

Growing in FAITH™

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

June 2009

One Minute Meditations

Love yourself

When Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself," he wanted us to love and care for each other. He also wants us to be good to ourselves and love ourselves in a healthy way. Loving yourself is not the same as being self-centered or self-indulgent. It means seeing your immense value as a child of God.

Proud Catholics

In a recent poll of U.S. Catholics conducted by the Center of Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), more than three out of four respondents say they are proud to be Catholic. More than eight in ten consider their Catholic faith to be important in their daily life. (See <http://cara.georgetown.edu> for more information.)

The bright side

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Philippians 4:8).



Five ways you can make a difference to your parish

Amazing things happen in our Catholic parishes every day. It is in the arms of our parish that we experience God's love and share that love with friends and neighbors. Every parishioner is important to a parish. Consider these ideas to make a difference to yours:

Take your rightful place. As a baptized Catholic, you have the right to a seat at your parish table. You take it when you attend weekend Mass, seek peace from sacraments such as the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and participate in parish ministries.

Boost the faith of fellow Catholics. Even the most active Catholics sometimes falter in their

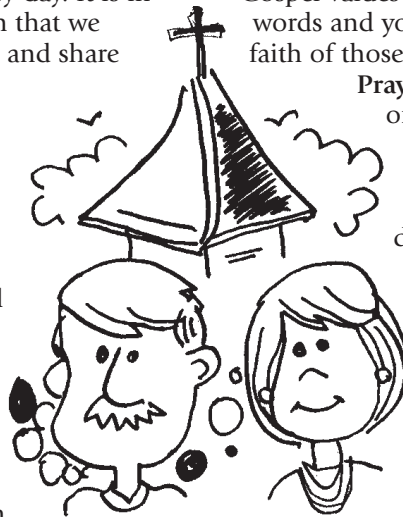
faith. Look for opportunities to share Gospel values through your actions and words and you will strengthen the faith of those around you.

Pray for your parish. This is one of the most important contributions you can make. Join parish intentions to your own daily prayer intentions.

Pray for parish ministries. Offer prayers for your priests and other religious, and parish staff.

Build it, serve it, or pay for it. When there is a need in the parish, don't wait for an invitation. Your parish depends upon your efforts and support.

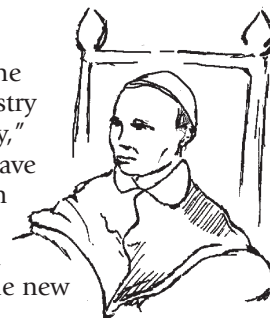
Help it grow. Don't be shy about inviting friends, coworkers, or neighbors to join you. Your parish might be the home they've been searching for.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics follow the Pope?

All Catholics – including the Pope – follow Jesus. The ministry of the Pope, called the "papacy," was begun by Jesus when he gave Peter "the keys of the kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 16:19). By doing so, Jesus gave Peter a special role of leadership in the new Church.

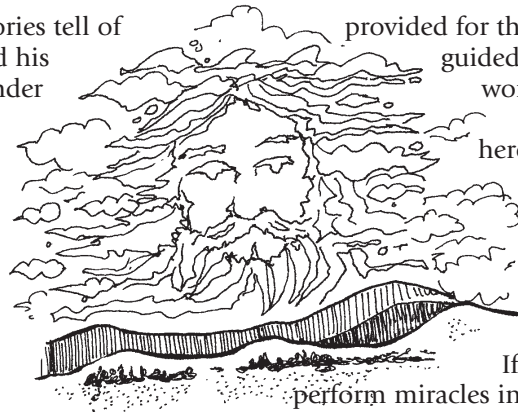


The authority given to St. Peter is passed to his successors who also become head of the Church. The Pope brings unity to the entire community of Catholics and helps us continue Jesus' saving mission.

Is God still around?

Many Old and New Testaments stories tell of personal encounters between God and his people. As we read them, we may wonder why we don't see or hear him like they did. In fact, God walks with us today in the very same way he walked with the Israelites through the desert. It's God's people who have changed.

Times change; God doesn't. The Bible tells of countless times when God gave his people victory in otherwise hopeless circumstances,



provided for them when they had no resources, and guided them in their decisions. God is ready to work as powerfully for us.

Why the difference? All the Biblical heroes had one thing in common; they were ordinary people with no power of their own. The difference between us may be that they were more aware of and open to the presence of God in their lives. Through prayer and sacrifice, they were closely connected to God.

If we do the same, God is ready to perform miracles in our lives, too.

from Scripture

Mark 5:21-43, Faith in action.

As the leader of the local synagogue, Jairus was probably pressured by the Pharisees to avoid or reject Jesus. It was a courageous act for him to publicly approach Jesus, bow before him, and beg for a cure for his daughter. Jairus' faith in Jesus was that strong.

On the way to Jairus' home, Jesus was delayed by a woman with a serious hemorrhage. According to Jewish law, her constant bleeding would have excluded her from most



social contact. She thought Jesus wouldn't want to touch her and secretly grabbed his cloak believing that any contact would cure her. In fact, she was cured, but Jesus told her that it was her faith that provided the cure. We should never allow fear of our unworthiness to keep us from God.

By the time Jesus finished with the woman, Jairus was told of his daughter's death. Jesus simply said, "Do not be afraid; just have faith" (Mark 5:36), and Jairus' great faith was rewarded. No matter how desperate your situation may appear, trust Jesus to help. Even death is under his control.

Feasts & Celebrations

June 19 - Sacred Heart of Jesus. The image of Jesus with his heart exposed in unquenchable flame is a reminder of his intense and eternal love for us.

June 20 - Immaculate Heart of Mary. In response to a request by Our Lady of Fatima, Pope Pius XII consecrated the world to Mary's gentle and devout Immaculate Heart in 1942, and initiated this feast in 1945.

June 21 - St. Aloysius Gonzaga (1591). St. Aloysius prayed vigorously and fasted from age 7. Upon joining the Society of Jesus, he was ordered to cut back in order to study and spend time with the other students. He died while nursing the sick.

June 24 - Nativity of St. John the Baptist. The only saint whose birth and death we observe, St. John was Jesus' cousin. He baptized and prepared the people for Jesus' coming. He even baptized Jesus and was later executed for denouncing Herod's marriage to his sister-in-law.



Q & A I vote pro-life. What else can I do to promote respect for life?

All Catholics are called to protect the dignity of life from conception to natural death. While voting for candidates who pledge to protect life is important, there are also options outside the voting booth.

Assist pregnancy support centers. Many centers offer counseling, material assistance, and even provide daycare. Find one in your area and volunteer your time, talents, or treasure in support.

Speak up. When you hear or read about a story in the news in which the value of life is demeaned, write a letter to the editor and to government leaders supporting life-affirming and

non-violent solutions.

Consider becoming a foster parent. Many local social service agencies are overwhelmed by the number of children whose families cannot care for them. Contact your local social services department to inquire about the necessary training and certifications you'll need to take in a child who needs shelter.



Visit local nursing homes and offer residents companionship. Many older people feel forgotten and would welcome the attention.

Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

Success Publishing & Media, LLC
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 104 Stone Ridge Court, Winchester, VA 22602
 (800) 366-3114 • info@growinginfaith.com
 http://www.growinginfaith.com

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