

# Catholic Faith Corner

Understanding, Teaching, and Living the Faith

Sea of Galilee at Sunrise



[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [ARTICLES](#) [BOOK LIST](#) [BOOK REVIEWS](#) [SPEAKING/EVENTS SCHEDULE](#) [TALKS](#) [CONTACT](#)



## Your Life as a Gift to Give as Gift

by KATHLEEN GLAVICH, SND on [AUGUST 19, 2015](#)  
in [BLOGS](#)



This week I gave a retreat for a school faculty whose theme for the year was “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (2 Corinthians 12:7). St. Paul goes on to list gifts given by the Spirit such as uttering wisdom, healing, prophecy, and speaking in tongues. We spent

the morning reflecting on our gifts. I thought you'd like to share in some of the ideas from the retreat. The main thread was “What you are is God's gift to you, but what you become is your gift to God.”

We began by a guided meditation on being alive as a gift from God: How out of millions of possibilities God called us into being. So now we are living. We are breathing. Our hearts are pumping. Blood is coursing through our bodies. Thousands of neurons are shooting off in our brains. We are alive at this time, in this pace, with these people. We are alive because God loves us. If God would stop thinking about us, the chair we sit in would be empty. We have all the powers of a human body. We have all the powers of a human soul: to think, to imagine, to create, to love—because we are alive. Our lives, your life, all that you are and all that you will be, is sheer gift.



**Mary Kathleen Glavich, SND**

I'm a Sister of Notre Dame, of Chardon, Ohio, the author of seventy-plus books on religious education and spirituality, including a novel, *The Fisherman's Wife: The Gospel According to St. Peter's Spouse*. I enjoy giving talks and am a pastoral associate at St. Dominic Church.

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We usually know what our special gifts are, such as a flair for art, music, teaching. Sometimes we are not aware of the special gifts the Holy Spirit has brought us. Being generous, cheerful, compassionate, patient, and hardworking are also gifts. These are not as flamboyant as speaking in tongues or healing, but they contribute to making the world a better place.

All have different gifts. These complement one another like the ingredients in a recipe. The other day I made honey, raisin, oatmeal cookies. They didn't bake. That evening when I opened the microwave, I found the melted butter I forgot to add. All gifts are needed to build church. All work for the common good.

We must not waste our gifts but pour them out. Remember the parable Jesus told about the talents (which meant coins then but to us also providentially means special skills). Two servants doubled the amount their master entrusted to them, but the servant who received only one talent buried it instead of using it. He was severely punished. This is like the saying "Better to wear out than to rust out."

We can use all of our gifts to glorify God. As Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta urged, "Make your life something beautiful for God." And Pope Francis said, "Live life as a gift, to give to others, not as a treasure to be kept for ourselves."

But what if we think we don't have any gifts, or not many? Are you familiar with the parable of the cracked pot? A man in China took two pots hanging from a pole over his shoulders to fetch water. One pot was cracked, and by the time the man got home, half of the water in it had leaked out. One day the pot said, "Master, I'm sorry. I never bring you a full pot of water." The man replied, "Look behind you." All along the side of the path where the pot had spilled water, flowers grew. A quotation attributed to St. John Vianney is "If Samson slew hundreds of Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, imagine what God can do with a complete ass."

We might open others' gifts for them. Encourage them to try new things. Someone asked me to write a school song. I did and became a writer of school songs for four schools. My eighth grade teacher had me write compositions and mail them to her during the summer.

God helps us use our gifts by sending us the Holy Spirit, a gift who is known as a counselor, friend, someone who walks by our side. The best gift from God is Jesus. He revealed the Father to us and died and rose so we would again have the chance to live eternally happy. And Jesus gave us the gift of the Eucharist, a way that he is still with us. At each Mass we can offer ourselves to the Father as a gift. That is what the presentation of gifts symbolizes.



### About Sister Kathleen Glavich, SND

Jesus ordered us to make disciples of all nations and teach them. Mary Kathleen, a Sister of Notre Dame from Chardon, Ohio, responds to this call through writing, speaking, giving retreats, and teaching. Her motto, adopted from Eddie Doherty's gravesite, is "All my words for the Word!"

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The retreat included one of my favorite reflections: "The Tandem":

At first I saw God as my observer, my judge, keeping track of the things I did wrong, so as to know whether I merited heaven or hell when I die. He was out there, sort of like a president. I recognized his picture when I saw it, but I didn't really know him. But later on when I met Christ, it seemed as though life were rather like a bike—a tandem bike, and I noticed that Christ was in the back helping me pedal. I don't know just when it was he suggested we change places, but life has not been the same since I took the back seat to Jesus, my Lord. Christ makes life exciting. When I had control, I knew the way. It was rather boring and predictable. It was the shortest distance between two points.



