

Enrichment: Character

An Actor Finds True Happiness

God calls all people to experience the true and lasting happiness that only He can give us—even if you are an Academy award–winning actor like Sir Alec Guinness. Sir Alec Guinness is best known for his roles in *The Bridge on the River Kwai* and *Oliver Twist* and as Obi-Wan Kenobi in the original *Star Wars* trilogy.

Born in 1914, Guinness grew up not knowing his father. His mother was married again, but Guinness did not have a good relationship with his stepfather. He was eventually sent away to school, where he studied acting. As he grew older, Guinness stopped believing in God.

However, one evening, when London was being attacked during World War II, Guinness was visiting a friend. This friend gave Guinness a copy of Saint Francis de Sales' book called *An Introduction to the Devout Life*. This book has helped thousands of people around the world fall in love with God through prayer and the sacraments. Guinness began reading it and asking questions to himself about the Catholic faith.



Sadly, Guinness' eleven-year-old son Matthew became ill. Matthew had a terrible disease called polio and was paralyzed from the waist down. Guinness began to stop at a Catholic church on his way home from work to pray. Guinness made a deal with God. He promised that if God would save Matthew from dying, he would not prevent Matthew from becoming Catholic if he ever wanted to.

Matthew did end up recovering from his illness. His parents sent him to Catholic schools, and when he turned fifteen years old, he announced that he wanted to become Catholic. His father kept his promise to God and allowed this to happen.

Guinness also felt God calling him to the Church. He met with Catholic priests to discuss the faith and began to attend Mass. He was received into the Catholic Church and found the true happiness he had been searching for all his life.¹

Journal Reflection

Sir Alec Guinness developed a holy character by accepting God's grace. **What part of his character would you like to imitate in your life?** Write your answer on the journal page. Journal pages are available on the parent and student portals.