

In the constant turning of your heart toward Christ you will encounter him. Listen to him carefully as he speaks to you, and follow his lead. Invite others to also share in this great joy. It is the joy of the Gospel!

In these words, Christ speaks to you: "I love you tenderly and my love is forever. Even when you suffer difficulty, imitate my self-giving love and you will be at peace. Walk with me and allow me to guide you."

5 Sustain your faith through life in the church, the People of God, the Body of Christ.

Drawing close to Christ also draws us to one another. We do not come to Mass for our own good but in order to donate ourselves to the parish. Let yourself be drawn into the Eucharist by the love of Christ.

This will also draw you into greater attention to the poor, the suffering, and the rejected. Examine your own life in the light of the Gospel. Do you have room in your heart for these poor ones who are beloved of Christ?

Because God has loved and forgiven you so often and so completely, you must now also become someone ready to love and forgive no matter what. As Jesus told his disciples after he had washed their feet, "I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).



The Joy of the Gospel

"I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ."



How to have a renewed personal encounter with Christ

Adsum

With this simple word, Mary allowed her heart to be drawn into God's heart. Adsum means (in Latin) "I am present" and it is the posture of prayer. Let this word now lead us to draw closer to Christ.

1 God loves you and is always ready to embrace and forgive you.

Like the father of the Prodigal Son, God stands at the crossroads, looking for you, hoping you will return to him with your whole heart. God desires that you draw near to him. "Come to me," God tells us, "I have forgiven you completely. I love you unconditionally. You will always be my child and my mercy is always offered to you."



All quotes are from *The Joy of the Gospel* by Pope Francis. The artwork is from Mark Hakomaki. Text is by Bill Huebsch.

2 We tend to be distracted from God and from love, caught up in selfish designs of our own, for we are sinners.

We often do not walk with God in our daily lives. We're busy about so many other matters. We often do not listen carefully to the divine voice which echoes within us, calling us to do what is good and to avoid evil.

And yet, whenever we seek God's mercy, it is gladly given to us. God speaks to us like this: "I forgive you; you are my daughter or son and I love you. Take my hand and walk with me; sin no more." This wonderful hope draws us ever closer to Christ. In him we find joy.

"Let me say this once more: God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy."

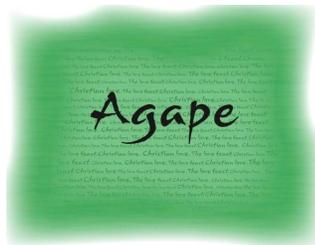
Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel* #3

3 Christ's self-giving love on the cross opens the pathway to love in our own lives. By this love, we are being saved all the time, saved from our own selfish selves.

Pause here in the midst of everything and simply turn your heart to Jesus. Let yourself be in his presence and sense how near to you he is.



Like a shepherd cares for his sheep, so Jesus Christ cares for you. In the nighttime, when you awaken from sleep, turn your heart to the shepherd of your soul. Speak to him as a friend. There is an element of surrender in this just as the lamb surrenders to the care of the shepherd. Give yourself over to Christ and trust him.



You will not be disappointed.

Throughout your days and nights, let your heart turn toward him like this. It is the Holy Spirit who moves you to draw closer to Jesus. Let us pray:

**Jesus, I turn my heart toward you now;
I know you receive me with open arms.
Even though I am sometimes very selfish
your forgiving love stays with me.**

**"Lord, I have let myself be deceived;
in a thousand ways I have shunned your love,
yet here I am once more,
to renew my covenant with you.**

I need you. Save me once again, Lord.

Take me once more into your redeeming embrace."

Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel* #3

4 Living in Christ brings us great joy; it is, indeed, the only pathway to true human happiness and fulfillment.

Let the Spirit nudge your heart to be more open to encountering Christ in your daily life. Let forgiveness be your first impulse when you are wronged. Let generosity drive your decisions. Learn the art of self-giving love and you will be on the pathway to great happiness.

As you become the servant of all, your own heart will fill with meaning, happiness, and peace. You will be eager to share it with others.

You will soon find a sense of direction for your life.

