



# Finding God®

Our Response to God's Gifts

© LOYOLA PRESS. All rights reserved.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

### PAGE 2: Spread the Joy!

God loves the cheerful giver.

### PAGE 3: Come to My Aid!

Jesus hears our prayers.

### PAGE 4: How can I teach the importance of sacrifice?

We all make sacrifices, big and small, to help others.



## 3-Minute Retreat

### Christ Have Mercy

**We are not perfect—despite our best intentions—and sometimes, even unintentionally, we hurt others.**

Sometimes we intentionally hurt others for our own gain or profit. Yet God is always there to forgive us if we approach him with a contrite heart.



Rest comfortably for a moment, with your hands up in a gesture of receptivity. Bring to mind a moment when you acted unkindly toward someone. Examine the reasons for your actions, the

circumstances surrounding them, and the consequences. Share your sorrow with God and ask for the grace to heal what was broken. If necessary, celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Rest for a few moments, silently repeating the words, "Christ, have mercy." ■

For a daily online 3-Minute Retreat, go to [www.3MinuteRetreat.com](http://www.3MinuteRetreat.com).

## Five Tools to Forgive

I've traveled the wild roads of grudges and walked the path of bitter resentment. I know they do not lead to healing or peace. I also know that it requires God's grace to forgive someone "not seven times but seventy-seven times," as Jesus instructed. (Matthew 18:22) I hope to give my children some tools that have helped me respond to Jesus' call to forgive others.

**1. Take responsibility.** When we hurt others, we acknowledge and admit what we've done. This is as simple as saying "I'm sorry," naming the hurt you caused, and giving the other person time to process. Recognizing our own need for forgiveness can help us forgive others.

**2. Accept apologies.** I don't teach my kids to say "It's okay, I forgive you," because it's not okay that someone hurt them. Instead, I teach them to say "I accept your apology. Thank you for apologizing." That step can open the door to God's grace to forgive.

**3. Be patient.** Forgiveness can take time. The time it takes to forgive depends on how you've been hurt and who hurt you. Forgiveness is a decision, not an emotion. Forgiveness prevents you from being defined by grudges and resentment.

**4. Don't dwell.** When you forgive someone, you are making a conscious decision to not be controlled by the hurt a person caused you. It is not to be confused with forgetting. Forgetting puts us in a position to get hurt again. Forgiveness allows us to grow in the freedom of God's love.

**5. Forgive debts.** Even though people don't always apologize, we are still called to forgive them. I once read that the easiest way to do this is to see their hurtful actions like a debt owed; sometimes, that person is incapable of repaying it. When we forgive them, we cancel that debt.

I hope these tools will help my children respond in a Christlike way to people who hurt them. ✝

**Christina Antus** spends her free time wrangling her children, folding forever-piles of laundry, and making mediocre meals.





## EXPERIENCING GOD IN THE ORDINARY

### God Loves a Cheerful Giver

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes, “God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7) while encouraging his readers to be generous. God is a cheerful giver, and since we are made in the image and likeness of God, we, too, are asked to be cheerful givers.



Once when we were discussing generosity, a Jesuit told me about a pastor with whom he worked who gave, often through this Jesuit's

hands, big gifts to some seminarians, who never thanked the pastor. My friend told me that he got angry at their apparent lack of gratitude and spoke to the pastor about this. The pastor sternly replied, “Am I to stop loving and giving simply because someone is incapable of expressing gratitude or returning love? The answer is an emphatic ‘No’! That would be just too great a price to pay.” My friend said it was a sober lesson learned and never forgotten. Here was a man who, like God, gave without counting the cost. ■

Excerpt from *Experiencing God in the Ordinary* by William A. Barry, SJ (Loyola Press, 2020).

## Family Activity Cards of Joy

Begin by talking to your children about people who are in a hospital, are homebound, or live in a senior care facility. Explain how important it is to keep in contact with these people, particularly members of your extended family. You will then make cards expressing joy and hope to send to them.



