

# Growing in FAITH™

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

February 2021

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

## One Minute Meditations

### Struggle and prayer

During hard times, we can bring our true emotions, concerns, and fears into prayer. Lay it all at the feet of Jesus. Let His wisdom and love provide confidence and hope, even when our own emotions are in disarray.

Struggling is normal and helpful to growing in faith. Standing before God in truth is a sign that we are in a right relationship with Him.

### The human person

Human beings are the clearest reflection of God among us. That makes human life sacred. The Catholic Church proclaims that the dignity of human life is the foundation of a moral vision for society.

Catholics are called to work to uphold the dignity and rights of all people. Catholics work for the good of everyone, especially working to support marriage and family.

"In all created things discern the providence and wisdom of God, and in all things give Him thanks"

(St. Teresa of Avila).



## Grow in love during Lent

The point of the season of Lent is to transform our hearts – to become new, ready to greet our new life at Easter. "A

*new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh"*

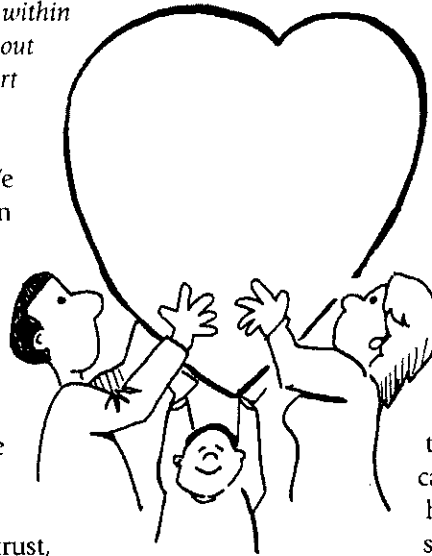
(Ezekiel 36:26). We can use this time in the desert to live lives of love for God and for one another.

**Affirmation:** Recognizing and acknowledging the valuable qualities of a beloved builds feelings of trust, safety, and wellbeing. Offer God praise from your heart. Don't keep

it to yourself, speak it out loud. Tell others how awesome He is and what He can do for them.

**Attention:** Spending time with God, one on one, is vital to getting through the day in His friendship. Give Him your attention each day, tell Him everything, and listen to what He says back to you. Being a good listener will benefit all your relationships, too.

**Gifts:** There is no point trying to impress God. He needs nothing that we have. However, we can give Him a gift from the heart. We can tithe, offer service, attend Mass, repent, change our lives to live His law. We can act as His hands and feet on Earth.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why do Catholics pray?

Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God, asking for good things in harmony with His will. Christian prayer is the lifeblood of an intimate relationship of the children of God with their Father, with

his Son Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit who dwells in their hearts.

All religions, and salvation history in particular, testifies to the human desire for God. And God continues to draw every person to the mysterious encounter known as prayer.

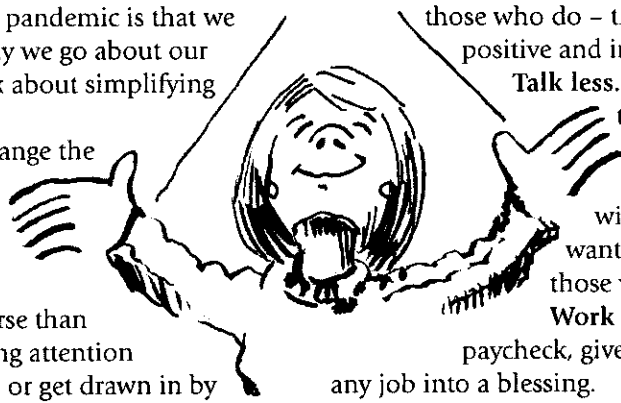


# Simple ways to live a better life

One consequence of a protracted pandemic is that we are almost forced to rethink the way we go about our daily lives. It's a good time to think about simplifying the way we live:

**Live in the moment.** We can't change the past and dwelling on the future is unproductive. The choices we make right now are all that count.

