



Feast of Saint John Climacus
Monday of the Third Week of Lent

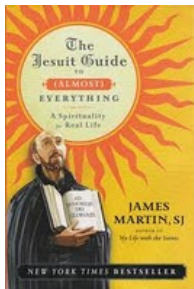
Question of the Week

For the Fourth Sunday of Lent (April 3, 2011) Laetare Sunday

“So he went and washed, and came back able to see.” Today is the half-way point in Lent, after washing for twenty (20) days, can you see better? Where do you see God’s presence in your life that you may have been blinded to before Lent began? Where in the world have you seen God building the kingdom? What kind of washing do you need to do during the remainder of Lent in order to respond as the one born blind, “I do believe, Lord’ and he worshipped him.”

NCCL News

INVITATION – Join the Wednesday Morning Book Blog



I received the following announcement/invitation from one of our newest members. Cheryl Smith is the Resource Center Administrator for the Diocese of Syracuse. With Fr. James Martin serving as the Opening Keynote for the 75th Annual Conference and Exposition, this is an appropriate time to meet him in one of his books. Thanks to Cheryl for quickly becoming an active member and to Caroline Cerveny for encouraging her to share this blog with all NCCL members. Here’s the invitation.

Cheryl Smith and Annette Gape, have developed a “Book Blog” for [The Jesuit Guide to \(Almost\) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life](#), by James Martin, SJ. We would like to invite the members of NCCL to join us at <http://wednesdaymorningbookgroup.blogspot.com>

The blog has reflection questions for each chapter along with some videos, podcasts and links to various articles that relate to the book.

The beauty of using a blog to discuss the book is that so many more people can join the group discussions. The blog is here to carry on the conversation with *all* who would like to join us. Some of us meet in person and the blog keeps the discussion going even after the meeting has ended. Come join the discussion, we would love to hear from you.

Another advantage to using the blog is that it doesn't matter where you are in the book because you can go to the 'chapter page' that you are on...do the reflections and watch the videos for that chapter. You go at your own speed.

Whether you are already reading the book, or if you are planning on purchasing the book [The Jesuit Guide to \(Almost\) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life](#), please join us...because it is never too late to share the insights of Fr. James Martin, SJ.

March Honor Roll - \$75 for 75th – 29 MORE Needed to Reach 75 by March 31

75 Years of Fidelity to the Word

\$75 FOR 75TH

THANKS to the next **21** Contributors. We only need 6 donations to reach our monthly goal of 75 contributors this month. Thanks to all those who have tried the online donation tab and were greeted with an error message. It is now working. In addition to being able to donate online, you can still call the office to donate or download a form and either mail it or fax it to the office.

This week's **HONOR ROLL**

49. Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Anderson

50. Ms. Carol Augustine

51. Mrs. Connie Calmer-Anderson

52. Fr. Paul Brian Campbell

53. Dr. Barbara Campbell

54. Mr. William Dinger

55. Dr. Carole Eipers

56. Dr. Zeni Fox

57. Mr. James Kemna

58. Ms. Teresa Locke

59. Mr. & Mrs. Bob and Maggie McCarty

60. Mr. Thomas, McGrath

61. Ms. Theresa May

62. Ms. Maribeth Mancini

63. Dr. Barbara Murray

64. Ms. Jo Ann Paradise

65. Ms. Ann Pinckney

66. Mr. Paul Schroeder

67. Mr. Brian Singer-Towns

68. Mrs. Suzette Sornborger

69. Rev. James Uppena

You can still be one of the **FIRST 75** to contribute this March. You can go to the NCCL website and click on \$75 for 75th under the *About NCCL* tab or click on this link to [Donate Now](#).

<http://www.nccl.org/Default.aspx?pageId=957755&wofg=false&wstepNo=1&wctxId=718277e83cba4eed890314f930081b46>

As of this publication, we have reached \$7,451.14

NEW Learning Session Added to Conference Schedule

Our Sunday Visitor

Curriculum Division

(formerly Harcourt Religion Publishers)

The Planning Committee is pleased to announce the addition of another Learning Session to the already dynamic line-up.