### MATERIALS LIST

- Construction paper
- Markers
- Stickers

**Directions:** Use the construction paper, markers, and stickers to make greeting cards to send to people your family knows who are in the hospital, are homebound, or live in a senior care facility. Include words of joy and hope in your cards. You can make a single card from the entire family, or you can have each family member make his or her own card.

Collect the cards and send them in the mail. Alternatively, especially if the person who is receiving the card lives nearby, you may want to hand-deliver the cards yourself and include a brief visit. ■



## God's Love and Mercy

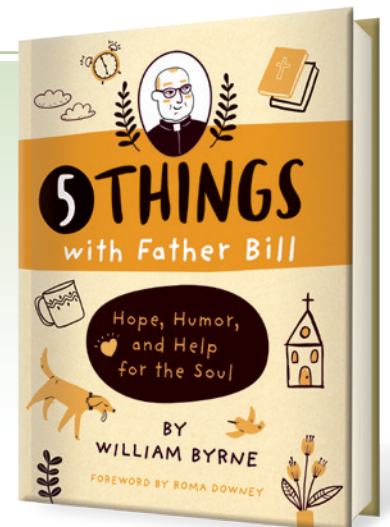
What are my claims? What are my merits? Only the mercy and love of God can explain them.

—BLESSED MIGUEL AGUSTÍN PRO

### 5 Things with Father Bill

In a practical and engaging guide to embracing happiness, Fr. Bill Byrne offers insights, reflections, and encouragement to enhance ordinary days and holidays. Witty and endearing with hands-on, real-world advice, *5 Things with Father Bill* makes the perfect gift for readers looking for a burst of inspiration and a dose of good cheer. ■

*5 Things with Father Bill* by William Byrne (Loyola Press, 2020).





Finding God: Our Response to God's Gifts

A newsletter for parents and families by Loyola Press

**Finding God Newsletter** is an expression of the work of Loyola Press, a ministry of the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits.

Contributors: Christina Antus; Bob Burnham, OFS; William A. Barry, SJ; Becky Eldredge; Joe Paprocki; Antony Barone Kolenc; Dee Skomer

Art Credits: Page 1: levente bodo/Moment/Getty Images, PeopleImages/E+/Getty Images, PeopleImages/E+/Getty Images, Page 2: ljubaphoto/iStock/Getty Images, Brothers91/E+/Getty Images, sharrocks/iStockphoto/Getty Images, Peter Dazeley/The Image Bank/Getty Images, Gene Plaisted, OSC, Page 3: ZU\_09/DigitalVision Vectors/Getty Images, Phakh Phumi Khx Phung/EyeEm/Getty Images, Page 4: Blend Images/Alamy Stock Photo, lowball-jack/DigitalVision Vectors/Getty Images, MoMo Productions/DigitalVision/Getty Images

To contact any of our writers, please e-mail us at [newsletter@loyolapress.com](mailto:newsletter@loyolapress.com).

Excerpts from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C., and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All rights reserved.

The newsletter is published seven times a year (including issues for Advent and Lent) by Loyola Press.

**LOYOLAPRESS.**  
A JESUIT MINISTRY

(800) 621-1008  
[www.loyolapress.com](http://www.loyolapress.com)

For activities, quick tips, and other resources to encourage faith-filled family living, visit [www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/family](http://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/family).

Web Number: W2576

Copyright © Loyola Press, 2022

All rights reserved. Materials may not be reproduced in any form without permission of the publisher.

## Lord, Help Me!

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, we grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

I invite you to contemplate the Canaanite woman's faith.

*A Canaanite woman . . . called out, “Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon.” But he did not say a word in answer to her. His disciples came and asked him, “Send her away, for she keeps calling out after us.” He said in reply, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But the woman came and did him homage, saying, “Lord, help me.” He said in reply, “It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.” She said, “Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.”*

—Matthew 15:22–27



You beg and you plead for him to heal your child. Jesus replies, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” (Matthew 15:28)

**Respond.** Tell Jesus how you feel, having been heard and your prayer answered.

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

**Reflect.** What did you learn about Jesus, God, or yourself? What does the Scripture passage offer you about praying for your children? What prayers do you offer on behalf of your family? ■

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

**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 your love for your child. She suffers horribly, and you are powerless to relieve her suffering. You cry out to Jesus to heal your child.