**Avoid drama.** There will always be someone whose situation is worse than our own. If you find yourself seeking attention and sympathy from other people – or get drawn in by



those who do – try substituting activities you find positive and interesting instead. Prayer helps.

**Talk less.** Weigh your words before you say them. Spend more time listening.

**Spend time with happy people.** Connect in safe and healthy ways with people who are positive and want to improve their lives. Let go of those who drain your energy.

**Work happy.** No matter how you earn a paycheck, give it your very best effort. That turns any job into a blessing.

## from Scripture

### Luke 9:23-36, Linger on the mountaintop

While the Transfiguration was a fantastic encounter, it was not particularly joyful. Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus about "his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem" (9:31). They referred to Jesus' death, as the shadow of the Cross loomed. Like Moses' exodus from slavery in Egypt however, Jesus' exodus would deliver His people from the slavery of sin.



inspiring experience and want to stay there avoiding the realities of daily life. Yet, like Jesus, we cannot linger on the mountaintop but must come down to take our place in the Kingdom.

Finally, God used the Transfiguration to speak a message – the same one He spoke at Jesus' baptism.

He confirmed Jesus as His son, the Messiah, and added, "Listen to

When he offered to build shelters for the three men, Peter clearly wanted to remain on the mountaintop in this holy moment. Sometimes we have an

Him." The son of God has God's power and authority. If we believe that Jesus is the son of God, then surely we will want to do what He says.

## Feasts & Celebrations

**February 11 – Our Lady of Lourdes (1858).** A heavenly lady who called herself, "The Immaculate Conception," appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous, a poor girl from a village in France. After the first vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a spring with miraculous healing waters emerged from a nearby cave.

**February 17 – Ash Wednesday.** Marking the first day of Lent, ashes from the palms of the previous Passion Sunday are blessed and placed on the forehead as a sign of penance. One form of Lenten observance is to pray before the Stations of the Cross,

meditating on Jesus' walk to Calvary.

**February 22 – St. Peter's Chair (1st century).** We celebrate St. Peter's establishment of the Holy See and pray for the preservation of God's Church.

**February 23 – St. Polycarp (156).** As Bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp faithfully cared for his flock despite being surrounded by pagans and a government opposed to his religion.

Before being martyred, he thanked God for making him worthy of a martyr's death.



## Q & A Is it possible for real people to be holy?

On its simplest level, being holy means living a life centered on God. This is done by talking with Him continuously, imitating His behavior, and respecting His creations. It also means being part of the Church He established on Earth to help us be holy. Try this:



**Talk to God.** Spending time together is the best way to get to know God better.

**Practice sharing.** God wants us to take care of each other. Look for ways to share your money, time, and talents with someone who needs them.

**Celebrate the Sacraments.** Make Sunday Mass the highlight of your week. Attend if you can do it safely, stream it if you can't. Just don't miss it.

**Be a voice in the wilderness.** When you notice an injustice, speak out and take action. Treat all people with the dignity they deserve as children of God.

**Share your faith.** Talk about God with anyone who will listen. We can't keep His love to ourselves. We have to pass it on.

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living, Success Publishing & Media, LLC Publishers of *Growing in Faith™* and *Partners in Faith™* (540)662-7844 (540)662-7847 fax <http://www.infaithpublishing.com> (Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible - Revised)

# Partners in FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

February 2021

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



## Thoughtful Moments

### Pray for friends

In his Gospel, St. Mark tells a story of a paralyzed man whose friends showed great determination to bring his needs before Jesus. The house in which Jesus was speaking was too crowded for their friend, so they lowered him through a hole they made in the roof (Mark 2:1-12). In response, Jesus changed the man's life. Amazing things can happen when we place our friends' needs before Jesus.

