

## Go Forth

Growing in faith is a life-long process. God continually invites believers into a deeper relationship. Our GO FORTH opportunities will challenge you to dig deeper into your Catholic faith in a variety of ways and put your faith into action.

*Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. –Romans 12:12*

[Past Months](#) –Link to activities and replays from previous months

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## Live Your Faith

We each have a vocation and state of life. We are young, old, and somewhere in between. We are single, married, parents. We are consecrated religious, others are ordained. We all know the lyrics of the old familiar song, “They Will Know We Are Christians by Our Love.” How we live touches the lives of others, whether or not we take notice. How do we live our Catholic faith out in the world? Here we offer some ideas and suggestions to influence our world or make a difference in the lives within our community by simply living our faith.

*Support the Becoming Catholic program with prayer & welcome*

Participating in Faith Formation is an active way of living our Catholic faith. We have people who are exploring and learning about our faith through the Becoming Catholic program. These individuals are called inquirers. In the Rite of Acceptance (for the unbaptized) and the Rite of Welcome (for those baptized in another faith tradition), the inquirers make a public commitment to their continued conversion and learning. During the rite, the parish commits to praying for and supporting those in the Becoming Catholic program. What does that look like in this time of distancing, masking, and

limited group meetings? Greet the inquirers and welcome them with smiling eyes or a wave. Pray for them. Have more time or desire for greater involvement? Consider one of [these roles](#) that include small group ministries to extend a warm welcome to those journeying. Contact Vivian Day, Director of Adult Faith Formation at [vday@saintfrancischurch.org](mailto:vday@saintfrancischurch.org) or 515-440-1030 to get connected.

### *Be welcoming at Mass*

Likewise we have visitors attending Mass, some longing for connection to others. Do we race out the doors of the nave and gathering space to our cars? Or do we slow down and say “Hi, how ARE you?”

The art of hospitality can easily be lost. If you have the gift of hospitality, please reach out to the parish office for opportunities to meet and greet those who are attending Mass or the Faith Formation Office for opportunities to share your gifts with those who are journeying to the Church.

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## Meet the Saints

One of the beautiful things about our faith is the saints. As Catholics we respect and honor the saints and consider them to be heroes of the Church. The saints are timeless examples of how to live a Christian life, providing endless hope. Not only were they sinners who kept trying to grow closer to God, but they also exemplify ways a person can serve God. The Church emphasizes that they were ordinary people from ordinary families and they were totally human. We will highlight a different saint each month of Together in Faith.

### *St. Teresa of Calcutta*

Nun and missionary, Mother Teresa, now known as St. Teresa of Calcutta, devoted her life to caring for the sick and poor. Born on August 26, 1910 in Skopje, Macedonia, she

joined the missionary order of the Sisters of Loreto in Dublin, Ireland at age 18. Shortly afterwards, Sister Teresa, while praying, felt “a call within a call”. She left the convent and consecrated herself to helping the poor in the slums of Calcutta, India by living among them. Volunteers came to join her and this small group of women started the Order of the Missionaries of Charity. For the next several decades, Mother Teresa worked tirelessly on behalf of the poor. Her love knew no bounds, nor did her energy as she crisscrossed the globe, pleading for support and inviting others to see the face of Jesus in the poorest of the poor. Mother Teresa passed away on September 5, 1997, at the age of 87. In 2003, the publication of her private letters revealed that Mother Teresa suffered a crisis of her faith during the last 50 years of her life. In one of her letters she wrote, “Where is my Faith? Even deep down right in there, is nothing, but emptiness and darkness. My God, how painful is this unknown pain. I have no faith. I dare not utter the words and thoughts that crowd my heart and make me suffer untold agony.” Yet she continued to serve the Lord by serving the poor. She was canonized by Pope Francis on September 15, 2016.

During this time of the pandemic, you may have suffered or doubted where God is. We chose to highlight St. Teresa of Calcutta as an example of someone who has persevered through suffering. St. Teresa said, “What we need is to love without getting tired. How does a lamp burn? Through the continuous input of small drops of oil. What are these drops of oil in our lamps? They are the small things of daily life: faithfulness, small words of kindness, a thought for others, and our way of being silent, of looking, of speaking, of acting. Do not look for Jesus away from yourselves. He is out there; He is in you. Keep your lamp burning, and you will recognize Him.” Even though we may doubt or wonder if God is there, He is. He wants us to wait and prepare because the gift of eternal life with him awaits us. We just need to keep that light burning inside us. St. Teresa of Calcutta, Pray for Us!

Learn more about St. Teresa of Calcutta with the resources below:

Videos-free on FORMED

- **Mother Teresa**
- **[Mother Teresa: Seeing the Face of Jesus](#)** (for kids)
- **Lukas Story Teller: Mother Teresa** (for kids)

#### Books

- **No Greater Love by Mother Teresa, Forward by Thomas Moore**
- **Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta by Mother Teresa and Brian Kolodiejchuk**
- **Mother Teresa: In My Own Words by José Luis González-Balado**
- **[Love: A Fruit Always in Season, daily Meditations by Mother Teresa](#)**

#### Listen to Mother Teresa

- **[The Face of God by St. Teresa of Calcutta](#)**

#### Websites

- **<https://www.motherteresa.org/about.html>**

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### Serve the Lord

The Church is known for its emphasis on social justice and the importance of service to express the love of Jesus Christ to the world. Our faith teaches us that we should serve others, showing love and kindness to everyone. We can serve others in many ways, and we should ensure that we use every opportunity that we can. It goes without saying that those who learn how to serve others grow in many ways: empathy, awareness, concern, and closeness to Christ. There are many ways to serve Jesus by serving others and the Church. Each month of Together in Faith there are opportunities to serve inside and outside of our parish.

### *At St. Francis-5th grade Mission Awareness Project*

This month of Together in Faith, we will support our 5th grade St. Francis School students who are collecting toiletry items for Connection Café and West Des Moines Human Services. We are asking Together in Faith households to donate one of the following items: socks, underwear, toothpaste, toothbrushes, baby supplies, lotion, sunblock, deodorant, hats, gloves, mittens, nail clippers, shaving cream, Q-tips or hand sanitizer. Donations can be dropped off at the Faith Formation office by the end of the day, December 17. The 5th graders will wrap the items for delivery.

### *In the Community-Send a card to those in assisted living & nursing homes*

During the time of the pandemic, assisted living centers for senior citizens and hospitals across the country have had to restrict visitors for the physical health of their residents and patients. This has left a lot of people feeling more alone and isolated in a stressful time. To combat the loneliness, many of these centers are welcoming cards, drawings and letters from the public. We invite you to send a bit of Christmas joy to a resident of a local assisted living center or nursing home. Cards can be homemade or store-bought. A simple, "Thinking of you and wishing you joy this Christmas" would be fantastic.

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### **Sing His Praises**

Music is a beautiful way to elevate our prayer and express our faith in God. Enjoy and pray with these resources:

- [Music with Miss Emmy](#) (for the young and the young at heart)
- A favorite video of ["O Come, O Come Emmanuel"](#)
- December Spotify Playlist