312 Sacraments:

From Baptism to Matrimony—One size does not fit all

Jo Ann Paradise D. Min., National Catechetical Consultant of Our Sunday Visitor Curriculum Division. Our Sunday Visitor

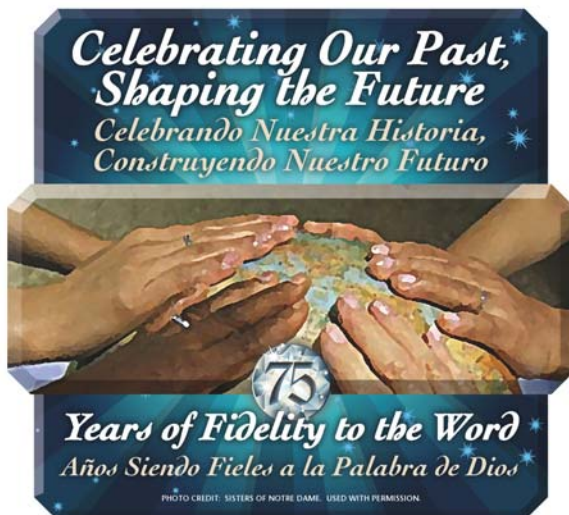
Curriculum Division is also sponsoring the Sunday Evening Reception. Hope to see you there.

Learning Session Description: From Baptism to Matrimony—One size does not fit all



In responding to the Church's call to prepare members of the community to receive the sacraments, catechetical leaders have created many creative and formative opportunities for candidates that often includes their families. Despite our best efforts, there is a continuing frustration that these opportunities do not facilitate deepening conversion. Could a clue to unraveling this mystery be found in the Emmaus story? This workshop will provide a lens to look at our existing programs and imagine ways to meet people where they are on the journey.

75th Annual Conference



May 22-26, 2011
Atlanta, Georgia

HYATT.

The conference hotel is the Hyatt Regency and single and double rooms are only \$99.00.

Book online at

https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_ei_new&eventID=2624958

Check out the conference website for NEW Information

<http://www.nccl.us>

► **Schedule** ◀

► **Presentation Overviews** ◀



»Fr. Jim Martin's Introduction To " *Who Cares About The Saints?*"«

><http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8WkZblkeNo><

►NEW Invitation Video from Caroline Cerveney◀

<http://animoto.com/play/XVEfzfkz02POjHQJZBADbQ>

Pre-register NOW and Save – only \$319 until midnight PDT May 1, 2011. Go to www.NCCL.org and click on *Annual Conference* under **News & Events**.

**When making your flight reservations -
plan to schedule your flight departure for May 26, 2011 after 3:00 PM (ET)**

President Invites Members to Serve on a Committee



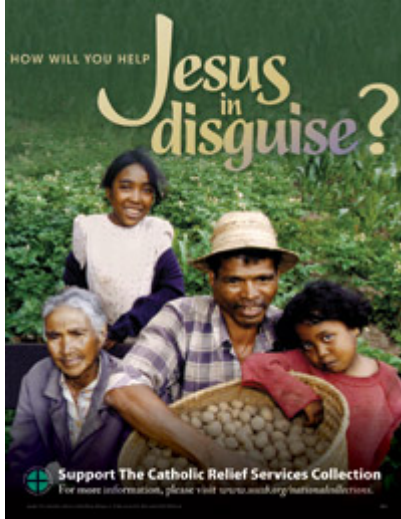
As a member-driven organization, President Anne Roat understands the importance of member participation on committees. They are the backbone of the organization. If you are interested in sharing your talents on a committee or if you would care to nominate an individual, either a member or a friend of NCCL with the gifts or skills to meet the committee's objectives, please contact NCCL President Anne Roat personally at aroat@dol-in.org.

A complete list of committees and their charges can be found at the NCCL website under **Committees**. In addition, if you sign in you can see the current list of persons belonging to each of those committees at <http://www.nccl.org/committees/conference>

Father of NCCL Member Joseph Fry is Born to Eternal Life

The father of Joe Fry passed to his heavenly home on the evening of March 25th, Feast of the Annunciation. Joe indicated that his "Dad passed very peacefully and in little pain." The funeral will be at 10 a.m. this Monday, March 28 at Saint Joseph Church in Corydon. Joe can be reached by email at jfeyjim@yahoo.com.

