

PART ONE

REDISCOVER THE ATTITUDE

There's a certain essence that comes with being Catholic. It's hard to put your finger on it, but it's an attitude unlike that of any other group I have discovered. It's full of paradoxes: of joy amid sadness, hope amid darkness, and other-centered love in a world seemingly dominated by selfishness. It's an attitude that is grounded in being a part of something big, something important—something that is everlasting.

A great many of the things we associate ourselves with in today's world are temporary. Our education, occupations, clubs, groups, products we "can't live without," and even relationships are all missing a certain something, leaving an unmistakable hole that we are desperately trying to fill. We go through life wishing for something deeper, an experience or association more profound.

The Catholic faith is that something we've all been searching for. Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ himself established a Church, and two thousand years later, he seeks for you to be a part of it. If that isn't cool, I don't know what is.



YOU'RE ROYAL, EVEN IF YOU CAN'T SEE YOUR CROWN

by Sr. Brittany Harrison

It's easy to forget our dignity. Not too many people roll out of bed each morning and dedicate the first moments of their days to straightening their spiritual crowns and greeting their king, but the saints teach us that we should do exactly that. St. Josemaría Escrivá calls the first minute of the day the “heroic minute” and encourages everyone to get up at the first sound of the alarm and devote those first moments to prayer, sanctifying the day. If you're anything like me, this is easier said than done.

The First Letter of Peter tells us that “you are ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises’ of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Pt 2:9). God not only created us and brought us into existence but God also chose us, made us his own special possession, and gave us dignity—regal dignity. This royal priesthood allows us to add our voices to the hymn of praise to God's mercy arising from every corner of creation and to intercede for one another in prayer.

Our spiritual enemy, the Accuser, the devil, wants us to forget our dignity by tossing away our royal crown through sin

and fear. He is clever in his attacks, suggesting that our happiness lies in acts we know to be wrong and then accusing us of having no value after we commit the sin. He feigns friendship and concern for our happiness one moment, and like the snake in the garden of Eden, he rejects us as worthless the next. To add to the pain, he tries to persuade us through shame that God could not possibly forgive such evil, and he makes every effort to keep us from the sacrament of Reconciliation.

The best ways to keep our spiritual crowns sparkling and in place are through the sacraments and daily prayer. Through daily prayer, even from the first moment of the day, we can remind ourselves that we are called to live as royal children of God, and we can gain the daily strength we need for whatever, and whomever, we encounter. For many saints, going to daily Mass to receive the Eucharist was a necessity, but if our vocations and/or jobs do not allow us such a gift, we can make Spiritual Communions and ask Jesus to come into our hearts through our desire to receive the Eucharist. Monthly Confession, praying of the Rosary, reading scripture, and having good friends who share our values are also aids in keeping our crowns in place and enriching them with beauty. In moments of difficulty, times of temptation, and struggles with discouragement, the discipline of a strong prayer life will anchor us in the love of God and keep our crowns where they are meant to be—adorning the heads of children beloved by God, not because we can or did earn his love but because of the freely given, incredible love shown to us in Christ Jesus, our Lord. “But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8).

**COOL SAINT:
BL. AUGUSTUS CZARTORYSKI**

When Bl. Augustus Czartoryski was born in 1858, his family, the royal family of Poland, was in exile in Paris. His parents raised the young Augustus to be aware of his regal dignity, but God had other plans for him.

As his family planned a suitable match for him, Augustus discerned God's will for his life, often speaking of how he tired of royal banquets and ceremonies. He felt that God called him to do something *more* with his life, something radical. When he was twenty-five, Augustus met St. John Bosco, the founder of the Salesians, at the Mass he offered in the Lambert Castle chapel in Paris. Following that encounter, Augustus went to Turin to visit Don Bosco as often as his father would allow him. Again and again he asked Don Bosco to allow him to join the Salesians, but Don Bosco refused him, citing his royal crown and life of luxury as being big hurdles to overcome in order to join the literally poor and demanding life of the Salesians.

Not one to take a no lightly, Augustus asked Pope Leo XIII to intercede for him, and the pope sent word to Don Bosco through Augustus to "tell Don Bosco that it is the Pope's will that he receives you among the Salesians."¹ Don Bosco relented.

Prince Augustus soon became Fr. Augustus and did not permit anyone to speak of his royal lineage, nor did he refer to it himself. The only crown he desired was the one given to him in Baptism and which he daily strove to beautify through holiness.

Along with royal lineage, he also inherited poor health from his family. After several years of priesthood, Fr. Augustus died of tuberculosis, nursed by his close friend from the novitiate, Ven. Andrew Beltrami. After Fr. Augustus's death, a hundred men from Poland asked to join the Salesians, inspired by the example of their prince. Eventually, the Salesians sent missionaries to Poland who opened an underground seminary

in which St. John Paul II would study during World War II. Thus the royal and holy influence of Bl. Augustus Czartoryski impacted not only those closest to him but also the world.

