

Growing in FAITH™

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

May 2009

One Minute Meditations

Not so bad

Just when we feel overwhelmed by our burdens, God often shows us someone else who has peacefully accepted troubles even worse than our own. When you start to lose your balance, look around to see who is worse off and draw comfort and strength from God's gift of perspective.

Your Lenten change

Lent is a time when we make changes that bring us closer to God. During Lent, many of us fast from our favorite food or drink, and approach Easter a little lighter in spirit and in body. Don't forget that a Lenten change can continue beyond Easter. Consider continuing your Lenten fast on Fridays throughout the year, or for a week each month, for example. Find ways to make your Lenten change permanent.

Rest and relax

God expects us to be sure to rest. *"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28).



Are you one of the beautiful people?

Who doesn't want to be considered beautiful? We often imagine that life would be better if we were. Yet over time, physical beauty can fade. The beauty that comes from a loving heart, however, only improves with time. Try these ideas to become one of the truly beautiful people:

Beautiful people appreciate God's creation. "... all things were created through him and for him" (Colossians 1:16). All that God created came from his loving heart. Beautiful people notice God's creations and experience his love through them.

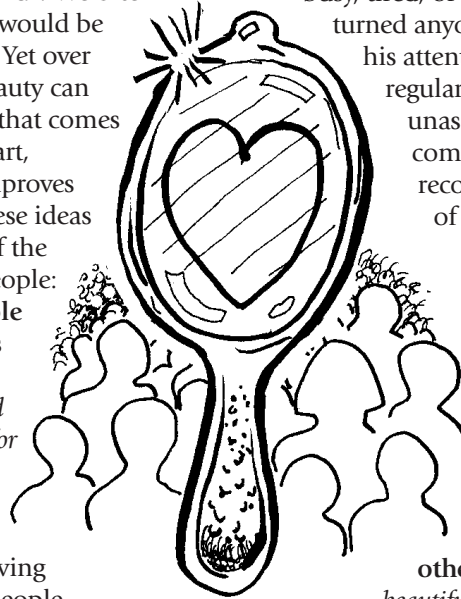
Beautiful people put others first. *"This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"*

(John 13:35). Sometimes Jesus was busy, tired, or worn out. Yet he never turned anyone away who asked for his attention. Beautiful people regularly help others – asked or unasked – without complaint or expecting recognition. They do it out of love like Jesus did.

Beautiful people accept others as they are. They don't judge because they know that God loves each of us equally. They find ways to love people others find unlovable.

Beautiful people build others up. *"Behold, you are beautiful, my beloved, truly lovely"* (Song of Solomon 3:16).

Loving people encourage, boost, and bolster those around them. Spending time with a truly beautiful person makes others feel beautiful, too.

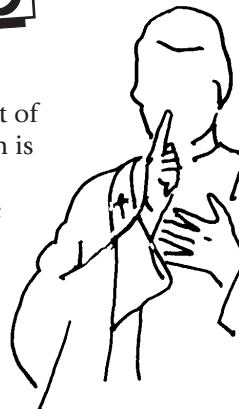


Why Do Catholics Do That?

Confessing our sins to a priest during the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is essential to healing our relationship with God. The Church created the Seal of Confession to help us confidently reveal all our sins so maximum healing can take place.

What is the Seal of Confession?

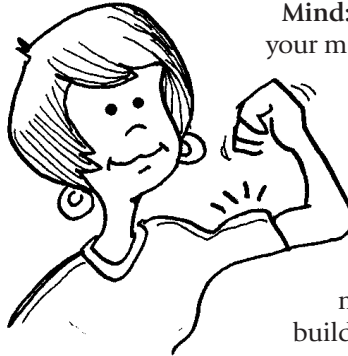
The Seal of Confession means that the priest to whom we confess must keep our sins secret. He cannot reveal what has been confessed during the Sacrament in any way or for any reason without the penitent's permission.



Take good care of yourself - You belong to God

Taking care of ourselves can become a low priority in the midst of other obligations. Yet caring for our bodies and minds is a duty we have to God. He needs us strong and healthy so we can help build up his kingdom.