How Will You Help *JESUS IN DISGUISE?* – Catholic Relief Services – April 2-3



The Catholic Relief Services Collection (CRSC) supports families in distress, whether across the street or half way around the globe. The national date for this collection, which funds six major national and international Catholic relief agencies, is set for the weekend of April 2-3. The Catholic Relief Services Collection's theme is "*Jesus in Disguise: How will you help?*" This year the focus of the collection is the family. The collection helps families, values their fundamental role in society, and strives to protect them.

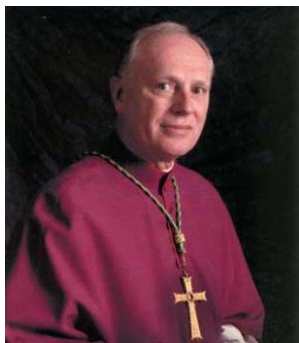
The Catholic Relief Services Collection values families. It works to provide for their basic humanitarian needs, protect vulnerable children, reunite families, and encourage legislation that reflects the importance of family in society. The reach of this

Collection spans the globe, helping families on every continent, with an array of ethnicities and backgrounds, addressing a myriad of needs. The Collection supports [six Catholic agencies](#) that prioritize the family and protect the life and dignity of each person. You can read the complete [press release](#)

(<http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2011/11-057.shtml>) or you can go to the Catholic Relief Services Collection website at <http://www.usccb.org/crs/>.



Weigh Use of Force in Libya in Light of Duty to Protect Human Life and Dignity



As the U.S. and other nations take military action to protect the people of Libya from their own government, the U.S. bishops asked the Obama administration to stay focused on this limited goal and mission, as well as the wellbeing of the civilian population. "Important questions include: How is the use of force protecting the civilian population of Libya? Is the force employed proportionate to the goal of protecting civilians?" wrote Bishop Howard J. Hubbard of Albany, New York, chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in a March 24 letter to National Security Advisor Thomas E. Donilon.

The bishop also urged that the use of force be continually evaluated in light of these questions: "Is it producing evils graver than the evil it hopes to address?" and "What are the implications of the use of force for the future welfare of the Libyan people and the stability of the region? We know these are difficult questions to which there are few easy answers, but it is our moral responsibility as a nation to rigorously examine the use of military force in light of the need to protect human life and dignity," said Bishop Hubbard.

Bishop Hubbard said the purpose articulated in UN Security Council Resolution 1973 to demand “a ceasefire and a complete end to violence and all attacks against, and abuses of, civilians” appears to meet the traditional criterion of “just cause,” but said the U.S. bishops joined Pope Benedict XVI in following the military action in Libya with “great apprehension.” The letter is available online: www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/callafrica/2011-03-24BishopHubbardtoNationalSecurityAdvisor.pdf

Pope John Paul II on FaceBook



The Vatican Radio and the Vatican Television Center, with the agreement of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, has created a Facebook page for Pope John Paul II on the occasion of his upcoming beatification.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, director of the Vatican Television Center as well as of Vatican Radio, reported that this week videos will be offered with the Pope's voice in various languages during his trips around the world and in the Vatican. There are some 40 videos offered thus far. In addition, 25 video clips have been made to present significant and particular moments of the pontificate's trips.

You can check it out at

<http://www.facebook.com/vatican.johnpaul2>

Lenten Reflection From Caritas Intertionalis



In “Ideas for Lent by Catholic Coalition on Climate Change in USA,” Dan Misleh, Executive Director of the Coalition, begins a blog by suggesting ways in which some Catholics might feel called to use this Lenten season to grow closer to God by more fully caring for Creation and the poor in the face of what Pope Benedict XVI has called “disturbing climate change” (Urbi et Orbi Message- Easter 2009). Says Misleh,

What we buy, how we move, what we waste, how we conserve, how we spend our time: all of these things impact our planet and its people. It strikes me that Lent asks many of these same questions. Lent calls us to sacrifice, to deny ourselves, to pray more fervently, to become more in touch with our Creator. Linking Lenten practices with a greater awareness of our finite planet and the needs of so many across the globe seem to me to be obvious connections.

