

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](#)



Down with Distractions During Prayer

by KATHLEEN GLAVICH, SND on [FEBRUARY 20, 2019](#)
in [BLOGS](#)



Apparently our brains have more than one track. Maybe as you're praying the rosary, you're planning what you'll have for dinner and before you know it, you've prayed the closing prayer. Maybe you're reading a prayer, like the Divine Office, and your eyes are following the words, but when you're finished, you don't know what you've said to God because you

were dwelling on a problem. During prayer, stray thoughts can pester us like gnats. Buddhists refer to "monkey minds," that is, just as monkeys leap from tree to tree, our brains leap from one thought to another. How helpful it would be if we were rapt in ecstasy as some saints were! Praying would be much easier. Many suggestions are given to combat distractions: focus on a candle, play music, look at a religious picture, weave them into your prayer. However, I've found one ploy to be 100% effective.

When I was writing a religion series, my meditation time was usually invaded by thoughts for the next lesson plan, the format for the pages, and how to deal with the publisher. Frustrated, I asked my spiritual director, a good Jesuit, "Can you help me?" This is what he said:



Mary Kathleen Glavich, SND

I'm a Sister of Notre Dame, of Chardon, Ohio, the author of eighty-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 retreats and was a pastoral associate at St. Dominic Church. I also edit and self-publish books for others.

[View Full Profile →](#)

Every day take out a pen and paper and begin, "Dear Jesus." Then write him a letter telling him whatever is in your heart. This may be about your upcoming day, your worries, people you care about—anything. When you are finished, sign the letter, "Love, Kathleen." But you're not done. Begin a new letter, "Dear Kathleen" and write a letter from Jesus to you. Sign it, "Love, Jesus." My first reaction to this second letter was that I didn't want to be putting words in Jesus' mouth. But Father said, "Don't consciously think about what Jesus would or should say to you. Just let the pen go by itself. This is important. You will be surprised."

The next morning, being a good sister, I did what the priest had advised. There was no room for distractions! Amazingly, that afternoon something happened that Jesus had referred to in the morning's letter. I continued this practice of letter writing day after day. Some of the things Jesus wrote to me were powerful and touching. But then it occurred to me that because my work entailed writing all day long, my precious prayer time had become too much like my work. I got tired of writing letters. When I told Father this, I asked if I should stop. He replied, "No. Just make your letters shorter."

So each morning I wrote only one or two sentences in the two letters, like postcards. ("Wish you were here!") Surprisingly, the words had the same benefits. They made me realize Jesus' presence more. His words to me were moving.

Father also suggested that after a time I go back and read the letters, maybe annotating them. When I did this, I found I had a record of my life during that period.



Once after I gave a weekend retreat on Scripture the man who came in the evening to provide entertainment said, "I'm sorry I missed the retreat today. Tell me one thing you said." I shared the letter writing idea with him. He said, "I did that once on my computer. In Jesus' letter to me were things I did not know. It scared me and I never did it again!"

I pass this unusual prayer idea on to you. Try it and let me know what you think.

Perhaps you already write such letters. If so, what has been your experience?

Share this:



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!"

[Learn more](#)

About Catholic Faith Corner

A warm welcome to Catholic Faith Corner! May its reflections help you know and live the Catholic faith, inspire you, and give you hope.

Subscribe to Catholic Faith Corner

Subscribe to Catholic Faith Corner today to receive notification of new blog posts.

 [Subscribe to Catholic Faith Corner via RSS](#)

 [Subscribe to Catholic Faith Corner by Email](#)

[Click image to purchase](#)

Tagged as: [distractions](#), [Jesus](#), [meditation](#), [prayer](#)

{ 6 comments... read them below or [add one](#) }

Joyce February 21, 2019 at 8:28 am



I have been writing a letter to God and Jesus every morning for the past eight years. This has freed me to talk to God and Jesus in all ways. I have never wrote a letter to me from Jesus though. I think it might me be difficult at first, but I plan to try. After writing my letter I have tried to be calm and listen for whatever God would want to say to me. Thank you for sharing. Joyce

REPLY

Kathleen Glavich, SND February 22, 2019 at 11:11 am



Eight years! You are more persevering than I am, Joyce.

REPLY

Kathleen Tobin February 21, 2019 at 8:49 pm



Dear Kathleen,

It sounds like something to try. A little focus will take away some of the distractions, maybe all. I'll let you know if the idea works for me.

REPLY

Kathleen Glavich, SND February 22, 2019 at 11:11 am



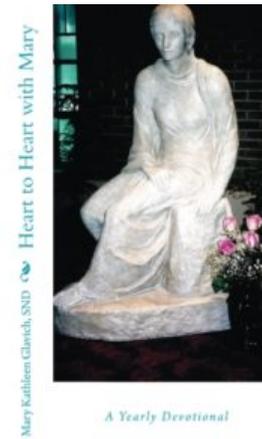
Good luck, Kathleen. Hope it nurtures your prayer life.

REPLY

Ruth Ann Pilney February 22, 2019 at 8:35 am



My spiritual director suggested something similar to me: letters to God. I did that for awhile, but I don't remember it too well. Your post is encouraging me to do it again, perhaps during Lent.



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.

I no longer worry about distractions in prayer, though. I deal with them by “repenting”. That is “returning” to the prayer. I do that as often as necessary, telling God I prefer Him.

REPLY

Kathleen Glavich, SND February 22, 2019 at 11:12 am



Sometimes we're able to weave our distractions into our prayer. Maybe they are graces prompting us to pray about someone or something.

REPLY

Leave a Comment

Name *

E-mail *

Website

Submit

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.

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?")

Of Interest

[The Fisherman's Wife](#)

[100 Catholic Blogs by Catholic Sisters and Nuns](#)

[Ideas for Church fundraising](#)

Recent Posts

[Kindness for a Better World](#)

[A Layman Answers Why Are You Catholic?](#)

[Advice for a Happy Thanksgiving Dinner](#)

[In Praise of Praise, Part 2](#)

[In Praise of Praise, Part 1](#)

About the Sisters of Notre Dame, Chardon, Ohio

The Sisters of Notre Dame of Chardon, Ohio, belong to an international congregation of more than two thousand apostolic women religious. We are one in mind and one in heart for the transformation of the world in Christ.



[Learn More](#)

SND Blogs

[Catholic Web Solutions](#)

[Grace to Paint](#)

[In the Hands of the Potter](#)

[Living Justly](#)

[Prayer Poems](#)

[SND Express Blog](#)

[Sunflower Seeds](#)

[The Fisherman's Wife](#)

[What's Happening](#)

Search

SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME WITNESS DAILY TO
GOD'S GOODNESS AND PROVIDENT CARE.

Join us!

Contact our Vocation
Director today.



Copyright © 2012 The Sisters of Notre Dame, Chardon, Ohio | Design & Development by [Groupmind Media](#)