

# Sacramental Gift Guide 2018

Faith-Inspired Presents for Everyone on Your List

**W**ith Easter and springtime approaching, it is time for many families to celebrate the sacraments of baptism, Eucharist and confirmation.

The Register's annual guide features gifts for babies being baptized, children making their first Communion, teens being confirmed, new Catholics entering the Church and couples getting married.

(Prices are subject to change.)

To order: [EWTNRC.com](http://EWTNRC.com) or (800) 854-6316 (unless otherwise noted).



SHUTTERSTOCK

## Baptism



### PEWTER CRIB CROSS AND ROSARY SET

The crib medal is a pewter cross that features a young boy or girl kneeling down in prayer at the bottom of the cross and a guardian angel medal in the center. It measures 3 1/2 inches and comes with a blue or pink satin ribbon. This set also includes a blue or pink pearl rosary that features a matching guardian angel-medal centerpiece. Boy's, Item: BS35; Girl's, Item: BS36. Each \$28.

### BABY PHOTO FRAME WITH CROSS

This frame is the perfect size (3 3/4 inches high and holds a 2-inch x 3-inch picture) to display a photographic remembrance of your little blessing's entry into the Church as a child of God. Item: 13827, \$12.



### BAPTISM PICTURE FRAME

With an easel back, this zinc alloy frame has a pearlized enamel inlay with a silver cross at the upper left corner and "Baptism," written under the photo, also in silver. Frame measures 5 1/2 inches high x 6 3/4 inches wide and holds a 3-1/2 inch x 5-inch picture. Item: 10906, \$18.

### BABY KEEPSAKE ROSARY

Made of porcelain and painted in soft blue or pink, the top features a sleeping baby boy or baby girl. The small box holds a 3mm pale blue or pink bead rosary with a silver crucifix and center. Boy's, Item: 31008; Girl's, Item: 31009. Each \$16.

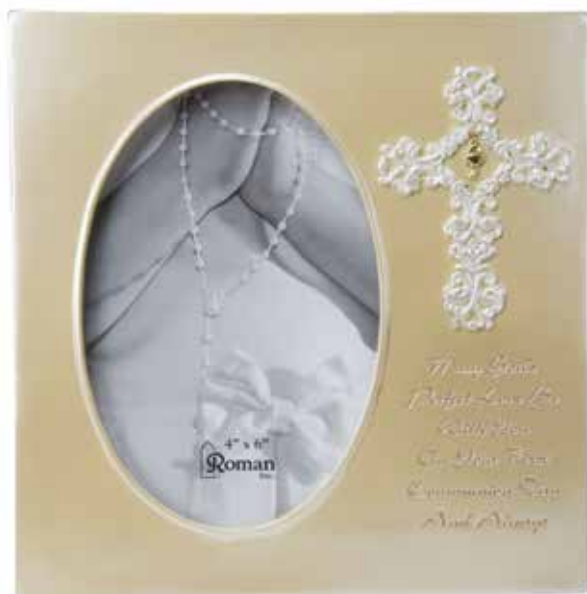


### BABY BAPTISMAL GIFT SET

This three-piece set will complement the blessed day. It includes a bib with lace detailing, embroidered cross, socks with gold-stitched cross, 40-inch square blanket with a satin ribbon accent and beautiful embroidered cross. The set comes in a display box with a clear lid tied with a white ribbon bow. Item: 26318, \$45.



## First Communion



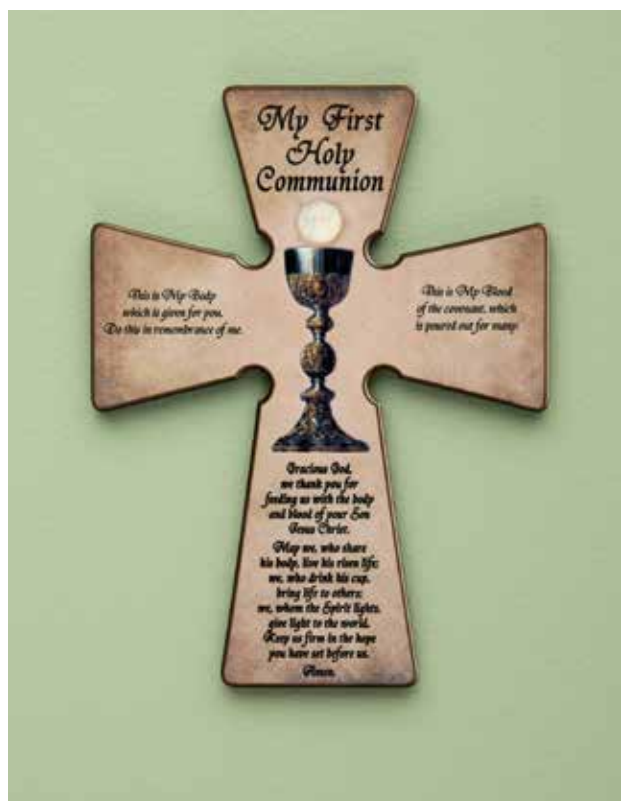
**GOD'S PERFECT LOVE FIRST COMMUNION FRAME**  
This pretty first Communion commemorative picture frame has a champagne finish with an ivory filigree cross on the right side just above a beautifully scripted verse that reads: "May God's Perfect Love Be With You on Your First Communion Day and Always." Frame is made of resin and measures 7 inches high x 6 3/4 inches wide. It has an easel back that opens to hold a 4-inch x 6-inch photograph of the first communicant. Item: 47802, \$16.50.