Read the [entire blog here](http://blog.caritas.org/2011/03/14/us-catholics-encouraged-to-carbon-fast-for-lent) (<http://blog.caritas.org/2011/03/14/us-catholics-encouraged-to-carbon-fast-for-lent>).

USCCB Urges HUD Not to Include Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Among Protected Categories

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has urged the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) not to adopt a proposed regulation that would add sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of protected categories for which discrimination in HUD programs is prohibited. In comments filed today with HUD, Anthony Picarello, USCCB general counsel, and Michael Moses, USCCB associate general counsel, noted that, when it comes to orientation and gender identity, “a protected classification for purposes of federal housing programs has no support in any Act of Congress and appears at odds with at least one other, namely, the Defense of Marriage Act.” They added that “the regulations may force faith-based and other organizations, as a condition of participating in HUD programs and in contravention of their religious beliefs, to facilitate shared housing arrangements between persons who are not joined in the legal union of one man and one woman.”

“By this, we do not mean that any person should be denied housing. Making decisions about *shared* housing, however, is another matter,” wrote Picarello and Moses. “Particularly here, faith-based and other organizations should retain the freedom they have always had to make housing placements in a manner consistent with their religious beliefs, including when it concerns a cohabiting couple, be it an unmarried heterosexual couple or a homosexual couple. Given the very large role that faith-based organizations play in HUD programs, the regulation, by infringing upon that freedom, may have the ultimate effect of driving away organizations with a long and successful track record in meeting housing needs, leaving beneficiaries *without* the housing that they sought or that the government intended them to receive.” The full comment is available at: [www.usccb.org/ogc/HUD-Regulations-on-Sexual-Orientation-and-Gender-Identity\(March_2011\).pdf](http://www.usccb.org/ogc/HUD-Regulations-on-Sexual-Orientation-and-Gender-Identity(March_2011).pdf)

HELP: Seeking Pictures of Sadlier Events from Past NCCL Conferences



It's time to look back in your boxes of photographs, your trays of slides, your photo albums or more recently you can review your photo CD's, your memory cards, your hard drive or even your online photo storage. Sadlier is looking for pictures that capture the scope of the Sadlier Event. Please send any photos you have to Carole Eipers at ceipers@sadlier.com. If you are unable to send them digitally, send them to Carole at Sadlier, 9 Pine Street, New York, NY 10005-1002.

USCCB Launches Major Spanish-Language Media Initiative to Support Marriage

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) announced the launch of a major Spanish-language media initiative in support of marriage and the family. The radio public service announcement (PSA) campaign, titled “*Matrimonios que inspiran*” (Marriages That Inspire), is composed of nine unique 30-second radio spots, targeted to different age demographics.



foundation for a stronger, more stable family.”

“Most Latinos believe in the institution of marriage” said Alejandro Aguilera-Titus, director for Hispanic Affairs at the Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church and coordinator of the activity. “Our main communications’ objective with the campaign is to revalidate the significance of marriage as the



The radio campaign has its complement in a dedicated Spanish-language website,

www.portumatrimonio.org, which launched in 2010. The successful website has had over a 100,000 visitors in just one year, and averages 1,500 visits daily. It also has 1,200 fans on Facebook. The site has received very positive reviews and feedback from Spanish-language users around the country and around the world. You can access the complete [news release](http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2011/11-055E.shtml) (<http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2011/11-055E.shtml>).

Two New Exciting Features for Parents



Two new online series - *Catholic Parenting 101* and *Los Lazos Familiares* - feature helpful tips and information for Catholic parents as they deal with some of the hurdles life can present. These series are available at <http://faithfirst.com/family.html>. The first topic is *Confronting the Challenges of Bullying* and was written by Dr. Tim Hogan, a writer, psychologist and certified Imago Relationship therapist who has taught workshops for the Archdiocese of Detroit. FaithFirst is a program of RCL Benziger.

Love for Scripture Key for Evangelization



The Pope suggested St. Lawrence as a model for the new evangelization, saying that also today this effort “needs well-prepared, zealous and courageous apostles, so that the light and beauty of the Gospel will prevail over the cultural orientations of ethical relativism and religious indifference, and transform various ways of thinking and of acting into a genuine Christian humanism.”

