

Growing in FAITH™

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

March 2008

One Minute Meditations

Friend vs. Faith

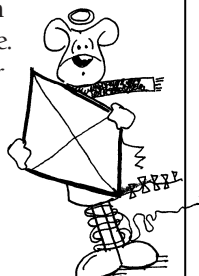
According to legend, Pericles of Athens refused to lie for a friend saying that a good friend won't let friendship violate one's faith or ethics. He contended that this doesn't demonstrate the friendship's limits; it proves its strength..

Who is my neighbor?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that our neighbor is someone whose origins we know and who deserves particular attention. This includes our brothers and sisters since they share our origins, as do cousins and other relatives. Fellow citizens are children of our country. Anyone who is baptized is a child of our mother the Church. And every person is a child of God.

Never say "never"

"That will never happen."
"Things will never change."
Never may be part of our vocabulary, but it isn't part of God's. Remember this next time you feel hemmed in by circumstances. God's grace can accomplish the unthinkable. Remember, "For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37).



Easter can be your new beginning

One thing Christians can count on is God's willingness to give each of us another chance. Easter is proof of that. Jesus gave himself for us so that we can make our second chances count. Try these ideas for living the lessons of Easter:

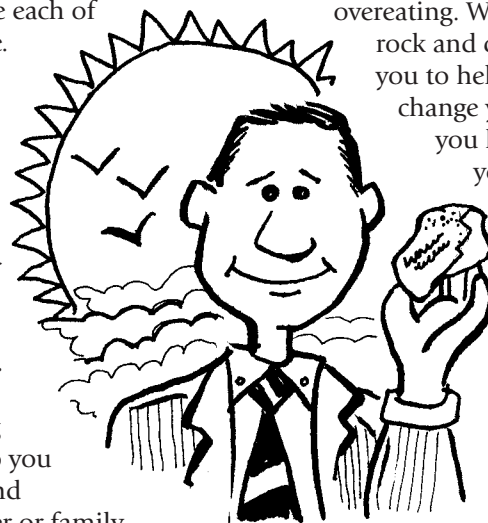
Start a new day. What is keeping you from growing closer to God? Do you work too much and neglect your prayer or family life? Do your friends tempt you away from holiness? Do you skip Mass on Sunday to sleep in? On Easter morning, start fresh by leaving your old life behind and growing in holiness.

Roll away the stone. Pick a bad habit

you want to change such as using bad language, getting angry too easily, or overeating. Write that habit on a rock and carry the rock with you to help you remember to change your behavior. Once you have conquered your bad habit, throw it away.

Look for the Lord. Jesus said, "I tell you ... there will be more joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no

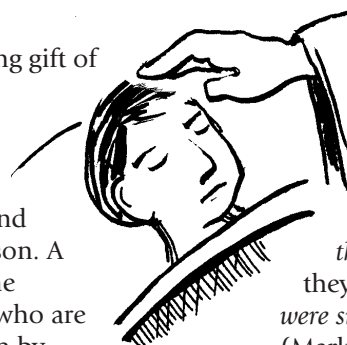
need of repentance" (Luke 15:7). No matter what you have done, God is ready to forgive you if you give him the chance. Confess your sins to a priest, do your penance, and join Heaven in celebrating.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics anoint the sick?

Through the healing gift of the Holy Spirit, the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick conveys forgiveness of sins and heals the whole person. A priest administers the Sacrament to those who are seriously ill or infirm by



anointing them on the forehead and hands with blessed oil.

Like all Sacraments, this one was initiated by Jesus. He told his Apostles to "cure the sick" (Matthew 10:1-8) and they "anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them" (Mark 6:13).

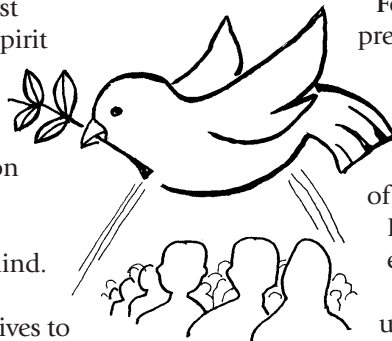
What did the Holy Spirit give you?

