

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

October 2023

St. Bernard of Clairvaux

Rev. Jack Gleason

One Minute Meditations

St. John XXIII

Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was born to a poor farming family in Bergamo, Italy. His ordination as a priest in 1904 began a lifetime serving the Church as the bishop's secretary, a military chaplain, cardinal-patriarch of Venice, and finally, as pope. He often visited the poor, the sick and prisoners. He also spent his brief papacy working to improve relations with the Eastern Church. He is most remembered for opening the Second Vatican Council. He died in 1963.

Choose entertainment carefully

A steady diet of violent entertainment, objectifying media, or explicit reading helps us to become comfortable with violence and sex. We begin to see people as characters rather than humans. Sinful behavior becomes normalized. In our journey toward holiness, it is critical that we are choosy about what we watch and read.

"Without love, deeds, even the most brilliant, count as nothing." (St. Therese of Lisieux, *Story of a Soul*)

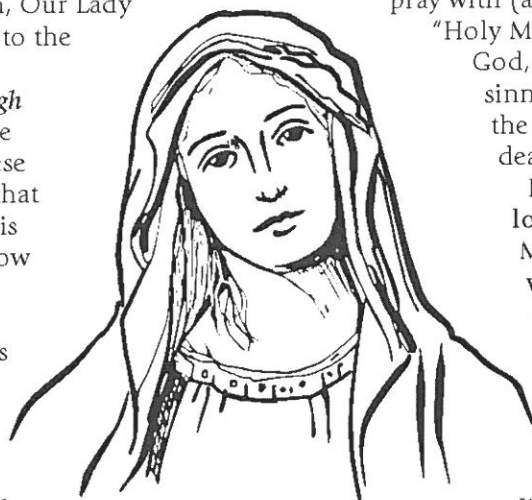


His Mother for our own

While He was on Earth, Jesus gave all of Himself for us – even His life – out of love. He even gave us His own mother to be our true mother (John 19:26-27). In turn, Our Lady works to bring us to the heart of her Son.

"To Jesus, through Mary." St. Louis de Montfort used these words to explain that devotion to Mary is the best way to grow closer to Jesus, because Mary herself will lead us to her Son if we ask for her help. When we are under temptation to sin, spiritually dry or discouraged, let Mary take you by the hand and lead you to Jesus.

Our path to Jesus. We have one mediator in Christ (1 Timothy 2:5).



Yet, what loving son refuses his mother's requests? In His generosity, God is pleased to answer Mary's prayers for us. We can ask Mary to pray with (and for) us:

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

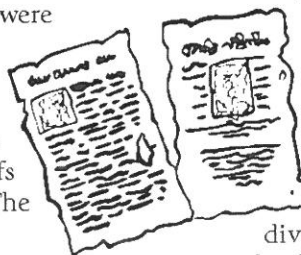
Entrust all we love to her. St. Maximilian Kolbe wrote, "Let us entrust to (Our Lady) all of those close to our hearts, and she, the best among mothers, will help them in the best way

possible." There is no safer place for all those we love than our Mother's arms.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics have two versions of the Creed?

Both creeds summarize what Catholics believe but were written at different times for different purposes. The Apostles' Creed is the summary of the beliefs of the early Church. The Nicene Creed is the expanded form of the



Apostles' Creed, stemming from two Church councils (Nicaea, AD 325; Constantinople, AD 381) to combat Arianism, which proposed Jesus was not God but a kind of super-saint. The Nicene Creed emphasizes Jesus' divinity, His divine Sonship, and the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

"Angel of God, my guardian dear ..."

"Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life," said St. Basil. The Church teaches that we each have a guardian angel, assigned to guide and protect us until death (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #336). Jesus said: "In heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10). Tap your angel's powerful protection to grow in virtue and holiness:

Confide in your guardian. Guardian angels aren't mind-readers, but they do observe us



carefully. The more we tell them, the better they can help us make good choices, avoid sin, and keep us safe.