The Bishop of Rome concluded his reflection by "underscoring that all [Lawrence's] activity was inspired in his great love for sacred Scripture, which he knew in great part by heart, and by the conviction that the listening and acceptance of the Word of God produces an interior transformation that leads us to holiness." The Holy Father recalled Lawrence's description of the Word of God as "light for the intellect and fire for the will, so that man can know and love God." The full article is available at www.zenit.org/article-32104?l=english.

The Courtyard of th Gentiles: *Lights, Religion, Common Sense*



The Courtyard of the Gentiles, a new forum for dialogue between believers and nonbelievers, was launched Thursday at the Paris headquarters of UNESCO, in the presence of diplomats, international officials and representatives of the world of culture. The initiative, promoted by the Pontifical Council for Culture, takes up a suggestion of Benedict XVI to create a space for dialogue "with those to whom religion is something foreign, to whom God is unknown and who nevertheless do not want to be left merely Godless, but rather to draw near to him, albeit as the Unknown" (Benedict XVI, Dec. 21, 2009).

Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, chose the French capital to launch the forum because of its symbolic status as the home of the Enlightenment and its impact on the world. Thus, Thursday and Friday, three prestigious institutions -- the U.N. Educational, Social and Cultural Organization, the University of the Sorbonne and the Institute of France -- enabled top personalities from the world of culture to discuss the topic "Lights, Religions, Common Sense."

At UNESCO, this dialogue was presented as an "essential element in the quest for peace and abolition of the rejection of the other in the affirmation of one's own identity," explained the Pontifical Council for Culture in a communiqué. "This dialogue has the same relevance for our time as interreligious dialogue," the council statement affirmed. "From the perspective of globalization, it calls for posing vital questions of a universal character and values." The press release can be found at <http://www.zenit.org/article-32127?l=english>. You can also read the text of Pope Benedict's video message "*Let Your Deepest Feelings Rise Toward the Unknown God*," to the Courtyard of the Gentiles at <http://www.zenit.org/article-32135?l=english>.

Environmental/Climate Change Study Guide Available for FREE



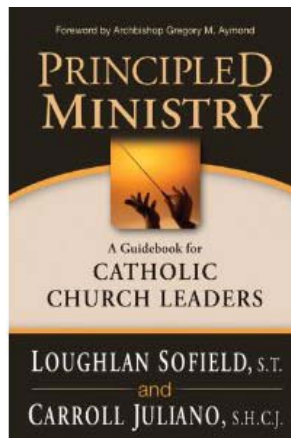
The Catholic Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh has produced a study guide on the Catholic commitment to care for God's creation, and explicitly addresses the issue of climate change. The study guide includes prayers and Scripture reflections about the environment, a sample Easter homily by Cardinal Keith Patrick O'Brien, climate change impact case studies, ways to become an "eco-congregation," and suggestions

about how to reduce your carbon footprint in defense of both Creation and the poor. A free copy can be downloaded at [Free Guide \(http://studyguides.eu5.org/docs/environment.pdf\)](http://studyguides.eu5.org/docs/environment.pdf).

FREE Professional Development Webinar – THIS Tuesday, March 29



In partnership with the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership and the National Association for Lay Ministry, Ave Maria Press is pleased to present this free, live webinar on March 29, 2011 from 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM EDT. It is entitled *Pastoral Leadership in the Christian Community*.



John Quincy Adams defined leadership this way: "If your actions inspire others to dream more, to learn more, to do more and to be more than they are, then you are a leader." Leadership is an extremely complex issue. It is multidimensional - an amalgam of many different components. Effective Christian leadership requires a balanced mixture of spirituality, skill, positive relationship, unique qualities, sound theory, principles, and, perhaps, even a dash of charisma. Join bestselling authors, Br. Loughlan Sofield, S.T., and Sr. Carroll Juliano, S.H.C.J. as they explore the elements of effective Pastoral Leadership in the Christian Community. They have co-authored [*Principled Ministry: A Guidebook for Catholic Church Leaders*](#).