**MY FIRST COMMUNION STATUE**  
From the Renaissance Collection of Joseph's Studios, this statue is a beautiful reminder of a child's first Holy Communion. It is made of a resin-stone mix. Boy's, Item: 47745; Girl's, Item: 47744. Each \$45.



**WHITE PEARL AND PINK ANGEL FIRST COMMUNION ROSARY**  
This beautiful and dainty rosary features 5mm white pearl beads with little angel Our Father beads shaped out of pink crystal beads with silver wings and a tiny pearl head. The pewter crucifix measures 1 1/2 inches, and the centerpiece consists of a chalice with a host, also made of pewter. Rosary measures 18 3/4 inches when laid flat and comes in a white leatherette gift box. This is a perfect first Holy Communion gift for a young lady. Item: R553, \$30.



**FIRST COMMUNION PRAYER CROSS WALL PLAQUE**  
Made of wood with a glossy finish, this Holy Communion keepsake plaque features a beautiful chalice surmounted by the Host. On the left arm of the cross it reads: "This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And on the right arm, the text reads: "This is my Blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." At the bottom is a prayer that begins: "Gracious God, we thank you for feeding us with the Body and Blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. May we, who share his body, live his risen life; we who drink his cup, bring life to others; we, whom the Spirit lights, give light to the world..." The cross measures 4 1/2 inches x 6 inches. Item: 1914A, \$14.

**WHITE HEART COMMUNION BRACELET**  
This child's stretch bracelet is made of 5mm pearlized hearts and 3mm pink crystals, a tiny rhodium-plated crucifix and a host-and-chalice medal. It is ideal for a little girl's first Holy Communion. Item: BR376, \$17.



**BLACK GLASS BEAD COMMUNION ROSARY**  
This rosary consists of 5mm black glass beads and a beautifully detailed host-and-chalice rhodium-plated center and crucifix. Measures 19 inches when laid flat. This is an ideal gift for a young man making his first Holy Communion. Item: C15RB, \$30.

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**Making Room for God**  
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MARY ELIZABETH SPERRY  
128 pages, \$14.95

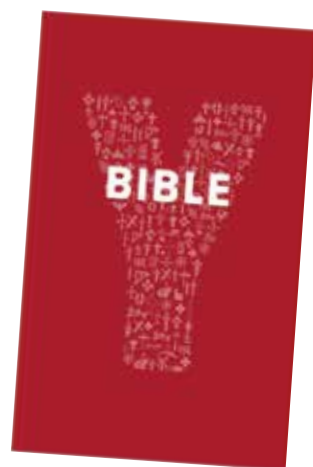
**Simplifying the Soul**  
Lenten Practices to Renew Your Spirit  
PAULA HUSTON  
192 pages, \$14.95

**Gratefulness**  
The Habit of a Grace-Filled Life  
SUSAN MUTO  
224 pages, \$15.95

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**SILVER CROSS CONFIRMATION PICTURE FRAME**  
This elegant picture frame is designed to display a special 4-inch x 6-inch confirmation photo. The border consists of an ivory pearlized enamel fill with a shiny rounded cross at the base and the word "Confirmation" written in cursive along the bottom. It measures 6 3/4 inches high x 4 3/4 inches wide and has a plush black-velvet easel back. Item: 19661, \$16.