Ask for help. Our guardian can help make tough decisions, resolve conflicts, offer protection especially for our souls. They intercede for us, and help to prepare our souls for the moment when we stand before God.

Respect guardian power. Angels are powerful creatures, created by God to care for us. They aren't answerable to us but stand ready to help us get to Heaven.

from Scripture

Matthew 22:34-40, Jesus has the right answers

In their first meeting with Jesus, the Pharisees wanted to trap Him by getting Him to say something that contradicted Jewish law. Then He could be arrested and silenced. The lawyer they sent was aware that generations of Jews had debated fruitlessly about which law was the most important. Pretending to seek Jesus' opinion, he asked Jesus to choose which of the 613 commands of the Jewish law was the most important.

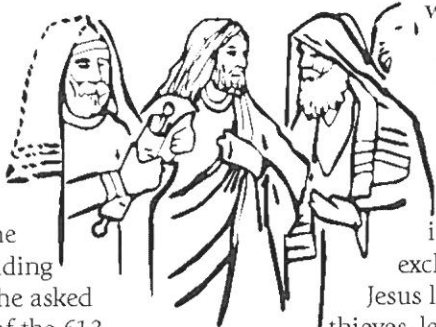
Jesus silenced them all by saying everything starts and ends with love – love of God and love of others. To love

God is to love one another. These laws are at the heart of all the other laws.

Even the Pharisees couldn't argue with that.

While it is easy to love God, loving others is more difficult. It means including people when the natural inclination is to exclude or avoid them.

Jesus loved prostitutes, thieves, lepers, even his political enemies. True love of neighbor is measured by how we treat the poor, the vulnerable, and our enemies. This is how God loves and He calls us to do the same.



Feasts & Celebrations

October 7 – Our Lady of the Rosary. Pope Gregory XIII named this feast because it was believed that Christians won a critical victory at the Battle of Lepanto after praying the Rosary.

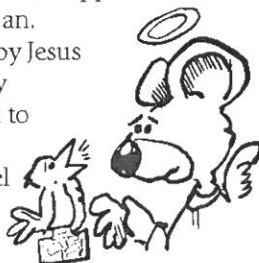
October 9 – St. John Leonardi (1609). Born in 1543 in Lucca, Italy, St. John spent his priesthood ministering in hospitals and prisons and teaching the Faith. He established the Clerks Regular of the Mother of God, and helped found the Congregation of Christian Doctrine.

October 16 – St. Hedwig (1243).

Born to the Duke of Croatia, St. Hedwig married the Duke Henry of Silesia. They founded a convent, hospitals, and monasteries. After his death, St. Hedwig became a Cistercian nun, donating her fortune to charity.

October 28 – Sts. Simon and Jude (1st century). St. Simon was a Zealot – Jews who believed the Messiah would free them from political oppression. St. Jude was a fisherman.

After being called by Jesus to be apostles, they eventually traveled to Persia where they preached the Gospel until they were martyred.



Q & A Can Catholics celebrate Halloween?

Catholics can celebrate Halloween as a holiday with Christian roots. In 835, Pope Gregory IV moved the commemoration of All Martyrs (later All Saints Day) from May 13 to November 1. The night before became known as All Hallows' Even or "Holy

Evening," and eventually Halloween. Villagers visited local homes to gather contributions for the feast to be held the next day, All Saints Day.

Those who didn't contribute might be subject to a prank or "trick."

Catholics enjoy donning creative costumes and giving out candy, but it's important to avoid glorifying evil, death, and the Devil. Consider using the holiday to learn about a saint you didn't know or collecting food for the poor.

In short, Halloween is a chance to celebrate generosity, friendship, and community. It's the threshold of a time to remember the believers who have gone to Heaven before us and the hope we have of following. We also pray for the Holy Souls in Purgatory to strengthen them during their purification before entering Heaven.



Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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