

Growing in FAITH™

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

August 2023

St. Bernard of Clairvaux

Rev. Jack Gleason

One Minute Meditations

A vessel of God's grace

We are each asked to share God's love with others. How much we allow ourselves to be filled with God's grace will determine what we can share with others. We fill up with grace when we frequent the Sacraments, pray, and study our faith. After all, if we don't practice our own faith how can we help someone to become excited about theirs?

Our powerful Lord

In the Gospels, Jesus healed people 20 times. Seven times Jesus expelled demons. Three times He raised people from the dead, and eight other miracles showed His power over nature. With God all things are possible. All we have to do is ask in harmony with His will.

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for He has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed" (Luke 1:46-48).



Build up the Kingdom of God

As followers of Jesus, we're each called to take our place in the Kingdom of God and help build it up. Consider these suggestions to do your part:

Find your gifts: What special gifts do you possess? In addition to talents and skills, these can include wisdom from life experience or a particularly deep faith. Discern your gifts and ask God where He wants you to use them.

Cultivate gratitude: Write down everything for which you are grateful in a "blessings list." Review it and add to it regularly, especially when tempted to jealousy or discouragement. Praise and thank God daily for whatever is on your list.

Practice humility: St. Thomas Aquinas

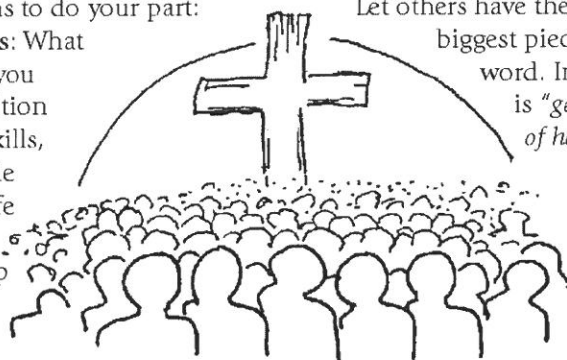
said, "Humility means seeing ourselves as God sees us: knowing every good we have comes from Him as pure gift."

Let others have the best place, the biggest piece of cake, the last word. Imitate Him who is "gentle and humble of heart" (Matthew 11:29).

Be ready to serve: Any act of service can build up your parish, neighborhood, or community. Small

or great, everyone can contribute something. Give of yourself.

Strive for the higher gifts: Jesus asked every one of us to love God and each other. Without love, St. Paul said, "I gain nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:3). If you have true charity, you're on the right track.



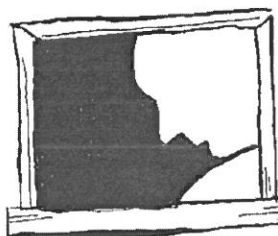
Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics confess their sins to a priest?

On Easter Sunday, Jesus appeared to the Apostles in the Upper Room and said, "Peace be with you" (John 20:19). He breathed on them, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them and whose

sins you retain, they are retained" (John 20:22-23).

With that, Jesus established an efficacious way to dispense forgiveness of our sins. He knew we'd need to be assured of His forgiveness by personally hearing the words, "I absolve you of your sins."



"Go and make disciples"

We're all called to spread the Gospel as missionaries (Mark 16:15), but not everyone is required to travel. As a Carmelite nun, St. Thérèse of Lisieux lived out her "second calling" to be a missionary. Here are three ways to spread the Gospel within any vocation:

Go deeper in your faith. You can't share what you don't have. St. Thérèse developed her "Little Way" of holiness after years of prayer and study. Step deeper into your faith daily: read a section of the Catechism, pray over a verse of Scripture, listen to a

Catholic podcast while driving or walking, pray.

Adopt-a-missionary: St. Thérèse was a "spiritual sister" to several missionaries, writing them letters and supporting them in prayer, indirectly helping hundreds of souls. Adopt a missionary – or anyone who shares the Faith. Contact your parish or diocese for suggestions.

"Intercession fueled by charity": St. Thérèse lovingly offered to God the "thorns" she received from others – discomforts, misunderstandings, hurt feelings – to win souls for Christ. Offer your "thorns" as saving graces.

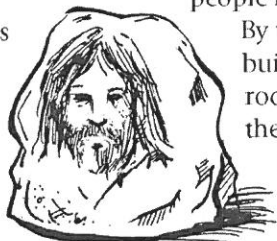


from Scripture

Matthew 16:13-20, The "Rock-solid" foundation

The events in this passage lay the foundations for the Catholic Church. In it, Jesus asks His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" It was a question about Jesus' identity, rather than about the persuasiveness of His teaching or His popularity. The heart of Catholicism centers around the truth of who Jesus is.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Simon answers for the group, identifying Jesus as the Son of God, the Messiah (Matthew 16:17). Jesus proclaims this was divinely revealed to Simon and changes his name to Peter



("Rock"). Jesus gives him the keys to the kingdom, giving Peter (and his successors) the authority to interpret Scripture, forgive sins, and admit people into the Church.

By this, Jesus signaled He was building His Church on a rock-solid foundation – on the confession of Peter about Jesus' divinity. This truth has been handed down through the ages, from the Apostles to the bishops to us. The Holy Spirit would lead Peter – and his successors, the popes – to continue speaking and acting in truth as the visible head of the Church.

Feasts & Celebrations

August 6 – Transfiguration of the Lord. Christ appeared in glory in the company of Moses and Elijah, discussing the Passion (Luke 9:30-31), and a voice was heard to say, "This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Matthew 17:5).

August 14 – St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe (1941). A Polish Franciscan, St. Maximilian was imprisoned at Auschwitz. When the jailers chose ten people to execute, he substituted himself for a man with a family. He was honored as a "martyr of charity" by

Pope John Paul II.

August 23 – St. Rose of Lima (1617). Born in colonial Peru, Rose worked constantly to help her poverty-stricken family. She became a lay Dominican, and cared for homeless children, the elderly, and the sick in her house.

August 29 – Passion of St. John the Baptist (1st century). St. John the Baptist courageously spoke the truth to the leaders of his time, making him powerful enemies. He was arrested by Herod and martyred (Mark 6:17-29).



Q & A How can I avoid gossiping?

Chatting with friends can become gossip – unfairly disclosing another's faults or sins without a valid reason, to people who don't know them (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2477). Try these ideas when chatting becomes gossip:

Name it: A gentle reminder between friends is an act of kindness. Try, "I think we're edging into gossip," or "Oh, that's not kind!" It's better to risk speaking up than silently allowing sin.

Redirect the conversation: Highlight good qualities of the person about whom others are gossiping. Refocus on inspiring news, a good book you read – anything else that is "honorable ... just ... pure ... pleasing" (Philippians 4:8).

Leave: If nothing else works, excuse yourself and leave the conversation. You'll avoid becoming complicit to sin and wordlessly communicate that you find gossip unacceptable.

Pray: Sins of the tongue (gossip, slander, calumny, detraction) are serious and require grace to resist. Invoke the Holy Spirit for yourself, for those who engage in gossip, and especially for those harmed by it.

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