

# Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

November 2019

## One Minute Meditations

### St. Frances Xavier Cabrini

The youngest of thirteen children, St.

Frances was born to Augustine and Stella Cabrini in Lombardy, Italy. She was

turned away from two religious orders because of her frail health, so instead, she founded her own order, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. In all, she founded 67 institutions to care for the sick and forgotten in Europe and the Americas. Mother Cabrini died in Chicago and was the first U.S. citizen to be canonized.



### A roomful of friends

Learning about the saints is like walking into a large room full of strangers. You scan the faces looking for a friendly one who beckons you over. Find ways to scan the sea of saints looking for the ones with whom you would like to become friends.

"Since Christ Himself has said, 'This is my Body' who shall dare to doubt that it is his Body?"  
(St. Cyril of Jerusalem)



## Count blessings with a thankful heart

Gratitude for God's blessings is one of the most distinctive marks of those of us who follow him. An ungrateful heart leads to dissatisfaction and despair but a true spirit of thankfulness restores contentment and joy. November is a time to count our blessings as children of God.

*"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his mercy endures forever"* (Psalm 118:29). No matter how we stray, forgiveness and mercy are ours for the asking when we are truly sorry.

*"The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him"* (Lamentations 3:25). Hope is believing

that God will keep his promises. This virtue helps us to place our trust in God and receive his gifts with gratitude.

*"I can do all things in him who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13). The strength we need most doesn't begin in our bodies but deep in our souls. The fatigue we feel physically reminds us of how quickly our hearts can wander and fail. The virtue of wisdom prompts us to

ask God to strengthen faith more often than we ask him to strengthen the body.

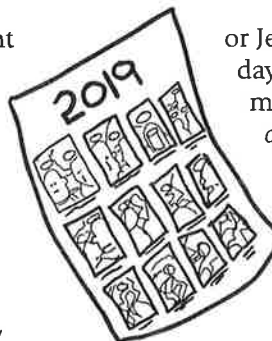
*"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful"* (Colossians 3:15).



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why do Catholics celebrate feast days?

Every family has significant events to celebrate yearly: birthdays, graduations, anniversaries. Feast days are the Catholic Church's family events. Many feast days celebrate events in the lives of Jesus and Mary, such as the Annunciation, the Immaculate Conception,



or Jesus' Baptism. Other feast days celebrate the saints as role models of holiness (*Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), #1173*). Celebrating feasts give us a break from regular life. The Church is a big family so there's always something to celebrate.

## Love can make us saints

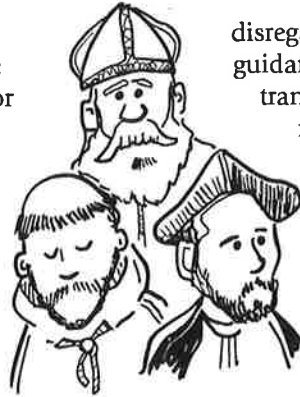
It is very Catholic to admire the saints but think that we can't measure up to them. In fact, they were ordinary people made extraordinary by their love for God. If they can do it, we can, too.

**St. Francis of Assisi** started out as a careless rich boy. God had to knock him off his feet with a deadly illness to get his attention. For the rest of his life, Francis denied God nothing. Great are the rewards when we love God without limit.

**St. Augustine** caused his mother years of heartache with his immorality, paganism, and

disregard for holiness. Through her prayers and the guidance of St. Ambrose, Augustine became transformed. His love for God made him a new man.

**St. Ignatius** was a womanizer, loved fancy clothes, and used his position to avoid consequences. A battle injury forced Ignatius into a long recovery during which he only had religious texts to read. He fell in love with Jesus and devoted the rest of his life to serving God.



### from Scripture

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

This Gospel passage seems at first to contradict the feast on which it is read – the Solemnity of Christ the King. When we think of a king, we think of a man robed in splendor, seated on a throne of power and crowned in majesty.

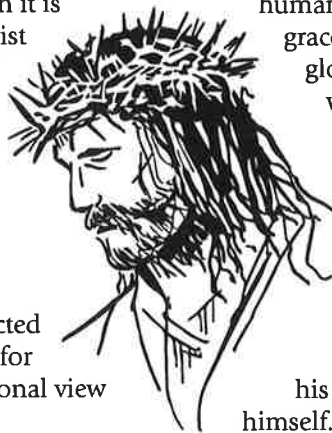
Yet, Jesus, in this reading, has been abandoned by his friends, condemned by powerful politicians, subjected to terrible tortures, and left for dead. This is not our traditional view of a king.

Yet this is when Jesus is at his most powerful. It's in this moment, when he is

shouldering the sins of the whole human race and restoring God's grace to us, that he is the most glorious. He is the only king with that kind of power.

Christ isn't an earthly king; he is the King of Heaven, King of the Universe. On Calvary, he opened the gates of Heaven for us. The crowds jeered at him and told him to prove

his divinity by saving himself. Instead, he revealed his divine love by saving us. He is the King of our hearts.



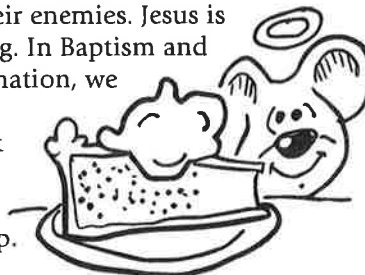
### Feasts & Celebrations

**November 1 – All Saints Day.** In the early Church, there was a great desire to celebrate the martyrs by assigning each a feast day. However, the Christian persecutions were so horrible that there weren't enough days in the calendar for individual commemorations. Pope Gregory IV designated Nov. 1 as All Saints Day.

**November 11 – St. Martin of Tours (397).** The patron of soldiers, St. Martin was forced to join the army, but he left to become a priest. He founded a monastery near Poitiers, France, and later became bishop of Tours.

**November 23 – St. Clement I (1st century).** Arrested by the Emperor Trajan for converting members of the nobility, Pope St. Clement I was sent to work in the mines in the Crimea. He comforted and encouraged the other Christians there until his martyrdom.

**November 24 – Solemnity of Christ the King.** God promised his people a king who would triumph over their enemies. Jesus is our King. In Baptism and Confirmation, we are brought under his kingship.



### Q & A What is the "Communion of Saints"?

The Church is a much larger family than we may realize. The "Communion of Saints" includes all the saints in heaven and those still journeying to heaven. This includes those baptized faithful on Earth and the souls in Purgatory. The Communion of Saints is the Church as the Body of Christ.

*"[As] all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ"* (1 Corinthians 12:12). This means we can help each other by offering intercessory prayers and sacrifices. The saints in Heaven pray for us on Earth. We pray for the souls in Purgatory, who pray for us (CCC, #947). God is perfectly able to help us by himself, yet he generously involves us — including the saints — in carrying out his plans.

The Communion of Saints is not a "club for the holy elites." It is actually the biggest, fastest, most effective support network in the universe. No matter where we are, there are people praying for us, encouraging us, and caring for us.

**Our Mission**

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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