

# Growing by the Light of the Spirit: Kathy Mathieson and the Women of Grace at Blessed Sacrament Parish (Clermont, FL)

**Help! There's no room in my parish to hold regular meetings. What should we do?**

*Kathy Mathieson solved this problem by opening her home five times a week to accommodate the sixty women who wanted to attend. "If we had it at the church, we would have to do it at a time that suited the church's schedule, and we wanted to make it available to as many women as possible." She found that mid-week studies, in the morning or evening, generally received the best response.*

*Are you worried that your home*

*might be too small or plain to be suitable? Don't be. "All you need is a VCR or DVD player and television, and a space to seat no more than twelve women. And if you can't be at every meeting, you can always share leadership with someone in the group. Ask members to take turns bringing in the snacks, so all you have to do is plug in the coffee pot. I made keys for each leader to let the group in. The home environment really helped the 'community' feel."*

*Isn't it a lot of work? Kathy says that the rewards far exceed any sacrifice involved. "Wanda Gilrane and Pat Compton are two women who went through the fall series and are now facilitating their own groups.*

*They would be the first to tell you that they got far more out of the study than they put into it. The same is true for me . . . I get to hear the lesson five times every week, and hear the comments of all sixty women. And I get something new from it each time!"*

Blessed Sacrament Parish in Clermont, FL is a place with a heart larger than its space can hold. Even so, the Holy Spirit is finding room to move – through the Woman of Grace® Foundational Study Series and the industry of a vivacious blonde named Kathy Mathieson, who brought a baker's dozen of "women of grace" to the Orlando conference. Several of these women took time to share their diverse experiences.

The first time the group was offered in September 2005, there was no room in the parish to hold the meetings, so Kathy decided to move the meetings into private homes. The response exceeded even Kathy's expectations, who found herself in the same quandary that faces many devout and gifted Catholic women: many good intentions, not enough time. The solution? "Recruit, recruit, recruit!" laughs Kathy. "I don't have time to attend every meeting. All I do is spot the necessary abilities in the women of the parish, and encourage them to put those abilities to use."





So many women's lives were transformed as a result of the study, they decided to repeat the study. In order to get as many women to participate as possible, Kathy encouraged participants from the September group to talk about their experiences after Masses. One of these women, Donna Soldo was a convert to the faith of thirty years. "I've always been very comfortable in both the Protestant and Catholic cultures, even though I've been Catholic for thirty years. But it was the (Women of Grace Conference) tape by Rosalind Moss that made me really proud to be a Catholic – something I never thought I'd hear myself say."

For Nancy Sturk, the draw was being able to connect with other people and to be spiritually and intellectually fed as a Catholic. "I've moved around a lot these past few years, and always got involved in RCIA programs of each parish to which we belonged. At Blessed Sacrament, I realized I was hungry for something more." When she saw the study advertised in her parish bulletin, she realized this was what she was looking for – and Kathy soon

snapped up Nancy as a future facilitator, something she was happy to do. "She had the most beautiful prayer journals," Kathy remembers, "in which she cut and paste prayers and insights that she found personally meaningful. I knew she'd make a great facilitator."

*Have you been thinking about starting a Women of Grace® Foundational Study in your parish, but wonder if you have what it takes to facilitate a group?* You will be encouraged by Maryann Palmer, who describes herself as "wall-flowerish," and decided to become a facilitator only after a great deal of encouragement – including a personal invitation from Johnnette. "At my first meeting I was extremely nervous. I had to pray a lot, and I was very unsure. But Kathy encouraged me to think and pray about it, and so I got the materials. Then one day we had Johnnette come and speak at a luncheon, and she encouraged me to facilitate a group, too, and I decided this was God's answer for me." The rest, she said, was a blur. Laughing, she admits. "I find that if I can remember a lot about a meeting, I'm doing too much. God works most powerfully the times when I don't remember much at all. All I have to do is step out and trust that God will do the rest. A year ago I would never have gotten in front of the church and talked. But this series has changed my life. I'm not afraid anymore."



# WOMEN... Find your purpose Feed your soul

AT LAST, A POWERFUL CATHOLIC STUDY JUST FOR YOU

## Full of Grace: Women and the Abundant Life Foundational Study The first in the Women of Grace® Study Series



### FACILITATOR'S KIT

Complete kit to start your group includes elegant Women of Grace tote bag, Johnnette's book, *Full of Grace*, beautiful, bound Study Guide, Facilitator's Guide with answer key, 8 lectures by Johnnette on DVD or VHS, and theme song CD \$149.95

### Johnnette Benkovic

Author

Founder and President of Living His Life Abundantly® and Women of Grace®

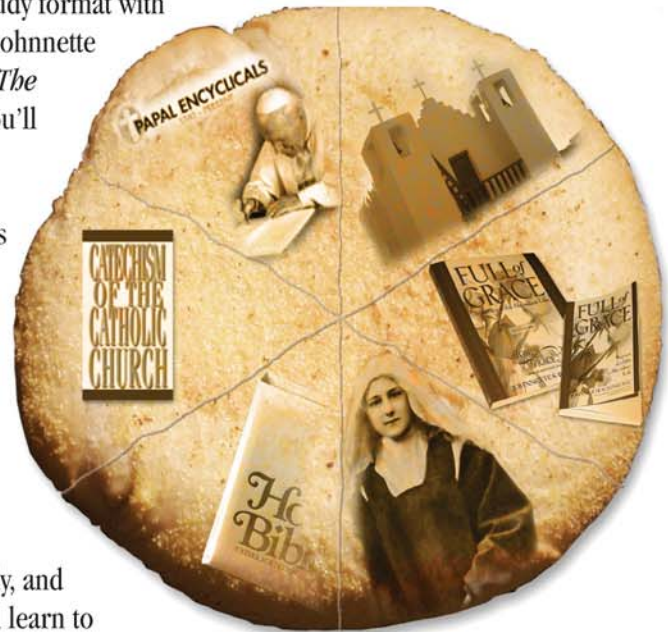
Host of *Moments of Truth Live* radio program and *The Abundant Life* seen on EWTN



### PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

Beautiful, bound Study Guide (232 p.) \$24.95  
Johnnette's book *Full of Grace* (234 p.) \$10.99

Vatican II asked women to accept God's urgent call to "aid humanity in not falling". Based on Johnnette Benkovic's book, *Full of Grace*, this study will teach you how by revealing God's purpose and mission for you. In a group study format with video lectures by Johnnette Benkovic, host of *The Abundant Life*, you'll delve into prayer, Sacred Scripture, Church documents and teachings, the *Catechism*, the lives of women saints, and the example of our Blessed Mother. You'll be nurtured and fed spiritually, mentally, and emotionally. You'll learn to embrace your gift of authentic femininity and your dignity as a daughter of God. You'll be equipped to fulfill your call and mission as a woman of grace in the world today.



These teachers will feed your soul

**Order yours today**

Call 1- 800-558-5452 or visit [www.womenofgrace.com](http://www.womenofgrace.com)

to order on-line and get a sneak peek

**Discount:** All Women of Grace members receive 20% off

WOMEN  
of GRACE® Study Series

**AUTHENTICALLY**  
Feminine • Faithful • Catholic