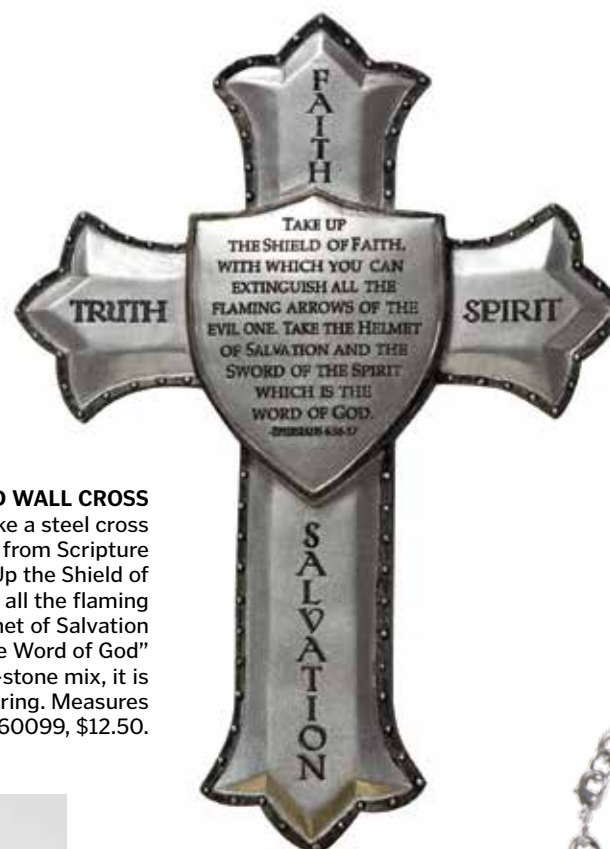


**YOUCAT BIBLE**  
This Bible features the creative elements of the best-selling YOUCAT youth catechism and the DOCAT social teaching handbook. Based on the popular Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition of the Ignatius Bible, the YOUCAT Bible carefully abridges the biblical text to help young people follow the "story" of the Bible. It is filled with engaging photos, fun and smart illustrations, insightful sidebar quotes from great thinkers and saints, helpful introductions and easy-to-understand commentaries. Paperback. 448 pages. Item: 40981, \$25.

**ARMOR OF GOD WALL CROSS**  
This wall cross is designed to look like a steel cross with an armored shield. A quote from Scripture imprinted in the center reads: "Take Up the Shield of Faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the Helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Ephesians 6:16-17). Made of a resin-stone mix, it is painted silver, with black detail and lettering. Measures 8 inches x 6 inches. Item: 60099, \$12.50.



**HEART-SHAPED CONFIRMATION ROSARY BOX**  
This elegant heart-shaped keepsake box has a removable lid with "Confirmation" written in cursive above a rounded cross with a pearlized enamel fill. The inside of the box is lined with a plush cream velvet lining. The shiny metal box is made of a lead-free zinc alloy and measures approximately 3 inches wide x 2 3/4 inches high x 1 1/2 inches deep. Item: 10913, \$16.



## Confirmation



**RED CORD HOLY SPIRIT HEART BRACELET**  
This bracelet is made of a red cord that holds a rhodium-plated braided heart with a Holy Spirit charm in the center. It measures 7 1/2 inches, with an adjustable chain and lobster clasp. Item: 676C, \$12.



**BRAIDED STAINLESS STEEL CROSS BRACELET**  
A shiny 1 1/2-inch stainless steel plate with a bold black cross in the center is attached to two braided black leather cords to form this faith bracelet. It has a lobster clasp with an adjustable chain that allows the bracelet to measure from 7 1/2 inches to 9 1/2 inches. Item: 45638, \$5.



**HEART-SHAPED HOLY SPIRIT BRACELET**  
This sterling silver heart-shaped Holy Spirit medal comes on a 7-1/2 inch stainless steel cable bracelet. Item: B3205, \$54.

# Saints and Sacraments: 7 Books Highlight Holy Lives and Moments

CHILDREN'S BOOK PICKS

BY KERRY CRAWFORD & PATRICIA A. CRAWFORD

Lent is here, and with it comes the challenge of helping children to understand this liturgical season and all that goes with it — preparation, sacrifice and waiting. It's a prime time to offer kids opportunities for spiritual reading that will help them to walk the Lenten journey and prepare for Easter and upcoming sacraments. Here are a range of books that celebrate the sacraments and special saints who each embraced their own crosses. Available at Amazon.

**Baptism Day**

Written and illustrated by **Maïte Roche**  
Ignatius, 2017  
14 pages, \$6.99

It is a very special day. Baby Leo is becoming a child of God. In this beautifully illustrated board book, sized just right for small hands, young children learn about the sacrament of baptism. Leo's parents ask that their baby be baptized.

As the parish priest pours water over his head and anoints him, his family, friends and godparents rejoice. Leo has become a Christian and welcomed into the Church! Ages 4 and up.

**Saint Bernadette and the Miracles of Lourdes**

Written and illustrated by **Demi Ignatius**, 2017  
48 pages, \$15.99

Fourteen-year-old Bernadette Soubirous was poor, sickly and unschooled. If they thought of her at all, no one in the small French town of Lourdes ever expected anything of Bernadette. But it was to Bernadette that a beautiful lady appeared in a nearby grotto and then vanished. The lady, as we now know, was the Mother of God — but Bernadette didn't know that at first. This tale tells the rest of the story: Bernadette's other visits to the grotto, what Mary asked her to do, and her uncovering of a spring that has healed many. Healings — both

physical and spiritual — still happen at the Shrine of Lourdes, where, once, a young girl humbled herself and trusted in the "beautiful lady" sent by God. Ages 6-12.

**Junipero Serra: Founder of the California Missions**

Written by **Linda Gondosch**  
Illustrated by **Emmanuel Beaudesson**  
Ignatius, 2015  
36 pages, \$14.99

The New World beckoned to Friar Junipero Serra, who dreamed of becoming a missionary priest. Leaving behind family and friends in Spain, Father Serra worked tirelessly among the Indians living in Mexico and California. He traveled more than 24,000 miles — mostly on foot — to bring Christ to those in the wilderness. Guided by his motto, "Always forward, never back," Father Serra established the first nine Catholic missions, from San Diego to San Francisco, in California. Pope Francis canonized St. Junipero, naming him "the Evangelizer of the West in the United States." Ages 9 and up.