### Just ask

Jesus tells us to ask God for what we need and to be persistent until we hear from Him. Don't worry about pestering God. Think of how eager we parents are to help our children—especially if they are struggling. It's the same with God – our perfect Father – who never tires of helping us.

*"If you then...know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him"*  
(Matthew 7:11).



## Observe a fruitful pandemic Lent

Once again, Lent will look different for many families. One goal of the season is to eliminate distractions and turn our hearts back to God. A few adjustments to your Lenten observance may help you transform your family's hearts, even in the midst of a pandemic.

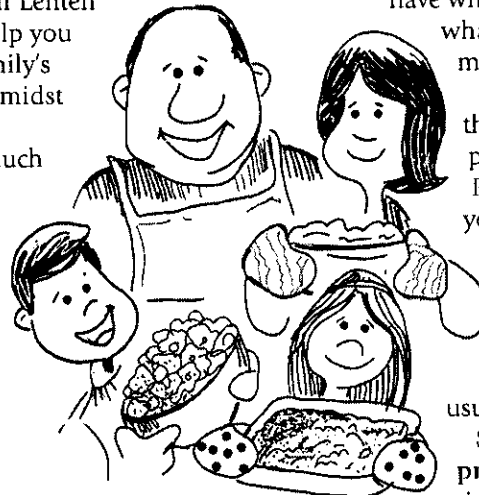
**Offer it up.** So much of what we are experiencing in the pandemic is sacrificial. Use visual aids to help children offer deprivation or sacrifices to God's purposes. For example, place a jar on your kitchen counter and encourage everyone to place a jelly bean in it each time they suffer a deprivation – a canceled sport season, a missed gathering, a scaled-down birthday celebration. Celebrate by

eating the candy at Easter.

**Practice gratitude.** Gratitude helps to keep everything in perspective. Stay aware of the pleasant moments you have with your family and do what you can to create more of them.

**Be flexible.** Accept that the landscape in a pandemic is different. Prioritize your family, your health and the health of your loved ones. Try not to hold onto specific ideas for accomplishing your usual activities.

**Swap screen time for prayer time.** Spending time watching or reading bad news or scrolling through social media sites filled with negativity creates stress. Turn to God in family prayer and rest in His presence in your lives.



## Why Do Catholics Do That ?

### Why do Catholics believe Christ is in the Precious Blood and the Host?

Once the bread and wine has been consecrated during Mass, Jesus Christ is wholly present under the appearance either of bread or of wine in the Eucharist.

In fact, Christ is wholly present in any fragment

of the Host or in any drop of the Precious Blood.

It is possible to receive the whole Christ in just one form or the other. However, it is most fitting to receive Christ in both forms during the celebration of the Eucharist.



## Give your family the gift of "Little Easter"

Every Sunday is a "Little Easter," with Mass as a celebration of Christ's victory over death and sin. Many Catholic families find that strengthening Sunday habits bring them closer together and closer to God. Try these ideas:

**Family forgiveness:** On Friday or Saturday night, gather together and ask each other for forgiveness for offenses committed against one another. Then, if you feel comfortable, go to Confession as a family as often as you can.



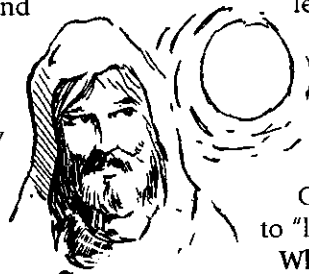
**Prepare for Mass:** Participating in Mass is critical to bring strength to a Catholic family. If you can't attend in person, watch it together, but don't miss it. Before beginning, go over the readings you will hear at Mass so you can answer questions ahead of time. Spending the time waiting for Mass to begin in silence leaves time for prayer and reflection. **Mass intentions:** Ask each person to pick someone for whom the family can pray during Mass. Write each name on a list and offer a family prayer for these intentions after Communion.

