

Growing in FAITH™

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

June 2007

One Minute Meditations

Private time at Mass

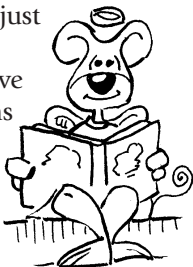
While Mass is a community celebration, take some time before it begins to renew your connection to Jesus. Open up your heart to Jesus during those few minutes and ask for his loving, powerful help for your daily life. Then experience the Mass with your whole heart and mind.

Catholic is catching

The number of U.S. Catholics rose about 1.3 million between 2005 and 2006 to 69,135,254, according to the Official Catholic Directory. That means almost one in four Americans is Catholic. (Official Catholic Directory, P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 908-665-3500)

Good advice

On a visit to his son-in-law Moses, Jethro noticed that Moses mediated every dispute that arose between the Israelites. The workload was overwhelming so Jethro suggested Moses delegate to assistants. Moses did, and the community grew as a result. Sometimes it just takes a friend with perspective to see solutions to our most pressing problems.



Rejoice always!

Reports of tragedy and scandal all over the world can make us forget the joy of being a child of God. So how can we lift our spirits?

Don't worry.

Like any loving father, God wants us to be happy and carefree. All we have to do is trust him and love him back. St. Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: Rejoice! ... Have no anxiety at all." By the way, he wrote that while he was in prison (Philippians 4:4, 6a). Turn your burdens over to the Lord and have the peace of knowing he's handling them better than you can.

Be happy.

"Therefore I commend mirth, because

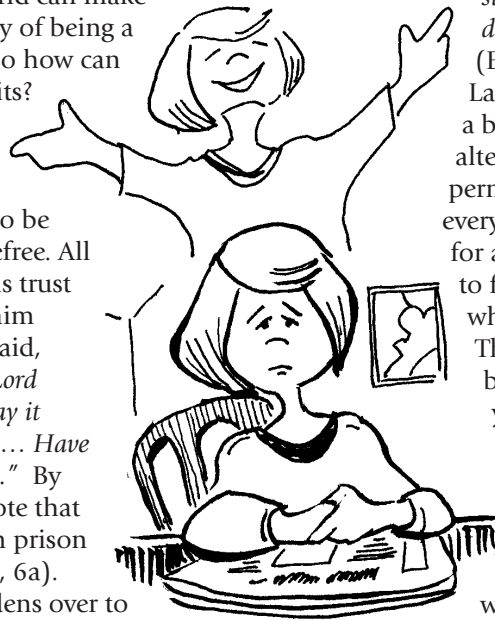
there is nothing good for man under the sun except eating and drinking and mirth" (Ecclesiastes 8:15).

Laughter is like changing a baby's diaper. It won't alter anything permanently, but it makes everything more pleasant for a while. Each day, try to find one funny thing at which you can laugh. The act of looking may be enough to pick up your spirits.

Look on the bright side.

As members of our society, we tend to look for what's wrong rather than right.

But anything that is learned can also be unlearned. Consider using prayer, repentance, forgiveness, and a change of heart as antidotes to negativity.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics believe that the Bible is the word of God?

The Church teaches that God is the author of sacred Scripture written down by men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. These men used their own faculties and abilities to write whatever God wanted written, but he acted in them while



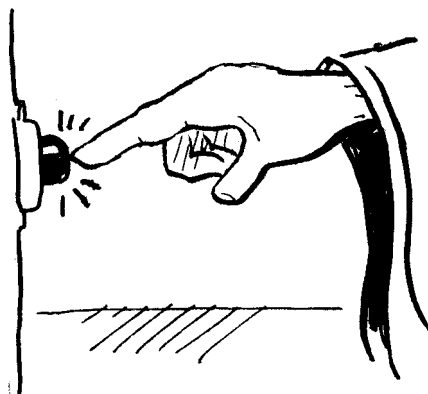
they did.

Although the originals of the New Testament have been lost, more than 4,000 Greek manuscripts have survived. Even though all were copied by hand, less than one percent of their divine content doesn't agree when compared.

Jesus is really here

Picture this ... you're spending a quiet evening at home reading or watching an interesting show on television. Your doorbell rings and Jesus Christ walks in and sits down on the couch right next to you. What would you do?