**Patrick and the Fire**

Written by **Cornelia Mary Bilinsky**  
Illustrated by **Maggie Coburn**  
Pauline, 2017  
40 pages, \$13.95

Bevan is so tired of herding goats!



The only thing that keeps him going is the thought of the upcoming fire festival for Balor, the god of light. Before the celebrations begin, Bevan meets a stranger, unlike anyone he has ever known. His new friend, Patrick, tells the story of how he was taken to Ireland as a slave but managed to escape. Now, he has returned on a mission to tell everyone about the one and only true God, Jesus Christ! Just in time for St. Patrick's Day, this engaging legend tells of the saint's life, while sharing an adventurous tale and providing springboards for catechesis. Ages 4-8.

**Brigid and the Butter**

Written by **Pamela Love**  
Illustrated by **Apryl Scott**  
Pauline, 2017  
40 pages, \$13.95

One good Irish tale deserves another! This legend tells the story of Brigid, a poor slave girl who grew up in Ireland. Brigid's mother entrusts her with the hard job of making butter, which is sometimes the only food in the house. A bright spot in her days occurs when she gets to hear the stories of Jesus told by Bishop (now-St.) Patrick. Inspired by the story of the little boy who gave Jesus all the loaves

and fishes he had to feed the crowd, she soon hits her own crossroads in giving. Will she share with a poor beggar woman the butter she worked so hard to make — or will she keep it for herself? This lovely tale of St. Brigid provides a model of generosity, sacrifice and confidence in God's provision. Ages 4-8.

**The Night Before My First Holy Communion**

Written by **Natasha Wing**  
Illustrated by **Amy Wummer**  
Grosset & Dunlap, 2018  
32 pages, \$4.99

"'Twas the night before Communion, our very first one," begins this lighthearted story of a brother and sister's special day. Told in the cadence of Clement Moore's poem about Christmas Eve, this book in rhyme gives a child's-eye view of preparing for and receiving Holy Communion. While the kids worry during practice about making mistakes, Father reassures them that all will be fine. It's hard not to be nervous on the big day, but a glance at a statue of Jesus takes away any fear. The celebration of the Mass is followed by a party with lots of family, all glad to share in the children's joy. Ages 5 and up.

**Anointed: Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

Written by **Pope Francis**  
Compiled by **Jaymie Stuart Wolfe**  
Design by **Putri Mamesah and Mary Joseph Peterson, FSP**  
Pauline, 2017  
120 pages, \$18.95

Pope Francis has spoken often about the Holy Spirit, and his words are captured well in this compact, hardbound volume. The book opens with a short introduction by the Holy Father and then unfolds in sections organized by the different gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Pope's words are sprinkled with quotes from Scripture, and both are brought to life with beautiful photos and engaging, youth-oriented graphics. A final section includes related prayers. This appealing book would be a wonderful gift to share with those who are preparing to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation. It includes both "gift" and "memory keepsake" pages that add a personal touch to this inspiring resource. Ages 10 and up.

The Crawford sisters write from Pittsburgh.

## First Communion GIFTS

First Communion may only happen once, but it marks a unique, lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church. From the wisdom of Pope Francis to the lives of the saints, children will enjoy these gift books from Loyola Press as they continue to learn and live as disciples of Christ.

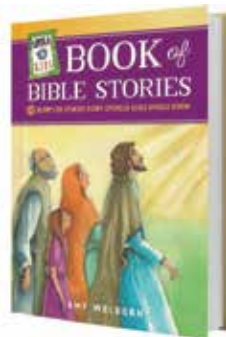
Use promo code **4836** for **20% OFF** these First Communion gifts.

Offer expires 5/1/18.



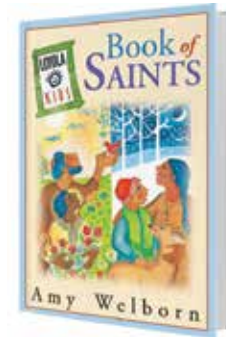
**DEAR POPE FRANCIS**

The Pope Answers Letters from Children Around the World  
ENGLISH: HARDCOVER | 4433-9 | \$18.95  
ESPAÑOL: TAPA DURA | 4435-3 | \$18.95



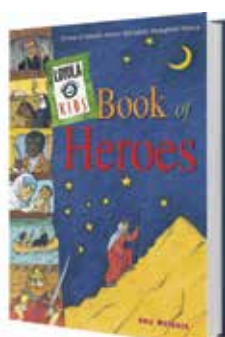
**LOYOLA KIDS BOOK OF BIBLE STORIES**

60 Scripture Stories Every Catholic Child Should Know  
HARDCOVER | 4539-8 | \$19.95



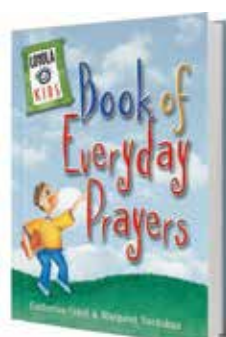
**LOYOLA KIDS BOOK OF SAINTS**

HARDCOVER | 1534-3 | \$17.95



**LOYOLA KIDS BOOK OF HEROES**

Stories of Catholic Heroes and Saints throughout History  
HARDCOVER | 1584-X | \$17.95