[Read more](#) about Carroll Juliano.



[Read more](#) about Loughlan Sofield.

Register and sign up at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/579427217>.

Six Ways to Boost Your “Habits of Helping”

The author of this article, Stephen G. Post knows that “one thing I’ve learned from my own experiences of loss and hardship is that, when all else fails, we can still give to others. And doing so will always be our salvation...” Research backs this up.

Science tells us that there appears to be a fundamental human drive toward helping others. When people do “unto others” in kindness, it lights up the primitive part of the brain that also lets us experience joy. This feeling of elevation is sometimes described by psychologists as the “helper’s high.” Just last year, a survey of 4,500 American adults showed similar results:

- 73 percent agreed that “volunteering lowered my stress levels.”
- 89 percent reported that “volunteering has improved my sense of well-being.”
- 92 percent agreed that volunteering enriched their sense of purpose in life.

So here are six suggestions for how to appreciate all the ways you’re currently giving to others—and to expand your habits of helping.

1. Keep a journal about the large and small ways you are giving to people right now. Need some help starting your own journal? Check out our [community "giving journal"](#)-- and enjoy the rush of the helper's high.

2. Make it a practice to help one person every day.

3. Visualize helping.

4. Draw on your own talents in giving.

5. Think about the ways others have given to you, right now or in the past.

6. Practice concentric visualizations, from the nearest to the neediest.

You can read the entire article at [Six Ways](#) (http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/six_ways_to_become_more_altruistic)

26 Years of World Youth Day



It’s less than two minutes. Video produced by Grassroots Films (<http://www.grassrootsfilms.com/>) for WYD 2011 Madrid. Watch it at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxOTpuQe6M4>. In addition, the organizers of Benedict XVI's visit to the United Kingdom launched a video campaign to encourage young people to respond to the Pope's invitation to World Youth Day in Madrid.

Three new videos, which were released through the Papal Visit Facebook page, feature two young Catholics, Claz Gomez, blogger and pilgrim, and Paschal Uche, the youth chosen to address the Pontiff during his visit to Westminster Cathedral last September.

The youth encourage their peers to respond to the Holy Father's invitation, which he gave in Hyde Park last year with these words: "Let me finish these few words by warmly inviting you to

join me next year in Madrid for World Youth Day. Check it out at www.facebook.com/papalvisit.

The Untapped Power Of Smiling – “When you fast, do not look gloomy...”



I am always amazed when science proves something our faith has always told us was true. I felt this article was quite appropriate for Lent. Every year as we are reminded of the three Lenten practices of praying, fasting and almsgiving, we hear in the Scriptures that “When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites.” It doesn’t actually tell you to smile but I believe the implication is there. And now, there is proof that “The mood-boosting power of a smile is unfathomable.” Here is part of what I read in the March 22 edition of Forbes. You can find the entire article by Ron Gutman at

<http://blogs.forbes.com/ericsavitz/2011/03/22/the-untapped-power-of-smiling>.

...I learned that we’re part of a naturally smiling species, that we can use our smiling powers to positively impact almost any social situation, and that smiling is really good for us.

Surprisingly, we’re actually born smiling. 3-D ultrasound technology now shows that developing babies appear to [smile even in the womb](#). After they’re born, babies continue to smile (initially mostly in their sleep) and even blind babies smile in response to the sound of the human voice.

A smile is also one of the most basic, biologically uniform expressions of all humans. Paul Ekman (the world’s leading expert on facial expressions) discovered that smiles are cross-cultural and have the same meaning in different societies.

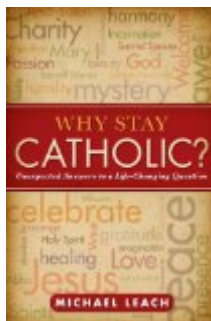
...now we know that:



- When you smile, you look good and feel good.
- When others see you smile, they smile too.
- When others smile, they look good and feel good, too.

Perhaps this is why Mother Teresa said: “I will never understand all the good that a simple smile can accomplish.” What’s the catch? Only that the smile you give has to be big, and genuine!

Why Stay Catholic?

