



“How do I build the kingdom?”

(Saying “Yes” to the Mission of Christ and His Church)



Name:

Opening Prayer

“Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’

“‘For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink.’

“‘[I was] a stranger and you welcomed me.’

“‘[I was] naked and you clothed me.’

“‘[I was] ill and you cared for me.’

“‘[I was] in prison and you visited me.’

“Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’

“And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

—*Matthew 25:34-40, NAB*

Dive In:

At St. Peter's Basilica

Sentenced to crucifixion by Nero, this apostle didn't think himself worthy to die like the Lord, and so he requested that his cross be turned upside down. According to tradition, St. Peter was buried as close as possible to the site of his martyrdom. Today, towering over his tomb, is one of the world's most beautiful works of architecture: St. Peter's Basilica.

The basilica, one of the most sacred places on earth, has a rich history that extends back to the time of Peter's burial. After St. Peter was buried, a simple shrine was placed atop his tomb. In AD 323, the Emperor Constantine had a beautiful church built there. It was finished after the emperor's death.

Centuries later, the basilica was in disrepair. Pope Nicholas V decided to demolish the old church and build a new basilica in its place. He commissioned Bernardo Rosselino from Florence to oversee the project. When Pope Nicholas died in 1455, little had been done to restore the site. Pope Julius II picked up Pope Nicholas V's initiative and commissioned Donato Bramante as the chief architect and grand designer. However, they also died before its completion, and over the years, other great artists like Raphael and Michelangelo Buonarroti became instrumental in the final design.

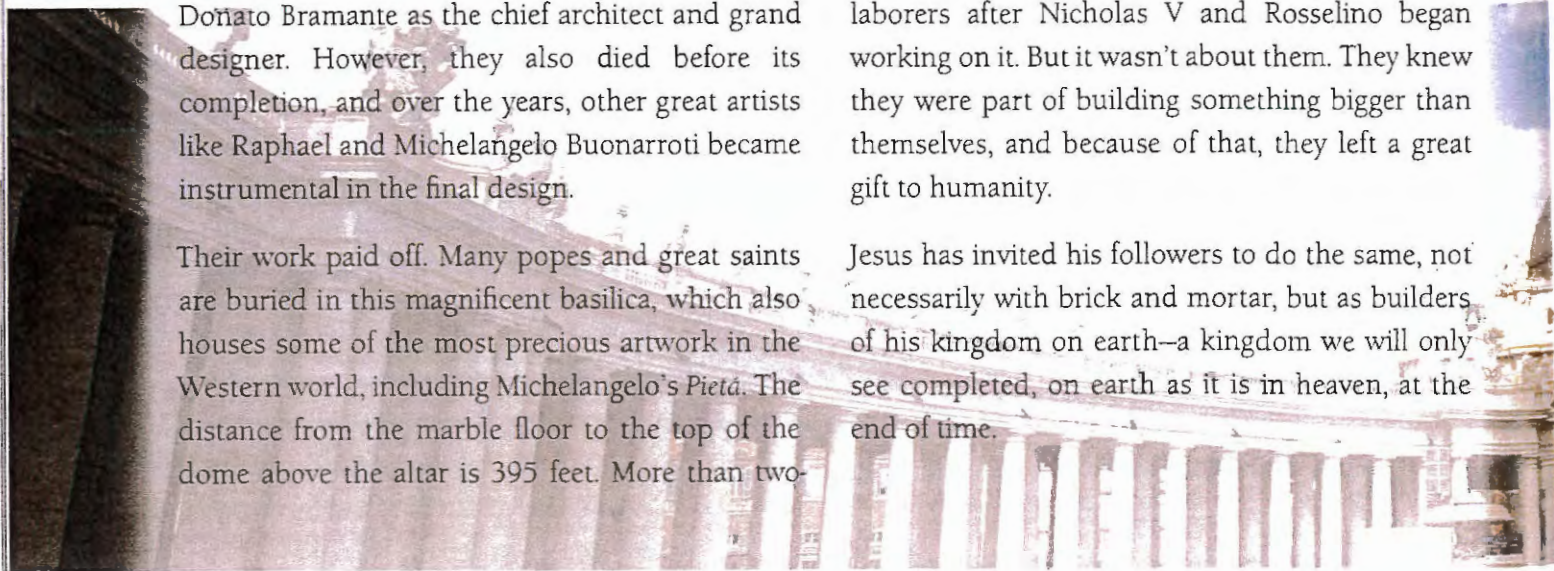
Their work paid off. Many popes and great saints are buried in this magnificent basilica, which also houses some of the most precious artwork in the Western world, including Michelangelo's *Pieta*. The distance from the marble floor to the top of the dome above the altar is 395 feet. More than two-