### Scripture LESSON

#### Mark 9:2-10, The test of the Transformation

When Jesus met with Elijah and Moses on the mountaintop, they talked about the journey Jesus was going to make to Jerusalem and the Cross. Perhaps the holy men were offering support and comfort, and Jesus probably felt strengthened by the meeting.

Certainly he was bolstered by hearing the voice from Heaven. Still, he had a difficult road ahead and he realized that despite all of his efforts, some would refuse to listen and would be lost. But God knew that the desire to follow Jesus comes



from confidence about who he is. If we believe Jesus is God's Son then we will want to do what he says. So he let the disciples witness the amazing meeting on the mountaintop, and he let them hear the heavenly voice proclaim Jesus as God's son and instruct us to "listen to him."

#### What can a parent do?

Society may try to tell us what is right, but Jesus' words are our final authority. Help youngsters test everything they hear against Jesus' words in the Bible and they will not be led astray.

### Parent TALK



I had a hard time praying. Too many friends and family have been lost to the seemingly endless pandemic and I was spent. I was juggling working at home with supervising online

schooling. My husband lost his job for the second time in three years and we had used up our savings the first time. It felt like God was far away. He wasn't listening.

A few nights later I overheard our ten-year old saying her prayers asking God for help. She ended with, "Thanks for listening. Amen." Then she went to sleep. Standing outside her room, I realized that Tessa didn't tell God what to do. She asked for help, trusted that it would come, and left it to God.

I prayed for the first time in weeks and ended with, "Thanks for listening. Amen." I realized God is always listening. I was the one who had stopped talking.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**February 2 - The Presentation of the Lord.** In accordance with the Law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to make the required offering forty days after his birth. They were faithful observers of the law of the Lord.

**February 3 - St. Blaise (316).** Bishop of Sebaste, he was martyred for refusing to renounce his Catholic faith. Priests usually bless throats on this day because St. Blaise, reportedly a physician, healed many ailments of the throat.

**February 10 - St. Scholastica**

(543). Twin sister of St. Benedict, St. Scholastica founded a Benedictine community for women five miles from her brother's monastery. The twins visited each other each year and Scholastica died three days after their last meeting. St. Benedict saw her soul rising heavenward in the form of a dove.

**February 17 - Ash Wednesday.** The first day of Lent. Ashes from the burnt palms of the previous Passion Sunday are blessed and placed on the foreheads as a sign of penance.














### Our Mission


To help parents raise faithful Catholic children  
Success Publishing & Media, LLC  
Publishers of *Growing in Faith™* and *Partners in Faith™*  
(540)662-7844 (540) 662-7847 fax  
www.partnersinfaith.com  
(Unless noted, Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and New American Bible (Rev.))







