

# Growing in **F A I T H**

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

January 2007

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church  
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## One Minute Meditations

### It's personal

When we take care of others and make sure everyone has enough to eat, warm clothes to wear, and a place to stay, Jesus takes it personally. It's what he wants from us. *"Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me"* (Matthew 25:40). He takes it personally when we don't, too.

### The Eucharist is the heart of our Church

"To contemplate Christ involves being able to recognize him wherever he manifests himself, in his many forms of presence, but above all in the living sacrament of his body and his blood. The Church draws her life from Christ in the Eucharist." Pope John Paul II, On the Eucharist/Ecclesia de Eucharistia

### Another reason to trust God

*"We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose"* (Romans 8:28).

## 6 easy ways to show your faith

Can other people tell that you are a follower of Jesus? *"This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13:35). Without preaching on a street corner or bringing your Bible with you everywhere, here are some easy ways to let people know you belong to Jesus.

**Wear it.** Add Christian items to your everyday wardrobe. Wear a crucifix or holy medals around your neck or carry a Rosary or prayer card of your favorite saint in your purse or pocket. They all say, "I'm Catholic."

**Tell people you pray.** When someone is ill or troubled, offer whatever help you can and let them know you'll be praying for them.

**Walk away.** Work hard to avoid gossip and when the conversation or jokes get vulgar, racist, or intolerant, leave. If you stay and say nothing, you give silent approval.

**Dress modestly** – men and women, young and old. Clothing that is designed to attract attention and say, "look at me" can detract from your good deeds and virtues.

**Choose your words.** Avoid using bad language. *"Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil"* (Matthew 5:37).

**Stay calm.** Assure others that our loving God is firmly in control, especially in times of trouble.



## Why do Catholics use holy water?

The use of holy water has several purposes. When we bless ourselves with holy water before and after entering the church, for example, it calls to mind our baptism when our souls were washed clean of original sin.

When we use it to bless items, it consecrates them to God and reminds us to use them in his service.

And, using holy water helps to drive away evil spirits and calls to mind the purity required of followers of Christ.

### *Resolve conflicts Jesus' way*

Human nature being what it is, we are bound to conflict with one another. So Jesus gave us advice on how to resolve conflicts with holiness instead of bitterness. Next time you conflict with someone:

**Admit you did wrong.** Jesus said, "...remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye." No matter what was done to you, admit your own errors even if they're minor in the conflict.

**Apologize.** In the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:21), Jesus told us that when the son returned home, his first act was to apologize to his father. Apologizing helps us to take responsibility for our errors.

**Ask for forgiveness.** If you ask sincerely, God will always forgive you – and other people usually will, too. Remember the criminal who was crucified along with Jesus? With his dying breaths, Jesus forgave the man his sins.

Amend. You can change with God's help, "*for nothing will be impossible for God*" (Luke 1:37).

## **Q&A Do Catholics have more than 10 commandments?**

The Church has issued additional commandments, called precepts, which are designed to help us live the original Ten more fully. All the Church's laws are contained in the Code of Canon Law, but these are the principal obligations of every Catholic:

Honor the day of the Jesus' Resurrection by going to Mass every Sunday and on holy days of obligation.

Receive Communion often, and go to Confession at least once a year.

Make a lifelong study of Catholic teaching.

Observe the marriage laws of the Church, and give children religious training.

Strengthen and support the parish community, parish priests, the worldwide Church and the Pope.

Do penance, including abstaining from meat and fasting from food on the appointed days.

Join in the missionary spirit of the Church.

### *from Scripture: Luke 4:21-30, Live the truth*

In Jesus' day, a popular idea about the Messiah was that he would be a triumphant king with extraordinary abilities. Someone familiar and ordinary was not what people expected.

Still, when the friends and neighbors from his childhood heard Jesus read Isaiah's prophesy about the Messiah and announce that he was its fulfillment, they were excited. They had heard reports about Jesus' miracles and wondered if their native son was the promised savior. Yet, that changed when they heard the tough message Jesus had for the children of Israel about who would inherit the kingdom and what it would take.

Jesus' audience threw him out when his words didn't please them. They forfeited his blessings because they rejected his word.

There is no substitute for the truth, and turning our back on the truth will close the doors to the kingdom to us. The truth isn't always easy to hear, nor is it easy to live. For a follower of Jesus, though, there is no substitute. It's the only way to enjoy God's blessings and grace.

## **Feasts & Celebrations**

January 1 – Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. When we celebrate this feast, we honor Mary, but also Jesus as God and her son.

January 4 – St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (1821). A wealthy American, St. Elizabeth became Catholic after her husband died. She founded the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph, a teaching order that established affordable schools.

January 17 – St. Anthony the Abbot (355). Born to a rich family around 250 A.D. in Egypt, St. Anthony gave up his riches to live a life of simplicity in the desert. He is the founder of monasticism.

January 28 – St. Thomas Aquinas (1274). St. Thomas was a Dominican teacher and scholar. He is considered by the Church as the preeminent spokesman for the Catholic tradition of reason and of divine revelation.