



Finding God

Our Response to God's Gifts

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WHAT'S INSIDE

PAGE 2: Celebrate Goodness

When something good happens to one, it happens to all.

PAGE 3: Let the Party Be gin

Joy is one of our deepest desires.

PAGE 4: What can I do about sibling rivalry?

Teach them to celebrate each other's successes.

The Beatitudes: Jesus' Vision for Our Lives

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1–10) offer meaning and direction for all of us; they articulate the vision of Jesus Christ. Through the Beatitudes, Jesus calls us to be peace-loving, merciful, clean of heart, and meek. By living the Beatitudes, we learn what it takes to be truly happy and live the values of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Beatitudes turn the values of the world upside down. The world sets up the rich to be first; Jesus puts the poor on top of the world. The world tells us to seek happiness at all costs; Jesus saw happiness in mourning. The world values power over others; Jesus praised the meek. The world encourages self-fulfillment; Jesus told us to work for justice. The world says that the merciless succeed; Jesus proclaimed blessed the merciful. The world announces, *Go for the gold!* Jesus taught us to keep our hearts pure. The world honors the winners of wars; Jesus celebrated the peacemakers. The world sees the persecuted as losers; Jesus declared them the winners.

So what are some ways that we can develop the Beatitudes in our own lives? First, we can rest assured that the Holy Spirit is already at work within us, drawing us toward God and inspiring



our desire to be a Beatitudes-type of person. Second, pay attention to the people you know who model a particular beatitude. Think of ways you can live these qualities in your own life. Finally, talk with God in prayer. Ask him to help you develop the Beatitudes in your mind, heart, and actions. †



For more tips on how to bring the Good News to young people, visit www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/family/catholic-teens.



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MINUTE RETREAT

Rejoice with Others

St. Paul's advice to the early Christians to "rejoice with those who rejoice" (Romans 12:15) reminds us that when we share in another person's joy, we are praying. Why? Sharing joy strengthens the bonds of love, and love is the heart of prayer.

Pause for a moment and imagine the faces of those closest to you.



What good news, big and small, have they shared with you recently? A good grade? A compliment at work? A good report from the doctor? Recall the joy on their faces and let it fill your heart. From this place of love, offer a prayer of thanks to God, the giver of all good gifts. ■

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



HOLY DESPERATION

Rewards

What does “reward” in prayer mean, anyway?

Reward certainly doesn't seem to mean money, sex, or recognition, some form of which is often what we're looking for.

Nor does it mean some of the satisfactions that are perhaps subtler: the perfect spouse, kids who reflect well on us, a career as a famous spiritual writer or speaker. Our motives can be good . . . but those may or may not be the ways Christ chooses to bear fruit in us.

In fact, the kind of reward Christ is talking about seems to be a total forgetting of self. It's a movement away from the effort to surround ourselves with people and accomplishments that reflect well on us, to a spontaneous celebration of the way God shines in and through other people. The very realization that we're capable of celebrating—loving—someone besides ourselves is the “reward.” We move away from the demand for peak experiences and begin to see that the kingdom of God—entering through the narrow gate—consists mostly in trudging, plodding, suiting up, and showing up so that we're available for the “small moments.” ■



Excerpt from *Holy Desperation* by Heather King (Loyola Press, 2017)

LOVE IN MARRIAGE | Joy Begets Joy

I anxiously waited for my husband to arrive home from work so I could open the brown package wrapped with colorful tape that was sitting on our kitchen island. I knew that this package contained a copy of my book, and I yearned to rip it open and hold it for the first time in my hands. Even though excitement was growing inside me, I couldn't bring myself to open it until Chris got home. This book represented not just my hard work; it was the result of our shared sacrifice that had allowed me to make space for writing in the midst of family life. When he finally walked in the door, he helped me open the package, and then we took turns holding the book in our hands, flipping the pages, feeling the cover, letting out shouts of excitement.

Of course, I didn't have to share this moment with him; I could have pretended that this book was the result of my efforts alone. And he didn't have to celebrate this moment with me; he could have been unconcerned and shown little interest in this accomplishment. Instead, we rejoiced with each other. We both understood that this book's birth happened because we supported each other. He supported me by giving me the space to



pursue my passion, which in turn prompted me to support him in his professional life. And together, we were able to support our family.

Joy begets joy. This lesson helps our family celebrate the good things that happen to any of us as good things that happen to all of us. ■

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

The Joy of Love

POPE FRANCIS

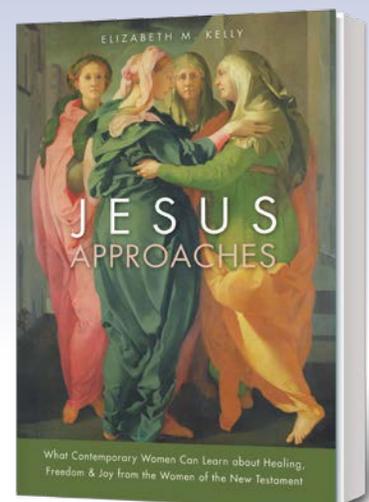
The family must always be a place where, when something good happens to one of its members, they know that others will be there to celebrate it with them. ■



Jesus Approaches

In *Jesus Approaches*, Elizabeth Kelly shares vivid stories of New Testament women whose encounters with Jesus freed them to flourish in life. The stories teach that sometimes the best way to find wholeness in Christ begins with bringing your brokenness to the Lord. ■

Jesus Approaches by Elizabeth M. Kelly (Loyola Press, 2017)



Finding God: Our Response to God's Gifts

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

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BE JOYFUL

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.”

