

Bring faith to life.  
Find life in faith.

# Impact

## Living stones

What are you building? Lasting relationships, a career, a family? Do you build others up? Are you building a better world? What we build says a lot about who we are.



Each of us has only so many hours in a day, and we do not know when our last day on earth will be. We make many choices in the course of our days and weeks, months and years. How will we use our time? What needs our attention? Who needs our presence and care? We may build something that matters, or waste the opportunities we have in favor of passing things. **Through our decisions and actions, we build a life, the total sum of all that we are and do.**

**Jesus shows us that there is more to life** than the focus on ourselves and those closest to us that often consumes our time and attention. That life that you're building? Make it about more than your narrow concerns. Let yourself build something that has much greater impact. In the second reading for May 7, St. Peter says, "like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Pet 2: 4-5) **What we build and how we build it is an expression of what is most important to us.**

**When we turn to Christ, the living stone, our priorities change.** In faith, we grow in a desire to give for the sake of others, to sacrifice beyond what we think we can, trusting that God will take our offering and build something wonderful. In the words of Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger, God's cause becomes the only concern of our hearts. Christ calls us to build up the reign of God through our actions and interactions, in what we say and what we do. We may choose to give our time and resources to help others build a better life. We may contribute to parish ministries and Church initiatives to serve the poor, promote peace and advocate for justice. If we pour ourselves out, our hearts will be filled. If we resolve to build the reign of God, the reign of selfishness, material wealth, and need for security dissolve into the promise of a brighter tomorrow. **We have but one life in which to make a difference. Build something for lasting impact.**

## Filled with the presence of God

**Picture in your mind your favorite painting or photograph.** Hear the familiar sounds of the recording you most enjoy. Think of your favorite movie, the background of its setting, the soundtrack, lighting and costumes.

**In each, what is not seen or heard is essential to our experience of that which is central.** A painting, without the color or light in the background would have no clear image upon which to gaze; music without the pauses, an endless stream of noise; a movie without the background falls flat, and does not capture our attention.

**This could be one way of thinking about the Holy Spirit in our lives.**

People sometimes say they have a difficult time perceiving the Holy Spirit, and yet, the presence of the Holy Spirit within us is like the background in a painting that allows the image to shine



through: as people created in God's image and likeness, it is the power of the Holy Spirit that infuses us with the gifts, guidance, wisdom, and courage to live as Christian disciples and

stewards. We often only recognize the Spirit's presence in hindsight, much as we only recognize the background in the movie as we reflect on it over time.

**Once we draw our attention to the unseen and yet holy within and around us, we recognize the Spirit's action in our minds and hearts.** We perceive the presence of God in others. We see the eyes of Christ in the eyes of those who are poor or lonely; we hear the voice of the Lord in the call of a child or an elder; and we become ready to witness to the love of God in the course of our daily lives.

**Let us grow in willingness to share our presence, gifts, and resources as stewards through the power of the Holy Spirit, grateful people whose lives are filled with the presence of God.**

## Impact this month

Pay attention. Pray. Grow in Gratitude. Sacrifice. Trust.

**Be attentive to the needs of others.** There are many in our local community, country, and world who are in great need. Pay attention.

**Consider your own gifts, and respond in the best way that you can.** Each of us has different talents, strengths, and skills. Pray that you may grow in

gratitude for your many blessings. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you who needs the gift that only you can give.

**Stretch yourself. Sacrifice.** Remember that God's way is the way of self-giving love. There is much in our culture that tells us to focus on our wants, rather than on the needs of others. Give more than you think is possible. God will take care of the rest.

**Trust that Christ is with you.** We all have moments in which we feel alone and wonder if we're on the right track. Jesus said, "I will be with you always."