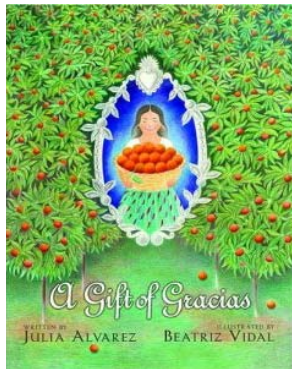


This new book by Michael Leach simply made me swell with pride as I read his answers to the question most of us have heard from at least one person, *Why stay Catholic?* In part one, he shares and explains great ideas Catholics never hear about, even from the pulpit; in part two, he introduces inspiring,

often little-known Catholics who never make the news but can make a big difference in people's faith; and in part three, Leach highlights great Catholic organizations that change the world. Why not purchase your own copy of [*Why Stay Catholic?: Unexpected Answers to a Life-changing Question*](#), I doubt you will be disappointed. Here is how he begins.

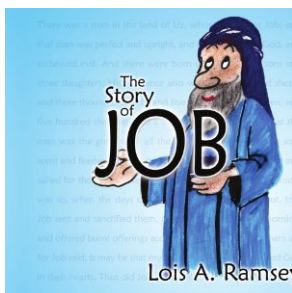
Catholicism is about seeing what the eyes cannot see and understanding what is at the heart of things: truth, love, mercy, goodness, beauty, harmony, humility, compassion. Gratitude, joy, peace, salvation. It's about seeing the ordinary and perceiving the extraordinary at the same time: the midnight glow of Easter candles that are, in truth, a thousand points of light; the stories of saints, the saga of sinners, and the rumors of angels that inspire and heal us. "It is only with the heart that one sees rightly," wrote Antoine de Saint-Exupery. "What is essential is invisible to the eye."

[**A Gift of Gracias: The Legend of Altagracia**](#)



The Virgin Mary takes many names around the world, and in the Dominican Republic, the author's birthplace, she is *Nuestra Senora de la Altagracia*. This magical story, based on a legend of Altagracia, begins as Papa returns home from a trip to the city with an overflowing basket of oranges, like those he used to eat in his native Spain. That night, after Papa warns the family that they may have to abandon their failing olive farm, young Maria dreams of planting orange seeds, and a beautiful lady with a crown of stars, Altagracia, materializes in an orange-laden grove. The next morning, the family plants orange seeds and gives thanks to Our Lady--and sure enough, a bountiful orange crop is born. Argentina-born illustrator Vidal uses small brushes and gouache to create lovely, stylized folk-art-style paintings of the hard-working family and tropical landscapes. An author's note tells more about Altagracia. You can order [*A Gift of Gracias: The Legend of Altagracia*](#).

[**The Story of Job**](#)



The story of Job is a Bible Story about a man named Job who loved God and was blessed by God. All is well until Satan tries to make Job fall from God's grace. Sometimes, like Job, we suffer without knowing the reason why, and want to blame God for our trouble. We don't understand all things, and must learn to trust God in all circumstances. This book also shows us that God is free, and is not bound to help us understand everything. It also teaches us that God is good, and fair, in His dealings. You can purchase [*The Story of Job*](#).

Recycling a Bottle



This is affirmation at its finest. It's a very clever flash mob activity. It's only two minutes from our neighbors to the North. Hope you enjoy it.

Watch it at [Flash Mob](#)

(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYnd5JRu86E&feature=youtu.gdata_player)

The Tire Iron and the Tamale By JUSTIN HORNER

The following story appeared in the March 4 edition of the *New York Times*. I hadn't planned on sharing a story during each week of Lent but this is week three and story three so it just might continue. This is one of those stories you want to pull out when someone complains about "those immigrants". Ironically the Trinitarian theme is present. I hope you will be inspired to stop and help someone. They used to say that Catholics were great people who would always help you as long as they weren't on their way to Mass.

During this past year I've had three instances of car trouble: a blowout on a freeway, a bunch of blown fuses and an out-of-gas situation. They all happened while I was driving other people's cars, which for some reason makes it worse on an emotional level. And on a practical level as well, what with the fact that I carry things like a jack and extra fuses in my own car, and know enough not to park on a steep incline with less than a gallon of fuel.



said.

