

Growing in FAITH™

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

August 2021

St. Mary's Nativity Church
Rev. Clyde Mahler, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

The gift of work

Work can feel like a treadmill. The routine can be exhausting and the job seem pointless. When we treat our labor as a gift back to God, there is an additional purpose to it than just a paycheck. *"There is nothing better for man than to eat and drink and provide himself with good things by his labors. Even this, I realized, is from the hand of God"* (Ecclesiastes 2:24).

Think and pray

Consider how many mistakes or heartaches could have been prevented if we had been wise enough to stop and think before acting. Too many times we focus on enjoying ourselves as much as possible and we step closer to sin until it draws us in. Trouble can be averted if we think and pray before we act.

"Understand this well: there is something holy, something divine hidden in the most ordinary situations, and it is up to each one of you to discover it."

St. Josemaria
Escriva



Where in the world is God?

Two travelers, distraught over the murder of someone they loved, were heading out of town. As they walked, they struggled to understand what happened and why God had abandoned them. They felt overwhelmed and alone. A kind stranger joined them in their journey, explained the recent events, and reminded them of God's reliable love. The stranger turned out to be the very loved one they were grieving. Although they hadn't realized it, God was with them all along (Luke 24).

Why can't we find him? Events or experiences in our lives can lessen

our awareness of God and make Him appear distant. Sometimes we are too worried, too sad, or too angry to find Him. For example, preoccupied by grief, the two travelers failed to recognize God walking with them.

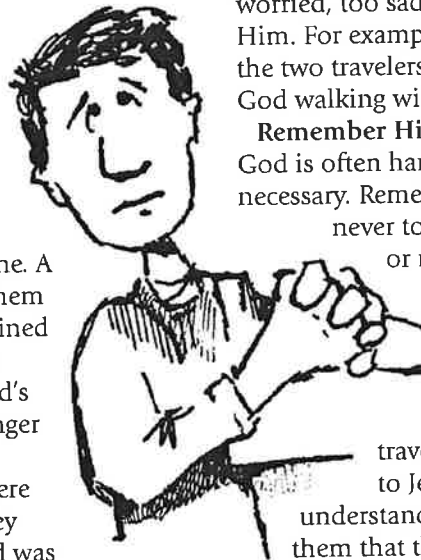
Remember His promise. Trust in God is often hardest when it is most necessary. Remember, He promised never to abandon us. Whether or not we are aware of Him makes no difference.

God never breaks a promise.

Talk to

Him. When the

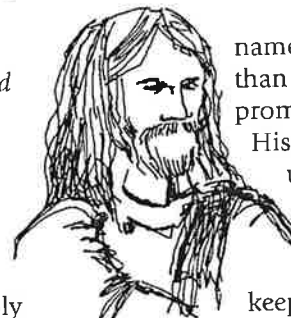
travelers opened their hearts to Jesus, He helped them to understand their situation, assured them that they were firmly in God's care, and gave them peace and consolation. When we open our hearts to Jesus and tell Him everything, He will give us peace and consolation, too.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

How do Catholics regard Jesus' name?

"At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Philippians 2:10). The use of His name is so powerful, Jesus promised that He will answer any prayer we make in His name (John 14:14). It is wrong to speak the holy



name of God in any way other than prayer or praise. In fact, He promised that whatever we ask in His powerful name, He will give us. Calling on His name as a swear, to express improper emotions, using it to curse or make promises we don't keep are grave sins.

Grow in patience and tolerance

The past eighteen months of pandemic have tested our patience and good humor. Tempers have become shorter and tolerance limited. Yet, followers of Jesus know that it is critical for our daily treatment of others to demonstrate our love for God. We are asked to show as much patience to others as God has with us.

Fight against your own defects. Certainly it can be frustrating when the faults and mistakes of others disrupt the routine of our lives. In fairness, our own defects disrupt theirs as well. Instead of noting and



resenting the weaknesses of our neighbors, we can focus on improving our own.

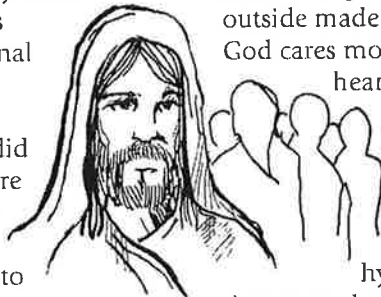
Help, don't judge. Developing an honest concern for those around us helps us to become generous in our relationships. Acting with love and understanding means that we aid those in our lives instead of looking for their blunders.

Become a carrier of love. Jesus asks us to be His hands and feet on Earth. As His disciples, we are to carry His love to others. It is through our actions that we bring Jesus to the world.

from **S**cripture

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23 Clean hearts vs. clean hands

The religious leaders sent investigators to check up on Jesus and didn't like what they saw. Not only were Jesus and His followers ignoring some traditional rituals, Jesus scolded the leaders for being hypocrites when they did observe them. They were outwardly obedient so they could look holy instead of taking steps to actually be holy.



Jesus' followers didn't perform this ceremony. Jesus told them that they were wrong to think being clean on the outside made them acceptable to God. God cares more about the state of our hearts than our hands.

Hypocrisy is when we pretend to be something we aren't and have no intention of becoming. Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites because

they went through the motions of worshipping God so they could appear holy in the eyes of the Jews. We become hypocrites when we follow religious practices carefully but allow our hearts to remain distant from God.

For example, devout Jews performed a cleansing ritual before each meal. The Pharisees liked to believe this ceremony kept them from being considered unclean. They were critical because

Q How can I resist & temptation? A

There is only one effective way to resist temptation and that is to say "no." But that is easier said than done. Try these ideas for help:

Make a list of what most often leads you into sin. Do you have friends who love to gossip? Do you drink too much with coworkers? Do you spend too much money at the mall? Write your list down and make it complete. Then decide to reject each item on the list.

Practice saying "no" when you are alone. Say it out loud if you have to. Don't offer explanations. Just make it a "no." "I don't do that." "That's not me."

Remove yourself from temptation. In the Old Testament story of Joseph, his boss's wife "looked at him with longing" and followed him around but Joseph "would not agree to lie with her or even be near her" (Genesis 39:10). Avoid the gossiping friends, go straight home from work, stay away from the mall.

There is nothing more important than avoiding sin.

Feasts & Celebrations

August 6 - Transfiguration of the Lord. Tradition holds that it was on Mt. Tabor where Christ appeared radiant in the company of Moses and Elijah. A voice said, "This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

August 8 - St. Dominic (1221). Dominic was alarmed by the Albigensian heretics who threatened the Church. He and his followers rejected material comforts while many Catholic preachers traveled in luxury. St. Dominic became an itinerant preacher like the Apostles and founded the Order of Preachers, "Dominicans."

August 10 - St. Lawrence (258). A Roman deacon to Pope St. Sixtus, II. In response to Roman demands for the Church's material treasure, St. Lawrence gathered the poor and presented them as the Church's treasure. He was martyred shortly afterwards.

August 15 - Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Declared a dogma of our faith in 1950 by Pope Pius XII, the Assumption celebrates Mary's taking up into Heaven body and soul at the end of her life.



Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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