



Finding God®

Our Response to God's Gifts

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Missionary disciples are part of a community of faith.

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Strong communities are rooted in strong families.

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We are missionaries when we renew our relationship with Christ.



3-Minute Retreat

The Way of Mercy

In his discourse about the judgment of the nations (Matthew 25:31–46), Jesus makes clear the criterion for judgment: mercy done for the least of his sisters and brothers. When we show mercy to others, we do God's will. Jesus, so it seems, teaches his disciples that the way of the Kingdom of God is the way of mercy.

Take a moment to welcome God's mercy into your heart. Sit in a comfortable position with your hands in your lap, palms up. Recall all the times you have felt God's mercy in your life. Give thanks for those moments. Then lift your hands up in an offering while thinking of people who need mercy. Close by repeating the words "Lord, may I be merciful as you are merciful." ■

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



You Welcomed Me

I was about nine years old when I started to understand why, every now and then, someone new would suddenly arrive at our home, stay with us and join our table, and then just as suddenly no longer be there. Among other things, my parents taught us the value of family and social responsibility. When they had left Mexico back in the 1950s, they left behind much of their families, though some would follow in the years to come. Some of our extended family would ask to stay in our home until they got themselves situated in their own place. We were able to offer a warm bed (though in reality it was the living room couch) and my mom's great cooking, and my father would often help them get employment where he worked.

It wasn't always easy—it often meant giving up our living room space in a house that was already crowded with five children, it was an extra mouth to feed on a one-salary household, and even though they were family, they were at the same time strangers to us. I believe my parents not only saw this as their duty to help family, but also as an opportunity to recall how God had blessed and protected them because they "were once aliens in the land of Egypt." (Leviticus 19:34)

While many of us might not welcome someone into our home, we would do well to recall the many blessings we have received from God and show mercy and hospitality to the strangers among us. My parents taught me the meaning of Jesus' words, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me." (Matthew 25:35) Today's stranger might be the immigrant or the homeless person; he or she might also be the "other" who is different from me in race, creed, sexual orientation, or economic



status. Today the challenges are different, but Jesus' invitation remains the same. ✝

Marco A. López is the Director of Lifelong Formation at St. Rita of Cascia parish in Chicago's southwest side. Marco and his wife have been blessed with two children, who are currently teenagers.

Saint John Baptiste Vianney



Saint John Baptiste Vianney

Use the QR code to watch a [video](#) about how Saint John Baptiste Vianney responded to Jesus' invitation to follow him.



START WITH JESUS

Welcoming Interruptions

Like most people, I sit down each morning and work on a to-do list for my day. At night, when I review my day, I often realize that I have not gotten all my tasks crossed off. As I am working in my office, the phone rings or someone comes to my door and says, “Can we talk?”

Right then and there, you and I have a decision to make. We can indicate that we are busy working on our tasks and close ourselves off to a potentially grace-filled conversation and, thus, a further deepening of a relationship. I’ve made this mistake before and bitterly regretted it. Or we can take the time to be with the person in front of us, offering our full attention.



When I review my day, I often notice that these interruptions were some of my most meaningful moments. We want to strive for a balance between being and doing, but this ministry of interruptions is a gift we ought to appreciate more. Attentive listening communicates the gift of presence. ■

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

Community Life

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 the communal and missionary life of a disciple.

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one’s need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

—Acts of the Apostles 2:42–47

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 how the Apostles lived a communal life. Imagine the signs and wonders they performed.

Notice. Watch and listen as the scene unfolds. What gifts do you share with this community? What gifts do you receive? How are new members received into this community? How are you received?



Respond. What signs and wonders do you long for the Spirit to work in your life, your family, and the world? How might you be called to contribute to the growth of the Christian community?

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

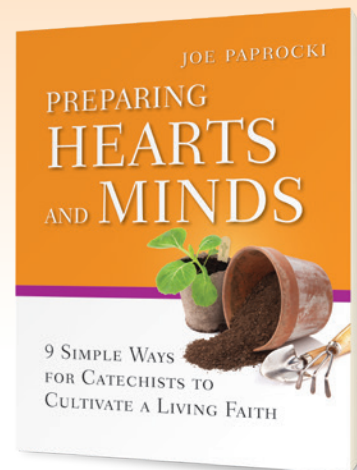
Reflect. What did you learn about Jesus, God, or yourself? Where are you being called to live as a missionary disciple in your life today? ■

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

Preparing Hearts and Minds

The early followers of Jesus knew that their Good News was indeed unique, unlike any message they’d heard before. They knew Jesus’ words could transform a person’s life. In *Preparing Hearts and Minds*, Joe Paprocki revisits how the early Church evangelized, identifying nine strategies to help catechists and learners alike. ■

[Preparing Hearts and Minds](#) by Joe Paprocki (Loyola Press, 2020).



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For activities, quick tips, and other resources to encourage faith-filled family living, visit www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/family.

