

Growing in FAITH™

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

January 2009

One Minute Meditations

Consequences remain

Our faith tells us that if we repent after sinning, God will forgive us. However, forgiveness doesn't mean that the consequences disappear. Sometimes they serve as a reminder of the destructive nature of sin. Remembering the effects of past sin can help us avoid it in the future.

God is enough

When Moses was approached by God with a mission, he was overwhelmed by his own inadequacy. Yet, with the power of God's grace, Moses accomplished great things. The next time you are faced with a task you think is beyond your abilities, rely on God's grace to see it through. God turns the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Love is always yours

There's nothing you can do to lose God's love. He will never say, "you've gone too far, I can't love you anymore." *"It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things"* (1 Corinthians 13:7). His love is always yours.



The key to Mary's success

Jesus loved his mother dearly, and his last thoughts on the Cross were of her. We know that she is in Heaven with God, but what did she do to earn this love and great reward?

When Mary agreed to become the mother of God, she may have expected an easy life but it was hard right from the beginning. She could have become disappointed or bitter.

Instead, Scripture tells us that all Mary expected was the joy of doing God's will. **She put God's will before her own.**

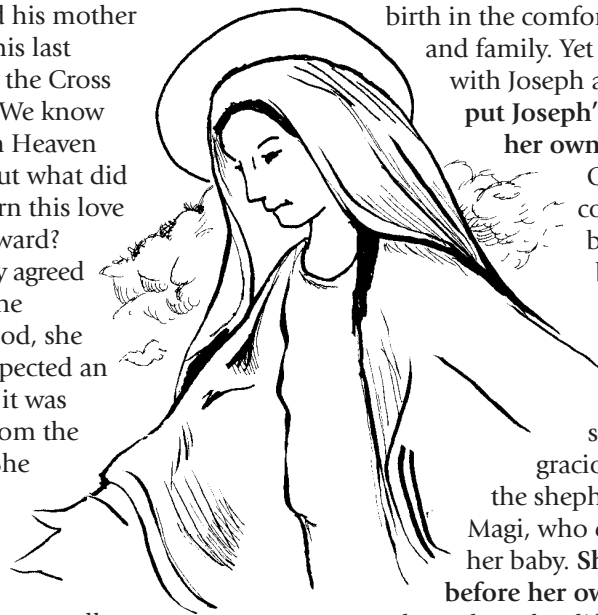
When St. Joseph went to Bethlehem for the census, Mary didn't have to go. She could have stayed behind to give

birth in the comfort of her friends and family. Yet she chose to go with Joseph as his wife. **She put Joseph's needs before her own.**

Once there, the couple slept in a barn or stable because there was no room at the inn.

Instead of indulging in self-pity, Mary graciously received the shepherds and the Magi, who came to worship her baby. **She put their joy before her own discomfort.**

Throughout her life, Mary said "yes" to God, put his will first, and thought of others before herself. In return, she was crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth. If we follow her example, we'll receive our reward in Heaven, too.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

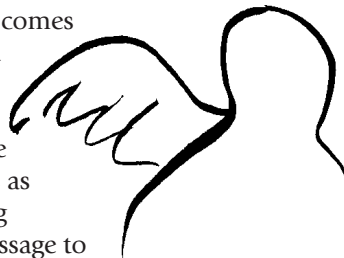
The word "angel" comes from the Greek word "angelos," meaning "messenger." Christians have come to understand angels as ones who often bring God's power and message to Earth. They are bodiless creatures with intelligence and

Why do Catholics believe in Angels?

free will who are dedicated to God.

There is much biblical evidence of angels – including Jesus' own words.

For example, he talked about the angels of children (Matthew 18:10) and refers to the angels in Heaven (Matthew 24 and 25).

