

Growing in FAITH™

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

September 2021

The Catholic Communities of Stapleton, Arnold and Callaway
Fr. Thomas Gudipalli

One Minute Meditations

Make time

Life can be so busy that it becomes impossible to find time to pray. Instead we have to make time to pray. If we make time for God, he will help us find the time we need for everything else.

Face forward

Continually reliving the past prevents us from looking ahead with hope. Follow St. Paul's example: *"Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 3:13-14).

Our Lady of Sorrows

On September 15th we commemorate Our Lady of Sorrows. The title refers to Simeon's prediction that Mary would experience sorrows as if *"... you yourself a sword will pierce"* (Luke 2:35). Her greatest sorrow may have been watching her son die on the Cross.

If we ever want someone who understands our difficulties, we have only to look to Mary.



"Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Popular culture would have us believe that happiness comes from having the perfect spouse, the perfect home, the perfect job, and the perfect body. Without all that, happiness isn't possible. Consider this:

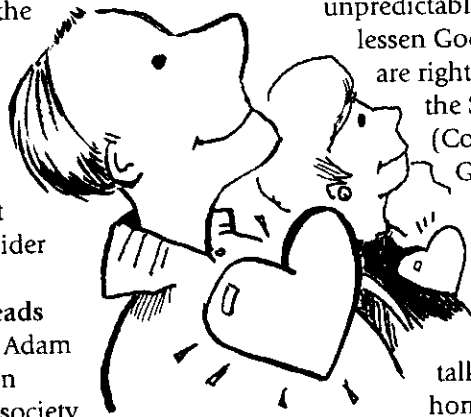
God's way leads to perfection. Adam and Eve were in Paradise until society convinced them that by eating a piece of fruit, they could become perfect and be even happier. Had they listened to God instead, their lives would have stayed perfect.

Only God loves perfectly. Sometimes we fear that showing our failings to

others will lessen their regard. The more perfect we appear, the more we will be loved and respected. Human love is unpredictable, but we can never lose or lessen God's love. He loves us as we are right now. In fact, Jesus created the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) to remind us of God's unconditional love.

God's idea of perfect is possible. Jesus said, *"... be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect"* (Matthew 5:48), but he wasn't

talking about muscles or homes. Perfection in Jesus' eyes means loving God with all our hearts, praying for our enemies, and taking care of the poor. To Jesus, love, obedience and service is the true measure of perfection and he wants us to let go of anything that gets in the way. That's the only "perfect" that is possible.



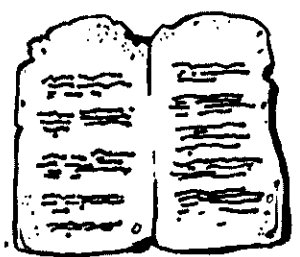
Why Do Catholics Do That? Why do Catholics follow the Ten Commandments?

The Ten Commandments were given by God to the Israelites on Mt. Sinai after they left Egypt. They are considered divine law because God himself revealed them to help his people live holy lives. They formed the basis of Jewish life, so Jesus followed them, too.

The Commandments are standards of holiness for Christians, too. Obey them

and eternal happiness is ours. Disobey them and we suffer the consequences. Jesus

summarized the spirit of the Commandments in Matthew 22:36-40.

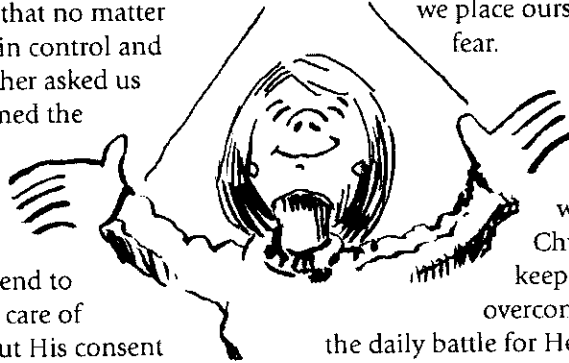


Be not afraid

The phrase "be not afraid," made famous by Pope St. John Paul II, helps us to remember that no matter what happens in the world, God is in control and we are in good hands. The Holy Father asked us to put our trust in Jesus who redeemed the world.

Refuse to worry. Jesus reminded us that tomorrow isn't guaranteed to anyone (Luke 12:20). What brings us peace is to tend to today's challenges and let God take care of tomorrow. Nothing happens without His consent

and He won't permit anything that is bad for us. When we place ourselves in His care, we have nothing to fear.



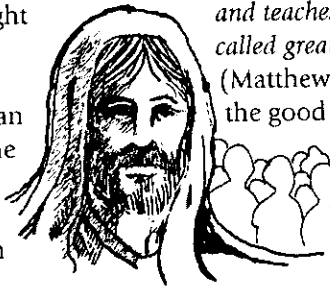
the daily battle for Heaven.