**LOYOLA KIDS BOOK OF EVERYDAY PRAYERS**

HARDCOVER | 1509-2 | \$15.95



**JESUS THE TEACHER**

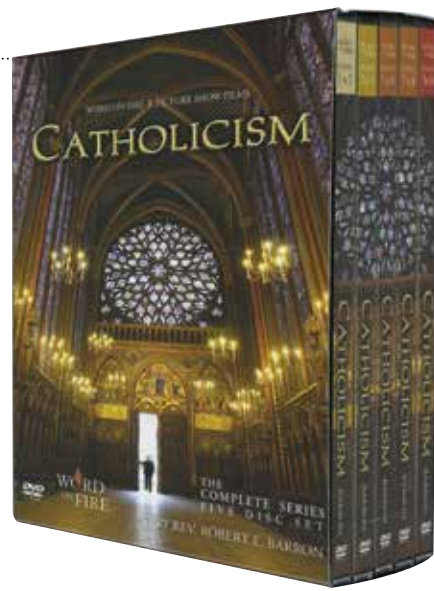
PLUSH FIGURE | 4460-0 | \$24.95

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**SACRED HEART BLACK ONYX ROSARY**  
This lovely rosary features smooth, round 6mm black onyx beads with a sterling silver Sacred Heart scapular medal center and papal crucifix. Item: 315LF, \$81.



**CATHOLICISM DVD BOXED SET**  
The beauty, goodness and truth of the Catholic faith are illustrated in a rich, multimedia experience. Journey with acclaimed author, speaker and theologian Auxiliary Bishop Robert Barron of Los Angeles to more than 50 locations throughout 15 countries. Be illuminated by the spiritual and artistic treasures of this global culture that claims more than 1 billion of the Earth's people. This boxed set includes five DVDs, each containing two episodes. Each episode runs 50-60 minutes. English and Spanish subtitles are included as viewing options. Item: WF50D, \$100.



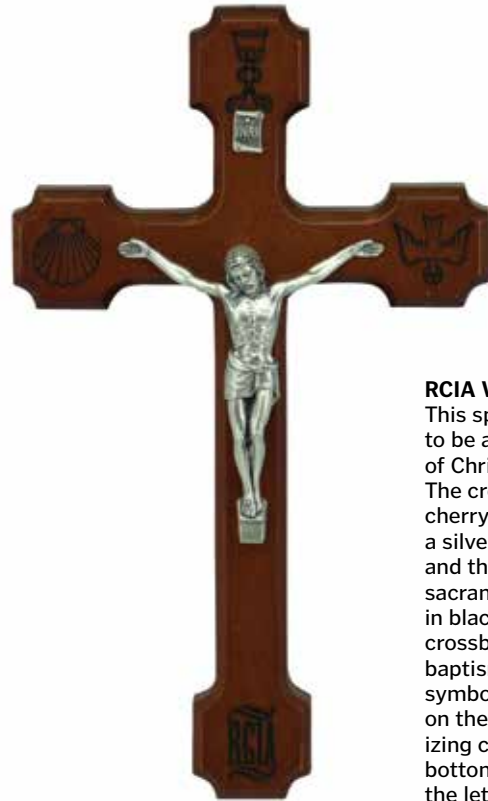
**RCIA ROSARY AND BOX**  
Made in Jerusalem, this rosary is made with 8mm oval Olivewood beads and comes in a matching Olivewood rosary box. Box measures 2 3/4 inches x 2 3/4 inches x 1 1/2 inches, with a bronze-colored pewter crucifix on the top and a banner that reads "RCIA." It is the perfect gift for an adult entering the Church. Item: 49RC, \$25.



**SACRED HEART OF JESUS STATUE**  
This beautiful statue is made of fiberglass and measures 18 inches high. Imported from Peru. Item: V0648, \$90.



**IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY STATUE**  
This beautiful statue is made of fiberglass and measures 17 1/2 inches high. Imported from Peru. Item: K0482, \$82.



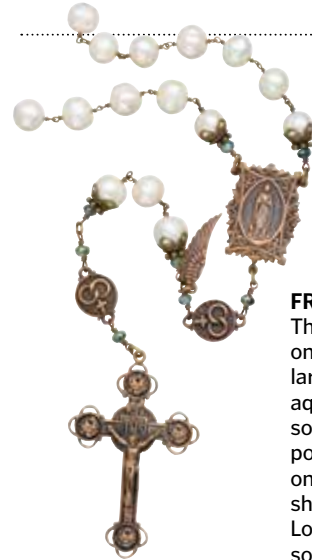
**RCIA WALL CRUCIFIX**  
This special crucifix is designed to be a holy reminder of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The cross is made of beautiful cherry-stained maple wood with a silver-plated Italian corpus and the three symbols of the sacraments of initiation etched in black. On the left side of the crossbeam is a shell, symbolizing baptism; at the top is a chalice, symbolizing the Eucharist; and on the right is a dove, symbolizing confirmation. At the very bottom also etched in black are the letters "RCIA." This crucifix measures 8 inches high and comes in a satin-lined gift box. Item: 1751R, \$33.



