



Finding God

Our Response to God's Gifts

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Patience takes root when we love people as they are.

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God gives us the grace to practice patience.

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When anger arises, take a breath and find a solution.

Patience Is a Classroom

Children are intelligent and witty. They can recall tongue-twisting dinosaur names and know every song in *Frozen*. They are resilient in the face of change, often more so than we are. And then, just when we grow comfortable with their youthful sophistication, they upset that notion with their immaturity.

Surely Saint Paul foresaw this when he wrote what might be the first and most important instructions for teaching and parenting: Love is patient. (1 Corinthians 13:4)



for me about still-maturing students. They are still learning why they feel, say, and do the things they do.

Neurologists report that the human brain doesn't fully mature until one is in his/her twenties. Of course, neuroscience matters little in a moment of frustration. When the bike

has been left in the driveway again or the homework crumpled in the backpack and not turned in, we want an answer to our question, "What were you thinking?"

Patience in that moment is the space to coach responsible decision making, where we can talk through the ramifications of actions and encourage reflection in children about who and how they want to be in the world. †



Kathy Judge lives in Oklahoma City, OK, and teaches English at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School.

We dedicate years to academics because learning requires time and patience. Understanding math is a process, and there is no shortcut to knowing history. Likewise, understanding what motivates a person's behavior requires learning too.

Years ago a fellow teacher's son made a poor choice that resulted in his suspension. His mother told me she asked him why he'd done it. In that question were many: Why had he betrayed people's trust? Why had he aligned himself with another's inappropriate actions? Why had he, an exemplary student, chosen to damage his reputation? He looked at her and said, "I don't know."

He wasn't lying, she realized. He really had no understanding of what motivated his rash behavior. That was a great lesson



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MINUTE RETREAT

Be Yourself

We all are many things to many people—parent, spouse, employee, volunteer—to name a few. At any given moment, we may wear one or more hats, with layers of responsibility. It can be both fulfilling and exhausting.



God knows us, better than we know ourselves: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you." (Jeremiah 1:5) Stop for a moment and take a deep breath. Lift your heart to God and ask for the grace to know yourself and others as God does. How do you see yourself? How do others see you? How does God see you? Remember that God loves you as you are. Give thanks for this gift of God's unconditional love. ■

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



HOLY DESPERATION

Where Is God?

I've met people who loved gardening or fishing or the saxophone: hardworking, talented people with noble hearts.

They think they can't find God. They'll ask, "Where is God? When is God going to come?" We've been given this insane gift of life. We're living in the midst of the Resurrection. And still our hearts ask, Where is God?

I began to realize that God was the things, or had created the things, that I'd loved my whole life. The blue heron. The trees that changed color in fall. That swelling in my heart when the tattooed guy with three months of sobriety choked

up as he said, "My wife cut me out of her life, but she's gonna let me see my two-year-old daughter. I'm gonna see my little girl next week."



As Meister Eckhart observed, God is like a suitor. He never forces himself on us, but if we have eyes to see, he's everywhere. Things changed when I began to see that I had always loved God and that what I did each morning—sitting quietly watching the light, feeling incoherently grateful, letting my mind wander to the mysteries of the universe—was prayer. ■

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



LOVE IN MARRIAGE | It's Not About the Beans

Our kids still laugh at a heated argument they witnessed between my husband and me about a can of beans. It began when I made a snide remark to my husband about not putting a can of beans in the right place while he was kindly unloading groceries. I noticed that he wasn't following what I considered my well-thought-out organizational system, and instead of keeping my mouth shut, I commented that his way was the wrong way.

My critique of his alternative organizational system did not go over very well. Before I knew it, we were fighting over how to unload and organize groceries. Even though I kept bringing up the can of beans, I kept insisting, "It's not about the beans!" Our oldest child, sensing the ridiculousness of the fight, grinned and asked me, "Mom, are you sure it's not about the beans?"

That was the remark I needed to help me realize the absurdity of my impatience and critique. All five of us broke out into laughter.

When the laughter died down, I looked my husband in the eyes, gave him a sheepish grin, and apologized for my



quick temper and for being so critical. That day, I learned the value of "love is patient" the hard way, only after my impulsive reaction hurt my spouse.

Marriage invites me to love and accept who he is, as God does, even down to the way he puts away groceries. ■

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



The Joy of Love

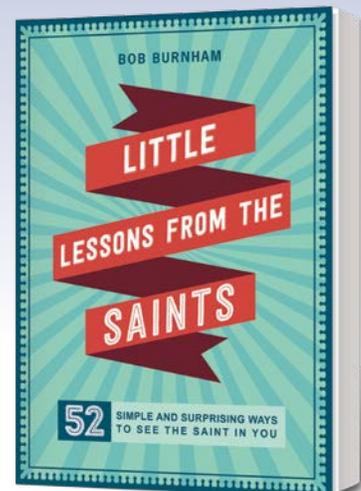
POPE FRANCIS

"Patience takes root when I recognize that other people also have a right to live in this world, just as they are." ■

The Saint in You

Many Catholics think of the saints as irrelevant to everyday life. However, Bob Burnham offers 52 glimpses into the lives of Catholic saints to show how each saint's charisma can be applied to our own lives today. ■

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



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PATIENCE

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in mercy

—PSALM 145:8

At a recent get-together, one of our son's close friends tried and failed to get his five-year-old daughter to put on her coat. She didn't want to leave the party.

I watched as he asked—then cajoled—her to comply. She was adorable and kept running from him, stuffed animal in hand. I thought, “At what point does he lose his patience with her?”

He didn't. He remained calm, although the tone of his voice changed slightly as he said firmly, “Now, Fiona.” And she put on her coat.



They are close, these two, and it shows. He is slow to anger, rich in kindness, and she loves that about her daddy. I was not such a patient parent when my sons were young. I was always living in a hurry, which meant barking orders, making demands, and, all too often, losing my cool.

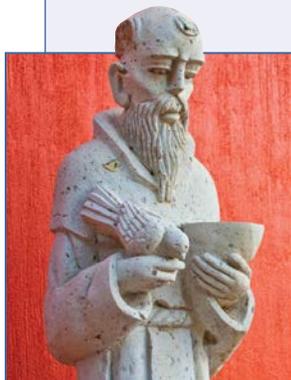


I have learned, however, that if we pray for—and are open to receiving—patience, wisdom, and grace, the good Lord will continue to shape and mold us accordingly. Perhaps my sons will never forget their stressed and anxious young mom, but the mom they have now has had 30-plus years to learn and practice patience. ■

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

SAINTLY HABITS

The Patience of a Saint



I like to think that I am a patient person.

But when my mom calls to tell me a story that she's told me a thousand times before, I quickly lose patience. I usually end up

cutting the conversation short; I'm sure she can tell by the tone of my voice that I'm displeased with her.

Saint Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) said that it's easy to be patient when one is content; people only have as much patience as they have when they are disgruntled, aggravated, or bitter. Patience, he seems to tell me, is a virtue designed to help me deal with times of discontent.

How can I be more patient when my mom calls me to tell me the same old stories? I can understand that she calls me because of the love a mother has for her son. I can be merciful by reminding myself that hearing my

mom's voice is never a waste of time. I can forgive her for forgetting that she told me a story I've heard before, and I can forgive myself for being impatient.

Patience requires understanding, mercy, and forgiveness; after all, these are the ways in which the good Lord is patient with us. ■



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).



As a parent, it is not always easy to be patient. Is it a sin to get angry?

a: *In and of itself, anger is not a sin; however, it can easily lead us to the*

occasion of sin if our response is too quick, too excessive, and if the effects linger for too long. Anger needs to be tempered by judgment lest it end up hurting others and ourselves. Anger can become sinful if we express it inappropriately, if it is not

justified, and if it makes the situation worse. When anger arises, it helps to step back, take a deep breath (literally), speak slowly and clearly, seek a solution, and avoid accusation.



When anger arises, it helps to step back, take a deep breath (literally).

and impulsive but is always directed at evil. It angers God to see his children engage in actions that diminish them. In the same way, our children become aware of our passionate love for them when we express anger appropriately over behavior that diminishes them. ■

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

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 each person time to respond, encouraging them to expand on their answer whenever possible.**
3. **Watch the mealtime conversation get cookin'!**

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

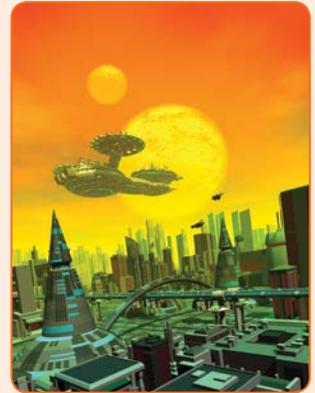
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THINGS

Five Things I Learned From . . .

WEB • BOOKS • MUSIC • MOVIES • TV

Star Wars

As a huge *Star Wars* fan, I have learned much about my faith from the movies of this galactic saga:



1. **Redemption is always possible.** In *Return of the Jedi*, the greatest screen villain of all time, Darth Vader, became a hero and saved the galaxy.
2. **Remain a child at heart.** Jesus called the children “blessed”; only a child could enjoy the prequel trilogy.
3. **Pick good role models—like the saints!** Just as Yoda taught Luke Skywalker the ways of the Force, the saints teach us the way of Christ.
4. **Don’t run away from your problems.** Our favorite Jedi Knights did this a lot, and just look where it got the galaxy!
5. **God is never asleep.** Even when the Holy Spirit seems dormant, God will “reawaken”—much like the Force—at any point. ■

Kris Fankhouser is a freelance writer and editor.

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