



# Finding God

Our Response to God's Gifts

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## Are You a Good Provider?

I was at a retreat for men and one of the guys talked about his dad. "People saw my father and said, 'What a great provider.' He had an important job and our family lacked for nothing—at least materially. But emotionally, what he provided me was an emptiness in my heart and in my gut that plagued me for years. Now I'm trying to discover ways to do it differently with my children. I'm proud that I know my kids and they know me."



Part of the "guy code" tells men that they are supposed to be great providers. This can be troubling during these difficult economic times, especially if we hold too narrow a view of what it is we provide. While providing for the material needs of our families is something men—and women—can justly be proud of, it's not the whole story. Men, we have far more to offer than just a regular paycheck. Here are other areas in which we can be good providers:

**Notice and admire.** Every child, especially our sons, needs to be seen and blessed. Pay attention to what's going on in your children's lives and speak words of encouragement and, when warranted, praise. Accept your child for the gift he or she is.

**Listen and respond.** Dads can tend to speak more than we listen. And we can react instead of responding. Listen to your children and when you respond, don't attempt to fix or give advice unless you are asked. You can and should share your wisdom, but lose the preachy style.

**Tend to your children's spiritual life and your own.** Lead by example: worship together, pray together at meals, and find ways to share your faith naturally in the course of your life together. Take time this Father's Day to write a letter saying "one thing I admire about you" to each of your children. †

*Tom McGrath is the father of two and the author of [Raising Faith-Filled Kids](#). He is a frequent speaker on men's spirituality.*



## 3-Minute Retreat

### A Father's Love

On Father's Day, our thoughts and prayers turn to those men who have shown us fatherly love in our lives. Because of their love and protection, we have come to catch a glimpse of the steadfast love that our Father in heaven offers to us.

Take some time, now, to turn to your heavenly Father in prayer. Thank him for all of the ways that he has shown his love to you, from the time of your childhood up to the present day. Ask him for the grace you need to share his love with others as unselfishly as he has shared his love with you. End by slowly and reverently praying the Our Father ■



For a daily online 3-Minute Retreat, go to [www.3MinuteRetreat.com](http://www.3MinuteRetreat.com)

## Thrift Store Saints

### Blame the Victim?

The question is no longer, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” but, “When am I my brother’s keeper? Once a month, or any given day? All of my brothers? Whether they deserve it or not?”

After more than a year working at the St. Vincent de Paul shop, I still keep looking for “the deserving poor”—the innocent ones who are blatant victims of injustice and hard luck. I want to help them and no one else.

From what I can see, apart from children, most poor people’s situations seem to stem from a mixture of uncontrollable circumstances, luck, and their own decisions. Same as my situation.

Do I deserve everything I have? Am I somehow more moral, smarter, or a harder worker than poor people? Sometimes I am, most times I’m not.

Do poor people deserve their daily struggle for existence? Are they immoral, stupid, and lazy? Sometimes they are, most times they aren’t.

Very few people see themselves as poor and needy. Most of our clients describe their situation as “going through a rough patch.” If I ask, “How are you today?” typically, a client who is facing financial ruin will answer, “Blessed, I’m blessed.” The majority of people we help are doing the best they know how, just like everyone else on the planet. ■

*Jane Knuth has volunteered at the St. Vincent de Paul thrift store in Kalamazoo, Michigan, for 15 years and is the author of [Thrift Store Saints](#) (Loyola Press, 2010) and [Thrift Store Graces](#) (Loyola Press, 2011).*

## Providing What Matters

My Dad asked me to name some things he and my Mom did while I was growing up that still have an impact in my life. Here are a few.

### If it seems like a bad time, it’s probably the perfect time to share your love.

My dad would always leave us little notes when he traveled. Sweet, quick messages generally hidden with a stuffed animal. He acknowledged we were bummed he was going and took that time to share his love in writing. If I was pouting about something in my angsty teen years and “didn’t want to talk about it,” my dad would write me something, or tell me a story that showed he loved me. Angst and all.

### Don’t forget to celebrate.

A good report card, a new job, a finished race? All these events call for celebration. As a family, acknowledge each other’s highs, create traditions, and encourage future successes.

### It’s not about the money!

Growing up we didn’t have a lot of money, I didn’t know that at the time. The nights out to the hot dog stand that my parents saved up pennies to allow for were nights I looked forward to. Safari walks around the neighborhood for birthday parties were a hit with all of our friends.



### Have father–daughter time.

Because I was a daughter, that’s what we called it. From an early age it felt special to be able to ditch my friends playing freeze tag in the yard to head out for a day with my dad. It’s important to know that your parent wants to take time to connect with you. To get to know you and let you get to know them. ■

*By Patti McGrath, a Corporate Relocation Specialist living in Minneapolis, Minnesota.*

## Did You Know . . .

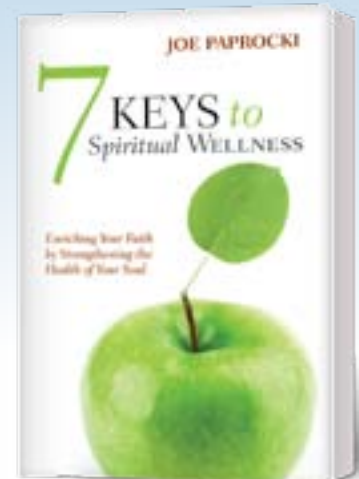
. . . family meals are important to teens? It may surprise parents to know that 72% of teens responding to a recent survey believe that eating dinner frequently with their parents is very important or fairly important. ■

*Source: The Importance of Family Dinners VI, a 2010 report from The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.*

## Unlock the doors to a healthy spiritual life

In *7 Keys to Spiritual Wellness*, best-selling author Joe Paprocki provides a prescription for spiritual health based on the rich wisdom of Catholic Tradition. He offers seven enduring and reliable strategies for achieving spiritual wellness that can lead readers to a more meaningful life and a richer experience of their faith. ■

[7 Keys to Spiritual Wellness](#) (Loyola Press, 2011).