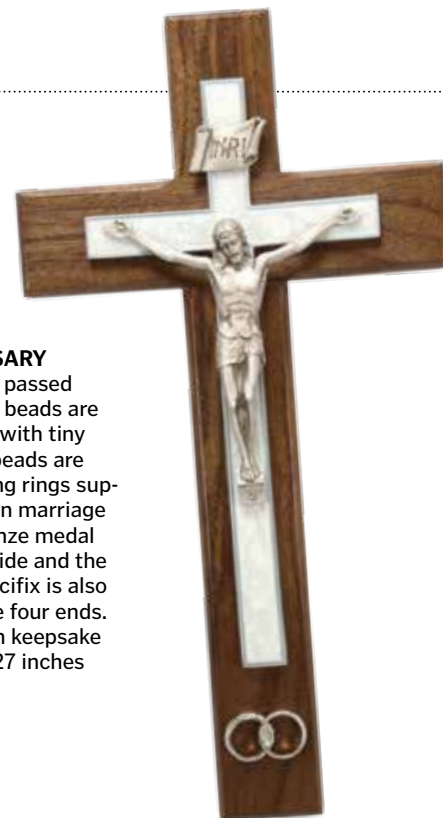
**DIVINE MERCY CLEAR-AND-RUBY-GLASS BEAD ROSARY**  
Made with fire-polished faceted clear-glass beads with ruby-red Our Father beads, the center features the image of the Divine Mercy of Jesus with the inscription, "Jesus I Trust In You" and St. Faustina on the reverse. The center medal and the beautiful crucifix are sterling silver. Item: 189L, \$78.

ADD A TOUCH OF BEAUTY TO YOUR PRAYER LIFE THIS LENT - BEHOLD THY MOTHER, A BEAUTIFUL SCRIPTURAL ROSARY.

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**FRESHWATER PEARL WEDDING ROSARY**  
This heirloom rosary is designed to be passed on from generation to generation. The beads are large 8mm genuine freshwater pearls with tiny aqua crystal accents. The Our Father beads are solid-bronze medals, with two adjoining rings supported by a cross symbolizing Christian marriage on each side. The center is a solid-bronze medal showing Our Lady of Lourdes on one side and the Lourdes Grotto on the reverse; the crucifix is also solid bronze, with a rose at each of the four ends. It comes in a rustic handmade wooden keepsake box. Rosary measures approximately 27 inches when laid flat. Item: RW1B, \$330.



**FOREVER: A CATHOLIC DEVOTIONAL FOR YOUR MARRIAGE**  
Authors Jackie Francois Angel and Bobby Angel are well-known experts on the theology of the body. This book is a six-week devotional for couples inspired by St. John Paul II's catechesis, with lessons on how to pray together as a couple and how to open up to the wonders that God bestows. Learn how to respond to God's call to love freely, totally, faithfully and fruitfully. Answer questions like: What is love? What is marriage? How do we create a family? Your marriage is a great call and responsibility. Live it well! Paperback. 176 pages. Item: 4336, \$15.95.



**FRAMED MARRIAGE OF MARY AND ST. JOSEPH IMAGE**  
This beautiful depiction of the wedding ceremony of St. Joseph to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the presence of the rabbi is framed under glass in a decorative gold wood frame and measures 10 inches x 12 inches. Item: 109B1, \$33.

**The New Evangelization 2018 Apologetics for Defending the Faith!**

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**TWO HEARTS MUG**  
This 12-ounce ceramic mug features matching images of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Microwave- and dishwasher-safe. Item: MUG55, \$10.

**Protect Families: Resolve Anger**

The Institute for Marital Healing offers expert marital and child counseling, webinars and articles on the major causes and resolution of spousal and child anger at:

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**Forgiveness Therapy**  
An Empirical Guide for Resolving Anger and Restoring Hope

Richard P. Fitzgibbons, M.D., co-author of Forgiveness Therapy, APA Books  
Peter C Kleponis, Ph.D. and Associates

**GOD BLESS OUR HOME FRAMED ARTWORK**  
The beautiful images of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary are adorned with roses, and a banner reads, "God Bless Our Home" as little angels hold a prayer that reads: "Wherefore I put myself within thy sacred side and under the mantle of Our Lady, my Mother. Let thy holy angels stand about me and keep me in peace; and let thy blessing be upon me." Framed under glass in an ornate gold frame with a black-velvet easel back, it also includes a hook for hanging. Measures 14 1/4 inches x 12 1/4 inches overall. Item: 15385, \$30.



**HOLY FAMILY OUTDOOR STATUE**  
This 24-inch Holy Family statue is painted in a natural white finish. Designed for indoor or outdoor use, it measures 24 1/4 inches high x 9 3/4 inches wide x 10 1/2 inches deep. This item can only be shipped within the continental U.S. Item: 2400W, \$78.