Keep your eyes on Him. Don't let the world blind you to God's presence in your life. We may not feel powerful at times, but when we stay close to Jesus through His Church, we receive the grace we need to keep fighting temptations to sin. God has overcome the world. With His help, we will win

from Scripture

Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48, The discipline of discipleship

In this Gospel passage, the disciples hear of an unknown man healing in Jesus' name. In their jealousy, it seemed the disciples were more concerned about losing the spotlight than in healing. Jesus added perspective. He pointed out that the man had the same goal as the disciples – to build up God's Kingdom. He was a teammate, not an enemy.



Discipleship means making a change of heart and mind. Jesus was very clear: if we choose to follow him, we can't foster private sins, too. If,

through those sins, we lead others into sin, our responsibility is doubled.

These are grim words, but the opposite is great news: "Whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19). God rewards us for the good we do to and for others.

Our example is powerfully influential.

Being a faithful disciple isn't easy. Rooting out personal sin and setting a good example is difficult, but we're not alone or without grace to do the job. No matter what we sacrifice, the reward is infinitely better.

Q & A

Why do I have to go to Mass when I don't enjoy it?

A Catholic adult who lives an average lifespan can attend as many as 4,084 Sunday Masses. No ritual or event can sustain good vibrations 4,048 times. The truth is that the Mass is not meant to always make us feel good. It isn't actually about us – it's about God.

Mass is public worship. At every Mass, we worship God as a natural response to His overwhelming magnificence. This is not because God needs our praise, but because we need to praise Him. We recognize and honor all that is good about Him.

Mass is a sacrifice. When the gifts are brought to the altar, each of us offers our lives along with the bread and wine. We can do nothing of our own accord, so Christ accepts our offerings – our sacrifice – and joins it to His ongoing work of salvation.

Mass is a meal. Through the Eucharist, Jesus makes His home within us. We deepen our union with Jesus each time we receive His Word and His Body and Blood during Mass.

Feasts & Celebrations

September 8 – The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1st century). Tradition says Mary was born in Jerusalem after her mother, Anna, and her father, Joachim, had been married more than twenty years without children. Mary's birth brought her parents joy, and we are joyful too – because Mary brings salvation to all of us with the birth of Jesus.

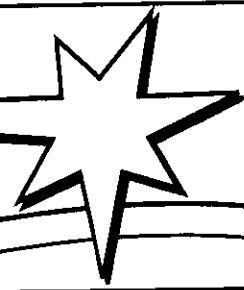
September 23 – St. Padre Pio (1968). Born to farmers in southern Italy, Padre Pio was an inspiring confessor and counselor. He received the five wounds of Our Lord's Passion (stigmata) eight

years after he became a Capuchin Friar. Despite intense personal and physical suffering, he remained dedicated to prayer.

September 28 – Saint Wenceslaus (929). As the king of Bohemia, Wenceslaus worked closely with the Church to end the persecution of the Christians in his country. He encouraged German missionaries, built churches, and cared for the sick, and poor. Political conflict led to his assassination by his brother. The "Good King" was immediately recognized as a martyr.



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Thoughtful Moments

A stranger in your home?

Would you let a stranger into your home, give him your child's undivided attention for hours, and let him tell her what



to wear and how to behave? Yet, that's what happens when children have too much unsupervised access to screens. To break the cycle, consider fasting from screens one day a week and substitute a family activity, such as reading aloud or playing board games instead.

Positive penance

Penance isn't punishment. When we do something that hurts our friendship with God, penance helps us to take responsibility for our actions and make amends. Our sin affects others, and our penance and reparation can, too.

The Baptized are never alone

Remind children that even when we aren't with them, God is. Baptism means we have been chosen by God and set apart for Him. Those who are baptized become part of God's family and He never forgets His own.

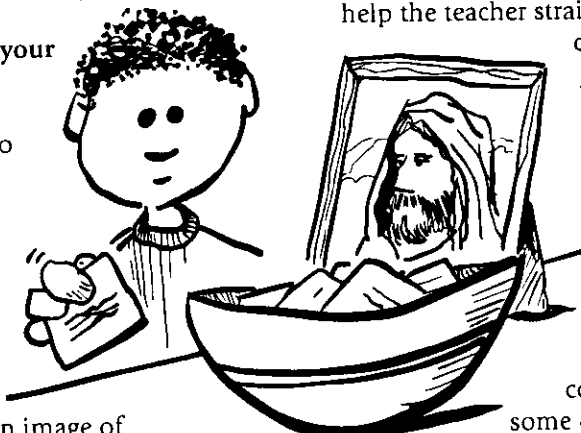


Take action to quiet worry

As we enter another school year in a time of pandemic, children may feel anxious about what's ahead. Taking spiritual action can help them feel less stress and worry. Consider these ideas:

Give God your troubles.

Encourage youngsters to write down concerns on slips of paper. Place them in a basket or bowl before a



crucifix or an image of Jesus. Then ask Him to handle your worries, and avoid thinking about them again. *"Cast all your worries upon Him because He cares for you"* (1 Peter 5:7).

