

Growing in FAITH™

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

July 2022

One Minute Meditations

Let God love you

Have you ever seen a parent scoop up a child, breathe in his scent, and hug him closely as if he couldn't get enough of that beloved child? That's how God feels about you. He loves you dearly and shows you each day. Open your heart to Him.

Not just a symbol

According to Scripture, Jesus took bread and wine and said, "Take and eat; this is my body" and "this is my blood" (Matthew 26:26-28), and changed them into his Body and Blood. He also said, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). In the Eucharist we experience during Mass, "the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1374).

"The Church is the home that accepts everyone and refuses no one ... the greater the sin, the greater the love that the Church should show towards those who convert." Pope Francis



Find God in everyday things

St. Josemaría Escrivá, founder of Opus Dei ("Work of God"), taught that extraordinary holiness can be found in ordinary circumstances: "Everything that is done for love becomes beautiful and grand" in God's eyes. Want the surest way to sainthood? St. Josemaría said to make every moment holy:

Sanctifying work: "Carry out the little duties of each moment," and put all your heart, mind, skill, and love into what you do. When we offer our tasks (the "raw material") to God's grace, He gives them infinite value. For example, activities – especially unpleasant ones – can be offered for our own or others' intentions. This is one way to dedicate daily activities to God.

Sanctifying moments: Find the

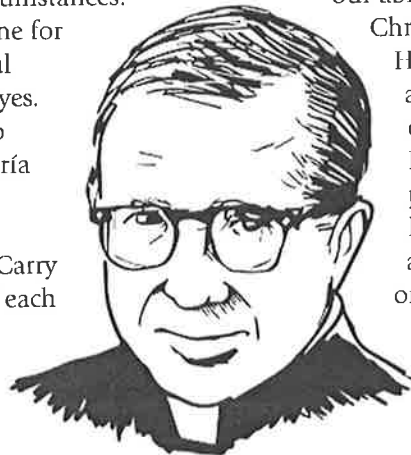
"divine hidden in the most ordinary situations." God uses moments that are difficult, tedious, or just beyond our abilities to conform us to

Christ. Jesus spent most of His earthly life working and leading a holy but often ordinary life. With His grace, we grow in patience, perseverance, humility, compassion, and gratitude by meeting ordinary moments with extraordinary virtue.

Sanctifying attitude:

When we are patient with others, take praise and criticism

well, and avoid jealousy, gossip, and dishonesty, we demonstrate that we belong to Christ. Our work becomes God's work. We become, slowly but surely, "a saint, seemingly like everyone else around him, but deeply identified with Jesus Christ."



Why Do Catholics Do That?

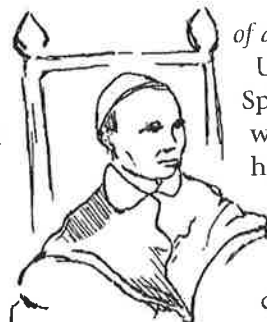
Why do Catholics believe the Pope can teach infallibly?

Jesus named St. Peter the (visible) head of his Church and gave him the keys of the kingdom to bind and loose sin.

At the Last Supper, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to: "teach you everything and remind you

of all that I told you" (John 14:26).

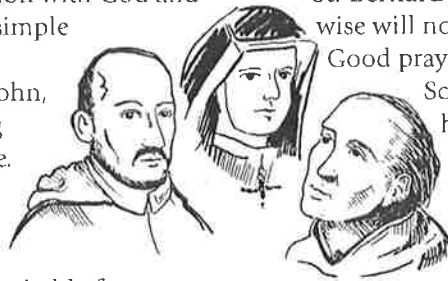
Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the pope teaches infallibly when, as St. Peter's successor, he teaches on matters of faith and morals (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), #891). In these areas, he cannot err.



Prayer tips from the saints

Prayer at its best is a personal conversation with God and fuels our friendship with Him. Try these simple pro-tips from the saints:

St. John of the Cross: According to St John, naming our human needs and presenting them before God in prayer are acts of love. He taught that we don't need to spell out what we need or want, but offer our need to God and ask Him to do what pleases Him, "... because the Lord knows what is suitable for us better than we do."



St. Bernard of Clairvaux: "Those who are sincere and wise will not fail to 'chew' the psalm with their mind." Good prayer is fed by reading and meditating upon Scripture. A good Catholic commentary can help, too.

St. Teresa of Avila: "He wants to ... know the love you have for Him, whether it is present in dryness as well as in spiritual delights." Good prayer, like true love, perseveres even in difficulty or dryness. Our sincere efforts please God.

from Scripture

Luke 12:13-21, More to life than riches

In this Gospel passage, Jesus is asked to intervene in a family feud over an inheritance. Back in ancient times, rabbis were often asked to settle such disputes. Jesus originally refused but seeing the discord within the family over the disagreement, he told them a parable about a wealthy but foolish man to put their situation into perspective.

The man in the story wasn't condemned for doing well for himself. He was condemned for his selfishness and lack of foresight. He didn't share his excessive wealth with those in need



or put his wealth to generous use. Although he was rich, he was spiritually impoverished. He would appear before God empty-handed.

The point of this parable isn't to scare us into getting rid of our wealth, but to remind us that there is more to life than accumulating goods.

Our worth and esteem aren't based on what we have, but what we do with the gifts God has given us. How do we use them to care for His beloved children. Once

we understand that, our hearts will become like His.

Q & A Does wearing the brown scapular bring good luck?

The scapular itself (from the Latin, scapula, or "shoulder"), consists of two small pieces of cloth connected by strings, and worn over the chest and back, close to the skin. According to tradition, Our Lady appeared to St. Simon Stock, founder of the Carmelite Order, and presented the brown scapular to him, promising that those who wore it until death would not suffer the fires of Hell, be preserved in time of danger, and experience peace and protection.

The brown scapular is the most common type, and there is a rite to enroll the wearer. The priest places the scapular on the wearer. These aren't "good luck" charms. Like other sacramentals, they are meant to prepare us to obtain grace through the Church's prayers, who asks for God's blessing upon us for some benefit for our body or soul (CCC #1670). The scapular itself - or any sacramental - doesn't "do" anything; it's a reminder to the wearer of their commitment to holiness and of Mary's protection - something already "in action."

Feasts & Celebrations

July 3 - St. Thomas (1st century). Despite being known as "doubting Thomas," he made a beautiful profession of faith when he received proof of Jesus' Resurrection: "My Lord and My God" (John 20:28). Tradition says that Thomas evangelized the Parthians, Medes, and Persians and ultimately reached India.

July 9 - St. Veronica Giuliani (1727). Born in 17th century Italy, St. Veronica entered the Capuchin order and began receiving visions of Christ's Passion soon after. By a special grace, she received the marks of Christ's

wounds on her body.

July 22 - St. Mary Magdalene (first century). Jesus expelled seven demons from Mary (Luke 8:2) and she financially supported His ministry. She stood by His Cross with His mother and was the one who informed the Apostles of Jesus' Resurrection.

July 26 - Sts. Joachim and Anne (first century). Little is known about Jesus' grandparents, but Mary's unshakeable faith, her devotion to the laws of her religion, and her steadiness in crises indicate the values with which she was raised.



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