

# When Faith Feels FRAGILE



Help for the Wary,  
Weak, and Wandering

R. Scott Hurd

## In Praise of *When Faith Feels Fragile*

“At some point in our life, our faith is tested. It can feel like God is hidden and out of reach. We wonder if we can count on God’s presence. *When Faith Feels Fragile* teaches us how to recognize the many ways that God touches us in the course of our daily routine. Drawing on the practical wisdom of life experience, Father Scott Hurd explores the deeper spiritual meaning by finding parallels in Scripture and Christian spirituality. We learn how to ‘open ourselves up to the gift of faith and hold it close to our hearts.’”

— His Eminence Cardinal Donald Wuerl,  
Archbishop of Washington

“I love Father Hurd’s style—good-humored and inviting, brimming with the wisdom of Sacred Scripture and the saints, and rich in practical advice. Don’t just get this book for the ‘wary, weak, and wandering’ cradle Catholics in your life—get it for the new converts, to help them keep the flame of faith alive.”

— Dawn Eden, author of *The Thrill of the Chaste*

“If there’s one thing we all feel with frequency, it’s our fragility. And if there’s one gift we need to share more generously, it’s our faith. In forty accessible and easy to read chapters, Father Scott Hurd offers deep insight and practical tasks so that we can move forward in peace, healed by the gift of faith. If life

has you anxious, tired, and confused, each chapter is a sermon for strength. Father Hurd relies on his wealth of personal and pastoral experience to provide a reader—possessing even but a spark of belief—with some welcome medicine for the soul.”

— Father Robert P. Reed, President,  
The CatholicTV Network

“When faith becomes a fragile thing, it usually means we are feeling challenged on many fronts and are worn down. With *When Faith Feels Fragile*, Father Scott Hurd takes a respectful look at the soul when it has come to feel incapable of bearing very much, and reminds us that, in order to regain strength, we must at least take on the little tasks that both nourish the spirit and help it to grow some muscle. In short, sometimes humorous, always insightful chapters, *When Faith Feels Fragile* goes down like a strengthening broth meant to restore mind, soul, and spirit. It is a very good recipe for when the appetite of faith has been waning.”

— Elizabeth Scalia, author of  
*Strange Gods: Unmasking the Idols in Everyday Life*

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*To my three wonderful kids:  
Charlie, Winnie, and Isabel.  
May God always bless you and keep you strong in faith.*



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Part 1



*All About Faith*



## Take the Offer

The crowd was eager with expectation. Many had traveled from around the globe to be renewed and encouraged in their faith, and they hoped that their prominent speaker wouldn't disappoint. But what they heard must have come as something of a surprise. "Our faith is weak," the speaker confessed, "our faith is shaky."<sup>1</sup>

These words weren't intended as a criticism or a put-down. Instead, they were meant to acknowledge and confirm what many in that crowd were likely thinking, or even fearing, to assure them that it was okay if their faith felt fragile, and that they weren't alone.

The speaker that day was no less than Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the Catholic Archbishop of New York, and his audience happened to be three hundred and fifty of the nearly two million young people who converged on Madrid, Spain, for

World Youth Day in 2011. But Dolan's words could have been meant for anyone. Perhaps they resonate with you.

Feeling that our faith is fragile is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, to accept our faith's weakness is a good step toward our faith becoming stronger. Even Mother Teresa struggled with her faith. In a letter to a friend, during a dark and difficult moment, she could admit: "I have no faith. I don't believe."<sup>2</sup> If Mother Teresa wasn't exempt from such feelings, we probably won't be either. Yet Mother Teresa is now well on her way to being declared a saint. This can give us great encouragement that there's hope for our faith too.

If your faith feels fragile, don't despair. It happens to just about everyone at some point, for any number of reasons. More often than not, it springs from a combination of factors.

First, there's all the "cultural static" we have to contend with. The world shouts at us, "Look at me! Buy me! Sleep with me!" and we can't seem to hear anything else—especially God, who typically speaks in whispers. Information overload from every conceivable form of media makes us hesitant to add other voices to the mix, including God's, which gets drowned out. Responsibilities with work, family, and other day-to-day activities distract and exhaust us so much that making time for matters of faith seems like a luxury, or something to put off for a day when we're less stressed. We don't intend to push God away; he simply drops off the radar screen. And when he's out of sight, he's out of mind.

Perhaps our faith feels fragile because it hasn't been fed. We're not entirely starving, but we're malnourished. Our formal religious education might have ended years ago, and it may have been very good. But even so, it was likely intended for