

# Being Authentically Christian Through All the Major Changes of Life

## Objective:

Life's major changes always involves some stress regardless of whether those changes are positive or negative. Stress can make being an authentic Christian challenging, so regular spiritual activities are important in making successful life transitions.

The primary point is to bring your authentic self to everything in life (with the precondition to make sure you have formed yourself well according to the Catholic faith). "Major changes" in life implies there are a lot of things, sometimes very heavy things, to deal with.

**Song Suggestion:** Prayer of St Francis (721)

## Bible and Catechism Readings:

### Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd there is nothing I lack. In green pastures you let me graze; to safe waters you lead me; you restore my strength. You guide me along the right path for the sake of your name. Even when I walk through a dark valley, I fear no harm for you are at my side; your rod and your staff give me courage. You set a table before me as my enemies watch; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Only goodness and love will pursue me all the days of my life; I will dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come.

## Vignette:

**Some examples of life's major changes or challenges and ways to handle them with authentic faith:**

- 1) Your daughter is dealing with friend drama in high school: help her to know herself and who she wants to be (i.e., is meant to be by God) and encourage her to handle situations accordingly.
- 2) Lean into empty nesting: rediscover and grow closer to your spouse, but don't forget/lose all the things you enjoy about your adult children. Ask God to guide you in your new circumstances as husband and father.
- 3) When a parent dies it's a crushing blow, don't put up a facade that it isn't. Be humble enough to allow God, and your family and friends to console you.
- 4) Your son is getting married: it's a big deal and you should revel in the sharing of the news and events with others. Thank God for all the blessings in your life.

**Forming ourselves well in the Catholic faith helps us deal with life's changes, but formation requires effort. Don't just go through the motions of being Catholic, be *Authentically* Catholic!**

## Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

What major life events happened to you in the past year?

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In your life, which of the major events was the most challenging for you?

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**Action Plan:**

Get to know Jesus Christ! - read a short portion of the Gospels and pray over it. How did Christ handle the major events of His life on earth?

Read a chapter of the Catechism. What does the church say about being a Catholic in the modern world?

Say the Rosary, either by yourself or with a group. Jesus' and Mary's major life events have a lot to teach us about authenticity.

Examine your conscience for a few minutes each day. Even an average day's events can present us with opportunities to be authentic Christians.

Don't avoid the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It's the ultimate accountability to living authentically.

Say NO to the recurring sins in your life. Have integrity, make a firm commitment.

Remember your faith in God as you go through a high stress event in your life.

Fast and abstain along with your prayers. The gospels are full of references of Jesus doing this, Christians imitate Christ.

Be Joyful in your Catholic Faith! The best way to show others that you truly believe God loves us.

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