Marriage

**WEDDING CRUCIFIX**  
This wood cross features a pearlized enamel overlay in the center as well as interlocking wedding rings at the base. The corpus and rings are made of pewter. Measures 10 inches. Made in the U.S. Item: 7119E, \$45.



# NEW MARCH SERIES ON EWTN



**SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION WITH FR. MITCH**  
Tuesdays at 2pm & 10pm; Wednesdays at 9am ET



**IGNATIUS LOYOLA: SOLDIER, SINNER, SAINT**  
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**WEB OF FAITH**  
Saturdays at 11pm and Fridays at 4am ET

Timeless wisdom from the Church's greatest thinkers flies off the page & into practice in a lineup of new series and specials coming soon to EWTN. For a complete schedule, visit our website at [ewtn.com](http://ewtn.com).

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**HOLY TEACHING.** Statues of Jesus and the Twelve Apostles in Domus Galilaeae on the Mount of Beatitudes near the Sea of Galilee in Galilee, Israel.



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## 'Be Blessed'

BY CATHOLIC NEWS AGENCY

A parish priest in South Carolina has developed a beatitude challenge that seeks to combat cultural misunderstanding of happiness and encourage Christians to pursue authentic joy.

"The word 'happiness' has been hijacked by secular culture, and as Christians, we want to take the word back, because that's a word that properly belongs inside the life of the beatitudes," said Father Jeff Kirby, pastor at Our Lady of Grace parish in Indian Land, South Carolina.

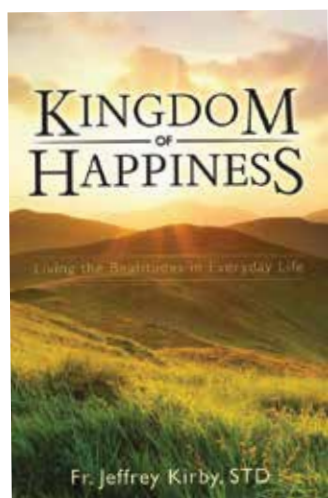
The "Be Blessed Challenge" has three parts: a book, a website and a DVD.

The book is called *Kingdom of Happiness: Living the Beatitudes in Everyday Life*. Each of the book's eight chapters examines one beatitude, offering examples of the virtues in daily life as well as prayers that coincide with the specific beatitude.

Also entitled *Kingdom of Happiness*, the companion DVD focuses on powerful stories of people who have lived the beatitudes, both in ordinary and extraordinary circumstances. An example of "Blessed are the merciful" is a woman whose brother and son were killed in the line of duty as police officers. After their deaths, she purposely reached out to the state to request the death penalty not be administered to the murderer.

The website maps out practical ways to live the beatitudes.

It includes definitions of each



beatitude, Psalms and other reflections for each day and challenges to implement the beatitude in a concrete way.

Father Kirby received his doctorate at Holy Cross University in Rome. He said happiness and the beatitudes were a major theme for the school's moral theology department, but when he later became a pastor, he realized that his parishioners were pursuing happiness inadequately.

Being truly happy is found in living out the beatitudes, he has found. "In the end, happiness is knowing we are blessed and loved by God and seeking always to be a blessing and an instrument of love to those around us."

**ONLINE**  
[BeBlessedChallenge.com](http://BeBlessedChallenge.com)

**TO ORDER THE BOOK**  
Visit [TanBooks.com](http://TanBooks.com) or call (800) 437-5876 or (704) 731-0651; the book is \$14.95.

### BOOK PICK

BY DANIEL BLACKMAN

Many Catholics have read *Divine Mercy in My Soul*, the spiritual diary of St. Faustina Kowalska, the "Apostle of Divine Mercy," or maybe *The Story of a Soul*, by the great doctor of the Church St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

Yet the personal diary of a pope is something of a unique sub-genre within autobiographic literature because there are few such diaries available among the 266 men who have held the Petrine office since Our Lord made St. Peter the first pope.

One notable example is *Journal of a Soul*, the spiritual diary of Pope St. John XXIII. And now comes *In God's Hands*, offering the diary of Pope St. John Paul II, focusing on his retreat notes.

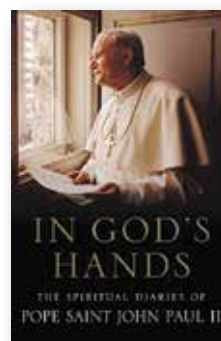
The volume carries a preface by Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, a lifelong friend and assistant to John Paul II. The cardinal shares reminiscences of John Paul II in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, immersed in God, when he was bishop of Krakow. And he remembers the sighs of the Pope coming from his personal chapel in the apostolic palace as he prayed. Perhaps hinting at the mystical life of the Pope, he adds: "His radiant face never revealed his inner experiences."

#### Saved by Cardinal Dziwisz

Surprisingly, these notebook dairies may not have seen the light of day — at the Pope's express request. In the preface, Cardinal Dziwisz writes that, just a few months after his election as pope, John Paul II wrote a "last testament," dated March 6, 1979, setting out what should be done with his few possessions after his death.

