

Growing in FAITH™

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

May 2014

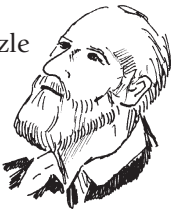
St. Francis of Assisi Parish

Rev. Anthony Francis Spilka, OFM Conv., Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Philip Neri

Philip Neri was a puzzle of contradiction – popular but pious, jubilant and holy, firm but kind.



Born in Italy in 1515, he became a priest after spending many years devoted to prayer. As a priest, he had a gift for seeing through pretenses in the Confessional and became known for creative penances.

He arranged talks, discussions, and prayer sessions - the beginnings of a religious institute he founded called the Oratory. He was sought for his holiness and joy.

The highest goal

It doesn't make sense to pursue pleasure or pleasant things; they don't last. Chasing pleasure draws us away from true joy. Instead, seek the lasting wonders of Heaven as the highest goal.

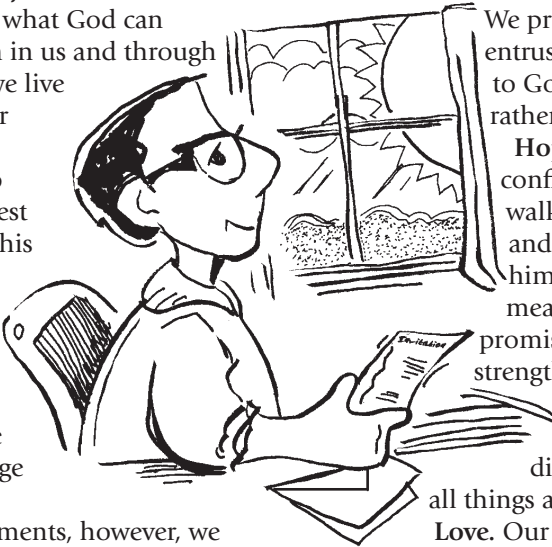
Universal love

Love wills the good of another. *"Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor"* (Romans 12:9-10).



Accept God's invitation to be his

The Ten Commandments are divine laws but they are also invitations to discover what God can accomplish in us and through us. When we live them as our personal response to God's request to become his children, we begin to merit eternal life. To help us live the challenge of the Commandments, however, we need to practice the virtues of faith, hope, and charity.



Faith. God reveals himself to us through Scripture, through his creations, through the Catholic Church and through Jesus. Faith is our response

to that revelation - a belief in the One Triune God as a reality.

We practice faith when we entrust ourselves completely to God. Our trust is in God rather than in human beings.

Hope. When we have confidence that God walks with us each day and guides us to life with him, we have hope. Hope means believing Jesus' promises and relying on his strength instead of our own.

People of hope have no use for despair or discouragement because all things are possible with God.

Love. Our greatest response to God's love for us is to love him. In fact, Jesus made love the greatest of the two great commandments (Matthew 22:37). We love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

What is a "Liturgy"?

Liturgy is a public work or service done on behalf of the people. To Catholics, it means publicly participating in the work of God. Liturgy can refer to divine worship, the proclamation



of the Gospel or acts of charity. Through the Liturgy, the people continue the work of God. "Christ, our High Priest, continues the work of our redemption through the Church's celebration of the Paschal Mystery by which he accomplished our salvation" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1067-1069).

Don't give up on God's mercy

Throughout our lives, we all have choices we wish we hadn't made or missed opportunities to do good. They add up as we get older. We may even fear our transgressions are so many or so serious that we are beyond forgiveness but nothing could be farther from the truth. Learn a lesson from Judas.