Bl. Augustus Czartoryski, pray for us.

FORGOTTEN PRAYER

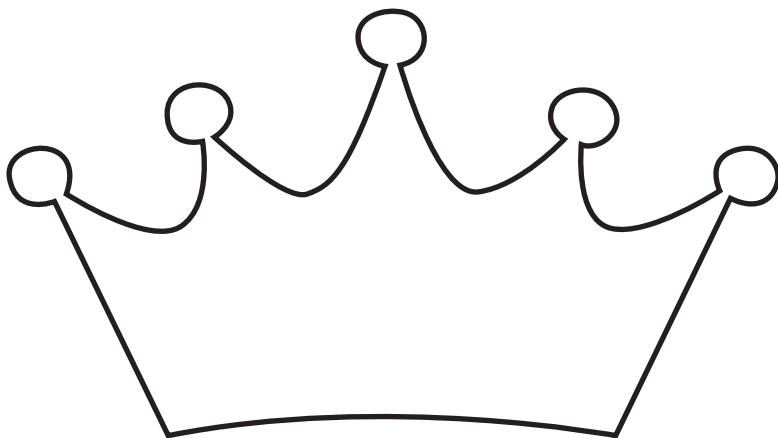
This prayer from Psalms is the motto that Bl. Augustus chose:

How lovely your dwelling, O LORD of hosts! My soul yearns and pines for the courts of the LORD. . . . Better one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere.

(Ps 84:2–3a, 11)

ACTIVITY

Complete the crown below by embellishing it in any way you like. This crown is a symbol of the spiritual dignity you bear as a child of God. Add any images, decorations, words, or colors you would like to represent your relationship with God.





WE DO THINGS THE HARD WAY

by Steven Lewis

There's no point in fighting it: St. Francis of Assisi is the patron saint of Catholic hipsters. Name any obscure, hip, and cool saint you want; it all comes down to Frank. If you pay attention to his life, you will quickly find out that he did everything the hard way. From his pursuit of poverty to his desire for perfection to frickin' *asking for the stigmata*, there was no easy faith for this guy.

This is a trait that he has left behind to his true spiritual sons and daughters, the Catholic hipsters. We draw this both from our ever-long quest for authenticity and from our Catholicism—with its stone altars and meatless Fridays. Throughout our lives we have known people who have left the Church and lost their faith because quick answers repeated over time just aren't able to do justice to some of the tragedies of life. Easy excuses for Christianity just don't cut it. We know a life well lived and a faith well practiced are going to be hard, so we need our prayers, art, living, and entertainment to be tough enough to help us survive.

As Catholic hipsters, we know that cheap faith is what makes people stop trusting in God. Chances are, you've built

a distaste for at least one of these things. You're not required to dislike them; it's just more likely that you might reject these:

- hand signals
Yes, Lord, yes, Lord, yes yes, Lord, I will never do that again.
- cheesy church songs
It's a mark of spiritual maturity to outgrow "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High," "You Are Mine," and "City of God." It's okay; you can let them go.
- newfangled spiritual books
Yeah, your *Napoleon Dynamite* devotional is cute, but have you ever picked up *Divine Intimacy*?
- short novels
Why are you reading *The Alchemist* when *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Kristin Lavransdatter* lie unread on your shelf?
- any American writer who isn't Flannery O'Connor
Now you're just wasting my time. Break out her novels and short stories, and brace yourself for the greatness.

This is why you'll find Catholic hipsters learning the *Angelus* and reciting it three times a day, humming old hymns, taking spiritual cues from the Carthusians (the most intense Catholic monks in the world), and only watching religious movies that get *really* sad before they get close to being happy.

This is not a life of cheap, easy prayers full of cheap, easy answers. Try it the hard way; you'll see the difference.

COOL SAINT: ST. EPAPHRAS

It's amazing how Epaphras, the bishop of Colossae, St. Paul's prison buddy, and a man name-dropped by Paul *three times* in two different letters of the New Testament (see Colossians 1:6–8, Colossians 4:12, and Philemon 1:23), could go totally unnoticed. Colossians describes Epaphras as "striving" or

“struggling” for Christians in his prayer, and that’s why I like him. In many languages, including Spanish and Greek, the word for *strive* or *struggle* is the same word for *wrestle* or *fight*. It’s similar to how the Spanish word *luchar* can mean a political struggle, while a *luchador* is a professional wrestler. Think of Epaphras as a heavenly masked wrestler, pile-driving Satan for you in prayer when you don’t have the strength.