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Contributors:

Joellyn Ciciarelli, Santiago Cortés-Sjöberg,  
Vinita Hampton Wright, Jane Knuth, Patti  
McGrath, Tom McGrath, Joe Paprocki,  
Denise Skomer.

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imagesource page 4

To contact any of our writers, please  
e-mail us at [newsletter@loyolapress.com](mailto:newsletter@loyolapress.com)

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## "Go!"

### People on a Mission

Dads know that it is almost impossible to leave the house without a child asking, "Can I go with you?" Children long to be a part of their Dad's life. One of the biggest thrills for any small child is when Dad invites him or her to help out when working on a task such as fixing the car or painting a room.

How lucky we are as God's children to know that God our Father wants us to help out with his mission! The new translation of the Third Edition of the *Roman Missal* makes it very clear that God wants us to work with him. In the Dismissal Rite of the Mass, we are now sent forth with one of the following dismissals:



*Go forth, the Mass is ended.*

*Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.*

*Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.*

*Go in peace.*

Each of these dismissals is reminding us that we have work to do and it is the work of God our Father. God has a mission and that mission has a church. As members of the Church—as children of God—we are privileged to share in the Father's mission of proclaiming good news to the world. ■

Master catechist Joe Paprocki is the author of the new *7 Keys to Spiritual Wellness* (Loyola Press, 2011).

For more information on the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, visit [www.loyolapress.com/romanmissal](http://www.loyolapress.com/romanmissal)

## "I have seen the Lord"

## John 20:14–18

[Mary of Magdala] turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" She thought it was the gardener and said to him, "Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni," which means Teacher . . . Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and what he told her.

There might have been a time when we did not do or say something because we assumed someone else was going to do it or say it, only to find out later that it never got said or done because everybody else thought someone else would take care of it. No

one remained passive out of malice; we just thought somebody else would act. And there are times when we do not even realize that something needs to be said or done. This might be of no consequence in certain situations, but there are others when it is a question of justice, of making the Gospel come alive.

One of the best lessons we can share with our children is how to be attentive to God's presence in our daily lives and recognize it, whether they are hanging out with friends, in the



classroom, strolling through the park, playing a match or game, or walking through the neighborhood or the mall. When we share our faith with our sons and daughters, when we model prayer and values to them, and when we live our convictions, we are helping them to find Christ in the moments of their apparently ordinary lives. And in those encounters, they will hear how Jesus calls them each by name and transforms them. They will see each day as an extraordinary event in which they will be able to say, "I have seen the Lord" and share his good news through their words and actions. ■



## Isn't it sexist to refer to God as Father?

**A:** God has no gender. As such, it is quite acceptable to use both masculine and feminine images to refer to God. In fact, Scripture contains a number of feminine images in relation to God, perhaps the most powerful and well-known one being Isaiah's beautiful passage: "Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you."

(Isaiah 49:15) The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that "God's parental tenderness can also be expressed by the image of motherhood, which emphasizes God's immanence, the intimacy between Creator and creature." (CCC 239) At the same time, it is important to know that Jesus revealed God as Father and taught us to use this title when addressing God. When we do so, we are not suggesting that God is a male. Rather, we are approaching God the way Jesus, the Son, did, acknowledging the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son that led Jesus to call him *Abba* or "daddy." Referring to God as Father is also part of a larger metaphor that refers to the Church in feminine terms as his Bride. Finally, it is also important to accept the fact that language will always fall short when used to describe the ineffable reality of God. ■



## 5 THINGS

### Five Things I Learned From . . .

WEB • BOOKS • MUSIC • MOVIES • TV

### Giving Your Child the Gift of Inner Discipline

I'm the mom of an introverted scholar interested in dance and an extroverted athlete interested in making films and mischief. Despite their differences, there are common lessons I can teach. Here are five ideas that this book shares—each tied to Catholic life.

1. If you want your kids to make wise choices, give them opportunities to make lots of choices—including unwise ones.
2. Children need to see us take a stand for values and against injustice.
3. Food eaten in company nourishes the individual spirit, the family, the community, and the world.
4. No matter how much money children have or earn, they need to learn how to save it, spend it, and give it to those in need.
5. For children to develop inner discipline, they need time to be alone and still. ■



*Joellyn Cicciarelli personally works employing inner discipline each day in her roles as wife, mother, and Director of Curricula Development at Loyola Press.*

## Family as a Spiritual Path

Joseph played an important role as Jesus' earthly father. Yet oddly enough, he spoke not one recorded word in the Gospels. He was a man of actions, not words. It seems to me that many dads share this same characteristic. Thinking back to my own childhood, I recall many long conversations with mother, yet very few with my father. It wasn't his late night talks or words of wisdom that stayed in my heart. Instead, it was the way he played tag and wrestled with my brother and me in the living room.

I felt his love when, after working a nightshift and sleeping only an hour, he willingly took playground duty just to be with me. He came to every sporting event and always found time to build projects. He changed oil and checked tires and could be



counted on to answer technical questions. My dad was a man of actions, not words. But each of those actions was filled with a thousand hugs and a million I love yous. He taught me that what you do speaks louder than what you say and those moments create lasting memories. ■

*Denise Skomer is a writer and editor and cofounder of Bound By Grace Press ([BoundByGracePress.com](http://BoundByGracePress.com))*