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FAITH IN ACTION

Looking Out for One Another

Human beings are social by nature. We, like the early disciples, are invited to come together as a community, whether in our classroom, workplace, or family. As God's family, we are called to look out for one another.

Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, is located in the Caribbean Sea. Most Haitians live on less than \$2 per day. Around the seaport of Les Cayes, there are few doctors or hospitals. Catholic Relief Services is working with volunteers like Louisma Toussaint to set up community health clinics. CRS trained Louisma and her fellow volunteers to provide basic checkups and medical assistance, and helped set up a community "rally post," where families meet with Louisma and the other volunteers. Mothers bring their babies to the rally post for monthly checkups. Louisma weighs and measures the babies to make sure they are healthy and growing, vaccinates them, and treats their illnesses. When someone needs a doctor, Louisma helps them get to the closest hospital. When they return home from the hospital, Louisma checks on them to make sure they are doing well.

A mothers' club meets at the rally post each month to share tips. They also get advice from Louisma about keeping themselves and their children healthy. The club has a community garden where the mothers grow vegetables and fruits. They share recipes for using vegetables



to make healthy, balanced meals. Louisma and her fellow volunteers are making a big difference. Since Louisma began volunteering, the number of children who suffer from malnutrition in her community has dropped by nearly half. "I look at all the children . . . and to see this energetic group of them, the future seems more fruitful."

The Call to Family, Community, and Participation invites us to respond to the challenges facing our communities as Louisma did in Haiti. As a family, discuss some of the challenges your communities face and ways your family can help. ■

Adapted from "Call to Family, Community, and Participation Lesson Plan: Haiti" by Catholic Relief Services (www.crs.org). For more information on how you can help the people of Haiti, visit hopeforhaitians.org.

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A Faith That Does Justice

Call to Family, Community, and Participation

The Call to Family, Community, and Participation teaches us that the family is the central social institution that must be strengthened. We are called to support families so that people can participate in society, build a community spirit, and promote the well-being of all.

Here are some ideas on how to support and strengthen your family

life. Determine the activities that are the most practical for your family: eat meals together as a family; share stories about your family history; make a collage using pictures of family members; pray together and attend Mass as a family; donate time, money, or clothing to an organization that provides shelter to families without homes; participate in a local community festival; choose a parish ministry that your family can support. ■





How can I be a missionary without traveling to faraway places to preach the Gospel?

a: *It's natural to think of missionaries as people who go to distant lands*

to bring the Gospel to those who have never encountered Christ. However, today we live in a world where we not only encounter people who have not yet heard the Good News of Jesus Christ, we also encounter people who might be seriously questioning their faith or the relevance of organized



religion. As a result, we speak of the “New Evangelization” in which all of us are called to be missionaries by renewing our relationship with Christ and his Church.

Each of us is on a mission to let others know that God has drawn near to them through his Son, Jesus Christ. We spread that good news not only by our words, but also by our actions, showing mercy to others who

are in need, physically or spiritually, and helping them know that God is near to them. In this way, we can and should be missionaries in our own homes, neighborhoods, communities, places of business, and even on social media. ■

Joe Paprocki is National Consultant for Faith Formation for Loyola Press and the author of *Living the Sacraments* (Loyola Press, 2018).

5
THINGS

Five Things I Learned From . . .

WEB • BOOKS • MUSIC • MOVIES • TV

Collaging

With only magazines, scissors, and glue, I create a peaceful space for thoughtful reflection and whimsical creation.



1. Collage as prayer.

Just as in prayer, there's no “right” way to collage; you simply share what's in your heart through words and pictures.

God, a loved one, or yourself.

4. Enjoy the simple delights.

I find God when I collage with my toddler, who gleefully sings while gluing and hunts for favorite pictures with enthusiasm.

2. Seek and ye shall find.

Noticing which text or pictures speak to you can remind you to open your eyes to what God is putting in your path.

5. Share your heart.

My dad always said “homemade is best” because creating something from the heart is a way to show your love for others. ■

3. Being mindfully

mindless. While your hands are busy, focus your thoughts on

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Liturgy in the Family

God Is Good All the Time

In the Black community, when the homilist approaches the ambo and proclaims the words “God is good,” the assembly will likely respond, “All the time.” Well, considering the racial unrest being experienced throughout the country, if God is good to us all the time, then our lives should be rooted in goodness to all our brothers and sisters without distinction. As parishes are becoming more culturally diverse, the domestic church

can effectively express the need for communion with our brothers and sisters of all colors and the universal character of our Catholic faith. After all, we are marked by the oneness proclaimed in the Creed professed during the Sunday Eucharist.



As families participate in the sacraments together, they attract, engage, and inspire young people to deepen their relationships with Jesus Christ and the knowledge of

the teachings of the Church. Participation in the Mass is a key component of our Christian life: it is the source from which all the Church's energy surges and the summit to which all activities are directed. Fostering a stronger and more active participation in parish life helps us witness Christ and welcome all God's children in our own lives and in the wider society. ■

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