FORGOTTEN PRAYER

The *Te Deum* is the perfect prayer for people who like to do things the hard way, because it’s so long:

You are God: we praise you;
 You are the Lord: we acclaim you;
 You are the eternal Father:
 All creation worships you.
 To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
 Cherubim and Seraphim, sing in endless praise:
 Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 The glorious company of apostles praise you.
 The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
 The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
 Throughout the world the holy Church acclaim you:
 Father, of majesty unbounded,
 your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,
 and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.
 You, Christ, are the king of glory,
 the eternal Son of the Father.
 When you became man to set us free
 You did not shun the Virgin’s womb.
 You overcame the sting of death,
 and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
 You are seated at God’s right hand in glory.

We believe that you will come and be our judge.
Come then, Lord, and help your people,
bought with the price of your own blood,
and bring us with your saints
to glory everlasting.
Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance.
Govern and uphold them now and always.
Day by day we bless you.
We praise your name for ever.
Keep us today, Lord, from all sin.
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.
Lord, show us your love and mercy;
For we put our trust in you.
In you, Lord, is our hope:
And we shall never hope in vain.

ACTIVITY

We all know some famous pilgrimages around the world: walking the Camino de Santiago; traveling to Jerusalem, Fatima, Rome, and Guadalupe; and even attending World Youth Day is a pilgrimage. But there are a variety of pilgrimage sites much closer to home; just look for anything called a shrine. A shrine is, by definition, a destination for pilgrimage. It can be an entire church or just a side chapel in a larger church, but it is there as a place for you to travel to so you can pray. Shrines are always dedicated to specific saints or devotions, and they are closer than you think.

Go to Google right now and type “shrine near me.” Suddenly, you have a local pilgrimage you can get to! This is the important part: don’t get there the easy way. Don’t just drive there. If you can, walk. If you must, use public transportation. Pack a backpack with prayers, a lunch, and extra cash or food you can give to people who ask for it. Get lost. Ask for help from a stranger. Risk the elements. Risk getting mugged.

Risk the discomfort. Then when you finally get to your local shrine and start praying, you'll realize the truth about pilgrimages: you were praying the whole time.



CATHOLIC SLANG

by Sergio Bermudez

So that attractive person at Mass has finally invited you to the hidden grotto where all the hip Catholics congregate, and you're feeling great. You show up, looking fresh, prepared to make some friends and be brought into the fold. All of a sudden, you think to yourself, "What are these people saying? I understand some of the words; it's clearly English, but it's not making sense."

Terms and phrases such as *emotional chastity*, *intentionality*, and *guard your heart* are all rather confusing to the uninitiated. So, I've gathered some of these terms and phrases (and also made up a few that I hope will catch on) to help you navigate a strange, perhaps new, avenue, so you won't be left behind in the conversation:

- *Catholic thirst*—That dude/girl who wants to get married but doesn't really care who that future spouse is. Their reasons for marriage are suspect, and they tend to evaluate everyone's potential for marriage. Often found at Catholic gatherings trying not to salivate at members of the opposite gender.
- *Emotional chastity*—This is perhaps the weirdest term, and it's not always clearly defined—even though everyone writes about it.

It's basically asking you to be disciplined with your emotions. Much like *guard your heart* (see below), just play it cool.

- *Guard your heart*—This isn't some veiled threat. It's another dating thing. This one's saying: Don't get too anxious or start planning that wedding right away. Just be cool. Always.
- *How is your heart?*—This isn't a question about your health. It is more a way to ask how you are feeling on a deep, emotional level.
- *Intentionality*—Used in dating. Again. Basically, people want to know your goals with a relationship. This is tricky when starting out because you don't want to be that thirsty person but you also don't want to be jumping into a relationship for the wrong reasons. Choose your answer wisely if asked about this.
- *Nunnabe*—Wannabe nun. She'll talk a lot about how she can't wait to go to the convent.
- *Predestinationships*—The idea of soul mates or that your relationship was somehow preordained—cause y'know, free will is a thing.
- *Steubies*—Kids who went to Franciscan University of Steubenville. You'll recognize them because they'll literally know every other Catholic in the area. They almost all know each other; I don't know how such a thing is possible, but that's how it goes.
- *Tradbro*—A devout Catholic who is also a bro. As the name suggests, the Tradbro falls more on the conservative/traditional end of the Catholic spectrum. He is aware of his bro-ness, which is why we all like him and tolerate him.
- *STREAM*—St. Thomas Rules Everything Around Me. Handy for when you are kicking it with a crew of Thomists.

There are more, of course, and as with most matters of language, they are flexible, so take some time to familiarize yourself with the informal lexicon we Catholics employ. Hopefully this helps the next time you're at a kickback with a handful of Catholic pals. Be sure to drop any of these terms and watch everyone stand impressed at the smooth way you have with