Body: What you put into your body is even more important than what you put on it. Consider taking steps to make your diet healthier and more nourishing. Avoid excessive alcohol. Don't forget to add exercise and eight hours of sleep each night.



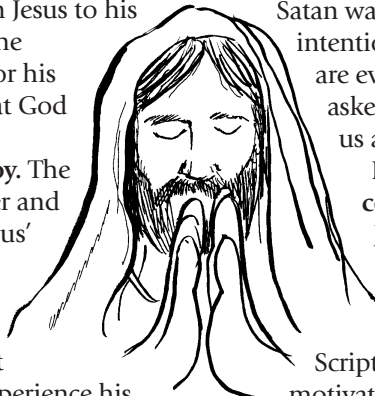
Mind: It's important to be picky about what you feed your mind, too. What you watch, read, and listen to shapes the way you look at the world. Evidence shows that it's hard to regularly watch violent shows or movies and still be a calm and happy person. Television programs or movies that portray infidelity or promiscuity as acceptable behaviors eventually dull our sense of sin. Feed your mind positive, Gospel-centered images that will build you up and inspire you.

from Scripture **John 17:11-17; Jesus' Prayer**

The entire 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel is a prayer from Jesus to his Father. In this part of the chapter, Jesus prayed for his disciples and asked that God watch over them (us).

He prayed for our joy. The love between the Father and Son is the source of Jesus' joy and he wants to share it with all of his disciples. The key is to live in intimate contact with God so we can experience his special care and protection.

He prayed for our protection. Christ's followers refuse to cooperate



with the world by joining in its sin. Satan wants to change that and his intentions for Christ's followers are evil and energetic. Jesus asked the Father to strengthen us against Satan's efforts.

He prayed for our consecration. A follower of Jesus becomes consecrated (set apart for sacred use) by believing and obeying the word of God.

Scripture points out sin, motivates us to confess, renews our relationship with Christ, and keeps us on the right path. That's what Jesus wants for us all.

Q & A How can I avoid wasting the price of a movie ticket or rental?

It is frustrating to waste the price of a ticket on a movie you find offensive. Even as a practical matter, movie tickets have gotten so expensive, it's disappointing to pay for a movie that isn't what you thought it would be.



Fortunately, there is help. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office for

Film and Broadcasting has an excellent service that reviews and describes movies, films, and theater from a Catholic perspective. Reviews even cover DVDs and other classics. In addition to detailed descriptions, the service also classifies each piece of entertainment to reflect the moral suitability of using Catholic principles. You can access this service on the website: www.usccb.org/movies.

Another service that compiles reviews of movies and films is offered by St. Anthony Messenger Press. Sources include St. Anthony Messenger magazine, *Every Day Catholic* and *Catholic News Service*. You can access this information at www.americancatholic.org/movies.

If you don't have access to the internet, look to your diocesan newspaper. Many bishops offer information and guidance about movies to their diocese.

Feasts & Celebrations

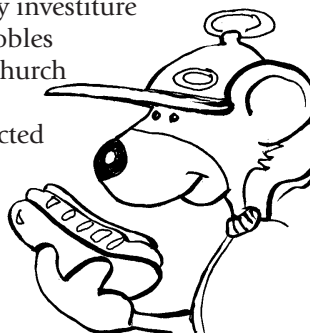
May 1 – St. Joseph the Worker. Husband of the Blessed Mother and Jesus' earthly father, Joseph was a carpenter devoted to his family and obedient to God.

May 13 – Our Lady of Fatima (1917). The Blessed Virgin appeared to three children near Fatima, Portugal. Mary asked them to pray the Rosary for world peace, for the end of World War I, for sinners, and for the conversion of Russia.

May 20 – St. Bernardine of Siena (1444). Bernardine was ordained a Franciscan at 24. After years in solitude,

he journeyed across Italy preaching. The symbol of the sun with IHS, the first three letters of Jesus' name in Greek, is attributed to him.

May 25 – Pope St. Gregory VII (1085). In a difficult time for the Church, St. Gregory fought simony (the buying and selling of sacred offices), unlawful marriages of the clergy, and lay investiture (kings and nobles appointing Church officials). He fiercely protected the authority of the Church but suffered and died in exile.



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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)