

How God Guides Us

Relationship comes first!



Our high school students in the Diocese have been telling us through surveys and interviews over the last several years that they want to know *how* God guides them in everyday life. This is radically important for them, and for each one of us.

It is essential to know that God truly *desires* to lead us. We can be sure of this because God has revealed to us in the Scriptures that He will guide us in all things. Here are some Bible passages that point to this fact:

- "He guides me in right paths for His name's sake" (Psalm 23: 3).
- "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with My loving eye on you" (Psalm 32:8).
- "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths known" (Proverbs 3:5-6).
- "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" (James 1:5).
- "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." (Luke 11:9).

God offers us guidance in different ways. However, there is something that is foundational to our receiving it. The key is **our relationship with God – knowing the Guide Himself**. Each of us must come to understand, through a special grace given by God, that we are loved deeply and uniquely by Him. Saint John says: "We love because God *first* loved us" (1 John 4:19). Whether we were blessed to realize this early in life, or whether we come to understand it later on, it profoundly affects a person to realize that I'm in this world because I'm loved – that I've been known and loved from all eternity – that I've been given life at a certain time, in a certain place and within a certain set of circumstances. I've also been given the choice to follow the Lord or reject Him.

In order to receive this grace of a deeper experience of God's personal love, we need to ask for it. Our Lord will answer this prayer, and we need never stop asking for more of it - for more of Him. When we know the truth of how much God loves us and that He *wants* to guide us, everything changes: we become more peaceful, confident and trusting. As we grow in our relationship with Jesus, we become more aware of His guidance. And, as we follow His guidance, we will grow deeper in our trust and relationship with Him.

Guidance is a gift from God and our part is to dispose ourselves to receive it. The proper disposition involves being open, available and

entails looking for and being ready to receive the gift of guidance *when* God gives it.

God desires what is best for us, even better than what we want for ourselves, or that anyone else wants for us. Based on this trust, we want to make ourselves available to what God desires. Even when this includes a certain amount of difficulty or suffering, God's guidance is always accompanied by a peace and joy deep down in our heart. He promised us that everything will work out together for good, in the end. (See Romans 8:28). If you would like to read two modern-day true stories of God's very real and practical guidance, they can be accessed at diolc.org/catechesis/bulletin-inserts then click on Stories for Bulletin Insert 1.

How does one go about seeking guidance from God? How do we begin to learn to listen for God's guidance? How can we tell if we're just "talking to ourselves" or if we're listening to God? These questions will be answered in a series of bulletin inserts to follow, which will provide specific principles for understanding how God guides us and how to practice making personal application in our everyday life. There is nothing more exciting than knowing that God has a special path for us and that we can come to know the peace and joy that comes in following this adventure with Him!

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