and-a-half full-sized replicas of the Statue of Liberty, foot to torch, could be stacked inside it! Millions of pilgrims visit St. Peter's Basilica every year to lift their hearts and minds to heaven.

Was St. Peter actually buried there? Beneath the altar, archeologists unearthed a box with bones and an inscription that read, "Peter is here." Careful study determined the bones were that of a man who was between sixty-five and seventy years of age, and 5 feet 6 inches tall. All the bones were present except those of the feet—consistent with the way Peter died, feet fastened to the top of a cross. Indeed, this particular church is built upon "the rock" of Peter's faith.

But perhaps the most notable thing about the holy site is the fact that people spent their entire careers working on it with no hope of seeing the full fruit of their labor in their own lifetimes. St. Peter's Basilica wasn't finished until 1626–176 years, twenty-six popes, many architects, and countless artists and laborers after Nicholas V and Rosselino began working on it. But it wasn't about them. They knew they were part of building something bigger than themselves, and because of that, they left a great gift to humanity.

Jesus has invited his followers to do the same, not necessarily with brick and mortar, but as builders of his kingdom on earth—a kingdom we will only see completed, on earth as it is in heaven, at the end of time.





Segment 1: We're on a Mission

1. Chris says that he looks like a banana but is shaped like a _____.
2. To combat the evil we see in the world today, we are called to build a "culture of _____."

Segment 2: Building the Kingdom

1. Jesus is the Way, the _____, and the Life.
2. St. Paul tells us that we are all part of the Body of Christ. In his analogy, which part of the body is Christ?
A) Feet B) Hands C) Head D) Eyes

Segment 3: The Works of Mercy

1. The _____ works of mercy are oriented toward the body, that is, toward other people.
2. To comfort the sorrowful and to bear wrongs patiently are examples of the _____ works of mercy.
3. Chris says we need to be "needy for _____."



“We serve a King who cares, a King who knows and loves his people.”



TO THE HEART with

In the year 2000, I went to Rome for the first time. A recent convert, I was excited beyond belief to spend ten days in the Eternal City. Every street and building told a story about my newfound faith. I vividly recall walking into St. Peter's Basilica and being struck by the grandeur of it. I looked up at the statues and felt as if they were saying to me, "Take this seriously. You're a part of something great."

Later that week, I joined a million other people in St. Peter's Square, awaiting the arrival of John Paul II. At the start of the ceremony, dozens of people emerged from the crowd carrying glowing lamps, which they placed in front of statues and icons on display. Someone explained that each lamp-bearer was honoring the original missionary who had brought the Gospel to his or her homeland. In that moment, I realized we were all

the beneficiaries of a legacy thousands of years in the making.

The story of our Christian faith is a tale of epic proportion without a single insignificant plot detail or character. There are heroes and villains, battles and quests, sinister plots, and unseen adversaries. It is an adventure full of unsung heroes, majestic cities, and shepherds becoming kings. Most of all, it is the story of a group of people following in the footsteps of a Servant King, living the life and sharing the gifts entrusted to them for the good of the kingdom of God. Not only do we get to be a part of that kingdom, but we also are given the chance to find and bring others into something great—just like those original missionaries!

When all is said and done, I want my life to have been such a gift to others that, thousands of years

later, the effects of that gift can still be felt, even if the people touched have no idea who I am. We need to work together to build this kingdom of God, both in this world and for the one to come.

