

# Growing in FAITH™

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

September 2008

## One Minute Meditations

### Hidden sins

Ever notice when reading the Gospels that Jesus doesn't get mad at sinners, he gets mad at people who don't think they're sinners? Take the time to regularly perform an examination of conscience so that no hidden sin will get between you and God's friendship.

### Language of love

Those of us who know and love God must be his voice in our world. We need to speak a language of love that will bring hope and inspire others to live according to God's plan. Spreading God's love is what he wants us to do.

### Strangers

During his public ministry, Jesus traveled across the country. His dress and speech made him stand out as a stranger. He knew what it was like to be away from home, to not know anyone, and to be branded as a foreigner.

Next time you see someone obviously from another place, think of Jesus and make him feel welcome.



## Gratitude that flows back to God

Whenever someone gives you a wonderful gift, you may want to do something nice in return. God gives us so many good gifts, our thankfulness can overflow into a desire to do something nice for him in return. Try these ideas for giving God gifts of your time, treasure, and talent in gratitude.

**Put God first.** Let nothing come in the way of your attendance at Mass and your personal prayer time. Open your heart wide to God and listen for his response.

**Get involved in your parish.** Where can you use your talents? Greeter before Mass? Eucharistic minister to visit the

sick and homebound? Extra help during CCD classes? Call your parish rectory to find out.

### Fund Christian activities.

Your parish depends upon your help to meet its operating expenses. Consider giving a portion of your paycheck – no matter how big or small – to your parish.

You may also want to donate what you can to organizations that meet Catholic ideals. For example, Catholic Relief Services or Catholic Charities.

**Build up the Body.** Each day, try to be Jesus to someone.

Think of ways you can live his teachings in all aspects of your life.

The amazing result of showing gratitude to God is that he then gives you even more for which you can be thankful.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why are Catholics concerned about sin?

Sin is a deliberate thought, word, action or failure to act that is contrary to God's law. It's like an illness that makes your body sick. Some illnesses can make you feel miserable but others can kill you. Some sins may delay our



entry into Heaven and some can cause us to lose our eternal lives.

Being aware of sin helps us to avoid it and stay in God's friendship.

The good news is: God is always ready to forgive our sins through the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession).

## Casting your Catholic vote

What is the most responsible way for a Catholic to vote? "A Catholic moral framework does not easily fit into the ideologies of 'right' or 'left,' nor the platforms of any party ... Believers are called to be a community of conscience within the larger society ..." (*Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops 2003*).

**Abstaining is not an option.** It is by casting a responsible vote that we can make the voice of God heard. And it is through our vote that we can best protect human life and



dignity – the heart of our Catholic responsibility.

**The Church can help.** Without endorsing any specific political party or candidate, the U.S.

Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) created a special website to help us use Gospel values to evaluate campaign platforms. Visit the special USCCB website ([www.faithfulcitizenship.org](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org)) or call 800-235-8722.

**Prayerful discernment is needed.** In the end, we must each vote our Catholic conscience. Invoke the Holy Spirit for help.

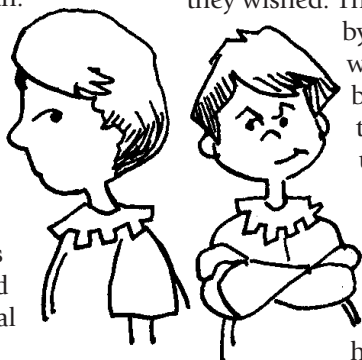
### from Scripture

**From Scripture: Mt 21:28-32; Obey because we love.**

Coming from a story-telling people, Jesus used stories to teach.

They weren't always easy to figure out, but this time even the chief priests and Pharisees realized that he was speaking of them.

The first son who refused to do his father's bidding but relented and obeyed represented social outcasts such as tax collectors and prostitutes. The second son who pretended obedience but defied his father symbolized the religious leaders, such as the chief priests and Pharisees. They pretended



to live by God's laws but privately did as they wished. These leaders were outraged by the idea that sinners would make it into Heaven before they would. Still, they were unwilling to give up their pride, learn at Jesus' feet, and seek forgiveness.

As disciples of Christ we know that God's way brings us happiness and joy. It isn't easy to be Christian in this world, and like the first son, we may balk at first. In the end, we follow God's laws because we love him and we know that he wants us to be with him in Heaven.

### Q How can I get & more out of going A to Mass?

The first thing to try is to get into the right frame of mind. You can do this by arriving a few minutes early to go over the readings so you can really absorb their message.



Next thing you can do is to notice and greet the people near you. That will give others the feeling that you're happy to be there and happy to see them, too.

**Change your spot.** If you normally sit in the back, move to the front. If you sit on the side, move to the center. Sometimes just a change of scene helps you look with a fresh perspective.

Sing every song. Pray every prayer. Mass is not a spectator sport.

Take with you a small pad in your purse or pocket. That way you can jot down prayer requests, intercessions, or thoughts from the homily to review later. Then you can take the Mass home with you and live it all week long.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**Sept. 16 – St. Cornelius (253).** Despite a Roman decree outlawing a new pope, St. Cornelius was secretly elected and bravely led the Church. He modeled forgiveness, embracing people who repented of renouncing their faith under persecution.

**Sept. 19 – St. Januarius (304).** Bishop of Benevento, Italy, during a time of great persecution, Januarius visited Christians in prison and was arrested himself. He and his companions were thrown to wild beasts in the amphitheater but were not harmed. They were later beheaded.

**Sept. 23 – St. Padre Pio (1968).** Born to farmers in Italy, he became a Capuchin Friar. Eight years later, the five wounds of Our Lord's Passion (stigmata) appeared on his body. Despite intense suffering, he remained dedicated to prayer.

**Sept. 26 – Sts. Cosmas and Damian (303).** These saints were Arab brothers who studied medicine in Syria and lived their Christian faith by treating people without charge. Unfortunately, such virtue made them targets of persecution. They were martyred for their faith.



### Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.  
 Success Publishing & Media, LLC  
 Publishers of Growing in Faith™ and Partners in Faith™  
 (540)662-7844 (540)662-7847 fax  
<http://www.growinginfaith.com>  
 (Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible)