

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

July 2024

One Minute Meditations

St. Kateri Tekakwitha

A smallpox epidemic in her Native American village left Kateri orphaned, disfigured, and half-blind at the age of four, and raised by relatives. Introduced to Catholicism by visiting priests, she was baptized when she was 19 against the objections of her relatives. Eventually, the persecution against her became so strong she had to steal away to a Christian village where she lived in holiness. After her death, her scarred face was miraculously restored to its original beauty.



Grow with God

A relationship between two people is most satisfying when it is dynamic and growing but that takes effort and care. Our relationship with God is no different. Spending time with God and making Him a daily part of your life will help your relationship with Him grow and deepen.

Got faith?

Faith is not about what you see with your eyes. Faith is about what you see with your heart. *"Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe"* (John 4:48).



Our God of second chances

The bad news is that at some point in our lives—probably way more than we would like to admit—we are going to make choices that hurt our relationship with God.

The good news is that our God is a God of forgiveness and second chances. Here are some suggestions for using God's second chances in your own life.

Come to your senses. The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-52) left the embrace of his father and ruined himself with bad choices. He finally "came to his senses" and returned home. Realize and admit your own mistakes and come back to your Father's embrace.

Avoid bad company. "Walk with

wise men and you will become wise, but the companion of fools will fare badly" (Proverbs 13:20). Surround yourself with people who will support your Gospel values.

Stay close. Closeness to God comes through prayer, Scripture study, regular Mass participation and living a Gospel-centered life.

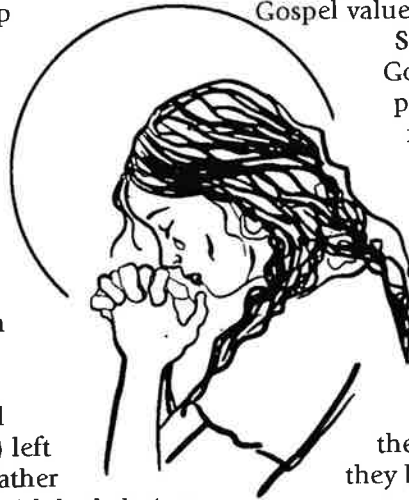
Don't give up.

Jesus spent three years teaching twelve people how to live as His

followers. They didn't

always get it right (and they lived with Him!), but

they kept trying. When you mess up, remember what Jesus said to the woman caught in the act of adultery. *"Neither do I condemn you ... from now on do not sin anymore"* (John 8:11). Pick yourself up and start again.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics wear scapulars?

Catholics wear scapulars as a sign of their devotion to Mary and their commitment to a Christian life. The scapular, particularly the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, symbolizes Mary's protection and promises spiritual benefits to



the wearer. Tradition holds that those who wear it faithfully will receive Mary's special protection and will not suffer eternal damnation. It serves as a daily reminder to live virtuously and is often associated with spiritual affiliation to religious orders like the Carmelites.

A vacation is no vacation without Mass

Does your summer vacation sometimes include taking a vacation from Mass? Finding a Mass when you are away from home, or fitting it into a summer schedule can mean making special efforts. Here are four reasons to fit Mass into your summer routine:

Wherever Mass is said anywhere in the world, millions of people you don't know are praying for you and with you. Where else can you get that kind of help?

Attending Mass connects you to the Communion of Saints – the saints in heaven,

the souls in purgatory and believers on earth. That's powerful company.

After Jesus ascended to Heaven, His followers formed the early Church to keep His message alive. Every time you attend Mass, you help to keep Jesus' message alive.

God commanded us to keep holy the Sabbath, and Mass is the way a Catholic fulfills that requirement. If God tells you to do something, it's a good idea to do it.

Note: to find a church or Mass time anywhere in the country, see masstimes.org.

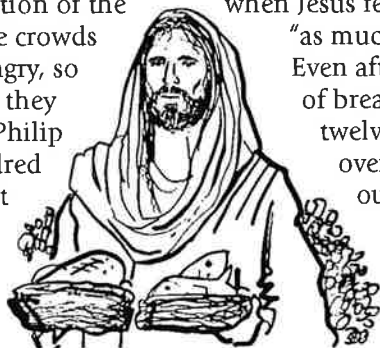


from Scripture

John 6:1-15, God's generous response to generous faith

This Gospel passage records the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes. The crowds following Jesus were hungry, so Jesus asked Philip where they could get enough food. Philip calculated that two hundred days' wages still wouldn't buy enough food for them. Like Philip, we face problems that seem too big for us and can be intimidated.

The apostle Andrew went a step further than Philip; he found the boy with five loaves of barley bread and two fish. The boy, in turn, offered to Jesus what little he



brought – all of it. What a surprise when Jesus fed the five thousand "as much...as they wanted." Even after they'd had their fill of bread, there were still twelve wicker baskets left over! God can't be

outdone in generosity. When we are faced with many problems at once, it can be overwhelming. It's easy to react like

Philip and give up hope. While on our own, we may not have much to offer, if we offer what we have to God, He can do something amazing with it.

Q & A Why are Catholics asked to dress modestly?

Catholics are encouraged to dress modestly, firstly in church, to honor and respect the sanctity of the liturgy. This practice keeps the focus on prayer and the Eucharist, free from distractions. And, dressing modestly is a way to show respect and honor to God.

In general, modesty in attire reflects the dignity of the human body, recognizing it as made in God's image. By dressing with discretion, we display humility and purity, following scriptural teachings. Conforming to common standards of decency promotes unity and mutual respect.

Beyond church, modest dressing aligns with Catholic values of chastity and humility, guiding us to live our faith daily and publicly. It demonstrates self-respect and respect for others, acknowledging every person's dignity. Modest attire minimizes temptations and scandals, fostering purity in interactions. Moreover, it sets a positive example for others, especially the youth, reinforcing values of decency and virtue.

In essence, modest dress in church and everyday life cultivates an atmosphere of respect, reverence, and virtue, embodying and demonstrating our Catholic beliefs and values.



Feasts & Celebrations

July 3 – St. Thomas, Apostle (First Century): Despite being known as "doubting Thomas," he made a beautiful profession of faith when he received proof of Jesus' Resurrection: "My Lord and My God" (John 20:28). Tradition says Thomas evangelized the Parthians, Medes, and Persians, and ultimately reached India.

July 5 – St. Elizabeth of Portugal (1336): The daughter of King Peter III of Aragon, she married King Denis of Portugal. She became known as "the Peacemaker" for resolving political

conflicts. After her husband's death, she became a Franciscan tertiary with the Poor Clares.

July 15 – St. Bonaventure (1274): Cured of an illness through the prayers of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bonaventure became a Franciscan. As Minister General of the order, he cultivated a love of the way of St. Francis and the order's ideals.

July 24 – St. Charbel Makhlūf (1898): A Maronite hermit, St. Charbel lived a life of solitude and holiness. He had a reputation as a wonder worker, even among his Muslim neighbors.



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)