Each of us is entrusted with a different task and is given certain gifts to get the job done. While each of us must use our unique gifts to build up God's kingdom, all of us as followers of Christ are called to take a public stand against evil, to assist the poor and hurting, and to teach people about Jesus and

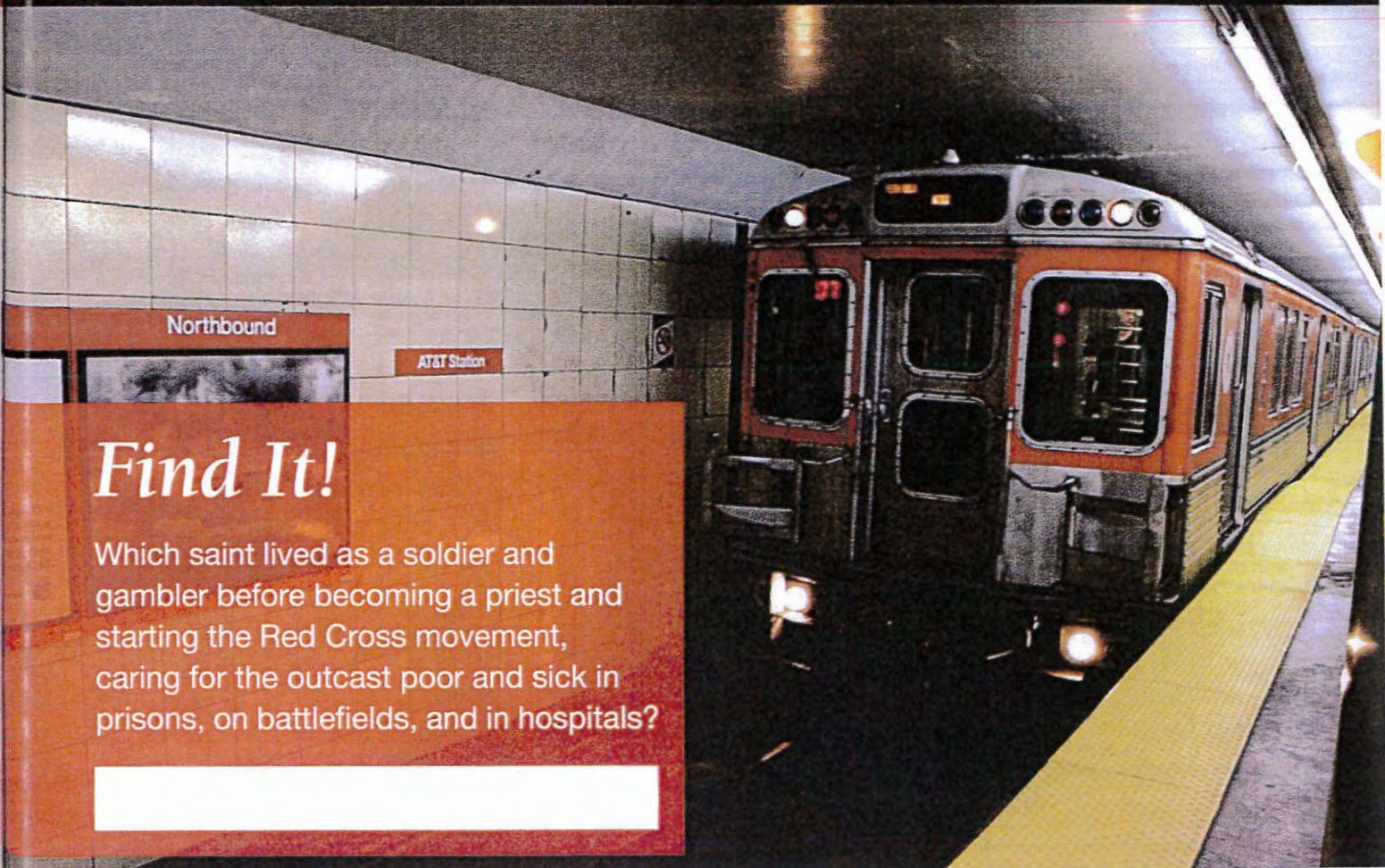
his Church. We serve a King who cares, a King who knows and loves his people.

This is the profound reality: The kingdom we build is one that is resting upon our willingness to serve others, to follow in the steps of the One who first served us. The more we learn from the King who is a Servant, the more we will be the saints we are called to be in his kingdom. You and I truly are a part of something great!

Chris Padgett

Find It!

