collect food to donate to a charity; donate clothing to an organization that distributes clothes to those who are poor or homeless; save money from allowances or jobs to give to a good charity; read newspapers and news magazines to find out how local, state, and national governments could be doing more to help those who are poor. ■





I'm uncomfortable with showing my faith in public. How can I do it without imposing my beliefs on others?

a: *Sharing your faith with others can be done not only through words but also through actions.* One of the ways we can do this is by leaving traces and clues of your faith for others. Here are some suggestions:

- Post (on social media or in your office at work) a picture or a quote from your favorite saint.
- Keep a reminder of your faith in your workspace.
- Leave some literature (such as a parish bulletin) lying around on your desk at work or on a table at home.
- Carry with you or wear a simple symbol of your faith: a medal, a cross, a pin, or a scapular, for example.
- Mention (without bragging) that you are fasting or abstaining from meat as a spiritual practice.
- “Check in” on Facebook when you arrive at church on Sunday.
- Share pictures on social media of yourself at events involving your faith community or visiting sacred sites.
- Mark a religious feast day or season on your calendar.
- Wish someone a happy feast day on the day devoted to his or her patron saint.

These actions are not meant to impress others. Instead they may spark curiosity that leads to an opportunity for you to talk about your faith. ■

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

The Dark Crystal



One of my favorite movies as a child was Jim Henson's *The Dark Crystal*, so naturally I was excited to watch the series *The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance*. I was surprised by what it taught me about my faith.

1. Creation is beautiful.

The mythical world of Thra is a majestic place. It reminds me that God created a world full of majesty and beauty.

the creatures of Thra, I am reminded of Jesus' words, "Let the children come to me." (Matthew 19:14)

2. Responsibility for creation.

Like Mother Aughra, we are called to be good stewards of the earth.

4. Greed corrupts.

The Skeksis's evil is most clearly seen in their desire to consume everything.

3. Innocence is important.

When I see how the character Deet interacts with

5. Cooperation.

The Gelflings resist the Skeksis by uniting and working together. ■

Bob Burnham, OFS, is 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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Liturgy in the Family

A Simple Meal

As the greatest sacrament, Jesus gave his followers a meal through which he would make his whole ministry, Death, Resurrection, and



glory present to them. The original form of this meal was the Passover supper that Jesus ate with his disciples on the night before he died. In this meal Jesus used

bread and wine—symbolic of nourishment and joy—to give himself to his disciples as the one who forgives sins and restores friendship with God.

As he gave his disciples the bread and wine at the Passover meal, Jesus told his disciples, "Do this in remembrance of me." (1 Corinthians 11:24) After his Death and Resurrection, they did exactly that. The Mass we celebrate today is the present form of that original meal. The Mass is essentially the Last Supper, celebrated in memory of Jesus. In this meal, our ordinary actions—standing and

sitting, singing and listening, walking in procession and eating—become the means through which Jesus makes himself present, teaches us, and draws us into his life. As Jesus adapted the incomprehensible realities of the kingdom of God to our finite understanding by telling simple parables that anyone can grasp, he makes the realities of the kingdom present to our experience through simple activities in which all of us can participate. ■

Excerpt from *Celebrating the Mass* by Kevin Perrotta (Loyola Press, 2005).

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