

# Growing in FAITH™

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

November 2014

**St. Francis of Assisi Parish**

Rev. Anthony Francis Spilka, OFM Conv., Pastor

## One Minute Meditations

### St. Andrew Dung-Lac

St. Andrew could also be the patron of the

persecuted. In 1785,

he was born in Vietnam to a poor family.

He converted, and became a Catholic priest

assigned to the missions. He

was swept up in the terrible religious persecution of the emperor, Minh-Meng. St.

Andrew and his companions

were arrested and tortured to

force them to renounce their

faith. They refused and were

martyred. Today, such religious

persecution continues in many

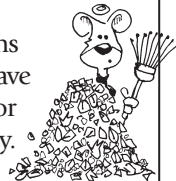
parts of the world.

### Catholic Guilt

Popular culture often refers negatively to "Catholic guilt," implying that Catholics are weighed down by an unfortunate awareness of having done wrong. Sincerely acknowledging true guilt is the first step toward forgiveness.

### God, the Partner

When David faced insurmountable odds against the Philistines, he turned to God for help. He asked if he should fight, he followed instructions carefully, and he gave God credit for his victory.



## Stewardship is giving thanks

For many Catholics, we think seriously about stewardship when our parish or diocese raises money but real stewardship is about becoming more fulfilled and having a greater sense of purpose. It is giving back to God in gratitude for his gifts. And while it's not just about money, good stewards have all the money they need.

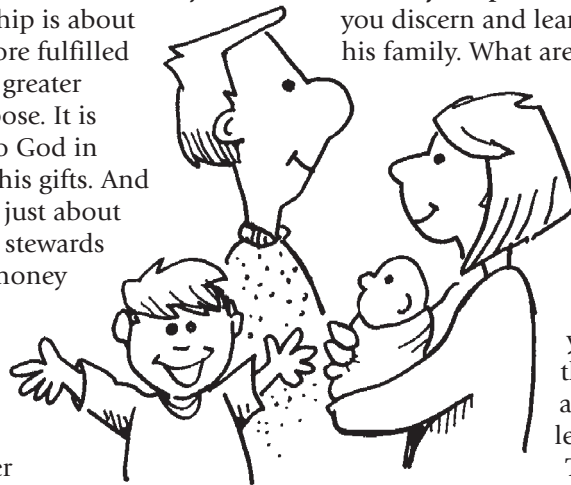
God's family comes first. All families come together in love to care for each other, enjoy each other, and support each other. In God's family, we come together in his love to care for each other, enjoy each other, and support each other. As good stewards, we meet the needs of God's family first, before

we spend time or money on anything else.

**Find your place.** Ask God to help you discern and learn your place in his family. What are you to do with your gifts?

**Take your seat at the table.** Find out where you can put your talents to work in your parish. Talk with your pastor, with the rectory staff, and with parish leaders.

**Think before spending.** Before you commit your time or money to any purpose, make sure you have taken care of the needs of God's family first. Everything we have and everything we are comes from God. He deserves the best we have to give in return.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

### Why do Catholics offer Masses for the dead?

Judas Maccabee ordered prayers and sacrifices for Jewish soldiers who died in sin (2 Maccabees 12:38-46). St. Paul prayed for Onesiphorus after his death (2 Timothy 1:18). Catholics believe that prayers and sacrifices benefit the dead.



When we die in God's friendship we eventually go to Heaven, but if we haven't properly atoned for certain sins we have to be purified in Purgatory first. We pray for the souls in Purgatory to help them pass through faster than they would otherwise.

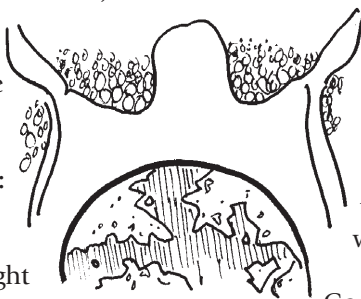
## The Catholic plan for world peace

Our world is often turbulent but the Church believes a just and fair world is possible when seven key principles are embraced:

**Life and dignity of the human person:** We were created in God's image, therefore all life is sacred. This belief is the foundation for a just world.

