

Growing in FAITH

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

May 2008

One Minute Meditations

Truthful rewards

History tells us that people who speak the truth aren't always treated nicely. But there are practical, let alone moral, reasons to be truthful anyway. For example, you never have to remember what you told people. Other people will come to trust your word. God will bless you for your obedience.

Sunday reminder

The Church requires that Catholics participate in Mass on Sundays and other holy days of obligation. We are also to abstain from any work that could interfere with the attention and worship due to God on that day. God wants us to relax and rest on Sunday to gather strength for the week ahead.

Great Commandments

Imagine what would happen if everyone lived the great commandments: "Love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself." Today, try to live them in some tangible way in your own life.



Are you afraid to die?

To many of us, death is a distant and slightly fearful unknown and we try to ignore it as we go about our lives. To be truly free from fear of death, live every day in a way that pleases God. That's what Jesus did.

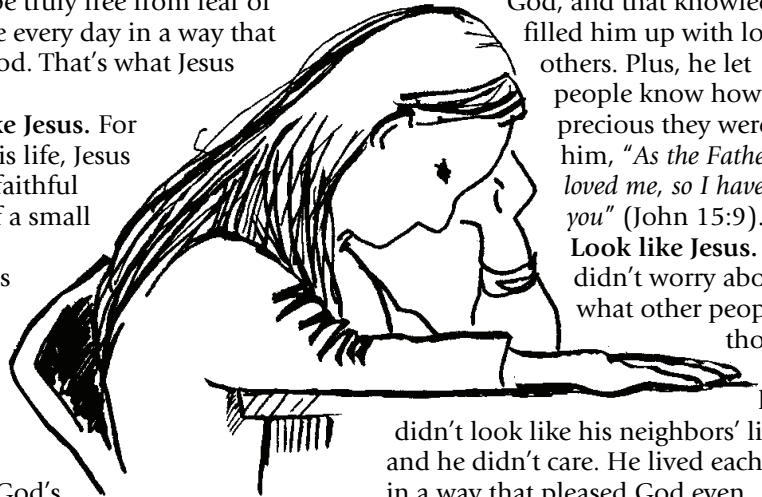
Live like Jesus. For most of his life, Jesus lived the faithful routine of a small town carpenter's son. He gave priority to time with God and to fulfilling God's purpose for his life. Jesus appreciated God's creation around him, like the lilies of the field, sparrows and sheep. He enjoyed his friends and the occasional glass of

good wine.

Love like Jesus. What Jesus deeply believed was that he was beloved of God, and that knowledge filled him up with love for others. Plus, he let people know how precious they were to him, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you" (John 15:9).

Look like Jesus. Jesus didn't worry about what other people thought. His life

didn't look like his neighbors' lives and he didn't care. He lived each day in a way that pleased God even though it ultimately meant betrayal, isolation, false accusation, and suffering. He knew the reward was worth it. "The Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces" (Isaiah 25:8).



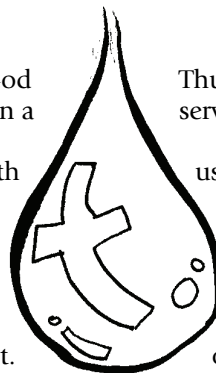
Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics have objects blessed by a priest?

Every blessing praises God and asks for his gifts. When a man becomes a priest or a deacon, he is endowed with the authority to bless objects or people in the name of the Church. When he blesses something, he invokes God's power and care on it.

Thus blessing it dedicates it to God's service.

Blessing everyday objects helps us to remember that everything comes from God and should be used as he intends. Knowing that something is blessed can help us remember to treat it with respect and appreciate it as a gift of God's favor.



All God's children

God loves each of us equally and fiercely no matter where we come from or what we look like. Those of us who love him back know that it's not just important to love each other, too. It's God's law.

Celebrate differences. Invite foreigners or people who are different from you to your home or church. Jesus was once a foreigner in a strange land and was grateful for the hospitality he received. There is great diversity in the Communion of Saints.



Practice patience. It can be tough to listen to someone with a heavy accent or a different cultural point of view. Perhaps it would help to imagine the face of Christ in the face before you.

