

• **You may feel a renewed urge to pray.** Saying an Our Father at bedtime or talking to God first thing in the morning are simple ways to integrate prayer into your daily life. Our parish staff can also help guide you in exploring different prayer forms or attending prayer services.



• **You may feel a deep desire to come to Mass again, but you may not be sure you're ready to join a parish.** That's okay! The most important thing is to come and experience the grace of God's everlasting love.

• **You may also feel attracted to the Catholic Church, but not quite ready for Mass.** While we encourage you to attend Mass, you are always welcome to attend our parish programs, volunteer in a parish ministry, sit in on a Scripture study, or help out on a project



for those in need. Feel free to contact anyone on our parish bulletin or website for information.

As you become more accustomed to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, you will begin to recognize more easily where you are being lead. Be assured that our parish staff is here to help you in whatever way we can. No pressure! No strings attached — just a promise that if you need spiritual guidance we can help you to find it.

If you are interested in becoming a Catholic:

If you are feeling called into the Catholic Church in a more formal way, the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, or RCIA, as it is commonly called, is the process through which people come into the Church. It is based on the same process the early Christians followed when they entered into the Faith. If you're interested, our parish staff can explain RCIA in more detail.

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IF YOU ARE COMING BACK TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH:

Some people who have fallen away from their faith begin to feel drawn back to their Catholic roots. While God is at the center of each person's decision to return to the Church, the circumstances surrounding each person's return are as varied as the individuals themselves. If you feel as if you are being drawn back, be assured that you will be welcomed. Our parish family is here to support you in your spiritual journey.

If you are a visitor, we encourage you to spend some time in prayer and contact your local parish to reconnect with the community. Thank you for being with us!

"So this is the invitation which I address to everyone.... Let us be renewed by God's mercy, let us be loved by Jesus, let us enable the power of his love to transform our lives, too; and let us become agents of this mercy, channels through which God can water the earth, protect all creation and make justice and peace flourish."

—Pope Francis, Urbi et Orbi,
Easter, March 31, 2013



Additional Resources

Gateways to God: Celebrating the Sacraments, Fr. Robert J. Hater (Our Sunday Visitor, 2011).

A Journey to the Heart of Jesus: Guideposts Along the Way, J. Peter Sartain (Our Sunday Visitor, 2014).

Recovering Faith: Stories of Catholics Who Came Home, Lorene Hanley Duquin (Our Sunday Visitor, 2011).

Through the Year with Pope Francis: Daily Reflections, Pope Francis, edited by Kevin Cotter (Our Sunday Visitor, 2013).

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THANK YOU FOR COMING

WELCOME

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"May the Church be a place ... where all feel welcomed, loved, forgiven, and encouraged to live according to the good life of the Gospel."

— Pope Francis

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Maybe you're here for a joyous occasion — a baptism, first Communion, confirmation, or wedding. Or maybe you're here for something more somber — a healing Mass, a funeral, or a memorial service. Perhaps you decided to drop in for Mass or just wanted to pray for a few moments. Whatever your reason for coming, we want you to know that you are very welcome!

WHILE YOU ARE HERE:

You may find that the readings, music, words of the priest, or interaction with other people in the church moves you in a special way and you begin to feel a spiritual longing. This is a movement of the Holy Spirit, who is constantly trying to draw us into God's love. You may not have noticed these little tugs before, but we tend to be more spiritually open in a church. While you are here, we hope that you will experience that gentle pull of the Holy Spirit.

"I would like to ask you: Have you sometimes heard the voice of the Lord, which through a desire, a certain restlessness, invites you to follow him more closely? Have you heard it?"

— Pope Francis, Regina Caeli, April 21, 2013

WHEN UNEXPECTED FEELINGS ARISE:

Many people tell us that a visit to a church can bring a flood of feelings — good memories of joy-filled moments, or painful memories of hurts and losses. We want to assure you that the church is a safe place to express tears of joy or tears of sorrow. While you are here, we hope that you will enter into the mystery of God who shares in all of your joys and all of your sufferings.

For some people, coming to church raises questions about what they believe or how they feel about Catholic teachings. We'd like to suggest that you set aside specific issues at this point and move with the grace of the moment. Turn off your mind and open your soul to the presence of God. Allow God to love and nurture you. Allow yourself to enter into a new spiritual reality.

There are also people who fear that God could never forgive them for mistakes that they made. We want to assure you that there are no limits to God's merciful love. God knows who you are and loves you unconditionally. We hope that while you are here, you will begin to feel God's healing love and experience a new fullness of life.

"How many times in my pastoral ministry have I heard it said: 'Father, I have many sins'; and I have always pleaded: 'Don't be afraid, go to him, he is waiting for you, he will take care of everything.'"

— Pope Francis, Homily, April 7, 2013



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YOU ARE IMPORTANT:

Your presence here today matters. When we gather together for Mass, for the celebration of a sacrament, or for prayer, Jesus Christ is present, and each of us becomes united with Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Your presence makes you part of this connection, which cannot be seen on the surface, but is a spiritual reality that strengthens our love for one another and reminds us that we are not alone. When you leave today, you will carry with you the love of Christ, which has the power to instill new meaning and purpose in your life and in the lives of others.

"Accept the risen Jesus into your life, then. Welcome him as a friend, with confidence. He is life! If up to now you have been distant from him, take a small step: He will welcome you with open arms. If you are indifferent, take the risk: You will not be disappointed. If following him seems difficult to you, don't be afraid: Entrust yourself to him and rest assured that he is close to you. He is with you and will give you the peace you are seeking and the strength to live as he wants you to."

— Pope Francis, Easter Vigil, March 31, 2013

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AFTER YOUR VISIT:

People who have experienced the presence of Christ during a visit to church are often uncertain as to what it all means or what they should do next. We want to assure you that the answer to these concerns will come if you open yourself to the Holy Spirit's movement.

- **You may want to talk about these new spiritual insights.** You might choose to share your spiritual experience with a close relative, friend, neighbor, or co-worker — especially



if you recognize that person as someone who has a strong relationship with God. Or you can call the parish office and make an appointment to talk with a priest or someone on our parish staff.

- **You may want to express your thoughts in writing.** Once you've experienced the movement of the Holy Spirit in your life, you may begin to notice those same kind of spiritual tugs in coincidences, dreams, insights, and new opportunities. It's a good idea to write them down in a spiritual journal. If you would like to share some of these written experiences, feel free to email someone on our parish staff, and we will respond.
- **You may find that reading helps sort through the new spiritual reality into which you have entered.** There are many books, websites, and publications that can help you understand the mysterious ways God works in our lives and the purpose God has for each one of us. Our parish staff can make suggestions or lend you books that may help.



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