



God Guides Us

Through Other People

This is the fourth in a series on how God guides us with the focus here on guidance through other people, both from those that we know well and sometimes from those that we simply encounter in differing situations. As part of God's family, whether we are mindful of it happening or not, we can serve as channels of God's direction for each other.

It is a true blessing to recognize the movement of the Holy Spirit when we "run into" someone who tells us something we identify as coming from God, unbeknownst to them. Or, this same dynamic might occur through a providential encounter in which we simply observe something in someone's life or actions which impacts our specific decision making. These unpredictable little "miracles" are happening all the time but we usually acknowledge them more often when we are deliberately seeking God's guidance in a particular area of our lives.

A significant way that God desires to provide guidance to children is through their parent's instruction. The guidance between parents and their sons and daughters is so important because it is primarily the parent's responsibility to lead their children to a personal relationship with Jesus - helping guide them to Heaven. This incredible obligation is, and has been, embraced by so many parents through prayer and with

self-giving love in cooperation with the help of God's grace.

Along with our family, we also need to be connected to a community of believers to receive guidance from God. A great way for this to happen is through attending Mass every Sunday, as well as studying the Bible in a small group at the parish or in the home. Bonding with our parish community provides a real sense that we are a family united under the spiritual fatherhood of our pastor. Further, this develops strong friendships in Christ, allows us to discover others with whom we can "walk" on the journey of life, and helps us to accept others and ourselves as imperfect persons who are seeking God's guidance.

Reading the lives of the saints, such as Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and Pope Saint John Paul II, can affect and guide us in a dramatic way because they were committed disciples of Jesus Christ. It often occurs with such spiritual reading that the Lord will highlight a word, phrase or experience that gives us clearer direction in *our* own situation.

Understanding that God often gives us guidance through other people, it will be most beneficial to specifically seek the counsel of godly, wise and experienced persons whom we know. These will include parents, pastors, teachers, and friends whom we deeply trust and respect for their integrity. It is crucial to ask for advice from those who have various avenues of life

experience and who are like-minded in the Christian faith. Further, we want guidance from those people who would never shy away from telling us what we might not want to hear. Two real-life stories at diolc.org/catechesis/bulletin-inserts exemplify this dynamic.

Sometimes without knowing of our discernment process, a person will express something that speaks directly to our situation—our heart will "lift" and we will **know** it is a piece of guidance from God for us. People who are good listeners tend to be led by the Holy Spirit and speak only their perception of His guidance when moved to do so. Be aware of persons who propose tons of advice and want to "fix" the situation.

It is important to remember that God will use one or more, or all of the ways that are explained in this series, to guide us. We need to keep listening and watching for His direction. The bigger the decision that is being made, the bigger the guidance that God will give us. When the guidance seems to resonate in our heart and we seem to be moving in the right direction, it will "fit" perfectly and be accompanied by peace in our mind and heart.



By Ann and Carol Lankford
DIOCESE of LA CROSSE