"I leave no possessions of which it will be necessary to dispose," wrote John Paul II, adding: "Let my personal notes be burned." John Paul II added subsequent paragraphs to the testament over a number of years, the last in March 2000. He referred to the retreats and spiritual exercises through the testament and its additions. However, Cardinal Dziwisz reveals what happened after the

## How St. John Paul II Met God in Prayer



**IN GOD'S HANDS**  
*The Spiritual Diaries of Pope John Paul II*  
Translated by Joanna Rzepa  
512 pages, \$35 (hardcover)  
HarperOne, 2017  
EWTN Catalogue Item: 6167

Pope's passing to eternity: "I did not dare to burn the personal notes and notebooks that he left behind because they contain significant information about his life.

"I saw them on the Holy Father's desk, but I never looked into them. ... [T]hey are a key to understanding his spirituality, that is, what is innermost in a person: his relationship to God, to other men and to himself."

Cardinal Dziwisz, one of the longest-serving assistants to the Pope, presented the notebooks to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints as part of the beatification process for John Paul II.

The diary entries offer deep insight into the Polish pope-saint.

One entry, just a few paragraphs and one of the shortest entries in the whole volume, is quite possibly one of the most profound and reveals the mystical insight of the Pope.

It outlines how, three days before Cardinal Wojtyła's election as pope, a close friend of his, a certain Bishop Andrzej Deskur, suffered an unexpected and serious stroke. Cardinal Wojtyła visited his friend en route to Rome. Linking the event of his election and his friend's suffering three days before, he wrote: "The sacrifice of Andrzej, my brother in the episcopacy, seems to me to have been a preparation for this event. ... His cross became the last word of my initiation." He added: "I have become a

debtor." He then reveals that, 11 years earlier, when he was appointed to be a cardinal, another friend, Father Marian Jaworski, lost his arm in a train accident, and he again links this to his selection as a cardinal.

Unlike other notes written during retreats, this entry focusing on his friends stands alone as a spiritual reflection, demonstrating a spontaneous expression of the Pope's inner life, not prompted or expected, as would more likely be the case during a retreat.

And prayer punctuates the tomes. As he wrote in March 1993, "Life should become a prayer, but it is necessary to meet God in prayer first."

#### Marian Devotion

Readers will remember that St. John Paul II placed great emphasis on the attempted assassination against him May 13, 1981, and the apparition of Our Lady at Fatima on that date, saying that it was she who guided the bullet so that he survived.

John Paul II's Marian devotion has been widely discussed, and it is worth mentioning that his *Totus Tuus* ("Totally Yours") to Mary is strongly present from the very first page of the retreat notes of July 8, 1962. To her he gave his ministry, and it was with her that he understood his vocation and identity as a priest and bishop.

The full version of his papal motto, taken from the writings of St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort reads: *Totus Tuus ego sum, et omnia mea Tua sunt, Accipio te in mea Omnia, Praebe mihi cor tuum, Maria* ("I am entirely yours, and all that is mine is yours. I take you for my all. O Mary, give me your heart").

Throughout his notes, he constantly refers to Mary and her unique mission, her relationship to God and to the Church, her example in the Gospels, and how she provides us with a perfect example of the virtues.

On several occasions throughout the diary, he refers to the "holy slavery" of consecration to Mary in the manner of St. Louis, mentioned above, which he discovered as a young man working at the Solvay chemical factory in Poland as a young university student during World War II.

There are also some rather unique expressions of devotion not often heard elsewhere. For example, in one retreat, he writes that the Church on Earth is "the City of the Immaculate" and will be so in heaven (a reference to the "City of the Immaculate" founded by fellow Pole St. Maximilian Kolbe). Elsewhere, he refers to Mary as the "Mother of Hospitality" in reference to her example within the Holy Family of Nazareth and the Wedding Feast of Cana. In a separate retreat, he wrote that Mary is the "Most-Cultivated Queen" and mother of true human, grace-filled culture.

And, in September 1976, he penned: "Mary is the Mother of the Church. She is also the Mother of priests. She bears in Herself a unique fullness and unique maturity of 'royal priesthood.' What is relevant to it can be found in Her plenitude. Thus she is also the Mother of priests and the Mother of the bridal love to the Church, by which every bishop should live, following Christ."

It's useful to remember that these were truly private notes, handwritten, regularly in shorthand with bullet points, pithy reflections and diagrams.

Reading the diary with George Weigel's *Witness to Hope*, the monumental first volume of his biography of John Paul II, would be a good idea, too. This biography enriches the diary, if you're looking to better understand the context of the notes and the times and places of the retreats in their ecclesial and historical context. In terms of structure, the original diary consists of two notebooks that the Pope wrote his annual retreat notes in between 1962 and 2003. The first notebook covers 1962-1984 and the second 1985-2003.

It's obvious that, among the few possessions the Pope had, the notebooks were of great importance to his spiritual life, shown by the assiduousness with which he maintained and returned to them each year. His retreat notes tell us of a man fixed on God, Our Lady and his vocation at the service of the Church.

Daniel Blackman writes from London.  
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