Which saint lived as a soldier and gambler before becoming a priest and starting the Red Cross movement, caring for the outcast poor and sick in prisons, on battlefields, and in hospitals?



Hero of the Week



Born:

July 22, 1515

Died:

May 27, 1595

Memorial:

May 26

Patron Saint of:

- Rome
- laughter
- joy
- humor

St. Philip Neri

“Smile, it makes people wonder what you’re up to.”

Is that an attitude you’d associate with holiness? It was for St. Philip Neri, a sixteenth-century Italian priest who dedicated his life to meeting the needs of ordinary people. Though he could have lived a life of comfort and privilege, he established the Oratory where he and the other “Fathers” of the community ministered to people who needed a listening ear.

Today, St. Philip Neri speaks to “ordinary” saints, those who aren’t called to disappear into the desert, dressed in sackcloth and eating locusts like St. John the Baptist. He shows us that building the kingdom of God right here and now in the “real world” is a job for everyday saints! And one of the ways he spread the kingdom in his day was through the simple joy he brought to everything he did.

St. Philip Neri was joyfully Christian! In fact, he was known for having a sense of humor and even liked playful practical jokes. He often used humor as a means of evangelization, reminding others—and himself—to stay humble. He would occasionally shave off half his beard—making others laugh while reminding himself that it’s the **INTERIOR LIFE**

that matters, not what others see on the outside.

He felt that laughter and smiles more perfectly fit the Christian than being sad and serious:

“A joyful heart is more easily made perfect than a downcast one.”

That’s not to say that he advocated a silly approach to living a Christian life, but rather, that our baptismal call is a joyful one, so we must live it with a joyful heart.

One of the remarkable things about St. Philip Neri is the story about his heart. When he died, doctors discovered that he had two broken ribs. They were attributed to the miraculous size of his heart, which, it is said, grew from the love he had for Christ and his brothers and sisters.

St. Philip Neri lived a life of *evangelization* and **SOCIAL JUSTICE**, serving not only the poor who needed to have their basic needs met, but also searching for the spiritual poor, who needed to hear the Good News. And that’s something to smile about.

St. Philip Neri, pray for us. Help us spread the joy of God’s boundless love to everyone we meet.

Challenge of the Week

- Give a little!** Start this week. Even if your earnings are minimal, put something in the collection basket on Sundays for the parish and its ministries. If you don't have any money, donate some of your time or some of the clothes collecting dust in your closet. Write about it below.
- Advocate for someone.** Do you know someone who needs a friend? Is there someone lonely or bullied at school? Step in, offer your friendship, and help this person to connect with friends or services he or she may need. Restoring another person's dignity is holy work and very pleasing to God. In the space below, write about your experience.
- Spread the word!** We're all called to evangelize. Find a way to share your faith this week, perhaps by inviting someone to church or to a youth ministry event, or even by simply posting your favorite Scripture passage on Facebook (or whatever social media you use).

✝ Closing Prayer

“Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me ...”

—Matthew 25:34-35

Lord, you love the poor and disadvantaged, and you're calling us to love them, too.

Help us to see you when we see anyone suffering, spiritually or physically, and give us the courage to reach out and help someone this week.

Every good thing comes from you, so increase our faith and make us generous, Lord, like you. Amen.

Taking It Home

Wrap-Up

In his homily on March 24, 2013, Pope Francis had an encouraging word for the Catholic youth of the world:

“Dear young people! With Christ, the heart never grows old! Yet ... all of you know very well that the King whom we follow and who accompanies us is very special: he is a King who loves even to the Cross and who teaches us to serve and to love. And you are not ashamed of his Cross! On the contrary, you embrace it because you have understood that it is in giving ourselves, in emerging from ourselves that we have true joy. ... You carry the pilgrim Cross through all the Continents, along the highways of the world! You carry it in response to Jesus’ call: Go, make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19).

At the end of every Mass, God sends us out on a mission to build up the kingdom of God in our world by serving our families, our friends, and all those in our communities.

When we encounter Jesus alive in the Eucharist, we should be like the apostles, standing in awe before the empty tomb. They had encountered a love, a hope, and a power that was far too great to keep to themselves. They had to share it! Likewise, the love that Christ gives us in the Eucharist is far too great to keep to ourselves. The dismissal (*missa*) from

For next week’s “Review Game,” be sure to read over the following ...

