

# Growing in FAITH™

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

September 2015

**St. Francis of Assisi Parish**

Rev. Anthony Francis Spilka, OFM Conv., Pastor

## One Minute Meditations

### St. Robert Bellarmine

A Jesuit, Robert was a scholar devoted to studying and writing about church history, Scripture and the fathers of the Catholic Church. He taught against the divine right of kings and became unpopular. He worked to accurately record Church doctrine to explain and protect it from attack by Protestants. Although a cardinal and counselor to Pope Clement VIII, he lived and ate like the poor. He was canonized and declared a doctor of the Church.

### Let go of the dream

Who wouldn't want to live the "good life?" Imagine having all the money you need, going on exotic vacations, and owning your dream home. Yet, people who have all the world can offer still say they don't have all they want. That's because the good life isn't here on Earth.

*"We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose"*

(Romans 8:28).



## Discover God's plan of love for you

A vocation is a call from God to love him throughout your life. Whether you are called to be married, a priest or deacon, a religious brother or sister, or committed to staying single, your vocation will bring you the most joy you can experience on Earth. It will help you and others to grow closer to God. Here are some ways you can better discern God's plan for you.

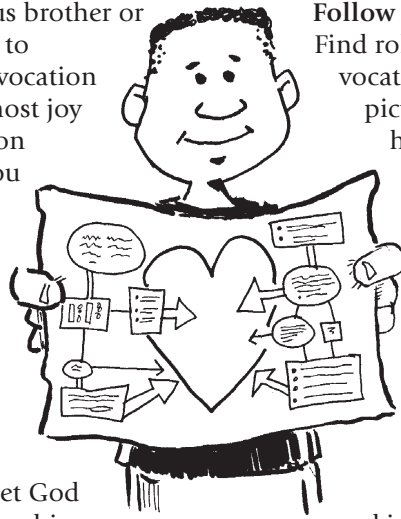
**Personally meet him.** The Church's sacraments are opportunities to meet God personally and receive his grace. We can meet him often in the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Sacred Scripture is another opportunity for

personal encounter. The more we open ourselves up to Our Lord, the more easily we can discern his voice.

**Follow in another's footsteps.** Find role models in the different vocations. See if you can picture yourself doing what he or she does each day.

Ask for details of their vocation stories to see how God chose them. That will give you clues to how you are being called.

**Keep in touch.** Keeping a prayer journal is a good way to spot patterns that may show God is working in your life. Pick a prayer buddy and pray for each others' vocations. Spend time in front of the Blessed Sacrament when you can.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why do Catholics only get baptized once?

The Catholic Church tells us that Baptism is the gateway to the Church, and the beginning of a lasting communion with God. At our Baptism, God adopted us as his children and "marked" us as his forever. This spiritual mark

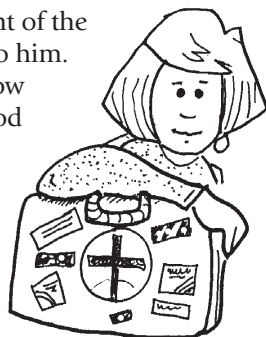
of Christ opens us to grace, helps us resist the temptation to sin, and inspires us to love God and neighbor more perfectly (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1121*). This mark is permanent, so we are only baptized once.



## Carry the Eucharist with you

During the Mass, Jesus comes to us in the Sacrament of the Eucharist to nourish us, heal us, and draw us closer to him. The graces we receive from the Eucharist help us follow Christ more perfectly if we are open to them. The good news is these “sacramental graces” remain even after Mass. They help us become Christ to the world.

Cultivate grace. Grace is a share in God’s divine life. Being open to Eucharistic grace involves spending time with God in the Eucharist. Is there a Eucharistic Adoration Chapel nearby? Does your



parish offer First Friday Benediction? Practicing a Eucharistic devotion will make the Mass less like a duty and more like a visit with a Friend.

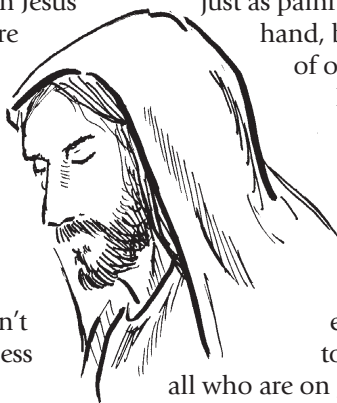
Take the Eucharist on the road. We take Christ with us when we communicate his love through our actions and words. Grace from the Sacrament inspires us and strengthens us to show Christ-like love to the world. *“As I have loved you, so you also should love one another”* (John 13:34).

### from Scripture

#### Mark 9:38-48, Be ruthless with sin

The disciples were jealous of an unfamiliar man who healed in Jesus’ name. It seemed that they were more concerned about losing the spotlight than in healing. Yet, we do the same thing when we refuse to participate in good works because the people are unfamiliar, those in charge don’t do things the way we’d like, or we fear our efforts won’t get recognized. Competitiveness and ego have no place in the Christian community.

Jesus was very clear; we must be ruthless in removing sin from our lives. Giving up a relationship, job, or habit



that keeps us from God may seem just as painful as cutting off a hand, but the consequences of our choices last forever.

Being lukewarm toward Jesus is not possible. “For whoever is not against us is for us.” Not all of Jesus’ followers resemble each other or belong to the same groups. But

all who are on Jesus’ side have the same goal to build up the kingdom of God. Our differences should never interfere with the work of the kingdom.

### Q & A What is the difference between feast days and solemnities?

Feasts and solemnities differ in terms of their importance.

Solemnities are the highest rank of celebration in the Church. Christmas, Easter, All Saints Day, the Ascension, Corpus Christi, and other celebrations of events in the life of Jesus are solemnities. There are fewer solemnities than feast days. These days are like Sundays but they



aren’t always Holy Days of Obligation. We say both the Gloria and the Creed on such days. “Thus recalling the mysteries of the redemption, (the Church) opens up to the faithful the riches of her Lord’s powers and merits, so that these are in some way made present in every age” (CCC, #1163). Far from being “solemn,” solemnities are joyful occasions to celebrate.

Feast days honor important saints or events from the lives of Jesus and Mary. The Catholic Church celebrates these feasts because they are snapshots in the history of the Church and of God’s saving love for us. They call to mind sacred mysteries or events recorded in the history of our redemption.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**Sept. 8 – The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.** Tradition says Mary was born in Jerusalem after her parents, Anna and Joachim, had been childless for more than twenty years. Mary’s birth brought her parents – and humanity – joy.

**Sept. 16 – St. Cornelius (253).** Despite Rome outlawing a new pope, St. Cornelius was secretly elected and bravely led the Church during a difficult time. He modeled forgiveness, embracing people who renounced their faith under the persecutions but sincerely repented afterward.

**Sept. 21 – St. Matthew.** Also known as Levi, he was a notorious tax collector. St. Matthew changed and left everything when Jesus called him to spread the Gospel. The Gospel of Matthew is attributed to him.

**Sept. 30 – St. Jerome (436).** St. Jerome’s great love of the Scriptures led Pope Damasus to ask him to translate the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin. Called the “Vulgate,” it became the official text of the Catholic Church and made the Bible accessible to many more people.



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