

Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.

Parish Life! from OSV



News and resources for your parish

November 2007

Welcome to **Parish Life!** from Our Sunday Visitor.

Welcome to **Parish Life!** from Our Sunday Visitor. As a parish leader who has ordered from Our Sunday Visitor in the past, you're receiving this eighth edition of our special e-newsletter just for parishes!

Each month you'll find timely content, practical information, and insightful inspiration delivered right to your inbox. We'd love to hear from you as well, so please e-mail us with questions or topics you would like to see discussed in future editions: yyoung@osv.com.

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Feel free to forward this email to a friend who might be interested.

Dealing with difficult parishioners

by Lorene Hanley Duquin

If you're a parish staff member, you see people at their best, their worst and everything in between. Whether parishioners are angry, confused, complaining, demanding, demeaning or emotionally distraught, it is part of your ministry to deal with the person without internalizing their problem.

It's not always easy.

The first step in dealing with difficult parishioners is to understand that most of them don't cause problems intentionally. Before you do or say anything to the person, ask yourself:

- Is the behavior damaging the parish or just annoying?
- Is this a one-time occurrence or habitual?
- Will time heal the problem or must some action be taken?
- Is something motivating the person to act this way? Can it be changed?

In many cases, problems with difficult people can be resolved. For example:

- Creative people are often disorganized and disruptive. Yet they breathe life into a parish with enthusiasm and new ideas. Don't put creative people in charge of projects that require attention to detail. Assure them that their ideas are important. Then organize listening sessions or brainstorming sessions to keep them involved.
- Insecure people crave attention. They talk excessively or make inappropriate remarks to be noticed. Stem the problem by finding ways to recognize them before they become disruptive.
- People who are upset tend to say things that they don't really mean. Don't take it personally. Listen and then ask the person what they need to settle the problem.
- Rigid people don't like change. They are quick to find fault and place blame. The best way to deal with them is to recognize their position by saying, "I'm glad you brought out some of the negative aspects of this." Then let it go.
- A gossip, a backstabber or a bully must be confronted. Force them to be accountable for their actions by recognizing their behavior. Make it clear that destructive behavior is not in line with the Gospel message.

A great prayer to use when dealing with difficult people is the Breathing Prayer. Imagine that you're breathing in God's love, and then breathe out frustration or tension or impatience. Ask God to make you an instrument of his love to that person.

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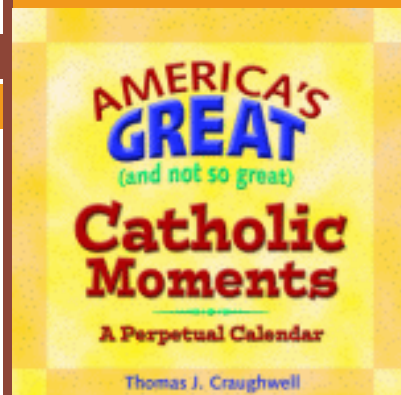
Mother Teresa's Devotion to Our Lady

Proving once again at what a powerful presence she possessed, Mother Teresa has been in the news recently.

Though some of the news reports got it wrong, charging her with not believing in God, she had wonderful ways of keeping her faith during dark and difficult times.

One of those ways was relying on the presence of the Blessed Mother, detailed in a new book "[Mother Teresa: In the Shadow of Our Lady](#)," published by Our Sunday Visitor. In many pictures of Mother Teresa, you will see her holding a rosary. Why? In addition to helping her recall and relive her founding vision, it was her way of "holding Our Lady's hand." [Read an excerpt here](#)»

Catholic Moments



November 6, 1683

Pope Pius VI names Father John Carroll bishop of Baltimore, the first bishop in the United States,

Ways to foster attitudes of gratitude

During Thanksgiving season, we talk a lot about gratitude. But how do we foster that? The following approaches seem to generate thankfulness. Many of these focus on children, but can work for just about anyone - parents, teachers and school staff, parish staff and volunteers.

10. As soon as toddlers can speak, teach them to say "Please" and "Thank you."
9. Make it a habit of saying "Thank you" when appropriate.
8. Encourage kids to write thank-you notes to those who give them gifts.
7. Set an example of sharing.
6. Give generously of your time, money and service to other families.
5. Have prayer times where everyone is asked to say, "Thank you, Lord, for _____."
4. When something good happens have everyone gather for a prayer of thanks.
3. When bad things happen, don't forget to be thankful for whatever good God may bring out of it.
2. Remember that the word "Eucharist" means thanksgiving, and at Mass we are giving God thanks for making us His sons and daughters.
1. Be thankful yourself, in all circumstances, good and bad. In all things, being grateful for thankfulness is a cause of joy and an antidote for disappointment.

Teaching Catholic Kids

Coming November 1 on Teaching Catholic Kids, find out more about our Bible. Did you know that through a quirk in history, English-speaking Catholics must look to France to trace the origins of the Bible printed in their own language?

Don't miss October's online update of Teaching Catholic Kids follows the lead of Pope Benedict XVI in his book "The Apostles" by urging catechists and students to examine the lives of the apostles. With specific looks at St. James and St. Peter, TCK leads kids into naming personality traits of each apostle and examining how those traits can be used for good ... or for bad. And Mary Lou Rosien tells catechists and kids how best to stand up for good Catholic values while attending public school. Free downloads and articles. [Click here to visit the Teaching Catholic Kids web site»](#)

Advent: Just Around the Corner

As the calendar year moves into the last quarter, you no doubt are starting to think about the Advent season. For a four-week plan on how to implement an approach of wait, convert, hope, see Our Sunday Visitor's pamphlet "How to Celebrate Advent."

From the pamphlet: "The First Week: ... Every one of us has some part of our lives that yearns for light, that is in deep need of reconciliation, or that feels lost. A glance at newspaper headlines tells us how great is the need of this broken world. *Come, Lord Jesus!* will probably be an easy prayer for this week."

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1789

Bishop Carroll's diocese covered all United States territory and gave him jurisdiction over 44,500 Catholics served by 24 priests.

Before he could assume his office, however, the bishop-elect traveled to England, where Bishop Charles Walmesley consecrated him in the chapel of Lulworth Castle.

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