

# Growing in FAITH™

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

April 2022

## One Minute Meditations

### Healthy worship

Recent medical studies revealed that people who attend church at least weekly have longer life expectancies and fewer complications from illnesses or surgeries than non-churchgoers. Going to church may not protect us from health crises, but it does help us cope with them.

### Empty and fill

There are times in our lives when we have to empty our minds of negativity so God can replace it with peace and joy. Each day, take time to rid yourself of anger, fear, self-pity, jealousy, and bitterness. Then look for God's gifts of peace, wisdom, friendship, forgiveness, and love.

### Speak the truth

Do you have the courage to speak out against injustice or sin? Yes, when you do, you may be called "intolerant" for sharing Gospel truths, but tolerance doesn't render truth untrue. In fact, saying nothing can be worse. Christ is clear: "When your brother sins, rebuke him and when he repents, forgive him" (Luke 17:3).



## Give Sundays to God

God intended Sundays as days for worship, rest, and charity for His people. In today's world, however, it can be challenging to "keep holy the Lord's Day." Try these suggestions to recapture your Sundays for God:

**Worship:** Mass is a direct encounter with God. Make it the center and highlight of your day. Prepare yourself to receive Jesus in the Eucharist by going to Confession regularly and staying aware of your conscience so as to avoid sin. One of the best ways to honor Him is respond to His love with your own.

**Rest:** Make Sunday different from the rest of the week. Avoid unnecessary work. Finish errands and chores by sundown on Saturday. Serve leftovers or

casseroles on paper plates to minimize washing up. Limit screen time, social media, online shopping.

**Joy:** God rested on the Seventh Day and delighted in His creation (Genesis 1:31-2:2). Find time today to do something that brings you joy. Spend time with loved ones, take a nature walk, indulge in a hobby, read a good book.

**Charity:** Traditionally, charitable works are performed on the Lord's Day. Consider putting money in the poor box at church, donating food or clothes to a shelter, or visiting a lonely neighbor. Don't forget, praying for others and treating them with kindness is a much-needed act of charity.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why do Catholics believe Jesus "descended into hell"?

In the Apostles Creed, we profess that Jesus "descended into hell" – Hades in Greek or Sheol in Hebrew. Used here, it means "the realm of the dead," not necessarily the place of punishment.

Human sin closed the gates of heaven even to righteous



souls, until Christ's coming. After accomplishing our redemption on the Cross, Jesus descended to the underworld, bringing news of their salvation to the righteous souls who were waiting to enter heaven (*Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*, #633).

# Keep Easter joy alive throughout the year

Easter Sunday celebrates Jesus' victory over death, sin, and Satan. In fact, it is the most important event in human history. This joy Easter inspires can't be contained to just one day; the Church gives us a whole season to celebrate. Try these ideas to prolong the joy of Easter:

**Keep a Lenten practice** that helped you grow closer to God – a small sacrifice to honor His sacrifice. For example, attend an extra Mass during the week, or perform an act of charity to share God's love.

**Decorate the house.** Celebrate the victory Christ won for you. Display an image of the Risen Christ in your home.

Decorate crosses and statues with white sashes. Put out bouquets of flowers (real or silk) for the garden in which Jesus rose (John 19:41).

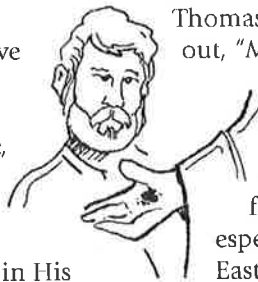
**Proclaim the Good News.** Mary Magdalene was the first to share the news of the Resurrection (John 20:17). Share it, too, by wearing a cross or crucifix, saying grace in public, talking about His grace, imitating His forgiveness.



## from Scripture

### John 20:19-31, "Jesus, I trust in You"

The two Resurrection appearances of Jesus to His disciples in this passage highlight God's merciful love. The first appearance was on Easter Sunday. Jesus could have abandoned His Apostles, just as they had abandoned Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, but He didn't. Instead, Jesus appeared to them and gave them His peace, His Spirit, and the power to forgive sins in His name.



He demanded physical proof. Jesus appeared in the Upper Room and invited Thomas to investigate. St. Thomas, moved to faith, cried out, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

This passage reminds us we can always bring our doubts, fears, and need for forgiveness to God, especially on the Sunday after Easter — Divine Mercy Sunday. To the disciples who abandoned Him, Jesus extended His peace and forgiveness. For St. Thomas who had been struggling with doubt, Jesus came in person to strengthen his faith. "Jesus, I trust in You!"

## Feasts & Celebrations

**April 5 – St. Vincent Ferrer (1419).** Against his parents' wishes, St. Vincent Ferrer joined the Dominican Order. He preached through much of Europe. He was called the Angel of Judgment because his sermons aimed to prepare his listeners for judgment.

**April 8 – St. Julie Billiart (1816).** Born in France, St. Mary Rose Julie Billiart was devoted to the care and education of the poor. After receiving a vision of her future religious order, she later founded the Sisters of Notre Dame.

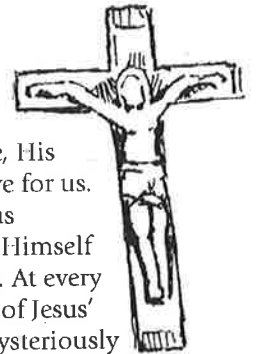
**April 24 – Divine Mercy Sunday.** In 1931, Jesus appeared to St. Faustina and asked that the Sunday after Easter become the "Feast of Mercy." Jesus promised special graces to those who honor him as the King of Mercy and pray The Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

**April 25 - St. Mark (1st century).** St. Mark wrote the second Gospel largely based on St. Peter's perspective. He accompanied Saints Paul and Barnabas on their journey through Cyprus and is credited with founding the Church of Alexandria.



## Q & A Why do Catholics display crucifixes?

Catholics display the Crucifix because it reminds us of Jesus' sacrifice, His victory, and His love for us.



**His sacrifice.** Jesus willingly sacrificed Himself for us on the Cross. At every Mass, the moment of Jesus' sacrifice is made mysteriously present again in the sacrifice of the Eucharist in an unbloody manner. The Crucifix indicates that the sacrifice of the Cross and the Mass are one sacrifice (CCC #1545).

**His victory.** The Crucifix looks like defeat, but in fact, it's a sign of victory. Jesus' sacrifice reconciled us with God, reopened Heaven to us, and broke the grip of death. Jesus took on death, sin, and evil, and rose again in triumph.

**His love.** "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). The Crucifix reveals how precious we are to God. Jesus taught us that true love seeks the good of the other. Jesus put our good first. He endured the crucifixion so we can be with Him forever in Heaven.

### Our Mission

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