



Finding God

Our Response to God's Gifts

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Jesus calls us to be kind and generous.

Simply Generous

I've often been accused of overthinking things. As I much as I don't want to admit that this is true, it probably is, and it even applies to the way I think about generosity. I will spend a lot of time thinking about the perfect charity I should to donate to, or I worry that I don't have enough to give.

This story about Pedro Arrupe (1907–1991), who was the Superior General of the Society of Jesus from 1965–1983, teaches me a good lesson about generosity:

When visiting a Jesuit province in Latin America, Pedro Arrupe celebrated the Mass in a suburban slum, the poorest in the region. Arrupe was moved by the attentiveness and respect with which the people celebrated the Mass. His hands trembled as he distributed communion and watched the tears fall from the faces of the communicants.

Afterward, one especially large man invited Arrupe to his home. The man's home was a half-falling shack. The man seated him in a rickety chair and invited Fr. Arrupe to observe the setting sun with him. After the sun went down, the man explained that he was so grateful for what Arrupe had brought to the community. The man wanted to share the only gift he had, the opportunity to share in the beautiful setting sun.

Arrupe reflected, "He gave me his hand. As I was leaving, I thought: 'I have met very few hearts that are so kind.'" (from *Pedro Arrupe, S.J.* by Jim Campbell, www.ignatianspirituality.com.)



Generosity is incredibly simple. I don't need to make grand gestures or sacrifices—"For it is loyalty that I desire, not sacrifice, / and knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings." (Hosea 6:6) I can be generous by sharing things that are important to me with others, whether it is a song, a quote, a funny joke, or even the view from my chair. †

Bob Burnham, OFS, is the editor of the *Finding God* newsletters.



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MINUTE RETREAT

Pay It Forward

Have you ever performed or received a random act of kindness? There's something about that anonymous deed that makes the kindness more genuine; nothing is expected in return. Authentic love is like that. We want to pay it forward.



Pause for a moment and relax your mind. Rest your hands, palms up, on your lap. Consider these words from Psalm 116: "How can I repay the LORD for all the great good done for me?" Call to mind the acts of kindness God has done for you—life, family, friends, beauty. What else can you add? How might you pay it forward? Notice how you feel and where your heart is leading. Close with a prayer of thanksgiving to God. ■

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



HOLY DESPERATION

We Are Enough

To set aside the other person's wrong and look only at our own doesn't mean that the other person, or the system, or the world, is 100 percent right, good, and true. So culturally geared are we toward worldly results—winning, being number one—that many people see the idea of looking only on our part, and leaving aside the other's wrongdoing, as an abdication of responsibility: a failure to “stand one's ground.”

But to turn the other cheek, or when a man asks for your cloak to give your tunic as well, is not to be a doormat. It's to freely choose generosity. It's to say I can afford to let you think I'm a loser because I so firmly know I'm acting from love.

On the other hand, when we act from love, we love ourselves, too. “Give till it hurts” is a good idea as far as it goes, but if it veers into self-depletion rather than self-giving, something's wrong.



To be grounded in Christ is also to know that if we are sincerely doing our best, we are doing enough, are giving enough—that we *are* enough, period. ■

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

LOVE IN MARRIAGE | Love Shows Itself in Deeds

My grandfather being diagnosed with brain cancer was one of life's unexpected curveballs. In an instant, life changed. Our weeks often feel like a juggling act, balancing time around taking walks with my grandfather, caring for our children, and honoring work commitments.

In this season of life, my husband is showing me, on a whole new level, what it means for love to be kind and generous. I am reminded of Saint Ignatius's words: “Love shows itself in deeds more than words.” Chris is showing his love for me through the generosity of his time as he listens to my worries after long days of doctor appointments, prepares home-cooked meals, drives our kids to their activities, and helps me prayerfully discern the priorities of each week. His loving actions are not only being offered to me, but also to my grandparents, our children, and our entire family.

Chris's generosity of time and kindness model the words of Saint Ignatius's Prayer of Generosity:

Eternal Word, only begotten Son of God,

Teach me true generosity.

Teach me to serve you as you deserve.

To give without counting the cost,

To fight heedless of wounds,

To labor without seeking rest,

To sacrifice myself without thought of any reward

Save the knowledge that I have done your will. Amen.

