

"Live in love"

www.graceinaction.org  
February 2006

# GRACE IN Action

LIVING CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP™



Detail from: "Archangel Raphael," about 1720, unknown artist. Courtesy of Denver Art Museum. Gift of Dr. Belinda Straight.

## NEW Parables

### Love's lessons learned

**T**here was a schoolgirl who accidentally dropped her carton of milk. As she watched the white puddle spread over the lunchroom floor she did, indeed, cry over spilled milk.

A teacher rushed to the child's side to console her.

"That's OK," the teacher said. "Accidents happen."

The girl stopped crying. One of the ladies who worked in the lunchroom hurried over with a cloth to begin wiping up the mess. And another woman who volunteered in the cafeteria led the girl to her table and opened a fresh carton of milk, which the girl held with both hands. As she ate a cookie her mother had baked for her, the girl watched the janitor mop away the milk puddle. After the janitor finished, the tall man looked at the little girl and winked.

*She did, indeed, cry over spilled milk.*

And the girl learned her lesson in love and kindness, compassion and forgiveness that day.

An older boy in the lunchroom had been watching. He witnessed the comfort the teacher had given the girl who had dropped her carton of milk. He saw how others had rushed to the girl's side to help her, to love her. He saw the janitor's wink.

And the older boy opened his carton and poured his milk on the floor. He dropped the carton and stood back, waiting for compassion and understanding and aid to surround him. Instead, a couple of teachers rushed to his side to reprimand him.

"We do not pour our milk on the floor," one said.

The boy held his breath.

"No recess for you today," the other teacher said.

The janitor took out his mop and said, "You can stay inside and help me clean the floor, instead." The custodian shook his head as he handed the boy the mop.

And the boy learned his lesson in love and kindness, compassion and forgiveness that day.



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## CELEBRATE

### February

- 2 Presentation of the Lord
- 10 St. Scholastica
- 11 Our Lady of Lourdes
- 23 St. Polycarp

## FAITH Fact Sacred hearts

**T**his Valentine's Day, when you see hearts all around, remember the Catholic devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which dates to the 17th century. St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690) was instrumental in spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart after receiving revelations from Christ.

On her deathbed, the French religious woman spoke her final words: "I need nothing but God, and to lose myself in the heart of Jesus."

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque's Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus:

"O Heart of Love, I put all my trust in you. For I fear all things from my own weakness, but I hope for all things from your goodness. Amen."

Visit [www.graceinaction.com](http://www.graceinaction.com) and pray Venerable John Henry Newman's prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

## CORNERSTONE

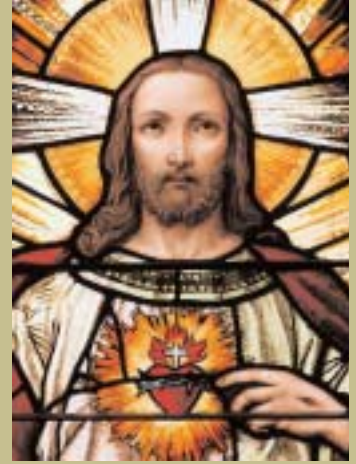
"Where there is no love,  
put love —  
and you will find love."  
— St. John of the Cross

# CATHOLIC WORDS, TO LIVE BY, TO LOVE BY

**T**o fall in love with God is the greatest of all romances; To seek Him, the greatest adventure; To find Him, the greatest human achievement.” — **St. Augustine**™ “For I who am infinite God want you to serve me with what is infinite, and you have nothing infinite except your soul’s love and desire.” — **God, to St. Catherine of Siena**™ “For silence is not God, nor speaking; fasting is not God, nor eating; solitude is not God, nor company; nor any other pair of opposites. He is hidden between them and cannot be found by anything your soul does, but only by the love of your heart.” — **“The Cloud of Unknowing”**™ “Nothing is obtained from God, except by love.” — **St. John of the Cross**™ “Make many acts of love, for they set the soul on fire and make it gentle.” — **St. Theresa of**

**Avila**™ “We are born to love, we live to love, and we will die to love still more.” — **St. Joseph Cafasso**™ “Love consumes us only in the measure of our self-surrender.” — **St. Thérèse of Lisieux**™ “All the good that you will do will come not from you but from the fact that you have allowed yourself to be used by God’s love.” — **Thomas Merton**™ “What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you will do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love and it will decide everything.” — **Pedro Arrupe, S.J.**™ “Happy is the man who is able to love all men alike.” — **St. Maximus the**

**Confessor**™ “We have an obligation not only to love each other but also in our love to make ourselves as lovable as possible so that it is easy for our sisters and brothers to love us.” — **William of Saint Thierry**™ “Be sure that as far as you advance in brotherly love, you are increasing in your love of God” — **St. Theresa of Avila**™ “We can never love our neighbor too much.” — **St. Francis de Sales**™ “Love is infinitely inventive.” — **St. Vincent de Paul**™ “We cannot do great things in life: we can only do small things with great love.” — **Blessed Mother Teresa**™ “When men have harnessed the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, they will harness for God the energies of love, and then for the second time in the history of this world, man will have discovered Fire.” — **Pierre Teilhard de**



James Baca photo

## TRY This Heart in hand

The pace of life in the 21st century coupled with the fever of fear in the land can leave even the most lighthearted person feeling heavy of heart. War. Terrorism. Natural disasters. The economy. The cost of oil. Avian flu. When life feels overwhelming, try this:

Place your palm over your heart — just as you would during the national anthem or the Pledge of Allegiance. Close your eyes. Be still. Take several deep breaths. Feel your own sacred heart beating. As you inhale, thank God for the gift of life. As you exhale, make room in your heart for the conversion that prompts Catholic stewardship.

## SOWING Seeds Where is your heart?

**“This is a culture in which destructive ‘isms’ — materialism, relativism, hedonism, individualism, consumerism — exercise seductive, powerful influences.”**

— *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*  
U.S. Catholic bishops’ stewardship pastoral



An antidote to the destructive “isms” is charity. “Charity” is one of those words that has lost its original meaning. We tend to think of charity as giving to help people who are financially poor. In fact, “charity” and “love” are used interchangeably in Scripture, and if you look up “Charity” in the index of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the listing will note “See also Love.” When you make a charitable contribution, you make a contribution of love. When you volunteer for a charitable cause, you volunteer for love.

**Which “ism” seduces you? How might you better support charitable causes? Where might you find more positive influences that support your discipleship?**

### Our Sunday Visitor

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## YOUR Feedback

**Egg-centric?** Do you wear an Easter bonnet to Mass? Decorate an egg tree? Bake hot cross buns? Play a part in a Passion play? How do you make your Easter special? We’re looking for a few glorious Easter traditions. The April issue of *Grace in Action* will include feedback from readers. If you have a special way of celebrating Easter, please e-mail or snail mail us at the addresses at left.