

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering **hope and joy** in the Catholic faith.

April 2009

One Minute Meditations

Healthy worship

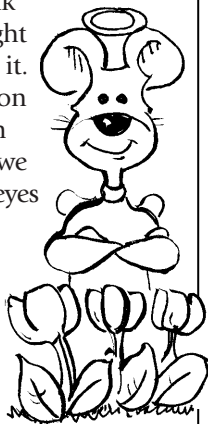
Recent medical studies revealed that people who attend church at least weekly have longer life expectancies and fewer complications from illnesses or surgeries than non-churchgoers. Going to church may not protect us from health crises, but it does help us cope with them.

Empty and fill

There are times in our lives when we have to empty our minds of negativity so God can replace it with peace and joy. Each day, take time to rid yourself of anger, fear, self-pity, jealousy, and bitterness. Then look for God's gifts of peace, wisdom, friendship, forgiveness, and love.

Our choice

Each day we have a choice of how we can live. We can waste time cursing the darkness or we can thank God for the light when we have it. We can focus on the ugliness in the world, or we can train our eyes to see and appreciate the beauty that is there instead.



5 reasons to be hopeful right now

It's hard not to worry these days. If we haven't been affected by economic troubles directly, we may be worried that we or someone we love will be soon. Yet we in God's family have more reasons to be hopeful no matter how bad things get ...

God loves us with the warm love of a father.

"If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him" (Matthew 7:11).

We can always count on our Father.
"Know that the Lord works wonders for the faithful; the Lord hears when I call out"

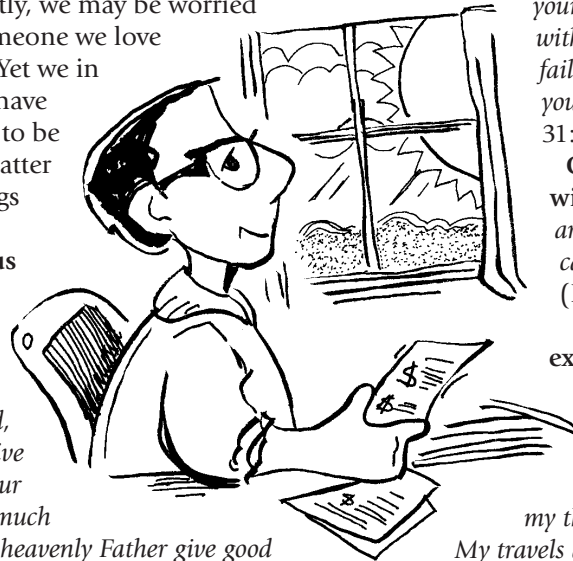
(Psalm 4:4). *"Be strong and of good courage, do not fear ... for it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you"* (Deuteronomy 31:6).

God is always with us. *"You, Lord, are near to all who call upon you ..."* (Psalm 145:20).

God knows exactly what we need. *"(Y)ou know when I sit and stand; you understand my thoughts from afar.*

My travels and my rest you mark; with all my ways you are familiar." (Psalm 139:2, 3).

All we have to do is ask. *"Cast all your worries upon him because he cares for you"* (1 Peter 5:7).



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Catholics believe that the Holy Trinity is one God in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The concept of the Holy Trinity, though, is beyond our human ability to understand. That's why we call it a "mystery."

Why do Catholics believe in a Holy Trinity?



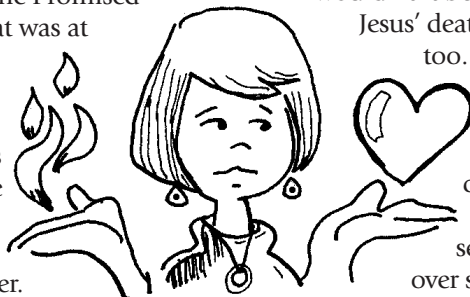
Before the time of Jesus, only the Father was known. Then Jesus revealed himself as God, *"the Father and I are one"* (John 10:30).

After his Ascension, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit – *God's Spirit* – on Pentecost (Acts 2).

It's our Easter choice ...

Before the Israelites could finally enter the Promised Land, Moses delayed them to explain what was at stake. He wasn't going with them but he wanted them to be able to stay there with God's blessing. (Deuteronomy)

So he put the choice facing the Israelites (and us) in the clearest possible terms: we can choose to live in God's friendship or outside of it. One choice means eternal life and happiness, the other misery forever. After waiting so long for the Promised Land,

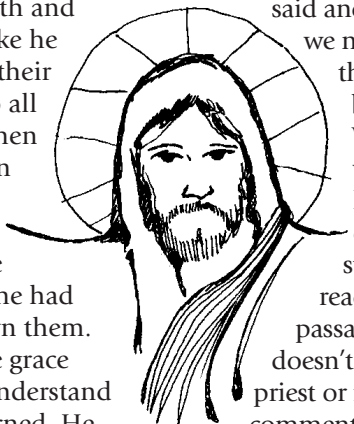


wouldn't it be a shame to make the wrong choice?

Jesus' death and Resurrection has given us a choice, too. Isn't it amazing that the Creator of heaven and earth lets us decide how we want to live? We can say "yes" or "no" to God's love. While our choices lead to consequences, the choice is still up to us. This Easter, choose honesty over deceit, self-control over sinful pleasure, generosity over selfishness. Then your Easter choice will be to choose life with God in his love.

from Scripture **Luke 24:35-48,** **Loose ends get tied**

The disciples shouldn't have been surprised by Jesus' death and resurrection. It's not like he didn't warn them. Yet their minds weren't open to all that he revealed. So when he appeared to them in Jerusalem, he let them see him, touch him, and watch him eat. He reminded them of all he had taught them and shown them. Then he gave them the grace they needed to truly understand and live what they learned. He gave them what they needed to be his true followers.



In order to understand all that Jesus said and all that he expects from us, we need to know him the way the disciples did. We can start by carefully reading his Word. Some aspects of what we read in the Bible may be hard to digest and comprehend. When you get stuck on something you have read, read the surrounding passages and footnotes. If that doesn't help, consult your parish priest or find a good Catholic Bible commentary. Once you understand, ask the Holy Spirit to help you put God's Word into action.

Q What are the 7 & themes of Catholic **A** social teaching?

Catholics have a history of speaking out for those who cannot speak for themselves. As a Church, we are committed to:

1. Life and dignity of the human person. Since we are created in the image of God, human life is sacred from conception to natural death.
2. Call to family, community and participation. We have a right to live in and contribute to our families and communities.
3. Human rights and responsibilities. Each person has a right to the things that make life decent – faith, family, food, shelter, etc.
4. Option for the poor and vulnerable. Jesus instructed us to care for those less fortunate.

5. Dignity of work and the rights of workers. Through work we participate in God's act of creation. The basic rights of workers, owners, and managers must be respected.

6. Demand for Solidarity. We work for the common good everywhere.

7. Care for God's creation. Our love for God inspires us to be good stewards of the earth and his creations.

Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.
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Feasts & Celebrations

April 4 – St. Isidore of Seville (636). St. Isidore was born to a family that included three other saints and succeeded his brother as bishop of Seville. He was a peacemaker and is known as "The Schoolmaster of the Middle Ages" because the encyclopedia he wrote was used for 900 years.

April 5 – St. Vincent Ferrer (1419). Against his parents' wishes, St. Vincent Ferrer joined the Order of St. Dominic. He became a famous preacher and was known as the Angel of Judgment because his sermons aimed to prepare his listeners for judgment.

April 12 – Easter Sunday. The solemnity that marks Jesus' Resurrection.

April 19 – Divine Mercy Sunday. In 1931, Jesus appeared to St. Faustina and asked that the Sunday after Easter become the "Feast of Mercy." Jesus promised that anyone who honors him as the King of Mercy and prays The Chaplet of Divine Mercy – the prayer he gave to St. Faustina – will receive special graces and great mercy.

