

Growing in FAITH™

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

May 2010

One Minute Meditations

Your turn

No parish can do the work of the Church without support from parishioners. For example, parishioners may bring Communion to the sick or infirm, clean the church, staff parish ministries, teach faith formation and give money to keep church facilities operating. What does your parish need from you?

Newest Catholics

More than 25,000 people became Catholic on Holy Saturday last month in the U.S. Each year Church numbers grow by approximately 10%. Please consider praying for these newest Catholics so that they can help the Church grow in strength and holiness.

Turn to Mary

During the month of May, we honor Mary, the Mother of God (and ours, too). Turn to her for guidance and protection and she will help bring you to her Son:

"Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided."



What is keeping you from God?

Does the business of your life take priority over your relationship with God?

"I work too much to have time for God, but I have lots of expenses and need the money." *"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"* (Matthew 7:9-11). Trust him and God will supply all you need and much of what you want, too.

"What's the point? It doesn't feel like God is paying attention to me." He may be waiting for an invitation.

"When you call me, when you go to pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, you will find me with you, says the LORD" (Jeremiah 29:11-12).

Invite him into your heart and he will always be close.

"My life is so busy there isn't much time for God." Yet, there is nothing and no one on Earth that can make you truly happy. "Do not conform yourselves to this

age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect" (Romans 12:1).



Why Do Catholics Do That?

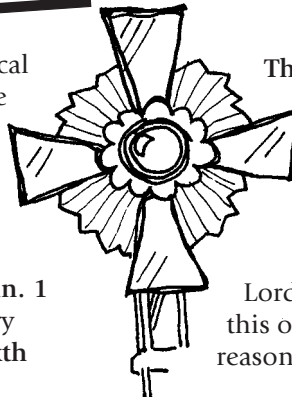
The Eucharist is critical to our salvation, so the Church requires that Catholics participate in the Eucharist every Sunday and principal feast day.

These can include: **Jan. 1** – the solemnity of Mary Mother of God; **the sixth**

What are Holy Days of Obligation?

Thursday after Easter – the Ascension; **Aug. 15** – the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary; **Nov. 1** – All Saints Day; **Dec. 8** – the Immaculate Conception;

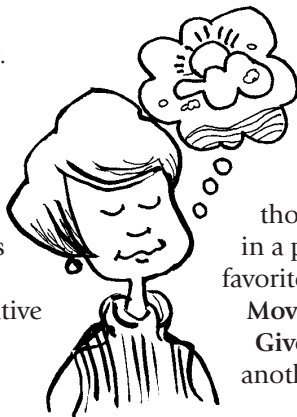
Dec. 25 – the Nativity of Our Lord. Those who deliberately fail in this obligation without a serious reason commit a grave sin.



One way to avoid sin: stop negative thoughts

If it's one thing Catholics know about, it's hope. God's love for us and his infinite mercy give us hope. Living in an imperfect world, however, can overshadow hope with doubt, fear, depression, anger, jealousy and all manner of negative thinking. Without hope, though, we can drift far from God and the path to Heaven. Try these ideas to resist negative thinking and hold onto hope.

Stay alert. Be watchful for the first signs of negative thoughts so you can crush them before they can take root.



Shake it loose. Do something to disrupt the negative image or thought. Snap a rubber band on your wrist, picture a brick wall, say, "STOP" out loud.

Replace it. Instead of dwelling on the negative thought, replace it with a prayer, an image of yourself in a peaceful place, or the face of Jesus, Mary, or your favorite saint.

Move on. Resume normal activities as soon as possible.

Give thanks. Thank God that he always gives us another chance to get things right.

from Scripture

John 20:19-23, Open your door to Christ.

Despite hearing that Jesus was being spotted around town, the disciples were shocked to see Jesus appear to them in a locked room. They thought the lock would keep everyone out. Jesus appeared to them so that they could be first-person witnesses to his resurrection. But he also came to commission them to carry on the work he started.



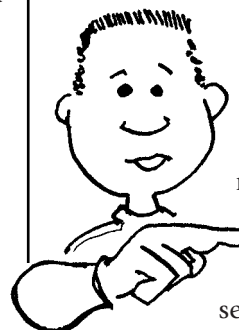
The work is why they were chosen, but Jesus knew they needed strength.

So he breathed on them, just as God breathed life into Adam and created a new creature. By doing so, Jesus renewed his disciples, strengthened them, and gave them a new outlook so they could continue his mission.

By virtue of our Baptism Jesus has commissioned each us to spread the word of God's love and the hope of salvation. And he promises to be with us and give us the strength we need to do his work.

Q & A Do I have an obligation to point out the sins of others?

One way Catholics can live as Jesus' disciples is to practice works of mercy. Acting out of Christian love, we can



help our neighbor obtain what is needed for spiritual and physical well-being. Corporal works address physical needs while spiritual works build up the soul.

In fact, one of the seven spiritual works is to convert the sinner.

"Brothers, even if a person is caught in some transgression, you who are spiritual should correct that one in a gentle spirit ..." (Galatians 6:1). When we notice someone acting in a sinful or hurtful way, we have a responsibility to speak up and act for change.

However, any kind of correction has to come out of love for the other person and have a basis in Scripture. *"... He should know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins"* (James 5:20).

Feasts & Celebrations

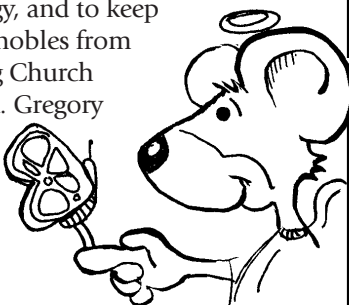
May 1 – St. Joseph the Worker. St. Joseph was a carpenter dedicated to his family, the Blessed Mother and Jesus, and obedient to God.

May 13 - Ascension of the Lord. This solemnity marks Jesus' triumphant entry into Heaven. *Note: In some dioceses, observance of Ascension has been moved to the following Sunday.*

May 18 – Pope St. John I (526). Arian heresy was troubling the Church and Arians were under attack by Emperor Justin of Constantinople. The Arian king asked Pope John I to advocate for them to Justin, which

made the emperor suspect the pope's loyalties. He had Pope John I imprisoned for conspiracy and the pope died from the treatment he received.

May 25 – Pope St. Gregory VII (1085). During dark days for the Church, St. Gregory worked to eliminate the buying and selling of sacred offices, unlawful marriages of the clergy, and to keep kings and nobles from appointing Church officials. St. Gregory vigorously defended the authority of the Church.



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