

“I’m Not Sure I Believe...”

When difficulties with faith keep you from attending Mass”

When faced tragedies or challenges, people will tell me that they feel distant from God, even like God has abandoned them. It’s not uncommon. Someone stops coming to Mass when facing a failed marriage, or their business going under, or a loved one is dying. They say, *“I don’t know where God has gone. My life is in such turmoil. I can’t pray. God’s abandoned me.”* My heart goes out to them because I have no doubt that this is exactly what it feels like... and it doesn’t feel good.

Even though it seems that God is distant, or even when it feels like God is absent, remind yourself that God is just as close to you in turmoil as God would be to you if your life was at peace. St. Francis de Sales said that it’s not tranquility which brings God closer to our hearts; it is rather the faithfulness of our love.

If you find yourself in a period of doubt or unbelief... be assured: you have a place at All Saints Church. Come to Mass, and lean on the faith of the good people here to help get you through these difficult times. Come to All Saints and find security in the acceptance of our parish family. Find courage in their kindness and friendship. Even find faith in the love you experience. After all, the Scriptures tell us that God is love. And if that’s true, then the more you experience love, the more you experience God.

No parish is perfect, but at All Saints we’re doing our best to be faithful to Christ. We love our Catholic Faith and how it has changed our lives for the better, and we want to share it with others. Right now at All Saints, we’re making a huge effort to re-energize the Catholic community in Gladstone. It’s called *“All Saints, Every Sunday!”* You’ve probably heard that our parish has been growing, Mass attendance is up, we help shelter the homeless and care for those in need, religious education efforts have never been stronger, and activities for our youth are steadily increasing. It really is a great time to be part of All Saints.

No matter who you are or where you’ve been, there’s a place for you in our parish family. Even if you’re not 100% on board with faith at this moment in

your life, that's OK. Because **we** have faith! The Christian community always makes-up together, what we are lacking as individuals. At All Saints, our faith is strong. Our parish family has faith that in time, God will touch your heart. We want to be there to support you on that journey.

There will be times in our lives when we must face the unknown, when we have nowhere else to go but to step into the darkness without understanding what it is all about. But we don't journey in darkness alone. Even when we cannot see God, and it may feel like God is absent, God is present. In the darkness is where God does his best work. It's as if God sneaks up behind us and whispers in our ear, "Of course I'm here. Where else would I be, but in this very dark place... to help you."

The road back to faith must always start with trust. If we want to regain a more solid faith, we must be willing to be ok with not knowing everything, but choose to believe that God does. We can do it, because Jesus did it first... for us. Jesus dared to believe that when everything was falling apart, and he didn't know where it was all leading, he believed that God the Father was at the bottom of everything, especially things we don't understand. In the times when we doubt, our first step is to surrender, and accept that in this darkness is where we find ourselves, and like Jesus, we will be led through somehow.

At All Saints, we know that road is rough sometimes. We want you to know that we care about you. So come to Mass. Join us on the journey. Someday, somebody will want to lean on **your** faith to get through difficult times. God uses us all, no matter how we got here.