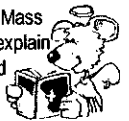



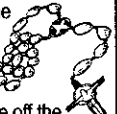





















# 2021 Lent Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>February</b> *Lent is the liturgical season of forty days which begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the celebration of the Paschal Mystery (Easter Triduum). Lent is the primary penitential season in the Church's liturgical year, reflecting the forty days Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying* (Catechism of the Catholic Church).			17 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> If possible, attend an Ash Wednesday liturgy and wear the cross of ashes. If not, stream it.	18 Choose Lenten offerings of prayer, penance, and almsgiving.	19 Abstain from eating meat today, and make your meals truly penitential.	20 Pick a saint to learn about and imitate. Ask for his or her special help and protection during Lent. 
21 After Mass, decide what you need to move aside in your life in order to truly experience Jesus during Lent.	22 Raise the level of your prayer and really think about the meaning of the words you are saying.	23 Put a cross, crucifix, or other image of Jesus in each room of your home to help keep you focused. 	24 As an extra Lenten offering, give up something you enjoy — just for today.	25 Resolve to say only positive things about yourself today.	26 Pray for the people in the world who can't afford to have meat as a regular part of their diets.	27 Make a list of the ways you can support the poor and resolve to do one activity each week.
28 Choose someone who has passed away or needs extra help as your Mass intention today.	1 <b>March</b> Pray an extra Rosary today and every day this week. 	2 Forgive someone who has hurt you.	3 Ask Jesus to heal whatever separates you from feeling God's bountiful love.	4 Read the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) and renew your commitment to keep them. 	5 Eat a meatless meal and remember why you are abstaining.	6 Adopt a local nursing home. Make cards for the residents, and offer prayers for each of them.
7 Take one idea from today's Gospel reading or homily to implement during the coming week.	8 At the end of the day, make an examination of conscience. Resolve to amend your life.	9 Look for evidence of God at work in your life today.	10 Deal with anyone in your life who may be interfering with your relationship with God.	11 Try to find the time to read an entire Gospel at one sitting. 	12 Make a fresh start on your Lenten journey today. Renew your Lenten observances.	13 Attend a parish Reconciliation Service, if you feel safe, or go to Confession on your own. 
14 <i>Laetare Sunday</i> Celebrate the halfway point of Lent. Do something fun after Mass today.	15 Go to a private room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. 	16 Ask God for a new grace today that will bring you closer to him.	17 Resolve to go the entire day without judging or criticizing anyone. 	18 Pick one way you can simplify your lifestyle to make more room for God.	19 Figure out how much money you saved by not eating meat today and give it to the poor.	20 Trim down your possessions and give what you don't need to the poor.
21 Look around your neighborhood today for signs of new life. 	22 Get up an extra 15 minutes each day for the next two weeks and spend that time in prayer.	23 Call Catholic Relief Services (877-HELP-CRS, <a href="http://www.catholicrelief.org">www.catholicrelief.org</a> ) to see how you can help.	24 Make a conscious effort to see everyone with loving eyes today.	25 Today, pray for someone you don't like. 	26 Eat pretzels today as a reminder that Catholics used to fast from milk, butter, eggs, cheese, cream, and meat.	27 Perform some act of service for your parish. Ask at the rectory for suggestions.
28 Place Palms around each of the images of Jesus in your home. Welcome the Messiah into your heart.	29 Recite the Profession of Faith or the Apostle's Creed each day this week.	30 Notice someone who may be hungry for love or attention and satisfy that hunger.	31 Try to find a reasonable explanation for some offense you may have suffered and let God be the final judge.	1 <b>April</b> Look for someone who is poor or homeless and share your food.	2 Meditate on the Stations of the Cross today. Try to imagine yourself at the scene of each one. 	3 Think about a way in which you might have betrayed Jesus today. Ask his pardon.