But when he took the lead, he knew delightful long cuts, up mountains, and through rocky places and at breakneck speeds; it was all I could do to hang on! Even though it looked like madness, he said, "Pedal!" I was worried and was anxious and asked, "Where are you taking me?" He laughed and didn't answer, and I started to learn to trust. I forgot my boring life and entered into adventure. And when I'd say, "I'm scared," he'd lean back and touch my hand.

He took me to people with gifts that I needed, gifts of healing, acceptance, and joy. They gave me their gifts to take on my journey, our journey, my Lord's and mine. And we were off again. He said, "Give the gifts away; they're extra baggage, too much weight." So I did, to the people we met, and I found that in giving I received, and still our burden was light.

I did not trust him at first in control of my life. I thought he'd wreck it, but he knows bike secrets, how to make it bend to take sharp corners, jump to clear high rocks, fly to shorten scary passages. And I'm learning to be still and pedal in the strangest places, and I'm beginning to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face with my delightful constant companion, Jesus. And when I'm sure I just can't do any more, he just smiles and says, "Pedal." (Author unknown)

What do you like about being alive?

When has someone brought forth one of your gifts?



Mary Kathleen Glavich, SND  Heart to Heart with Mary

*A Yearly Devotional*

### Newest Book

In "Heart to Heart with Mary: A Yearly Devotional" Our Blessed Mother speaks to us every day of the year and a suggestion is provided for a response. It is similar to the popular book "Jesus Calling" and can be found on Amazon or purchased from me.

### Featured Book

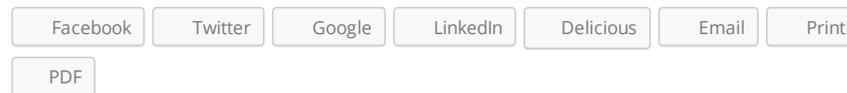
Totally Catholic! A Catechism for Kids and Their Parents and Teachers

Do you wish you had a simple, child-friendly summary of what Catholics believe? This book took first place in the Association of Catholic Publishers awards 2014 in the category of Children's Books. It can be purchased from Pauline Books and Media or from me. (\$14.95)

### A Heavenly Book

Do you believe in angels? Most people do. The Catholic Companion to Angels offers heavenly facts about these majestic creatures, confirming that you can turn to them for help. Uniquely, The Angels comes with three covers (statue, stained-glass, or painting). Choose the one you like best.

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**Mark Misencik** August 19, 2015 at 2:46 pm



Hey Sister,

The questions that you asked today require a lot of thought and to answer would call for a book to be written. At least for me. So I will leave it up to someone else to answer. Someone who can get to the point quicker.

"Your Life as a Gift to Give as Gift" reminded me of a paragraph from a book written by Peter Kreeft. He was explaining the Bible and in particular the Song of Songs. And I quote:

"Love somehow mysteriously exchanges selves (2:16). I am not mine but yours; you are not yours but mine. And this is the only way for me to be truly me and you you. The gift given in love is more than feelings, deeds, time or even life: it is the very self. The givers become their own gift."

Mark

REPLY

**Kathleen Glavich, SND** August 20, 2015 at 8:32 am



Mark, that quotation dovetails nicely with my blog. How good to know that you could write a book in answer to those questions. That means that you have zest for life and also that you are fortunate to have people in your life who care about you!

Available from ACTA Publications and me.  
(\$10.00)

## My First Novel!

The Fisherman's Wife is the story of St. Peter's spouse, the long-suffering but delightful woman who puts up with Peter and his obsession with the itinerant preacher named Jesus. Through her we meet Peter, Jesus, and other biblical characters. In Capernaum she witnesses Jesus' healings and hears his words. The book is based on the Gospels, legends, and what is known about first-century Jewish women. The rest is sheer imagination. Order directly from me FOR AN AUTOGRAPHED COPY at [kglavich@ndec.org](mailto:kglavich@ndec.org).

## A Bit of Humor

A Slow Student During indoor recess, the third and fourth graders were playing school. Taking part in the game, the teacher, Sister Janet, sat at a child's desk. Adam, who was playing the teacher, came up to her and asked, "And just how many years have you been kept back?" (from "Why Is Jesus in the Microwave?")

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REPLY

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