It would probably take a few minutes to sink in that you're facing the Lord and Savior. You may just stare at him in wonder. You might fall to your knees in awe or embrace him with love. You'd certainly treat him as a



special guest and make him feel welcome.

In reality, that's what happens every time we attend Mass. Jesus comes among us. He's not merely symbolically present - he's really, truly there in the church with us in flesh and blood.

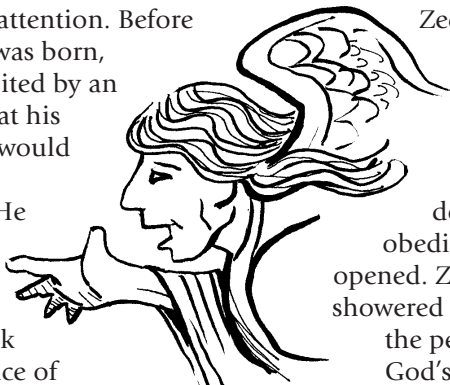
So next time you attend Mass, why not spend time marveling at the wonder of his presence, embrace him with love, make him feel welcome, and treat him like the special guest he is.

from Scripture

**Luke 1:57-66,
God means what he says.**

Sometimes God has to take drastic action to get our attention. Before John the Baptist was born, Zechariah was visited by an angel and told that his prayers for a son would be answered in a miraculous way. He also said this would be no ordinary son.

One might think that the appearance of an angel should have been enough to convince Zechariah of the truth of the message, but he was still skeptical that what the angel said was possible. He wasn't listening with all



his heart. So, God shut Zechariah's mouth to make it easier for him to hear and see the truth. When the baby was born, Zechariah demonstrated his obedience and his mouth was opened. Zechariah's first words showered praise on God and told the people around him of God's faithfulness and awesome love. He reminded us that we can always trust God's love and care. Listen for God's voice and remember that all things are possible for God.

Q & A

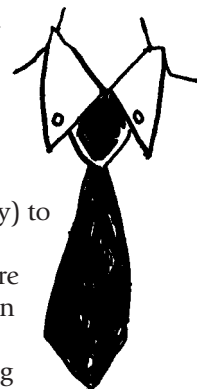
A friend told me it isn't necessary to be so formally reverent in church anymore. Is that true?

Our parish church is our father's house in which we are always welcome. He wants us to feel at home, but that doesn't mean we should put up our feet on the coffee table, so to speak.

Respect and reverence are asked of everyone who enters a Catholic church.

For example, we still genuflect (or bow deeply) to the Tabernacle when we cross in front of it. We are still expected to maintain silence during the Mass unless we are responding to the prayers or singing the hymns. And God still wants us to be fully present by following along with the assembly and receiving Communion if we are able.

As with many tools the Church gives us, the respectful behaviors she requires of us are for our benefit as well as tribute to God. Demonstrating reverence and respect helps everyone in church to worship our Lord freely and without distraction. Plus, respectful behavior also serves to remind us of God's power and control over our lives.



Feasts & Celebrations

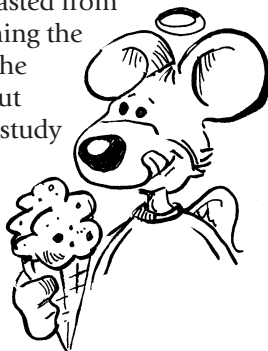
This month we honor the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The unquenchable flame of the Sacred Heart symbolizes Christ's unending love for us. Mary's pure mother's heart follows her son's and goes out to all those whom he loves.

June 1 - St. Justin (165). When ordered by a pagan judge to renounce his faith or die, St. Justin responded, "Nobody in his senses would give up truth for falsehood." He was martyred for his undying faith.

June 5 - St. Boniface (754). Called

the Apostle of Germany, St. Boniface was a monk dedicated to spreading the Gospel in Germany. He converted many to Christianity and was instrumental in restoring dioceses in Bavaria, Thuringia, and Franconia.

June 21 - St. Aloysius Gonzaga (1591). St. Aloysius prayed vigorously and fasted from age 7. Upon joining the Society of Jesus, he was ordered to cut back in order to study and spend time with the other students. He died while nursing the sick.



Our Mission

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.growinginfaith.com>
(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible)