

Why Stay Catholic? Here are a few reasons

adapted from *Why Stay Catholic? Unexpected Answers to a Life-Changing Question*
by Michael Leach (Loyola Press)

IDEAS:

•**the Sacramental Imagination:** seeing what the eyes cannot see and understanding what is at the heart of things: truth, love, mercy, goodness, beauty, harmony, humility, compassion, gratitude, joy, peace, salvation.

•**the Mystical Body of Christ:** we are all, literally, *in Love*, and nothing can separate us from the love of God in whom we live and move and have our very being.

•**the Seamless Garment of Life:** a consistent ethic of life, from womb to tomb, in the unborn and the dying, in the murderer on death row and the mother in a coma, in the soldier in Afghanistan and the homeless family in Iraq.

•**Catholic Social Teaching:** the church's best-kept secret, founded on the spiritual awareness that each of us is responsible for the good of all of us.

•**the 'Bethlehem Principle':** There is room in the church for everyone, or there is room for no one. Would not Jesus, if he were here today, prepare a great room for victims of abuse, for gay and lesbian Catholics, for divorcees, for Catholic thinkers who seek to shed light but too often receive only heat in return?

•**the Church Can Change - Really!:** Rules, rituals and teachings change all the time. What remains the same is beauty, not representations of beauty, truth, not statements about the truth, goodness, not good deeds.

PEOPLE:

•**Dorothy Day,** the pacifist-anarchist-activist servant of the poor whom many think will be the next canonized American saint.

•**Father Andrew Greeley,** who before his incapacitating accident was one of the most creative Catholic thinkers of our time.

•**Sister Thea Bowman:** African-American nun, musician, and cofounder of the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University.

•**Pat Reardon**, first assistant public defender of Cook County, Illinois (Chicago area), “a friend to those who have no friend.”

•**Father Bob McCahill**, “the Bicycle Disciple” who has been serving the poor in Bangladesh for 35 years.

PLACES:

•**The Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani** in Kentucky, where Thomas Merton lived for 27 years, exemplifies a chosen part of Catholic prayer: being still, losing interest in our thoughts and letting God do all the talking

•**Catholic Charities:** The second largest social service provider in the country, surpassed only by the federal government, Catholic Charities has for centuries been feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, nurturing abandoned babies, protecting neglected children, welcoming refugees, helping immigrants assimilate, caring for the sick and burying the dead.

•**Catholic Relief Services:** The official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the U.S. Last year it touched the lives of 130 million people; including helping people in forty countries meet basic needs for food, water, health and hygiene. The work of CRS is nothing more and nothing less than a manifestation of great Catholic ideas.

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