Each time, when these things happened, I was disgusted with the way people didn't bother to help. I was stuck on the side of the freeway hoping my friend's roadside service would show, just watching tow trucks cruise past me. The people at the gas stations where I asked for a gas can told me that they couldn't lend them out "for safety reasons," but that I could buy a really crappy one-gallon can, with no cap, for \$15. It was enough to make me say stuff like "this country is going to hell in a handbasket," which I actually

But you know who came to my rescue all three times? Immigrants. Mexican immigrants. None of them spoke any English.

One of those guys stopped to help me with the blowout even though he had his whole family of four in tow. I was on the side of the road for close to three hours with my friend's big Jeep. I put signs in the windows, big signs that said, "NEED A JACK," and offered money. Nothing. Right as I was about to give up and start hitching, a van pulled over, and the guy bounded out.

He sized up the situation and called for his daughter, who spoke English. He conveyed through her that he had a jack but that it was too small for the Jeep, so we would need to

brace it. Then he got a saw from the van and cut a section out of a big log on the side of the road. We rolled it over, put his jack on top and we were in business.

I started taking the wheel off, and then, if you can believe it, I broke his tire iron. It was one of those collapsible ones, and I wasn't careful, and I snapped the head clean off. Damn.

No worries: he ran to the van and handed it to his wife, and she was gone in a flash down the road to buy a new tire iron. She was back in 15 minutes. We finished the job with a little sweat and cussing (the log started to give), and I was a very happy man.

The two of us were filthy and sweaty. His wife produced a large water jug for us to wash our hands in. I tried to put a 20 in the man's hand, but he wouldn't take it, so instead I went up to the van and gave it to his wife as quietly as I could. I thanked them up one side and down the other. I asked the little girl where they lived, thinking maybe I'd send them a gift for being so awesome. She said they lived in Mexico. They were in Oregon so Mommy and Daddy could pick cherries for the next few weeks. Then they were going to pick peaches, then go back home.

After I said my goodbyes and started walking back to the Jeep, the girl called out and asked if I'd had lunch. When I told her no, she ran up and handed me a tamale.

This family, undoubtedly poorer than just about everyone else on that stretch of highway, working on a seasonal basis where time is money, took a couple of hours out of their day to help a strange guy on the side of the road while people in tow trucks were just passing him by.

But we weren't done yet. I thanked them again and walked back to my car and opened the foil on the tamale (I was starving by this point), and what did I find inside? My \$20 bill! I whirled around and ran to the van and the guy rolled down his window. He saw the \$20 in my hand and just started shaking his head no. All I could think to say was, "*Por favor, por favor, por favor,*" with my hands out. The guy just smiled and, with what looked like great concentration, said in English: "Today you, tomorrow me."

Then he rolled up his window and drove away, with his daughter waving to me from the back. I sat in my car eating the best tamale I've ever had, and I just started to cry. It had been a rough year; nothing seemed to break my way. This was so out of left field I just couldn't handle it.

In the several months since then I've changed a couple of tires, given a few rides to gas stations and once drove 50 miles out of my way to get a girl to an airport. I won't accept money. But every time I'm able to help, I feel as if I'm putting something in the bank.

Justin Horner is a graphic designer living in Portland, Ore. This essay was adapted from a message-board posting on reddit.com.

Love Letter to Japan



This is a short 1 ½ minute video that stems from the question, “If you could write a letter to the people of Japan, what would you say. For those curious how the video was created, Chris Cade asked over 35,000 people on Facebook and Twitter and a couple hundred responded. The merging of their answers is what appears in this video

http://www.flickspire.com/m/share_this/LoveLetterToJapan.

The words to the letter are printed here:

A Love Letter to Japan

No words can express how we
Your fellow citizens of this planet
Feel the grief of your significant loss.
We are all brothers and sisters.
When you hurt, we hurt.
As you overcome this devastating tragedy,
Your strength, courage, and compassion inspire us.
Know that we are with you.
We are here, holding your hand
And we are sending you healing energy.
You are in our hearts and thoughts.
May our prayers bring you
Renewed spirit, wholeness, and peace.
We love you.
In this time of sorrow,
May God be with you
And watch over you.

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