

"Teach me to be generous."
— St. Ignatius Loyola

www.graceinaction.org
September 2007

GRACE IN Action

LIVING CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP™



celebrate
September

- 8 Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary
- 14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross
- 15 Our Lady of Sorrows
- 21 St. Matthew
- 29 Sts. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael

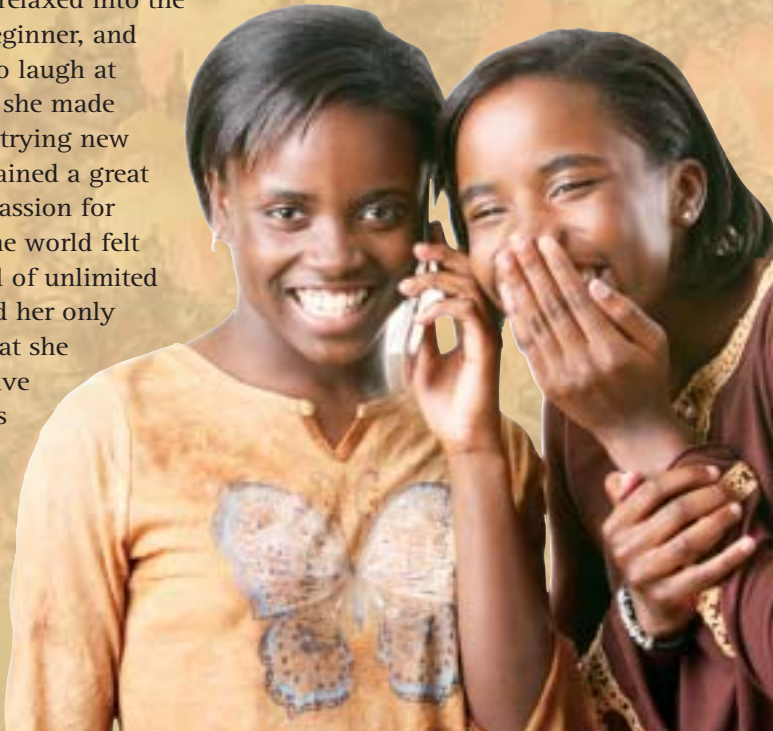
new parables Live every day of your life



here were twin sisters who had the same appearance, but very different attitudes. One sister wanted always to stay within her comfort zone. She never registered for classes or workshops because she did not like feeling like a beginner. She wanted to do everything well, and she felt ashamed and inadequate if she could not do everything perfectly, so she limited herself. This sister lived in fear of the possibility of embarrassing herself. At the same time, she regretted all the opportunities she had passed up due to her inhibitions.

She wanted to go away to camp, but she was sure she'd get homesick. She once had been invited to sing in a choir, but she felt too shy to sing at the tryouts. She had always longed to serve as a lector at liturgies in her parish, but she felt too intimidated to get up and read in front of people. She admired people who turned cartwheels, but she was too afraid to try. This young woman's world shrunk around her, and every day she questioned the meaning of her life.

The other sister signed up for courses that piqued her interest. She enjoyed meeting new people, experiencing unfamiliar places, trying new things. This sister enjoyed being a student. She relaxed into the role of the beginner, and she learned to laugh at herself when she made mistakes. By trying new things, she gained a great deal of compassion for beginners. The world felt large and full of unlimited potential, and her only regret was that she would not have enough hours in this lifetime to pursue all her interests.



St. Michael the Archangel photo by James Baca

modern disciples A Salute to All Teachers

Jesus was a rabbi. The word means teacher. This month, we salute all educators — from kindergarten teachers to university professors. Teachers, by nature, tend to be generous people. After all, they're willing to share what they know.

In a particular way, we acknowledge teachers in Catholic schools. Generally, Catholic-school teachers earn lower salaries than their public school counterparts. They often work with fewer resources and more budgetary constraints, yet they consistently turn out students who make the mark not only academically but as well-rounded people.

CORNERSTONE
"It is not what we do that makes us holy. We make holy what we do."
— Meister Eckhart

istock

kidsCORNER Apple of a kid's eye



This month, bring your favorite teacher an apple. Or an orange, a pear or a posy. Your teacher gives you, your classmates and your school so much. He or she will be happy to receive a small gift that shows your gratitude; and you will get to feel the joy of giving.



Or, instead of a simple present, make a gift of your time and effort. Depending on your talents and interests, volunteer to help your teacher with classroom tasks, tutoring other students or whatever your teacher might need.

And remember this: In life, we are all teachers, just as we are all students.



the wayWe pray

Sister Kathryn Kelm, S.S.S., works prayer into her daily workout. She wrote: "I do basic Tai Chi every morning. Phrases of the Our Father fit perfectly into the rhythm of this exercise; they work well with the basic symmetrical movements of this exercise for me."

Sister Kelm belongs to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament in Waterville, Maine.

sowingseeds

Our jobs can sanctify us

"Every human life, every personal vocation, is unique."

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

In body, mind and spirit, human beings are as different as snowflakes. We are, of course, unique, yet we share so much. God gifted each of us with life. God gave each of us talents and aptitudes. If you're reading this, you've probably also been gifted with the infused virtue of faith (see stewardship alphabet below). In return, Jesus calls us to make a contribution to the Kingdom.

We celebrate Labor Day this month. Whether your vocation is as a laborer or a professional, remember back to the day you were hired for your current job. Recall the satisfaction, relief and gratitude you felt when you landed the position. If you do not work outside your home, take time to relish the simple joys of home-making: clean, folded laundry; home-cooked meals; a hospitable garden lush with flowers and produce.

If we approach our work with the proper spirit, our jobs will leave us not drained of energy, but rather satisfied. Even sanctified.

Do you focus on excellence in your job? Does your work give you a sense of purpose and integrity? If not, what's missing?



The Crosiers

defining moments Stewardship alphabet



Illuminative Way: The second stage of the spiritual life in which one concentrates on responding to the gifts of the Holy Spirit so as to follow Christ. One may attain this level by cooperating with the "ordinary" movements of grace (receiving the holy Eucharist, frequenting the Sacrament of Penance, doing acts of charity, etc.).

Immortality of the Soul: The belief that the soul — that is, the animating principle of the human person — exists forever after the moment of conception. Eternal life is a long-cherished belief in many religions. Scripture and the Magisterium have always taught that the soul will endure; hence, all are called to care for their soul by practicing virtue and avoiding vice.

Source: OSV's Catholic Dictionary. Visit www.graceinaction.org for stewardship alphabet's letters A-H.

Imperfections: Deficiencies in one's character that, although not serious, are obstacles to attaining Christian perfection. The Sacrament of Penance, fraternal correction, prayer, acts of humility and penance are salutary helps in overcoming these weaknesses.

Infused Virtues: Those virtues of faith, hope and love that are imparted to the soul by God's sanctifying grace and are not acquired by any human effort other than having the willingness to receive them.

Intention: An act of the human will for the achievement of some purpose or objective — for example, in prayer.

Intercession: A form of the prayer of petition made to God on behalf of others, whether living or departed.

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