1. **Watch It!** questions (page 217)
2. **Wrap-Up**
3. **“What’s That Word?”**
4. **Memory Verse**

Don’t forget to do your **Challenge of the Week** (page 221)

Mass is “a starting point” for our mission to share not just a way of life, but the person of Jesus Christ, with the entire world.

For some people, the idea of evangelizing can be pretty intimidating. So let’s start with a couple of simple ways to share your faith without feeling foolish.

First, some “don’ts”:

1. **Don’t make it harder than it is.** You don’t need a theology degree or to travel across the globe to spread the faith (though if you get to do that, great!) The patron saint of foreign missions, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, did small things with great love, and her prayers helped strengthen those working to spread the Gospel.
2. **Don’t get discouraged or expect results according to your personal timetable.** St. Monica prayed for fifteen years for her wayward and promiscuous son, St. Augustine, before he came around. It is easy to forget that God wants a person’s conversion much more than you do. Remind yourself of how patient God has been with *you* over the years. Be that patient with others.

3. *Don't be confrontational or take pleasure in "stumping" the other person.* You may win the argument, but could end up losing a soul.

Now, some "do's"

1. *Pray before, during, and after* each opportunity you have to lead others to Jesus and the Church.¹ Prayer is ammunition for conversions. Without prayer, you'll be pulling the trigger, but shooting blanks.
2. *Be patient.* Be calm in your conversations so that you display the peace of Christ.² Sometimes, the most loving response is prayerful silence—to let the Holy Spirit speak.
3. *Be creative.* Look for ways to share good Catholic resources with friends, family, and neighbors. Visit the websites of the presenters from this program (see page 260) to find some

great books, booklets, and videos to help you spread the faith.

4. *Preach through your actions.* Living a virtuous life is a powerful way to share your Catholic faith.
5. *Practice humility.* When you don't know the answer to a question, say so. When others stump you, tell them that you'll get back to them (not back *at* them), and set a time to meet again. Then do some homework and bring them the answer. And relax, knowing that every question that can be asked, has been asked and answered over the 2,000-year history of the Church.

The more you live with the gentleness and courage of Christ in your life, the more you will draw others to him.

"What's That Word?"

THE KINGDOM

The *Catechism* glossary refers to the *kingdom* as "the reign or rule of God." Jesus announced that "the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15), and he used this image to encourage his disciples who were suffering under the reign of worldly rulers.

He was letting them know that, despite their current struggles, God was still in charge and had not abandoned his people.

Jesus assures us that those who submit to him and follow his commands will reap the benefits



Memory Verse:

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

—Matthew 5:6

of his kingdom here and now in the Church. He encourages us to pray, “Thy kingdom come ... on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). We can help spread his kingdom by being holy so that God reigns over us, by sharing the good news of the Gospel with our family and friends through acts of service, and by working for a more just world.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

The cardinal virtue of *justice* assists us in giving God and other people what they deserve, what is fair, or what is “due” to them. *Social justice* is when we work with others to make society a more just place, one that serves the common good. Jesus helped his disciples understand what was due to their neighbor in his parable of the Good Samaritan³ and his teaching of the “golden rule”: Do to others what you would have them do to you.⁴ True justice entails not only feeding the hungry, but caring for their spiritual needs as well. The grace of Confirmation helps us to live the demands of justice.

EVANGELIZATION

The word *evangelization* is based on a Greek term meaning “good news” (or “gospel”). *Evangelization* is the process of preaching the Gospel, both through words and example. God loves us, and he sent his Son, Jesus, who died so that we might have life with him now and forever in heaven.

St. John Paul II called for a “New Evangelization” in society, which can be accomplished by the witness of a life lived for Jesus, but which also includes the willingness to tell others about him. Just as the apostles were empowered by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to bring this message of salvation to the world, the same Spirit empowers those who receive the Sacrament of Confirmation to proclaim the Good News to our world today—using all the means of communication we have available.

Did You Know?

A twelfth-century Belgian priest, Lambert le Bègue, founded a religious order that depended entirely on donations solicited from the public. It is thought that the term “beg” was derived from his name.