

Growing in FAITH™

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

July 2023

One Minute Meditations

Room for God

"Make room therefore for Christ, and refuse entrance to all others. When you have Christ, you are rich and have need of (nothing) else."
Thomas À Kempis

Give love

One way to give thanks to God for all the gifts He Has bestowed on you is to work for the poor and vulnerable. Sharing your gifts with those less fortunate is how God intends you to use what He gives you. *"Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more"* (Luke 12:48).

Say, "Amen!"

The proper form when receiving Communion is to reply "Amen" when the Eucharistic minister raises the Host or Chalice and pronounces it, "The Body (or Blood) of Christ." By responding this way, you openly state your belief in the presence of Christ in the Eucharistic bread and wine, as well as in His Body, the Church.



Respond to the gift of the Holy Spirit

God loves us so much, He gives us what He values most – His only Son (John 3:16) and His Holy Spirit in Baptism (Romans 5:5) so we can have access to God's divine life and love. The Holy Spirit's presence with the entire Church throughout the centuries is as a comfort, consolation, leader and guide. To accept this gift, we can ...

Listen for Him: Spending time with Scripture can help tune our hearts to hear the *"still small voice"* (1 Kings 19:12) of the Holy Spirit. The better we are attuned to God's voice, the more likely we'll hear Him amidst the noise of the world.
Consult Him: Jesus promised to send

the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, to lead His disciples to truth (John 14:6). He helps us to see, evaluate, and choose like Christ. Call on the Holy Spirit when you're facing a difficult situation or decision.

Take refuge in Him: Every day, entrust yourself to the Holy Spirit and dedicate your day to His service. Let Him guide your

actions.

Actualize Confirmation graces: Upon our Confirmation, the Holy

Spirit fortified and empowered our souls with His seven Gifts:

Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2). When we rely on the Holy Spirit, we can overcome temptations to fear, distrust, and selfishness with His powerful gifts.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics fold their hands when they pray?

The custom of folding our hands comes from ninth century Europe where folded hands symbolized obedience by those subordinate to the lord or king. This gesture was also used by priests to show respect to bishops. The faithful adopted it to signify obedience to



God's will.

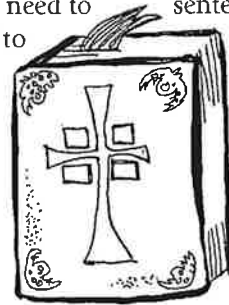
In some cultures today, such as India and other parts of Asia, clasped hands are also a sign of reverence. In fact, Mother Teresa was often photographed greeting people with this gesture.

Use the Bible well

There's a saying, "Bibles that are falling apart usually belong to people who aren't." The Church wants us to read the Bible daily because it contains everything we need to know to live a full, Christian life. Try these ideas to use your Bible well.

Choose the right version. We hear the New American Bible during Mass but any of the approved Catholic translations will do. Most important is having a modern edition that you can understand. If you need advice, ask your pastor or priest.

Use the aids. The Bible contains customs and terms that are foreign to us. Read the introductions and footnotes for helpful explanations.



Focus on passages. The Bible will make more sense if you read the sections that are grouped together rather than sentence by sentence.

Mark it up. Underline passages and make notes in the margins as you read to make your book more useful.

Read aloud. The Bible began as an oral tradition. Hearing the passages may help them become clearer than just reading them.

Read slowly. Let the words sink in.

Place yourself in the scene. What would you do? How would you react?

Put it to use. What you read in the Bible will help you find strength to meet the challenges of life. Don't just read it. Live it.

from Scripture

Matthew 13:44-52, The only thing worth everything

Jesus used the parables in this Gospel passage to emphasize the life-changing value of the Kingdom. In the first parable, a man discovers – seemingly by accident – a treasure buried in a field. Recognizing its value, he sells everything he has to buy the field. In the second story, a merchant finds a valuable pearl after diligent searching. He also sells everything to possess the precious pearl.

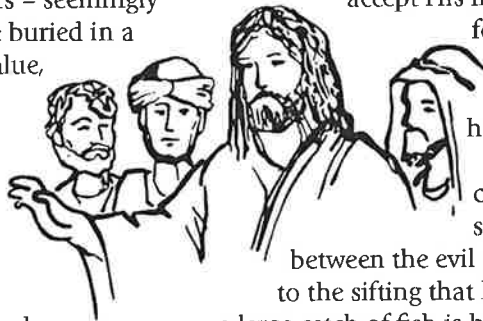
By these parables, Jesus taught that being part of God's Kingdom – accepting His love for us and loving others as He loves – is the only way

to live that will completely fulfill our hearts. God's unconditional love is worth everything we have. If we

accept His invitation (He forces no one), our lives may change as our hearts change.

Finally, Jesus compared the separation

between the evil and righteous to the sifting that happens when a large catch of fish is brought ashore. When we put our whole life in service to God's love, then the individual pieces fall into place around that love, and anything contrary to it falls away.



Feasts & Celebrations

July 16 – Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (1251). The Blessed Mother appeared to St. Simon Stock in England, carrying the brown scapular, a sign of her favor of the Carmelite Order, and promised whoever wore the scapular until death would avoid the fires of hell.

July 23 – St. Bridget of Sweden (1373). Born in Upland, Sweden to nobility, she was a wife, mother, reformer, and mystic. She is known for founding the Order of the Most Holy Savior, which was approved in 1370.

July 25 – St. James the Apostle (1st

Century). When Jesus called St. James and his brother, St. John, to become apostles, they promptly left their father in a fishing boat. He was one of the three apostles to witness Jesus' Transfiguration.

July 29 – Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (1st Century). These holy siblings often hosted Jesus at their house in Bethany.

Although Martha was corrected for being anxious about many things, Jesus rewarded her tremendous faith by raising Lazarus from the dead.



Q & A Is there a special prayer I can pray for healing of a serious illness?

Jesus knew that sickness can bring misery and isolation, and He dedicated much of his ministry to healing every kind of illness – physical or spiritual. He wanted us to see in His healing ministry God's saving power and concern for His children.

The Church continues Jesus' concern for the sick in the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. It is administered by a priest to a baptized person who may be in danger of death because of illness or old age, through prayer and the anointing of the body with special oil. The effects of the sacrament include a special grace of healing and comfort, and the forgiving of the person's sins.

Anyone baptized Catholic, regardless of age, can receive the sacrament if his or her health is seriously impaired. It can also be administered before surgery and can be received more than once if the original illness gets worse or if another serious sickness is diagnosed. Please see your pastor or parish priest to receive this important Sacrament.

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