**Call to family, community, and participation:** People have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking the well-being of all.

**Rights and Responsibilities:** Everyone has a right to life and to what is necessary for human decency.



**Option for the poor and vulnerable:** We are to treat as urgent the needs of the poor and vulnerable.

**Dignity of work and workers:** The worker has a right to productive work, to decent and fair wages and to the protection of basic rights.

**Solidarity:** We are one human family. We are to love our neighbors as brothers and sisters and work for justice and peace everywhere.

**Care for God's creation:** We show our love for God by protecting his creation.

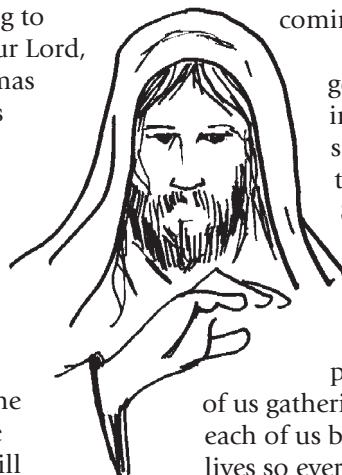
### from Scripture

#### Mark 13:33-37, Be watchful, be alert

This gospel is from the first Sunday of Advent. We are preparing to celebrate the birth of Our Lord, his first coming. Christmas is a time of joy, for Jesus came to us in human form to redeem us from our sins.

But Advent is a time for us to prepare for when Jesus comes again.

In the Creed we say, "...he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead." We don't know when this will happen. It could be tomorrow; it will certainly be when we die. Jesus' message



is to be watchful and alert for his coming.

To be watchful involves getting our individual lives in order. Christ gave us the sacraments so we can do this, especially the Sacrament of Penance. Being in a state of grace means we are prepared to meet Jesus.

However, this preparation involves each of us gathering the harvest. It means each of us being a missionary in our lives so everyone may come to know and love the Lord when they come face to face with God.

### Q & A

#### Why does God make us suffer?

When the disciples asked Jesus whose sin resulted in a particular man being



born blind, Jesus replied, "Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible

through him" (John 9:2-3). God doesn't send it, but he uses our suffering to draw us to him.

Suffering comes from living in a world made imperfect by sin. Jesus points out that God doesn't want our needless suffering and will help us through it. "Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread, or a snake when he asks for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him" (Matthew 7:9-11)? And he leaves in his wake a trail of discarded crutches, bandages, and bonds to prove it.

### Feasts & Celebrations

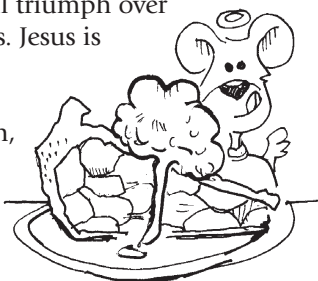
The first day of Advent falls on Nov. 30 this year and begins a new year in the Church calendar (Cycle B). The Advent wreath is lit in households all over the world as we anticipate the birth of our Lord.

**Nov. 1 – All Saints Day.** In the early Church, each saint and martyr was assigned a feast day. However, the persecution of the Christians became so great that there weren't enough days in the calendar for individual commemorations. Eventually Pope Gregory IV designated Nov. 1 as All

Saints Day.

**Nov. 2 – All Souls Day.** This is a day when we pray for the dead, especially our loved ones and souls in Purgatory. Our prayers and sacrifices can help them get to Heaven faster.

**Nov. 23 – Our Lord Jesus Christ the King.** A solemnity that commemorates Our Father's promise to his people of a king who will triumph over their enemies. Jesus is our King. In Baptism and Confirmation, we are brought under his kingship.



#### Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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