**Notice.** Watch and listen as the scene unfolds. Jesus doesn't answer you. The disciples want Jesus to send you away.

## Living the Beatitudes

*“Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.”*

—Matthew 5:7

Mercy is the vocation of every Christian. It is the singular path of discipleship. Jesus told his disciples, “Be merciful, just as [also] your Father is merciful.” (Luke 6:36) Perhaps that



is why Jesus' entire life was an exercise in mercy and forgiveness, even to the point where he

forgave those who crucified him. He was perfectly imitating his Father.

How can we practice mercy? Jesus tells us how: stop judging, stop condemning, and forgive. Give people the benefit of the doubt, seek understanding, and be kind. “For

the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.” (Luke 6:38) Happy indeed are those whose measure is filled with kindness. ■

### Faith & Justice



Use the QR code to learn more about how **small acts of kindness** can build a more just world.



## How can I teach my children the importance of making sacrifices?

**a:** *The word sacrifice comes from the Latin, which means “to make holy.”*

Since God alone is holy, to be holy is to be like God. One of the primary characteristics of God’s holiness is his selfless love: God the Father gave us his only Son, Jesus, who laid down his life for us. Jesus sacrificed his life so that we may have eternal life. We make sacrifices for those we love by setting aside our own needs to put their needs first. Such selfless love—the kind of love Jesus shows us—is love that does not keep score. It is proactive love.



A good way to teach your children about the importance of making sacrifices is to help them identify all the people in their life who have made and are making sacrifices for them—including and especially yourself as a parent! Then help your children recognize the many sacrifices they already make: taking care of younger

siblings, helping out with chores, volunteering at school, and so on. Help them understand that we don’t make sacrifices to seek rewards; we make sacrifices for others because that is what Jesus did for us. ■

**Joe Paprocki** is national consultant for faith formation for Loyola Press and author of *Preparing Hearts and Minds* (Loyola Press, 2020).

**5**  
THINGS

## Five Things I Learned From . . .

WEB • BOOKS • MUSIC • MOVIES • TV

### The Harwood Mysteries

As I was writing the *Harwood Mysteries*, I discovered that my characters taught me lessons that helped me grow in my faith.

- 1. Trust in God.** Xan taught me that the courage to help our friends comes from trusting God.
- 2. Pursue the good.** Xan’s best friend, Lucy, taught me that it doesn’t matter who solves the mystery, as long as good prevails.
- 3. God has a plan.** Xan’s mentor, Brother Andrew, taught me that God has a plan for each of our lives.
- 4. All will be well.** Xan’s mother-figure, Sister Regina, taught me that our choices in life



will all be good if we choose God to be our all in all.

- 5. Faith requires discipline.** Xan’s friend Christina taught me that sometimes we have to say “no,” even to our friends. ■

**Antony Barone Kolenc** is the author of the award-winning *Harwood Mysteries* (Loyola Press).

© LOYOLAPRESS. All rights reserved.

## The Little Way

### Daily Check-Ins

The Little Way of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux allows us to find God in the ordinary events of our daily lives. By doing ordinary, mundane things with great love, we come to know God, who is love. “We love God,” Saint Thérèse once said, “to the extent that we practice it.”

“When I think about the Little Way,” says Dee Skomer, a writer from the suburbs of Chicago, “I often think that Saint Thérèse was just



showing us how to connect with the present moment. One of the things I did with my kids when they were younger was to check in with them every morning. I began

by saying ‘Good morning!’ and then I would ask them what they had going on that day. I’d listen closely and focus on one or two things they said. That evening, I’d check in again and ask how those things went. I’d listen as they would express their frustrations or successes and just really be present with them as they shared those experiences.”

Perhaps Dee shows us the true meaning of the Little Way: being present to others and God in each moment of our day. ■

### Contact Us!



We’d love to hear from you! You can send us your questions, comments, and requests by using the QR code above or by e-mailing us at [newsletter@loyolapress.com](mailto:newsletter@loyolapress.com).