Perform a daily act of kindness.
The best antidote to worrying about

ourselves can be to think of others. Ask youngsters to perform an act of kindness for someone else each day. Do an extra chore unasked, sit next to a student who may not have a friend, help the teacher straighten up the

classroom. *"A friend owes kindness to one in despair ..."* (Job 6:14),

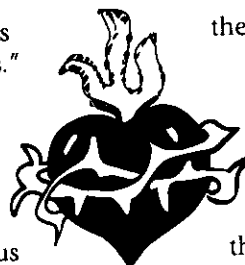
Pick a saint.
When a situation causes anxiety but is out of our control, call in some celestial backup.

Pick one saint each month to read about, learn about, and to ask for intercession. The saints are God's best friends, and He listens to them. *"... (I)f the word of the Lord were with them, then they would intercede with the LORD of hosts"* (Jeremiah 27:18).

Why Do Catholics Do That?

The word "catholic" comes from the Greek, "katholikos." It means "throughout the whole" or "universal."

The first record of the Church being called "Catholic" quotes a first-century letter St. Ignatius wrote to the Smyrnaeans, "Where



Why is our Church called "Catholic"?

the bishop appears, there let the people be, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church." St. Cyril of Jerusalem (347) wrote, "Now it [the Church] is called Catholic because it is throughout the world, from one end of the earth to the other."

Lean on Christ

Catholic parents want children to be strong enough to live virtuously as adults. It is critical for children to grow up leaning on Christ, not just meeting him as an infrequent visitor. Taking steps to keep youngsters connected when they are young will ensure they stay close to Jesus when they are grown.

Keep holy the Lord's Day by taking your family to Mass every Sunday and every Holy Day of Obligation. Avoid activities that would hinder worship or relaxation.

Lead a sacramental life. Encourage your family to receive Holy Communion frequently and the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly.



Study and share Catholic teaching. See that children are properly Confirmed and remain active in their faith.

Educate children in the Catholic faith. Use parish schools or catechetical programs.

Strengthen the Church. Contribute to your parish, support your priests, the universal Church, and the pope.

Perform and teach penance for forgiveness of sins – our own and those of others.

Help spread the good news of God's love and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

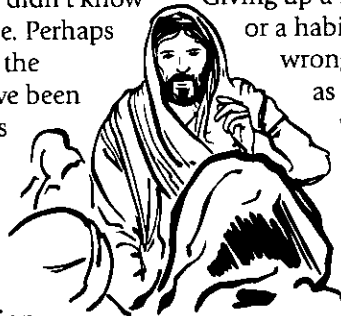
Scripture LESSON

Mark 9:38-48, Work together for God

In this reading, the disciples were upset because a man they didn't know was healing in Jesus' name. Perhaps they were afraid of losing the spotlight, or they may have been concerned because he was different from them.

Faithful followers of Jesus don't all look alike or talk alike, but we do act alike. Christianity is a kingdom, not a competition. All are welcome to work together to build it up. Those who share a common faith in Christ cooperate, not compete.

Some of Jesus' words sound strange but he is very clear; we treat sin like a



cancerous tumor and cut it out. Giving up a friendship, an activity, or a habit that causes us to do wrong may seem as painful as cutting off a hand. But the consequences of our choices last forever.

What can a parent do? The caution against harming little ones in faith applies to us as parents and teachers. Our thoughts and actions must be motivated by love so that we can model Christian behavior for our children.

Feasts & Celebrations

Sept. 16 – St. Cyprian (258). Born in Carthage to pagan parents, Cyprian converted to Christianity and became bishop of Carthage. A noted orator and theologian, Cyprian helped Pope St. Cornelius defend the Church against Novatian heretics. He set guidelines for readmitting lapsed Christians. Cyprian was arrested for refusing to worship idols. He was exiled and subsequently beheaded.

Sept. 28 – St. Wenceslaus (929). As the king of Bohemia, Wenceslaus worked closely with the Church to end the persecution of the Christians in his

country. "The Good King" encouraged German missionaries, built churches, cared for the sick and poor. Political conflict led to his assassination by his brother. He was immediately recognized as a martyr.

Sept. 28 – St. Lawrence Ruiz and his companions (1630). Lawrence was born in the Philippines to Christian parents—a Chinese father and a Filipino mother. Accused of murder, he fled with four Catholic priests and a leper to Nagasaki, Japan where there was violent persecution. They were arrested, brutally tortured and martyred on Okinawa.



Parent TALK

Throughout the months of the pandemic, Kara has been stressed and anxious. A worrier by nature, she said that she is afraid something will



happen to her (or us) and she doesn't feel safe. I realized that she needed to meet her guardian angel.

I told Kara that, according to tradition, each of us has a guardian angel who is with us from the moment of our birth until our death. Our angel stays by our side, tries to advise us for good, to steer us to the right path, and above all to help us be good people and good children of God.

Together we started praying the Guardian Angel prayer every night. We ask our guardians to look after us and protect us from harm. Now, whenever Kara feels concerned throughout the day, she whispers the same prayer and has confidence that she is safe in celestial hands.

Our Mission

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