



St. Patrick Catholic Church

God's Generosity

Multiplying Our Surrendered Gifts

What is God calling me to give? Where does He want to send me to find the hungry and the suffering? Who needs to hear me witness about my faith? What would it take for me to really surrender my time, treasure and talents to His service?

It does not take much to do good, to relieve suffering, or to show love. Consider the example of St. Teresa of Calcutta. When she began her ministry among the poor, she had nothing. She started her order with no master plan or endowment. Rather, she walked the streets, feeding the hungry, and caring for the sick with whatever resources she could muster. She gave the little she had, and through her generosity and holiness, she touched hearts and changed lives.

One day, she came upon a homeless man dying in the gutter. With the help of some men, she brought him to her home. There she washed him, prepared a small meal for him, and prayed. For three hours she did nothing but sit with him. He looked up at her and said, "My whole life I have been treated like an animal, now I will die like an angel." She was not able to give him much — just her time and her love — but it meant that, in his final hours on earth, instead of dying in the streets, he could die in the arms of a saint.

In the Gospels, Jesus never turns away those in need. Whether they have a question, whether they need healing or whether they are hungry, He gives them what He has, and it never fails to satisfy. Today's story about the multiplication of the loaves and fish is a case in point. The five barley loaves and two fish would not have been enough to feed the apostles, never mind a throng of five thousand. Yet Jesus refused to keep the food to Himself. Rather He took it, blessed it and gave it away. That small act of generosity was enough to satisfy a hungry mass of people with plenty left over.

It is a spiritual law that God uses those who have the least ability to do His work. We often say, "If you want to get something done, ask a busy person." Well, when God wants to get something done, He asks a poor person. By choosing those who are weak, deprived and even sinful, our Heavenly Father makes it clear that it is He who is at work. Otherwise we might chalk the good deeds up to the cleverness or resourcefulness of those who do them rather than the God who makes all things possible.

God wants to do great things in our families, parishes, and communities. He wants to feed the hungry, He wants to console the suffering and He wants to change hardened hearts. But He needs us to help Him. He needs us to give even when we think we have too little, to work even when we feel exhausted, and to open our mouths even when we think we have nothing to say. We need to take risks as St. Teresa of Calcutta did by ministering to those dying on the streets and as the boy in the Gospel did who gave his basket of food to Jesus. When we do that, when we step outside our comfort zone in faith, God will take care of the rest.



Prayer of St. Patrick

Christ with me,

Christ before me,

Christ behind me,

Christ in me,

Christ beneath me,

Christ above me,

Christ on my right,

Christ on my left,

Christ when I lie down,

Christ when I sit down,

Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,

Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me,

Christ in the eye that sees me,

Christ in the ear that hears me.

St. Patrick, Pray for us.



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Walking with God

Holiness ... kind of an intimidating word, right? Did you know the Church teaches that we are all called to holiness? What does holiness mean, anyway? According to a child, holiness is being best friends with God. How do we befriend God?

Use these five spiritual practices to get started:

1. Come, Let Us Adore Him

Pope Benedict XVI said, "In a world where there is so much noise, so much bewilderment, there is a need for silent adoration of Jesus concealed in the Host." Have you ever been to Adoration? Adoration is when we spend quiet time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Try making it to Adoration once a month.

Here's some great inspiration from one of my favorite saints, St. Thérèse the Little Flower, to help you get there:

"Do you realize that Jesus is there in the tabernacle expressly for you — for you alone? He burns with the

desire to come into your heart ... don't listen to the demon, laugh at him, and go without fear to receive the Jesus of peace and love."

2. Up the Ante

Make a spiritual practice to not give people what they deserve. Bear with me here. You know that snarky email you got? The one to which an equally snarky reply would be totally justified? Well, what about replying to it with kindness? Remember that person who said that awful thing about you to your colleagues or friends?

What if, instead of blasting them for being a gossip (and other less polite words), you made a point of saying something charitable (and true!) about them to others? The point is: make a daily practice of giving better than you get. It's about cultivating mercy and forgiveness in your heart. Every time you're presented with the opportunity to show love and mercy in the face of nastiness and gall, remember the love and mercy that are yours from Christ.

As St. Peter put it:

"Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing." (1 Peter 3:9)

3. Pray the Rosary

I know daily rosary can seem daunting, but give it an honest try! There's nothing like the rosary to draw our minds to the truth of the faith, to draw our hearts to Our Blessed Mother, and to draw our souls closer to God. Hard to find time in your day?

Here's some holy advice from St. Josemaría Escrivá:

"You always leave the Rosary for later, and you end up not saying it at all because you are sleepy. If there is no other time, say it in the street without letting anybody notice it. It will, moreover, help you to have presence of God."

4. Heed the Siren's Call

Develop a little practice when you hear a siren at home or anywhere say a "Hail Mary" for those in trouble and those speeding to their aid. Taking a minute to stop our day to pray for someone in crisis reminds us to let the needs of others penetrate our hearts.

St. Vincent de Paul describes it this way:

"We should strive to keep our hearts open to the sufferings and wretchedness of other people, and pray continually that God may grant us that spirit of compassion which is truly the spirit of God."



5. The Heart Diet

No, it has nothing to do with cutting down on your cholesterol, this is thinking about how what we consume with our eyes and ears affects our spiritual well-being. Does the music blasting from your AirPods on your way to work lift up your heart and mind to God? Does the website you're browsing encourage you to think charitably and respectfully about others? Does the TV show you're watching before bed help you unwind, or does it wind up? Making a daily habit of asking ourselves these kinds of questions can help us maintain a healthy diet for our hearts and souls.

St. Paul said it best:

"Finally, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." (Philippians 4:8)