

Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.

Parish Life! from OSV



News and resources for your parish

June 2007

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 fifth 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.

To continue receiving this monthly e-newsletter, you need do nothing. To unsubscribe, please follow the instructions at the bottom of the page.

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

Whatever Happened to Summer? by Lorene Hanley Duquin

Most parishes slow down during the summer. But what if you're in one of those parishes that never slows down? The summer months can fly by without any kind of a break, and before you know it, you're staring at the September calendar and saying, "Whatever happened to summer?"

It doesn't have to be that way. If you're serious about following in the footsteps of Jesus, then you will recall how he said to the apostles, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while" (Mk 6:31).

Jesus didn't suggest that the apostles rest because all of their work was done. He wanted them to rest because he understood that human beings need rest. In fact, the best time to rest is when we don't have time to rest! When we work to the point where we exhaust ourselves, we are not following God's will. We may try to justify our excessive behavior by telling ourselves that we are doing

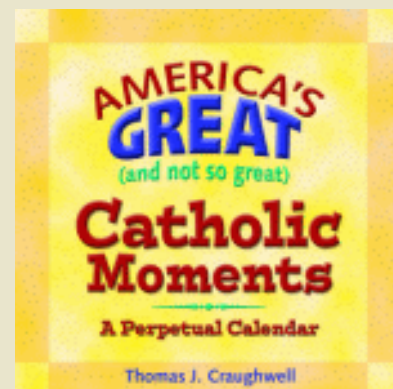
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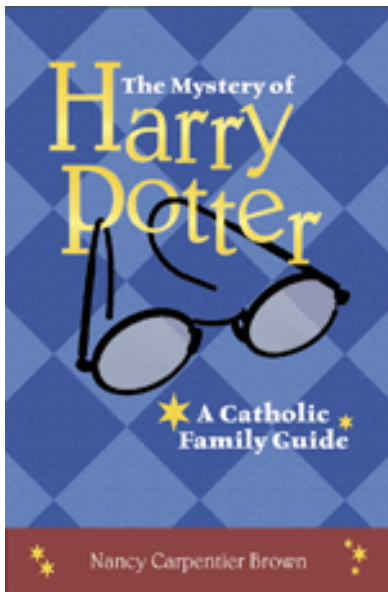


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God's work. But if we're really honest with ourselves, we know that when we don't get enough sleep, exercise and quiet time for prayer, we are not functioning at our best. We may find ourselves snapping at people. We may find ourselves making mistakes. We may find that our prayer life suffers.

Close your eyes for a moment and let these words of Jesus sink into the depths of your soul: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28).

How will you make time for rest this summer? How will you encourage other members of the parish staff to rest? How will you show that you are serious about following in the footsteps of Jesus?



A Catholic look at Harry Potter

Catholics, it seems to me, tend to look for the good in things, knowing that if God created something, it at least started out good. Of course things can go bad, for we believe in the fall, original sin, and the devil himself. Yet, the defendant is innocent until proven guilty.

Some folks tend to take books literally, and are unable to make distinctions. For example, even though the characters in [J.K.] Rowling's books are described as witches and wizards, they are people with talents or skills that can be used for good or evil. The literalists see the word "witch," and can quote the Bible condemning witchcraft. I agree,

witchcraft is to be condemned and it's evil. Despite the fact that the characters are called witches, the Potter books are not about witchcraft. - Excerpted from "[The Mystery of Harry Potter: A Catholic Family Guide](#)," by Nancy Carpentier Brown, now available from Our Sunday Visitor.

[Visit our special web section by clicking here»](#)

Pope Pius XII canonizes Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini, 1946 On this day, for the first time, an American citizen joined the vast company of saints of the Catholic Church. During the canonization ceremony, the Pope also formally named Mother Cabrini the patron saint of immigrants. - From "America's Great (and not so great) Catholic Moments," by Thomas J. Craughwell. [Order here»](#)

Quick links!

- www.OSV.com
- Parish leaders' resources
- Q&A with Dr. Joseph White
- 7 Steps to Becoming Financially Free Small Group Study Program
- New VBS program: Great Bible Reef
- Register to win free programs and materials for YOUR parish



From Grace In Action: Divine truth sets us free

The Declaration of Independence helped to achieve freedom of religion, yet practicing Catholicism in America was a hard-earned right. In Maryland, established by Catholics in 1634, Catholics could not vote or hold major office. Persecution of Catholics continued after the adoption of the First Amendment. In an 1884 pastoral letter, the U.S. Catholic bishops wrote: "A Catholic finds himself at home in the United States; for the influence of his Church has

constantly been exercised in behalf of individual rights and popular liberties. And the right-minded American nowhere finds himself more at home than in the Catholic Church, for nowhere else can he breathe more freely that atmosphere of Divine truth, which alone can make us free." - From Grace in Action, a bulletin insert focusing on living Catholic stewardship.

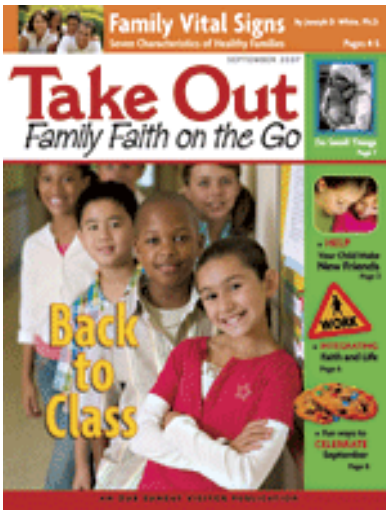
[Discover more about Grace In Action here»](#)

What is a good steward?

When the American bishops wrote their 1992 pastoral letter on stewardship, they defined a good steward as one who embodied four specific qualities: 1) Grateful: Thanking God daily for the blessings he or she has received. 2) Responsible with the blessings that God has bestowed; not only using them prudently, but also making sure that they do not wither away. 3) Sharing. A good steward knows that it is better to give than to receive, for in giving we receive far more than we could ever have imagined. 4) Accountable.

Remember the parable of the stewards to whom the master had entrusted the silver pieces? They had to render an account of their stewardship. One day, you and I will have to stand in accountability before the judgment seat of God. - For more on living stewardship, watch for Our Sunday Visitor's "What Catholics Do: Stewardship" pamphlet coming in July.

[View all our available pamphlets by clicking here»](#)



Family Vital Signs: Seven Characteristics of Healthy Families

By Joseph D. White, Ph.D.

When we visit the doctor, the first portion of the appointment is usually spent checking vital signs - physical symptoms such as temperature, blood pressure and heart rate - that are quick indicators of health and physical functioning. Over the past several years, researchers have identified several characteristics of healthy families that we might call family vital signs - indicators of good relationships and strong family functioning. If your

family is doing well, paying close attention to the following variables can help keep it strong. Or, if you're struggling right now, these seven areas might be good first points of intervention to help you get back on track.

- The family meal
- Family prayer
- A clean, well-organized home
- Family rituals
- Good communication
- Clear parent-child roles
- A strong marriage relationship

For more, [visit OSV's Take Out: Family Faith on the Go web site»](#)

[Read the expanded article here»](#)

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We hope you've enjoyed our Parish Life! e-newsletter! Let us know what you think--we appreciate your comments, questions, suggestions, and requests! Email yyoung@osv.com.

York Young

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Our Sunday Visitor

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