Judas' fatal mistake. There's no doubt that Judas' act of betrayal was horrible. It is inconceivable that he could know Jesus' friendship



for three years, be among his closest and most beloved friends and then deliver him for judgment and probable death. Yet, that wasn't Judas' worst sin. Doubting God's mercy was worse. God will always forgive us if we ask. It's we who don't ask. Jesus waits. Jesus never abandoned Judas. It was Judas who abandoned hope in Jesus when he killed himself in remorse for his part in Jesus' death. Peter betrayed Jesus, too, by denying him. But Jesus forgave him just as he will always forgive us if we give him the chance.

from Scripture

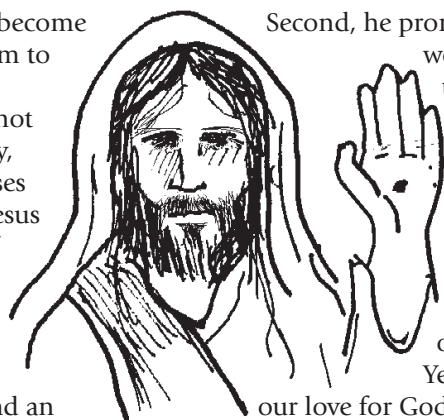
John 14:15-21; I will not leave you.

In this, one of his farewell speeches to his disciples, Jesus laid the foundation for them to become his Church. He was preparing the Apostles to become the people who carried him to the rest of the world.

Pope Francis said, "It is not easy to follow Jesus closely, because the path he chooses is the way of the Cross." Jesus knew that what he asks of his followers is difficult without him there as a guide, so he made two powerful promises to us.

First, he promised to send an Advocate – the Holy Spirit – who would always be with us. The gift of the

Holy Spirit would be poured out on all his followers and help us to see the truth of God's love for us.

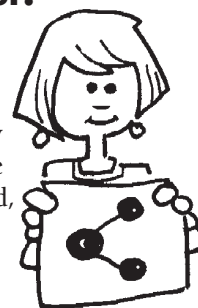


Second, he promised that he wouldn't leave us even though he was going away. When we are absorbed by the world, we can't "see" Jesus because we are too focused on ourselves.

Yet, when we live our love for God by obeying his commandments and loving others, we show Jesus to the world.

Q & A Are Catholics required to spread the Gospel?

Yes, Pope Francis has said it is the responsibility of every Catholic to spread the Gospel. And Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). While not all have the gift of preaching, there are other ways to share the Good News.



Social media. New media can be a great evangelization tool. We can post Gospel verses, inspiring stories of others who live virtuous lives, encouragement for friends. What we don't do can also be inspiring – choosing not to gossip or brag, for example.

Be a friend. Most people who leave a church say it's because they don't feel connected. Try welcoming newcomers to your church or anywhere, for that matter - neighborhood or workplace - and let your faith show as the friendship grows.

Lend a book. Share something you have read that moved you. Studies show that Catholics who left the Church often read their way back. Often non-Catholics enter the Church the same way.

Feasts & Celebrations

In May we celebrate mothers and honor the mother of all, the Blessed Virgin Mary. We can grow closer to Mary by praying the Rosary, honoring her feasts, and praising her to others.

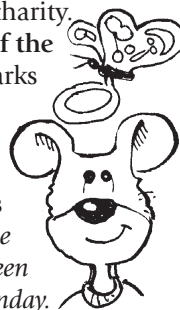
May 1 – St. Joseph the Worker (1st century). Entrusted with the care of the Blessed Mother and Jesus, Joseph was a carpenter dedicated to his family and obedient to God.

May 13 – Our Lady of Fatima (1917). The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to three children near Fatima, Portugal. Mary asked the children to pray the

rosary for world peace, for the end of World War I, for sinners and for the conversion of Russia.

May 22 – St. Rita of Cascia (1457). Unwillingly married off to a cruel husband at the age of twelve, St. Rita spent eighteen unhappy years before being widowed. She became an Augustinian nun known for her devotion to prayer and charity.

May 29 – Ascension of the Lord. This solemnity marks the completion of Jesus' mission of salvation and his triumphant entry into Heaven by his own power. *Note: In some dioceses, observance has been moved to the following Sunday.*



Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

Success Publishing & Media, LLC
Publishers of Growing in Faith™ and Partners in Faith™

(540)662-7844 (540)662-7847 fax

<http://www.growinginfaith.com>

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