

# Growing in FAITH™

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

October 2007

## One Minute Meditations

### Practice gratitude

Make a list of all the ways God has blessed you. Carry it in your purse or wallet. When worried or discouraged, pull out your list and remember that God has provided for you in the past and promises to always take care of you..

### Trust God

Because he's perfect, God can't err. If we let him, God will work in our lives. When we trust him completely, we feel a sense of personal well-being, security, and peace.

### Share with two ... or more

It is hard to do difficult things alone and being faithful to God is hard work. As Catholics, we are never alone in our efforts. We are members of the Church, the body of Christ. Together with Christ we can make a tremendous difference.

*"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* (Matthew 18:20).



## Three ways to be like Jesus

God's full nature is simply beyond our comprehension. We just can't imagine how wonderful he really is. That's why Jesus came to tell us about him and show us how to get close to him. Jesus hoped we would do what he did so we could know God as he does ...

### Serve with love.

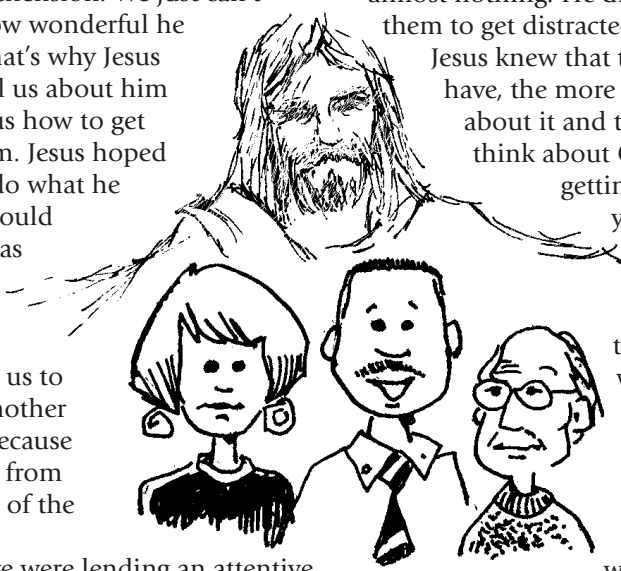
Jesus asked us to love one another as he did because love comes from God. Some of the ways Jesus showed love were lending an attentive ear, showing patience in irritating situations, helping people make good decisions. Try to show love in ways like these every day.

**Lighten your load.** Not only did Jesus have few material goods, he sent

his disciples out to preach with almost nothing. He didn't want them to get distracted.

Jesus knew that the more we have, the more we'd think about it and the less we'd think about God. Consider getting rid of what you don't need, and buy only items that replace what is worn out or broken. Don't value a possession so much that you can't do without it.

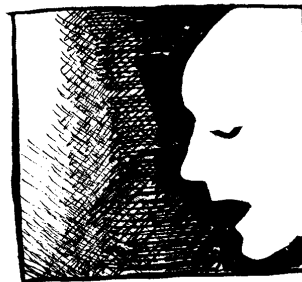
**Visit often.** Jesus often went off to be alone with God. Take some time each day just to keep company with God. Even as few as 10 minutes will help keep you connected to your loving Father.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why do we confess sins to a priest?

Sin is not a private act. When we sin, we put ourselves before God or anyone else. Very often someone else gets hurt by our sin, too. That weakens the entire Body of Christ.



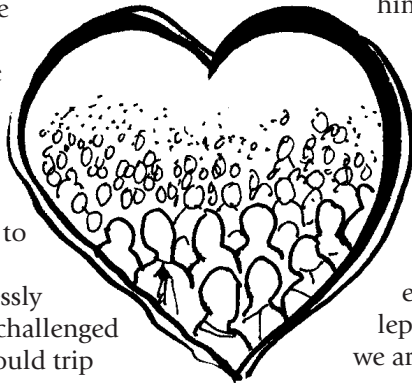
When we confess to a priest in the

Sacrament of Reconciliation, we are forgiven by those we hurt. Jesus has empowered the priest to convey God's forgiveness (see John 20:22b-23). And by helping us perform penance, the priest helps us reconcile with our Church community.

## The difficult task of loving others

Jesus made enemies of the leaders in the Jewish community. He accused them of acting without love for God or the people they served. That made them angry.