It has been a humbling experience to receive love like this. And as kind and generous love often does, it widens my own capacity to love others. ■

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



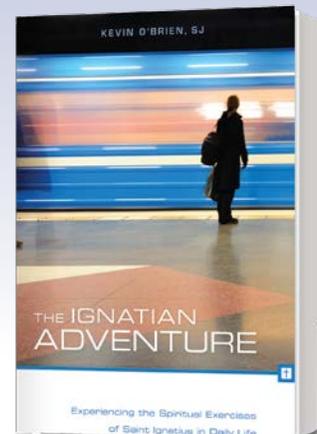
The Joy of Love POPE FRANCIS

“Love benefits and helps others. For this reason it is translated as kind; love is ever ready to be of assistance.” ■

Faith and Daily Life

There is no better guide than St. Ignatius Loyola if one desires to discover how faith and everyday life can thrive together. In *The Ignatian Adventure*, Kevin O'Brien, SJ, follows St. Ignatius's lead and offers today's time-strapped individual a unique way of “making” the Spiritual Exercises in daily life. ■

The Ignatian Adventure by Kevin O'Brien, SJ (Loyola Press, 2011)



Finding God: Our Response to God's Gifts

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KINDNESS

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

—COLOSSIANS 3:12

I was talking recently with a colleague who will soon have a new baby to join siblings that are two and four years old. The thought of this active, busy, and joyful household, with two parents who work outside the home, was exhausting.

I asked him about his hopes and desires for his kids, expecting a response about success in school, doing meaningful work as adults, or raising a family of their own. He said, however, "I just want them to be kind."

Ah, kindness—that learned, and practiced, ability to refuse to be mean, to refrain from being cruel, to understand that getting one's way at the expense of another is a form of bullying. Kindness is extended to



friends and, perhaps more importantly, offered to those who are unkind to us: the classmate who grabs the book you are reading or kicks you as you return to your seat, the friends who talk behind your back, the boss who berates you in public.

My colleague's hope for his children is a hope that I have for mine, even though they are older now. It is a hope for myself too. We want to be kind because we know that in being kind we are fulfilling the purpose God intends for us. ■

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



SAINTLY HABITS

The Habit of Presence



I have been taught—as I often teach in my faith formation classroom—that stewardship requires us to be generous in time, talent, and treasure.

St. Louise de Marillac (1591–1660)—who, along with Saint Vincent de Paul, founded the Daughters of Charity to serve those who were sick, poor, and forgotten—teaches me that time is the most important of the three. If I am going to be generous with my talent and treasure, I am going to have to make the time to share these gifts with others. To follow her example, I need to make myself available, both physically and emotionally.

If I am going to be a good steward of my family, I will of course provide for their material needs. I will want to share my interests and talents with

them too. But most importantly, I will need to spend time with them. When I am generous with my time, I will learn how to recognize their unspoken cries for help and offer whatever comfort I can, even if it is just by being available to them in their need.

After all, our simple presence to another person can be an incredible act of kindness. ■

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).



I heard that the Gospel has nothing to do with being “nice.” But isn’t being nice the same thing as kindness?



Grandparents are great examples of biblical kindness.

A loving grandparent is the closest thing we have on this earth to an experience of God’s kindness.

Such unlimited generosity speaks to us of the presence of God, whose very nature is to shower abundant blessings on his children. One of the healthiest things you and your children can do spiritually is to take time to literally count your blessings. Then, as followers of Jesus, we are compelled to do the same for others: to actively and generously spread kindness. ■

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

a: *The truth is, Jesus never said anything to us about being “nice.”* To be nice is to be pleasing or agreeable, which can be accomplished without helping others. Scripture instead talks about kindness as one of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. Kindness is not a passive trait but is actively exhibited by doing good. Grandparents are great examples of biblical kindness: they can’t wait to be with their grandchildren so they can spoil them with goodness and then send them on their way. I was told many years ago that a

5 THINGS

Five Things I Learned From . . .

WEB • BOOKS • MUSIC • MOVIES • TV

Racquetball!

I recently started playing racquetball with my son while he was home from college. I found God during our daily games.



- 1. Time.** Spending uninterrupted time with my adult son helped us reconnect. I also need uninterrupted time with God.
- 2. Humility.** My racquetball skills are a bit rusty. My son outplayed me (sometimes). I had to accept we both have aged! God gives us his grace to accept change.
- 3. Humor.** We laughed at each other and ourselves. God wants us to be happy!
- 4. Joy.** Joy is not complicated. My son and I simply enjoyed being with each other on the court, and God was with us in that joy.
- 5. Gratitude.** A very simple game helped us find each other again and reminded us of the love we have for each other. I must take time to thank God for all that is good in my life. ■

Michelle Cook is the mother of three and no longer aspires to be a professional racquetball player.



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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 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).