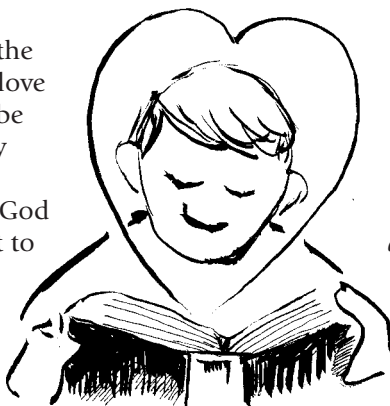


All God wants from us is love

The old Baltimore Catechism taught that the reason God made us was to “know him, to love him and to serve him in this world, and to be happy with him forever in the next.” Simply put, God wants us to love him back.

Know him. The Bible is the conversation God wants to have with us. We can only truly get to know him when we listen to and read his word.

Love him. Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all



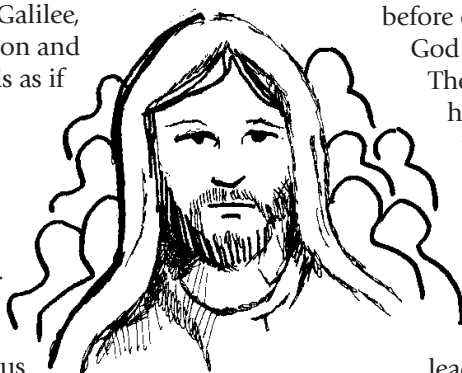
your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). Show your love by praying frequently, seek Communion with him often, and praise him continually.

Serve him. “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). When we make sure others have enough to eat, warm clothes to wear, and a place to stay, Jesus takes it personally. It’s how we show our love.

from Scripture

Mark 1:14-20, The common call.

The way Jesus gathered his followers seems almost casual. For example, he passed the Sea of Galilee, saw Andrew and Simon and called them. It sounds as if these men left their homes and their livelihoods to follow Jesus after very little thought. After all, he was a virtual stranger. There must have been something very compelling about Jesus and his call to them.



will provide whatever a disciple needs to follow him but nothing comes before our relationship with God and his call to us.

The compelling part of his call is the chance to serve him and be close to him.

Jesus chose twelve special people to be his closest followers and he became their

leader. They went where

he told them and did what he asked. Jesus is still calling people to follow him today. In fact, he has called each of us to follow him.

Feasts & Celebrations

In January we celebrate the Holy Name of Jesus. “...at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth” (Philippians 2:10).

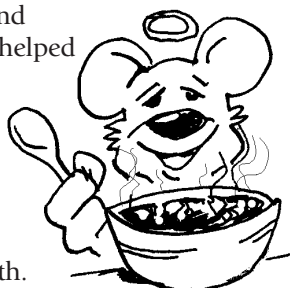
January 4 – Epiphany of Our Lord. Epiphany is Greek for “manifestation.” When they honored the infant Jesus, the three wise men bore witness to the fulfillment of God’s promise of a savior.

January 17 – St. Anthony the Abbot (355). Born to a rich family around 250 A.D. in Egypt, St. Anthony gave up his riches to live a life of simplicity in the

desert. He is the founder of monasticism.

January 26 – St. Timothy and St. Titus (1st century). Timothy and Titus were bishops of the early Church.

Timothy was converted to Christianity by St. Paul and later joined him in his apostolic work such as the founding of the Church in Corinth. Titus was Paul’s good friend and emissary and helped smooth out difficulties Paul had with new Christian communities, such as Corinth.



Q & A How can I tell if a Catholic book is accurate and faithful?

There are many popular books that claim to present the Catholic faith but unless the content is reviewed by an authorized member of the Church, it’s hard to know if it is accurate. Look for an “imprimatur” printed in the first few pages of the book.



The presence of an imprimatur generally means that a bishop’s office has determined it to be free of doctrinal or moral errors. It

may be accompanied by a “**nihil obstat**” (Latin for “nothing stands in the way”) which means that someone well-versed in Catholic theology has reviewed the contents and found the same thing. (Neither the imprimatur nor the nihil obstat imply agreement with the content or opinions.)

It is particularly important for a book that claims to teach about the faith of the Church to carry the approval of the Catholic Church. There are many well-meaning people who intend to educate others about God’s infinite love but may have an imperfect understanding of Catholic doctrine. When choosing materials to learn more about our religion, you are right to want to be sure that they are accurate.

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