So the Pharisees tried to get Jesus to publicly say something illegal. They asked him which of the Jewish laws was most important. If he encouraged people to disregard any of the laws, he could be punished. Generations of Jews had fruitlessly debated the question, so the lawyer who challenged Jesus only asked in the hope that Jesus would trip



himself up.

Jesus silenced all by saying everything starts and ends with love – love for God and each other. To love God is to love one another. They are as inseparable as the beams of the cross.

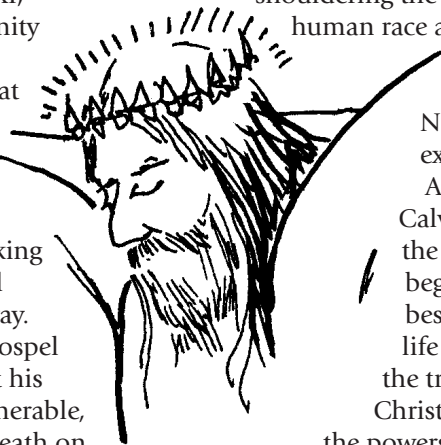
True love of neighbor is measured by how we treat those outside our circle. It means including people we may be tempted to exclude or avoid. Jesus loved prostitutes, thieves, lepers, even Pharisees. This is how God loves and we are to do no less.

### from Scripture

#### Luke 23:35-43, the true King

In 1925, Pope Pius XI, established the solemnity of Christ the King to remind the Church that our ultimate allegiance is to Jesus, the true king of our hearts and minds. In fact, Jesus is the only king still in power while all others have passed away.

At first glance, this gospel reading shows Jesus at his weakest and most vulnerable, moments before his death on the Cross. Yet it is at that moment when Jesus is actually at his strongest. It is at that moment when he is



shouldering the sins of the entire human race and restoring God's grace to each one of us then and now.

No king could do that except Jesus.

At that moment on Calvary, Jesus opened the gates of Heaven, beginning with the man beside him who led a life of sin but recognized the true King.

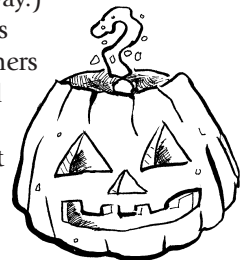
Christ is our King so that the powers of this world cannot hold us in their grip. With Christ as our King, we will never be consumed by the world.

### Q & A Is Halloween a pagan holiday? Should Catholics avoid it?

In fact Halloween has Christian origins.

In 835 Pope Gregory IV moved the commemoration of martyrs (later All Saints Day) from May 13 to November 1. The night before became known as All Hallows' Even or "holy evening," and eventually Halloween. (November 2 became All Souls Day.)

Hundreds of years ago in Ireland, farmers prepared for the All Saints Day and All Souls Day the night before by going door-to-door collecting food and goods for a village feast and bonfire. Those who contributed were promised prosperity; those who didn't received threats of bad luck. The Irish Catholics who immigrated in the 1800s brought this practice of "trick-or-treating" with them.



Halloween can be a good chance to focus on the three holidays as celebrations of the communion of saints. It's a time to remember the believers who have gone to Heaven before us and the hope we have of joining them.

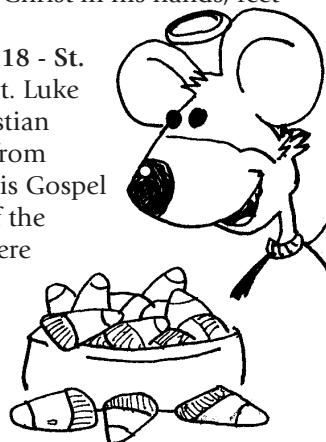
### Feasts & Celebrations

In October we celebrate the Rosary. We take time to us meditate on the mysteries of our salvation – Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection. And we also ask for Mary's intercession – the most powerful of all the angels and saints.

**October 1 – St. Therese of the Child Jesus (1897).** At the age of 15, Therese Martin became a Carmelite nun in Lisieux, France and served others with "quiet acts of love." Her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, is still read and loved throughout the world.

**October 4: Saint Francis of Assisi (1226).** St. Francis took the gospel literally and followed all that Jesus said. Two years before his death, St. Francis received the stigmata, the real wounds of Christ in his hands, feet and side.

**October 18 - St. Luke (?).** St. Luke was a Christian physician from Antioch. His Gospel and Acts of the Apostles were probably written between 70 and 85 A.D.



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To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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