

Growing in FAITH™

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

April 2010

One Minute Meditations

Actions speak loudly

John the Baptist sent his disciples to Jesus to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" (Luke 7:20). Instead of a long discourse on his spiritual genealogy, Jesus told them to watch him and report what they saw. His actions said it all. If you were to tell a friend about who Jesus is, what would you say?

Why obey?

Moses knew the people of Israel needed more incentive to follow the new commandments he presented to them. Asking for their obedience wasn't enough. So he said, "Observe them carefully, for thus will give evidence of your wisdom and intelligence to the nations" (Deuteronomy 4:5-9). Yet another reason to obey God; it shows how smart you are.

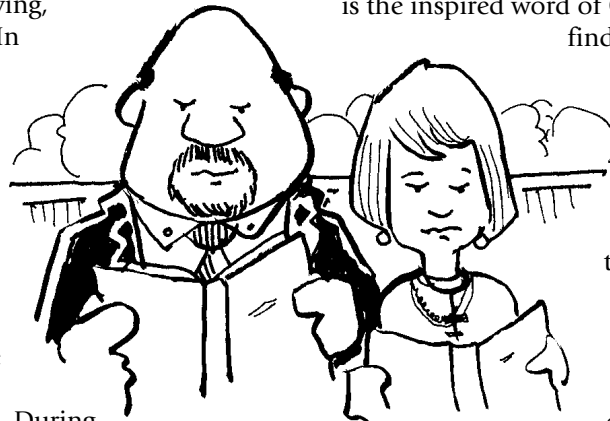
Overconfidence

Sin can be tricky. Just when you think have it beat, watch out. "Therefore, whoever thinks he is standing secure should take care not to fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12).



Meet God at "Little Easter"

One awesome fact of which Easter reminds us is that God lives and lives with us. Yet, as the joy of the celebration fades, we may feel distant from our loving, living God. In fact, we can renew our Easter joy every week at Mass on Sunday, our "little Easter." It's a great place to find God.



The Priest. During Mass, the priest is not acting on his own but in the person of Christ ("In Persona Christi"). Bishops and priests act in persona Christi when they offer Mass, forgive sins, preach on behalf of the Church, and perform other acts of shepherding and teaching. So, we find God in the priest.

The Word. Much of what goes on at Mass is directly from Scripture – the prayers we say together, the hymns we sing, the readings, etc. Since Scripture is the inspired word of God, we can find God in his Word.

The Eucharist. What starts as bread and wine becomes the body and blood of Christ. So we meet God in the consecrated Eucharist.

The People. When we unite to praise God, we are his Church. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). So God is there when we worship with others at Mass.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

What is an Epiclesis?

In each Sacrament, the prayer asking for the power of the Holy Spirit is called an "Epiclesis." In the Epiclesis during the Eucharist, the priest petitions God to send the Holy Spirit so that the offerings may



become the Body and Blood of Christ.

When that happens, the faithful who receive them become a living offering to God, too. "He has also put his seal upon us and given the Spirit in our hearts as a first installment" (2 Corinthians 1:22).

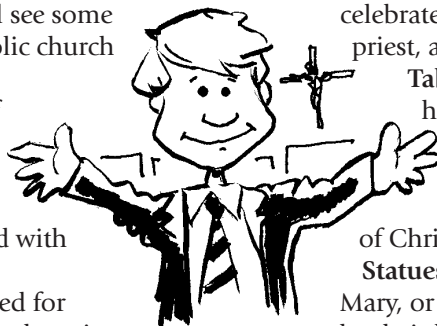
Feel at home in any Catholic church

Each Catholic church is unique but you'll see some of the same familiar elements in any Catholic church that you do in your own parish home.

Baptismal font – A pool or large bowl of water usually stands near the doors of the church and reminds us that baptism is our “door” to the Catholic faith.

Nave – The large open room usually filled with pews or seats is the main assembly area.

Sanctuary – The part of the church reserved for liturgical action that contains an altar where the priest



celebrates the sacrifice of the Mass, a chair for the priest, and the lectern for reading Scripture.

Tabernacle – Usually located in a place of honor in the sanctuary, this receptacle holds consecrated hosts. A candle nearby signifies when it is full.

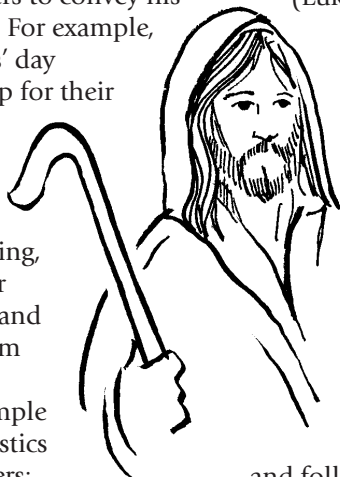
Crucifix – A prominent cross with an image of Christ crucified is usually located near the altar.

Statues - Statues and other forms of art of Jesus, Mary, or the Saints remind us of those who inspire us by their holy lives.

from Scripture

John 10:27-30, Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

As a storyteller, Jesus used images familiar to his listeners to convey his message of salvation. For example, many people in Jesus' day depended upon sheep for their livelihood. A village might have a common pasture where the sheep were led in the morning, but at night an owner would call his sheep and they would follow him home.



Jesus used this example to describe characteristics of his faithful followers:

They hear his voice. Jesus said to his

Apostles, “*He who hears you hears me*” (Luke 10:16). Catholics recognize Christ's voice in the successors of the Apostles: our pope and bishops.

They follow him.

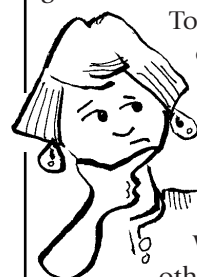
Catholics are called to follow Jesus. We follow out of love and we do what he asked us to do, including caring for the poor and vulnerable. We joyfully come when he calls us home.

They will have eternal life. Listening to his voice

and following Jesus will guide us safely to the pastures of eternal life.

Q & A Should I say something to people who come dressed to Mass inappropriately?

There was a time when reverential dress meant men and boys came to Mass in a coat and tie and women and girls wore a dress or skirt (and a hat).



Today's idea of reverential dressing has many interpretations and what may be reverential to you could be different to someone else.

When you look at how other parishioners dress, ask yourself if they could be wearing their good clothes even if it doesn't fit your idea of reverential. Then again, if they are dressed in clothing they would use to play a sport or clean the house, you may be right.

If you find how someone is dressed to be distracting, by all means offer a gentle, educational comment. Or, if in doubt, talk to your pastor.

The best way you can influence other people is by how you dress yourself. Wear your “Sunday best” and accessorize with a warm and welcoming manner to those around you, and you are sure to influence others to do the same.

Feasts & Celebrations

April 11 - St. Stanislaus (1079). As Bishop of Krakow in 1072, St. Stanislaus attempted to reform the violent and depraved king of Poland, Boleslas II. When his efforts failed, he excommunicated the king. In retaliation, Boleslas murdered the saint.

April 21 – St. Anselm (1109). A native of Italy, St. Anselm became a monk in France and reluctantly became bishop of Canterbury, England. He was exiled for rebuffing the king's interference in Church matters.

April 24 – St. Fedelis (1622). In his native Prussia, St. Fidelis became a

lawyer and championed the poor and oppressed. Later, he joined the Franciscans and gave away his wealth. During a revolt against the Church, St. Fidelis worked to bring people back. He was murdered by an angry mob.

April 25 - St. Mark (1st century). St. Mark wrote the second Gospel based on St. Peter's perspective. Mark accompanied Sts. Paul and Barnabas (Mark's cousin) on their missionary journey to Cyprus and is credited with founding the Church of Alexandria.



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