— JOHN 15:11

When my aunt Marie passed away on Valentine's Day, she was 99 years old. Her death was unexpected. The night before, she had been engaged in one of her favorite rituals, eating chocolate in anticipation of the holiday she loved.

Aunt Marie lived life with great enthusiasm and joy, in spite of being one of nine children in a family that struggled mightily during the Depression and having lost

her beloved husband, Rocky, 43 years before. What was the secret to her light heart and ready smile? She loved her Lord, attended daily Mass, and kept a rosary close at hand. Her joy was rooted in her deep faith. And the Lord blessed her with it abundantly.



Joy is not easy to come by. It seems there is too much wrong with the world, too much amiss in our lives to be joyful.

Yet Christians are called to be people of joy; joy is one of our deepest desires, a sign that the Holy Spirit is at work in us, bearing good fruit. As Aunt Marie was laid to rest in a sparkly red blouse that seemed to say “let the party begin,” we did just that, and we celebrated her life in gratitude, happy to have been blessed by her joyful presence, and, of course, eating chocolate. ■

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

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SAINTLY HABITS

The Power of Like

I asked a good friend what she thought was the most important thing in her marriage.

“We like each other,” she said. “Yes, we love each other; but we also simply enjoy being around each other.”

I'm sure that was true for Saints Louis and Zélie Martin (1823–1894; 1831–1877).



They lived an ordinary life with extraordinary love. Married in 1858, they were small-business owners, had nine children (the youngest grew up to be Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus), and lived an active faith. They were also no strangers to tragedy. Three of their children died in infancy, and one died in childhood. Zélie herself suffered anxiety and depression later in life. In 1877, she died from breast cancer, Louis at her side.

Saints Louis and Zélie encourage me and my wife

to live a marriage grounded in faith. They remind us to recognize God in the midst of our busyness, our shared struggles, and our shared joys. Our faith reminds us of our love for each other; it calls us to express that love in acts of kindness. And those acts of kindness are the reason why we like each other. ■

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





What can I do as a parent to help my children overcome sibling rivalry?

a: *The biblical story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1–16) teaches us that*

family relationships are the place where we need to begin practicing love. Their story teaches us to recognize the danger of envy and reminds us to avoid comparing ourselves to others. Unfortunately, that is something that children do constantly.



Strive to balance the time and attention you're giving to each child

The best thing you can do as a parent is to help your children use such rivalries in a positive manner. Emphasize to your children that you have no favorites but that, sometimes, an individual child may require more attention. Avoid comparing them, especially in public. Strive to balance the time and attention you're giving to each child so that each one feels noticed and appreciated. Encourage older children to pay attention to their younger siblings and to mentor them when possible. Most important, teach your children how to celebrate one another's successes and be patient with them as they struggle to do so. Your children will face rivalries throughout life. The family is the place to learn how to cope with them in a positive manner. ■

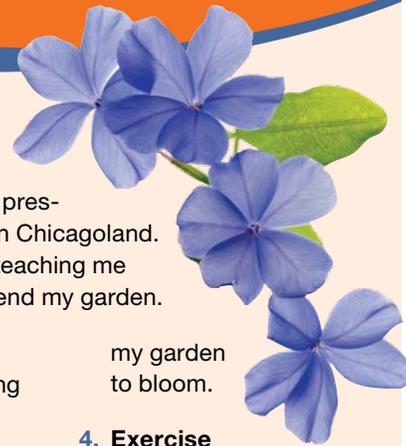
Joe Paprocki is national consultant for faith formation for Loyola Press and author of *A Church on the Move* (Loyola Press, 2016).

5 THINGS

Five Things I Learned From . . .

WEB • BOOKS • MUSIC • MOVIES • TV

Gardening



There may be no greater proof of God's presence than springtime in Chicagoland. I discover that God is teaching me valuable lessons as I tend my garden.

- 1. Creation is a gift.** When I hear birdsong at dawn or smell the fresh earth and flowers, I sense God's presence in all creation.
- 2. Discernment matters.** I need to pay attention and distinguish weeds from plants that bear good fruit.
- 3. Be patient.** It takes time for the flowers in my garden to bloom.
- 4. Exercise is good.** I enjoy the way gardening strengthens my body, mind, and spirit.
- 5. I need to relax.** A garden bench or path is a perfect place to realize God is right here in the moment. ■

Becca Gay is manager of production at Loyola Press and enjoys growing flowers and herbs in her garden.



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The Meal Box

How to Enjoy *The Meal Box*.

- 1. Learn more about one another by asking this question from *The Meal Box* at your next family meal.**
- 2. Allow people time to respond, encouraging them to expand on their answers whenever possible.**
- 3. Watch the mealtime conversation get cookin'!**

More mealtime fun can be found in *The Meal Box* by **Bret Nicholaus** and **Tom McGrath** (Loyola Press, 2009).

