

Growing in FAITH™

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

July 2009

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One Minute Meditations

Keep the parish lights on

No matter where you go this summer, don't forget your parish back home. If you will be out of town on a Sunday, please make your weekly donation by mail before you leave. Your parish depends upon your help to pay the bills even when you're not home.



Aching shoulders

When you see a need, prayerfully consider whether it's yours to fill. When leading the Israelites through the desert, Moses felt responsible for mediating disputes. The long lines of unhappy people soon exhausted him. Moses' father-in-law told him that by taking the whole job upon his shoulders, he was denying others the chance to serve God, too.

Second chances

Don't give up if you feel you failed to please God. Remember St. Peter. Although he deserted Jesus when he was most needed, Jesus gave him another chance to affirm his love (John 20:19). He will do the same for you.

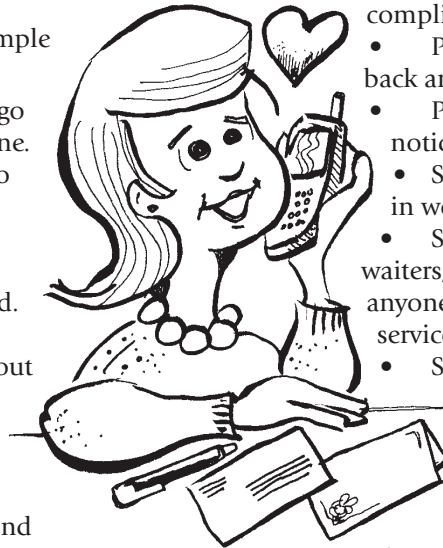


Twenty easy ways to show love

"I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35).

Try some of these simple ways to show love:

- Let someone else go ahead of you in line.
- Call someone who was absent from work or a social gathering and tell him he was missed.
- Resist the urge to talk negatively about someone.
- Find something good in everyone.
- Always give a second chance.
- Ask "How are you?" and listen to the answer.
- Go an entire day without raising your voice in anger.
- Help someone carry a burden.
- Listen patiently. Don't interrupt or correct.
- Make others feel welcome.
 - Offer a sincere compliment each day.
 - Pat someone on the back and smile at her.
 - Praise others when you notice their success.
 - Shake someone's hand in welcome.
 - Show appreciation to waiters, receptionists, and anyone who works in a service capacity.
 - Smile at a stranger.
- Treat everyone as if you like them – even if you don't.
- Try to cheer up someone who is having a bad day.
- Write a "thank you" note when someone does a favor for you.
- Do a good deed for someone who can't repay you.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics pray?

As Catholics we know that God created us out of love and continually summons us to love him back. Prayer is our response to God's love.

Catholics pray because we believe in God's existence in our lives.



We pray because we have the hope that our salvation is coming. And we pray because during prayer the Holy Spirit brings us hope, joy, and peace.

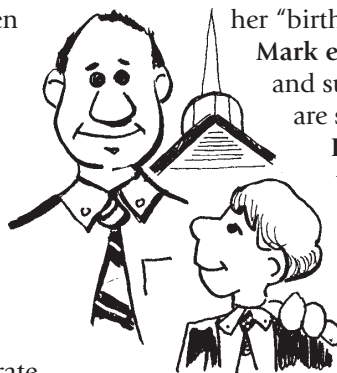
Prayer is what connects us to God directly, intimately, and lovingly.

Help your godchild on the journey to Christ

God has called all of us to follow him. Yet when we are asked to be godparents, we are not only called to follow, we are called to lead. Aiding in a child's spiritual growth is an awesome responsibility but you can teach the importance of our faith in simple ways.

Go to Mass. Inviting your godchild to attend Sunday Mass with you is a great way to spend time together and show commitment to the faith.

Send cards. On the anniversary of the child's baptism each year, send a birthday card to celebrate



her "birth" into the life of Christ.

Mark each sacrament received. Offer lots of attention and support during these Catholic milestones. These are steps on our journey toward Christ.

Prayer cards. Promote prayer and a devotion to the saints by sending an occasional prayer card pertinent to his life situation.

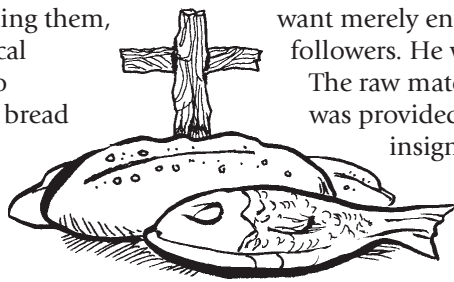
Reevaluate your role. Being a godparent doesn't stop at the Baptism celebration. It is a lifelong commitment. Remember to stay active into your godchild's adulthood.

from **S**cripture

John 6:1-15; the loaves and the fishes.

Jesus' fame spread because of the healings and other signs he performed. People came from all over hoping to share in the material benefits he offered. By feeding them, he met their physical need, but then also offered the eternal bread - himself.

The crowd was so awed by the miracles he performed, they wanted to make Jesus king. They thought that the miracles were proof that he was the "Prophet, the one who is to come into the world," as foretold in Deuteronomy 18:15, 18.



After all, the great prophet Moses fed the people with manna and Jesus used bread. But Jesus wasn't fooled by their enthusiasm and left quickly. He doesn't want merely enthusiasm from his followers. He wants faith.

The raw material for this miracle was provided by a boy - an insignificant child. By choosing him, though, Jesus showed that nobody is insignificant when it comes to proclaiming

the gospel. So, what bread or fish can you offer to God? If you have true faith, whatever you offer just might become a miracle, too.

Feasts & Celebrations

July 2 - St. Thomas (1st century). Known as "doubting Thomas" for requesting proof of the Resurrection, he made a beautiful profession of faith when he faced the truth (John 11:16). Tradition says that Thomas evangelized the Parthians, Medes, and Persians and India. He was martyred at Calamine.

July 6 - St. Maria Goretti (1902). Twelve year-old Maria was afraid of her neighbor but kept silent for fear of causing trouble for his family. One day, while alone, Maria was attacked by the neighbor who had evil intent toward her. He stabbed her when she

wouldn't submit. Still, she forgave him before she died just hours later. Her attacker dreamed of Maria while he was in prison and repented. His first act when released 30 years later, was to beg her mother's forgiveness. He attended and wept tears of joy at Maria's canonization.

July 26 - St. Joachim and St. Anne (?). Little is known about Jesus' grandparents, but we know Mary was raised in a devout home. Her unshakeable faith, her devotion to the laws of her religion, and her steadiness in moments of crisis indicate the values with which she was raised.



Q & A I get flustered when I'm asked about my faith. Can you help?

One good way to be sure you can explain what you believe is to have solid information at your fingertips.

To start, read some common questions and answers about Catholic faith and practices by Church experts. For example, a popular series by Fr. Peter Stravinkas may be helpful. *The Catholic Answer Book* is published by Our Sunday Visitor books (www.osv.com, 800-348-2440). Or, ask your priest for a Church-approved recommendation.



Keep a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* handy. It summarizes what we believe and why, with an excellent glossary to help navigate. Your library may have one or you can buy it from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (www.usccb.org, 800-235-8722).

Start a record. Write down the answers to common questions you have been asked or wonder about yourself. Keep them in one place, like a notebook or on note cards, so you can refer to them often.

Don't forget to rely on the Holy Spirit. In fact, next time you are asked a tough question, let the Spirit do the talking.

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