

# A View from the Pew

by Deacon Greg Kandra

## *Was Jesus an Introvert?*

Once read an article from *The Atlantic Monthly* by Jonathan Rauch called “Caring For Your Introvert.” When this piece ran a few years ago, it caused a sensation. It’s reportedly one of the most popular essays the magazine has run, and has received repeated requests for reprints and downloads from *The Atlantic’s* Web site. (You can Google it, or just visit [www.theatlantic.com](http://www.theatlantic.com).)

Rauch begins with some provocative questions:

*“Do you know someone who needs hours alone every day? Who loves quiet conversations about feelings or ideas and can give a dynamite presentation to a big audience, but seems awkward in groups and maladroit at small talk? Who has to be dragged to parties and then needs the rest of the day to recuperate?”*

These are all tell-tale signs of an introvert—and they sounded very familiar to me. Where had I seen that recently? Hmmmm. Then I remembered. Of course: That’s my wife—a classic introvert who likes nothing more than to think Deep Thoughts and share Deep Ideas over dinner. (Me, I don’t have that problem. I prefer shallow thoughts about how to make funny noises at parties with your armpit. But then, I’m more of an extrovert.)

Reading over Rauch’s article, I gained a new appreciation for The Quiet Ones among us (especially, of course, the one I’m married to) but I also began to wonder: Was Jesus an introvert?

Rauch explains some of the symptoms, concluding: *“For introverts, to be alone with our thoughts is as restorative as sleeping, as nourishing as eating. Our motto: I’m okay, you’re okay—in small doses.”*

Christ certainly knew the restorative powers of solitude. He liked to get away from people. (He kicked off His ministry by spending forty days in the desert. What extrovert would do that?)

He also knew how to “give a dynamite presentation to a big audience.” (You can’t beat the Sermon on the Mount, or the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes. Talk about a PowerPoint presentation!) And perhaps it was with both self-revelation and sympathy that He sized up Martha the extrovert and Mary the introvert, and commented, “Mary has chosen the better part.”

Introverts, Rauch reminds us, have always been misunderstood—something else that may point to Jesus. Also, extroverts tend to be successful in business and politics, and are often outgoing, bighearted and outspoken. They bang drums and slap backs.

Introverts, on the other hand, listen, watch, think and ponder. They don’t like to make a fuss. The less attention they get, the better. Scripture tells us that when Jesus performed miracles, He told people to keep quiet about it.

Jesus went to his death like a lamb. Yes, I think: He *must* have been an introvert. We are asked to remember the words God’s soft-spoken Son: The meek will inherit the earth.

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