We Miss You

The full, active, and joyous participation of every Catholic is a precious gift to our faith community. As long as any Catholic is inactive or alienated from the Church, the Church remains incomplete. We want all our inactive brothers and sisters to return to the Church, so we can support each other on our common journey of faith. Here are some reflections on that journey that you may find helpful.

Growing Spiritually

God wants you to make the greatest possible difference with the rest of your life. Many people are realizing that the routines and rhythms of their everyday life do not fulfill their hunger for purpose and meaning—they are restless to live a life that matters. This restlessness in itself is a first step to growing spiritually. Faith is a gift from God that strengthens our spiritual life and inspires us to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. But growing spiritually has to be practical. It's about finding real Gospel answers to the real needs and real questions of real people.

Maybe your life is full—but it's not fulfilling. You see, our pursuit of personal fulfillment and significance goes far beyond material or emotional success. We were created for loving relationships. We need God, and we need each other. The Lord Jesus said,"I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." (John 10:10) To grow in the abundant life that Christ promised to all of us, means that we need to find a community of faith and enter into a fruitful relationship with others in the Church.

It had been twelve years since I confessed my sins and received communion, and I felt renewed. The guilt was gone. I felt open and honest with God and looked forward to participating again in my parish. —Patricia, age 35

Being Away

It doesn't matter how long someone has been away from the practice of the faith. The return of an inactive Catholic at any time brings great joy to God and enriches the life of the Church. Through God's grace, the person returning can develop a deeper and stronger faith.

Catching Up

The Catholic faith is a rich treasury of teachings and tradition. Even the most learned among us does not know everything. Lifelong Catholics continue to read, study, and attend adult faith formation classes to grow in their faith. Anyone who wants to "catch up" will be right at home with other Catholics.

Our parish priest was such a great help! He didn't give me a hard time about leaving the Church. He's been a terrific influence in helping me return. —Tom, age 27

Church Teachings

In his preaching and teaching ministry, Jesus showed the way to freedom and happiness in God's love. The teachings of the Catholic Church guide us to follow Christ so we may grow in holiness and one day be united with God forever in heaven. In its teaching ministry, the Church prayerfully studies and hands on the fundamental truths of faith, as expressed in Scripture and Tradition. If you have questions about church teaching, we invite you to give us a call to talk with a priest or other knowledgeable person or visit **www.CatholicsComeHome.org**

Divorce and Marriage

Can I come back if I am divorced? Yes, you can definitely come home to the Catholic Church and participate fully in the life of the parish community, including receiving communion. Divorce alone does not exclude anyone from the sacraments.

For those who are married or remarried outside the Church, each situation is unique. You can begin the process of healing your relationship with God and the Church. The easiest way to find out more is to contact your local parish and speak to the person who handles marriage annulments. You can also learn more at: *www.DioceseCC.org/Tribunal*. The Church is very eager to help and welcome you home with the love of Christ.

I finally got the courage to return to the Church. The day I received the Lord in the Eucharist again was such a happy day, especially because it was the day my little boy received his first communion. —Phyllis, age 34

The Joy of Forgiveness

The Church constantly teaches that Jesus is our Savior, who came not to condemn, but to save and to set us free. In the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation, Christ forgives sin, dissolves guilt, and sends the repentant person away with a joyful heart. You can change your life today by going to confession.

The Hurts of the Past

The Church is made up of imperfect people on a journey to the fullness of life in Christ. If you have been hurt by a church leader or member in any way, we ask your forgiveness. We believe that you can find healing through the Sacraments and through the compassionate support of our faith community and direct counseling, referral and support by calling 361-882-6191 ext. 632

Other Considerations

You may have questions about your faith or about the Catholic Church that are not answered here. If you would like to explore a topic further, a parish representative will be happy to talk with you.

By coming back, I've been able to take my faith out of grade school and bring it up to date, on par with my adult thinking on everything else. —Chris, age 58

How do I invite an inactive Catholic?

Please tear out and follow these 5-steps in giving an inactive Catholic the *We Miss You* brochure.

Step 1: Ask the Lord whom to invite: a family member, relative, co-worker, or friend that is Catholic and inactive in their faith.

Step 2: Write the name of person you are inviting:

_____

(Keep this as a reminder to pray for them.)

Step 3: Begin to pray asking the Holy Spirit for inspiration and to touch their heart and mind.

Step 4: Decide on the best way & time to invite them. A face-to-face conversation is usually best.

Step 5: Extend the invitation and give them the *We Miss You* brochure from your parish. Then be patient, and listen to them in a loving, welcoming and non-judgmental way.

Remember, Jesus says to you, "Do not be afraid…" (Mt. 28:10)

A Prayer

Heavenly Father, I praise you for the abiding presence of your Holy Spirit, and I speak your peace, your grace, your mercy and your perfect love into the life of (name of person). Give me joy and peace, as I prepare to invite them, patience and kindness in our conversation, and faithfulness as I continue your mission.
In Jesus Holy Name. Amen.

Thank you, for joining the Lord Jesus in His lifesaving mission to seek and save someone close to you (cf. Lk 19:10).

Please Tear Out and Read :: *Before giving this to someone*