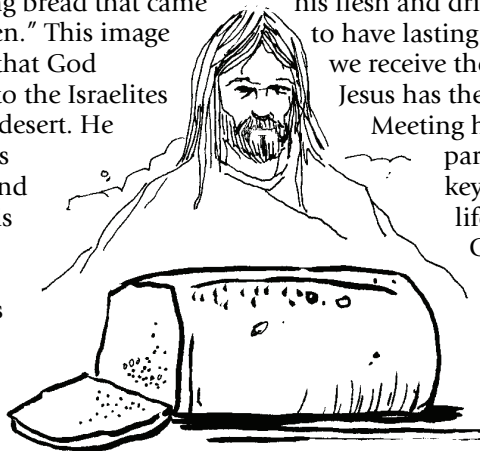
Counsel the ignorant. Someone from another country or region might be behaving in an inconsiderate way out of ignorance of our culture or customs. He might appreciate being informed.

Speak up. Don't stand by in the face of racial or ethnic prejudice, and be positive about cultural diversity if friends or relatives start criticizing others' faith or cultures.

from Scripture

John 6:51-58, God's promises kept

In this Gospel reading, Jesus called himself, "the living bread that came down from Heaven." This image recalled the time that God provided manna to the Israelites wandering in the desert. He wanted to help his listeners understand that his presence is another way God fulfilled his promise to always care for us. God gave people manna to help them live. Jesus came down from Heaven as God's gift to us to help us live eternally.



Jesus also said that we have to eat his flesh and drink his blood in order to have lasting life. We do this when we receive the Eucharist at Mass.

Jesus has the power to give life. Meeting him each time we participate at Mass is our key to lasting and eternal life.

Communion with Jesus through the Mass means uniting our body to his body, our blood to his blood so that through him and with him we can also become an everlasting gift to the Father.

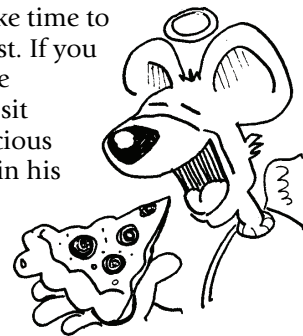
Q & A My spiritual life feels dull. Any suggestions?

Just like changing the oil in a car, our souls need spiritual preventative maintenance. Without regular attention, our souls sputter and smoke just like a car with old spark plugs. There are a few things you can do regularly to keep your spirit fresh and alive.

First, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is like a regular oil change – out with the bad, in with the good. It is a necessary form of maintenance, so schedule it regularly – once a month or every few months, if possible.

Second, try to add reading Scripture into your daily routine. Find a book in the Bible you've never explored or just let it fall open and see where you are led. Chances are, you'll find something new you didn't know.

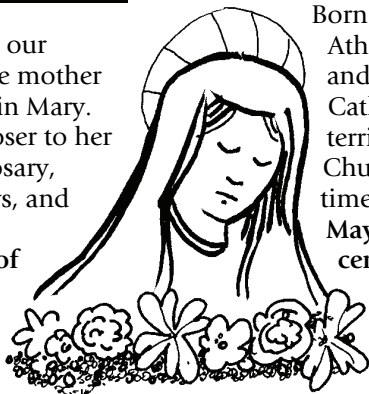
Third, make time to be with Christ. If you don't feel like praying, just sit quietly conscious that you are in his presence. You'll be amazed by what comes to you.



Feasts & Celebrations

In May we celebrate our mothers and honor the mother of all, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Three ways to grow closer to her include praying the Rosary, honoring her feast days, and praising her to others.

May 1 - Ascension of the Lord. This solemnity marks the completion of Jesus' mission of salvation and his triumphant entry into Heaven. *Note: In many dioceses, observance of Ascension has*



been moved to the following Sunday.

May 2 – St. Athanasius (373).

Born a Christian in Egypt, St. Athanasius became a priest and a great defender of the Catholic faith. As a result of terrible persecution of the Church, he was exiled six times during his life.

May 11 – Pentecost (1st century). After the

Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, the Holy Spirit was given to the Church at the first Pentecost. When the apostles received the Holy Spirit, the "new age" of the Church was born.

Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living

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(Unless noted, Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible.)