# Family Lent Calendar

 = a day of abstinence from meat

 = a day of fasting and abstinence

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p>"Lent is the liturgical season of forty days which begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the celebration of the Paschal Mystery (Easter Triduum). Lent is the primary penitential season in the Church's liturgical year, reflecting the forty days Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying" (<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>).</p>			<p><b>17 February</b></p> <p> If you are comfortable, take your family to the Ash Wednesday liturgy and wear ashes all day.</p>	<p><b>18</b> Tape a drawing of a vase on the fridge and label it, "Lent." Each day draw a flower in the vase and watch Lent blossom.</p>	<p><b>19</b> Share a meatless  family meal. Discuss your Lenten offerings to be sure all are doable and sacrificial.</p>	<p><b>20</b> Choose a family Lenten offering, such as giving up desserts, attending or streaming daily Mass, or praying a family Rosary regularly.</p>
<p><b>21</b> After Mass today, explain the Gospel and the homily in terms your children can understand.</p> 	<p><b>22</b> Contact Catholic Charities (703-549-1390, <a href="http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/">www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/</a>) to see how you can help those suffering most in the pandemic.</p>	<p><b>23</b> Invent a new family prayer you can say together each day.</p> 	<p><b>24</b> Take stock of how your Lenten fasts are going, and refresh your commitment to them.</p>	<p><b>25</b> Before eating your family meal together, ask each person to say a spontaneous prayer.</p> 	<p><b>26</b>  Pray for the people in the world who can't afford to have meat as a regular part of their diets.</p>	<p><b>27</b> Turn off the television, unplug the computers, and take the phone off the hook for a half hour to pray a family Rosary.</p> 
<p><b>28</b> Before Mass today, pick a saint represented in one of the statues in your church and find out more about him or her during Lent.</p>	<p><b>1 March</b> Collect stuffed animals or soft pillows, wash them well, and bring them to a local nursing home. Older folks love soft things to hug.</p>	<p><b>2</b> Ask each person to share a game, toy, or treat with someone else in your home.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Plan how each of you can show kindness or compassion to someone else tomorrow.</p> 	<p><b>4</b> Think of someone you don't like and say three nice things about him or her.</p>	<p><b>5</b> Figure out how much your family saved by not eating meat today, and put that money in the poor box at church.</p> 	<p><b>6</b> At bedtime say, "Let's turn our hearts to God and think of him." Sit in silence together for a few minutes.</p>
<p><b>7</b> Light a candle in church today for someone who passed away or who needs special help.</p> 	<p><b>8</b> Ask each family member to write a letter to Jesus thanking him for his sacrifice on the Cross.</p>	<p><b>9</b> Make cookies and share them after dinner tonight.</p> 	<p><b>10</b> Encourage each family member to perform an examination of conscience.</p>	<p><b>11</b> Place a crucifix or picture of Jesus in a central place to keep the focus on him.</p> 	<p><b>12</b> Every time a good deed is done, put a jelly bean in a jar. Share the jelly beans at Easter!</p> 	<p><b>13</b> Ask each person to make a sacrificial offering, such as doing an extra chore without being asked.</p>
<p><b>14 Laetare Sunday</b> Have a special meal at home (or get takeout) to celebrate the half-way point through Lent.</p>	<p><b>15</b> Pick a friend or neighbor and perform an anonymous good deed for him or her.</p> 	<p><b>16</b> Encourage all family members to refrain from bickering today.</p> 	<p><b>17</b>  Say a short prayer before each cross or crucifix in your home.</p>	<p><b>18</b> Make up a box for a needy family or homeless shelter. Put canned goods, clothing, toiletries, and gently used toys in it.</p>	<p><b>19</b> Serve pretzels as a reminder that Catholics used to fast from milk, butter, eggs, cheese, cream, and meat.</p> 	<p><b>20</b> Make simple crosses out of construction paper. Write on them, "He died for me," and post them all over the house.</p> 
<p><b>21</b> After Mass, light a candle, and recite the Apostle's Creed as an affirmation of faith.</p> 	<p><b>22</b> Pray for the victims of the pandemic.</p> 	<p><b>23</b> Send a card to someone who might need cheering today.</p> 	<p><b>24</b> Give up a favorite toy or treat just for today.</p> 	<p><b>25</b> Pray for someone who is sick and can't leave home.</p> 	<p><b>26</b> Place any final donations in the box you set up. Make a family trip to deliver it to its destination.</p> 	<p><b>27</b> If you feel comfortable, go to Confession or attend a Reconciliation Service. Then eat ice cream afterwards to celebrate forgiveness.</p>
<p><b>28</b> Have a Palm Sunday procession around the house and take turns playing Jesus.</p> 	<p><b>29</b> Take a walk outside and look for signs of new life.</p> 	<p><b>30</b> Forgive someone who hurt you today.</p> 	<p><b>31</b> Get up 15 minutes earlier than usual today and pray as a family.</p>	<p><b>1 April</b> Wash and dry each other's feet in commemoration of Jesus washing the feet of his Apostles.</p>	<p><b>2</b>  Pray the Stations of the Cross today, and meditate on each one.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Dress up a doll in a white garment and talk about the Baptismal vows we renew each year.</p>