When you were baptized, made your First Communion, or got confirmed, the Holy Spirit gave you gifts to help you grow in your Catholic faith. Have you unwrapped them yet?

Wisdom: This gift helps us stay focused on God's will and his plan for us.

Understanding: Lets us grasp truths. It means seeing with the heart, not just the mind.

Counsel: Also called "right judgment," counsel enables us to weigh all the alternatives to make the right choice.



Fortitude: The ability to remain firm against all pressures. (Also called courage.)

Knowledge: A person with knowledge sees more than one dimension of an issue to determine the right path.

Piety: Helps us think of ourselves as children of God and be eager to serve him.

Fear of the Lord: The wonder and awe God inspires encourages us to respect him and all his creations.

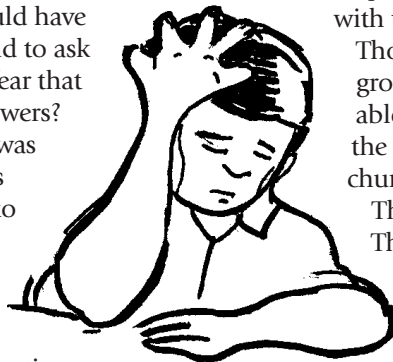
Accepting these gifts means identifying and using them. Just don't forget to call on the Holy Spirit for guidance when you do.

from Scripture

John 20:19-31, "Doubting Thomas"

Have you ever struggled with doubts about your faith? Do you think that true people of faith should have no doubts? Are you afraid to ask tough questions out of fear that you can't handle the answers?

As a disciple, Thomas was with Jesus for three years and was an eye-witness to the great miracles. Jesus even clued the disciples in to what was going to happen to him. Yet, Thomas had trouble accepting the truth of the Resurrection without hard evidence. So, when he appeared to Thomas, Jesus invited him to do whatever was necessary to convince



himself of the truth.

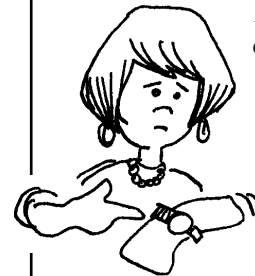
Despite his nonconformance with the other disciples, Thomas stayed part of the group. As a result, he was able to find the answers in the context of that early church.

This encounter with Thomas suggests that every seeker is welcome to bring his or her doubts to God.

He delights in guiding our search for the truth and promised that the Spirit would aid those who seek it (John 16:13).

Q I'm so busy. & How can I find more A time to pray?

A healthy friendship with God needs the time and attention of prayer. Yet the hectic pace of life can make it hard to find time to pray. Consider these ways to find more time for heartfelt prayer:



Pray the wait. A decade of the Rosary, can be a great way to pass the time spent waiting in line at the grocery store, at a traffic light, or in the doctor's office.

Pray the Bible. Copy a different passage from the Bible each week and put it in your pocket, on your refrigerator, or your bathroom mirror where you will see. Memorize it and think about its meaning.

Pray the sounds. Listen to recorded prayers or inspirational music while exercising, commuting, or doing chores. That helps turn whatever you're doing into a prayer.

Pray the moment. Pick a simple phrase to repeat throughout the day. Try the Jesus Prayer, "Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." See how many times you can say it each day.

Feasts & Celebrations

March 3 - St. Katharine Drexel (1955). A Philadelphia heiress, St. Katharine Drexel gave up her fortune to become a nun. She established 50 missions for Native Americans in 16 states and founded Xavier University in New Orleans, the first university for African-Americans in the U.S.

March 7 - Sts. Perpetua and Felicity (203). Perpetua, a beautiful young mother and noble woman, and her slave, Felicity, were imprisoned for refusing to renounce their Christian faith. St. Perpetua kept a diary of their

imprisonment, which included her anxiety for her infant and the child born of Felicity in prison. Neither woman lost her resolve, however, and both died violent deaths.

March 17 - St. Patrick (493). Born in Scotland, St. Patrick was kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave. Although he escaped, he later returned to become the bishop of Ireland and is credited with establishing the Church there.



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