

Growing in FAITH™

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

September 2014

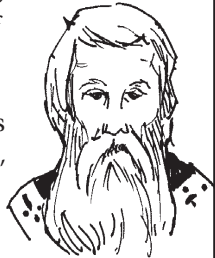
St. Francis of Assisi Parish

Rev. Anthony Francis Spilka, OFM Conv., Pastor

One Minute Meditations

Pope St. Gregory the Great

A great pope of the Church, Pope St. Gregory gave up the privileges of being a rich man's son to serve God. As a young man, he became one of seven deacons of Rome. He then became Rome's Chief Magistrate but resigned to become a monk turning the family estate into the Abbey of St. Andrew.



Elected pope at age 50, St. Gregory made peace with the invading Lombards, saved Rome from famine, and restored order within the Church itself.

Our rock

Although the world may change, God stays the same. He can be trusted to provide love, support, strength, patience, wisdom, insight, and creativity when we need it. All we have to do is ask. *"For I the Lord do not change ..."* (Malachi 3:6).

Power in number

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).



God loves me; this I know."

We are loved immeasurably by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Why, then, do we often fear God as a stern taskmaster who imposes impossible rules and waits to catch us in misdeeds? Instead, let's be confident in his warmth.

God is love.
"Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God ... for God is love" (1 John 4:8). God's very nature is love. He isn't capable of ill will, ridicule, or bad feelings. He can only love and want us to love.

God is only capable of wanting our good. When someone loves us, he

wants the very best for us. *"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope"* (Jeremiah 29:11).

God doesn't want us to wonder about him. We don't have to guess who he is. He makes it easy to come to know him. *"... Let*

him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practice steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I

delight, says the Lord" (Jeremiah 9:24).

We get to know him through seeking him in prayer and action.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do we say the Church is "Apostolic?"

The Church was founded on the Apostles, sent by Christ to *"make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you"* (Matthew 28:19-20). The Apostles conferred their mission and authority on their successors with the imposition of



hands, still done today.

The faith of the Apostles was preserved through time via this apostolic succession. *"[The Church] continues to be taught, sanctified, and guided by the Apostles until Christ's return, through their successors in pastoral office"* (CCC 857).

Mistakes can be blessings

Do you dread making mistakes and feel remorse when you do? Instead, realize that mistakes are simply outcomes we didn't expect and can lead to growth.

Start by admitting your mistake. You can only learn from a mistake if you admit you made one. Acknowledging the error takes the focus away from assigning blame and moves it toward understanding a future course of action.

Enlist help. Talking to someone else about what happened gives you the benefit of another's experience. He or she may have made a similar

mistake or know of solid solution. Plus, describing the event forces you to think it through and may even help you see opportunities you didn't know were there.

Decide on change. Ask, "What will I do better next time?" Real growth and change happen when you see possibilities for improvement.

Benefit from mistakes. If you can learn from the current error, you may be able to avoid a future one.

Remember, God is the only one you know who doesn't make mistakes.

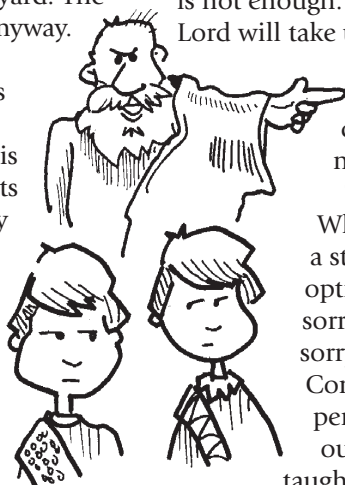


from Scripture

Matthew 21:28-32, Honest obedience.

Jesus told of a man who asked his two sons to go work in his vineyard. The first said, "No," but went anyway. The second said, "Yes," but didn't go. Which son did as the father asked?

The father in the parable is God. The first son represents the outcasts of society. They said "No" to God at first, but repented of their sins and changed. The second son represents the Jewish religious leaders. They said "Yes," but it was just lip service. They followed rules rather than change their hearts.



Saying, "Yes, God, I believe in you," is not enough. If we presume that the Lord will take us into Heaven just

because profess our faith, we will be disappointed. Words are not enough.

True obedience is lived. When we realize we are in a state of sin, we have two options. We can say we're sorry, or we can show we're sorry by going to Confession, doing sincere penance and amending our lives. Living as Jesus taught us is our way of "working in our Father's vineyard."

Q & A Why is the Our Father called, "The Perfect Prayer?"

One reason we call the Our Father, "The Perfect Prayer," is because Jesus



taught us to pray it (Luke 11:1-13). It is actually four prayers in one. First, it is a prayer of praise and gives God the glory that he is due.

Second, it is a prayer of petition in which we ask God to provide what we need.

Third, it is a prayer asking for forgiveness and the strength to be forgiving. And last, it is a prayer of acknowledgement. It leads us to admit that God knows what is best for us and reminds us to submit to his will rather than our own. That's what makes it the perfect prayer and the perfect prayer model.

The Our Father is a good beginning to heartfelt prayer. Jesus encourages us to ask for God's help, seek God's will, and open the door to God's grace in our lives.

Feasts & Celebrations

Sept. 13 - St. John Chrysostom (407). A powerful public speaker, he was a brutal critic of clergy who abused their office and royals who turned a blind eye to the suffering of the poor. He died in exile as a result

Sept. 27 - St. Vincent de Paul (1660). St. Vincent de Paul, was devoted to the spiritual and physical relief of the poor and sick. He founded several hospitals, and ransomed over 1,200 galley slaves from North Africa.

Sept. 21 - St. Matthew. Also known as Levi, he was a notorious tax collector. St.

Matthew left everything when Jesus called him to spread the Gospel. He wrote the Gospel According to Matthew.

Sept. 29 - St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael, the Archangels. Members of the third hierarchy of angels around the throne of God, archangels are entrusted with important missions to mankind such as St. Gabriel's visit to the Blessed Mother to tell her she had been chosen as the mother of God.



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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)