

Growing in FAITH™

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

February 2015

St. Francis of Assisi Parish

Rev. Anthony Francis Spilka, OFM Conv., Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Peter Damian

Born in 1072, Peter was orphaned at a young age. He escaped poor treatment by one brother when the other took him away to school where he trained to become a professor.

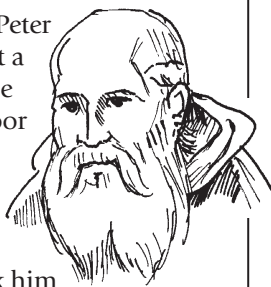
Peter practiced strict penances and spent many hours in prayer. Soon he left teaching to become a Benedictine. Pope Stephen IX made Peter cardinal of Ostia and he instituted reforms and ended many abusive practices in the Church. He wrote extensively and was declared a Doctor of the Church.

Mass for Lent

Consider increasing your Mass attendance from once in a while to every Sunday, or from every Sunday to several days a week. Trade an hour of television each day for an hour of prayer. The extra grace will see you through the season of Lent.

"You will show me the path to life, abounding joy in your presence, the delights at your right hand forever"

Psalm 16:11.



Self-denial is not just for Lent

Society tells us that we are entitled to whatever we want whenever we want it. Yet Jesus said, *"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me"* (Matthew 16:24). The ability to say "no" to ourselves is critical for achieving goals and overcoming temptations.

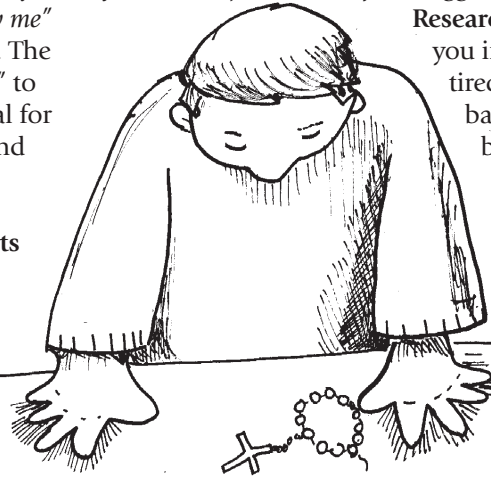
Self-denial starts with deliberate choices. To live a disciplined life – key to reaching any important goal – means choosing to be ruled by deliberate choices rather than by emotions, bad habits, or the influence of others. Practicing self-denial prepares us for the lean times in life that are outside of our control.

Learn what tempts you. Make a list of

that which you have most difficulty regulating. For example, you may find food, using bad language, and gossip to be your biggest temptations.

Research your triggers. Do you indulge when you are tired? Insecure? Around bad company? Read books or articles about the areas that present difficulty. Becoming informed helps you make the right decision when you are tempted to make the wrong choice. Make an action plan.

Distract yourself. When you feel the urge to lose self-control, pull out your Rosary, go for a walk, drink a glass of water. This will derail the train of thought and give you time to regain your self-discipline.



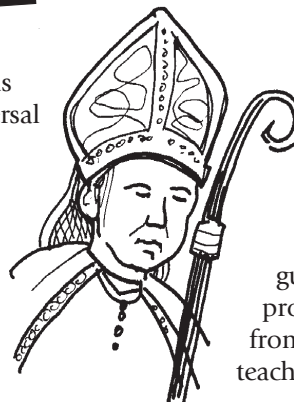
Why Do Catholics Do That?

After his resurrection, Jesus sent his Apostles on a universal mission: *"Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you"* (Matthew 28:19-20).

The Apostles left bishops as their successors to

Why do Catholics follow bishops?

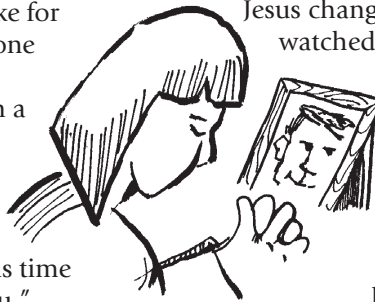
continue teaching the faith. The pope and the bishops form the Magisterium, the teaching authority of the Church. The Magisterium, guided by the Holy Spirit, protects Church teaching from serious mistakes and teaches us how to live our faith.



Intercessory prayer – a double blessing

When we pray for others, we offer powerful help for someone in need. It's the best action we can take for others. Intercessory prayer is also a gift for the one who prays.

Prayers of friends can save. Remember when a group of friends lowered a paralyzed man through a roof so Jesus could cure him (Mark 2:1-12)? Jesus was clearly touched by their devotion. His usual response when asked for healing was, "your faith has saved you." This time he said, "The faith of your friends has saved you."



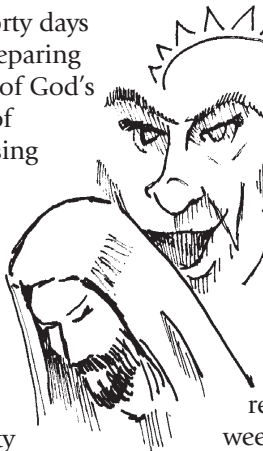
Place friends' needs before Jesus. In the Gospel story, Jesus changed the man's life and amazed all who watched. Imagine the kind of difference we can each make when we ask Jesus to help our friends.

Prayer blesses both the one who prays and the one prayed for. Those for whom we pray are blessed by the positive effect of our prayers. We are also blessed by the connection prayer gives us to God and by seeing the results of our prayers.

from Scripture

Mark 1:12-15, Triumph in the desert

Led by the Holy Spirit after his baptism, Jesus spent forty days fasting in the desert preparing for his ministry. Many of God's chosen spent periods of preparation and cleansing before undertaking important work in his service. Moses spent forty days fasting with God on Mt. Zion at the giving of the Law (Exodus 34:28). The Israelites scouted the Promised Land for forty days (Numbers 13:25) and wandering in the wilderness for forty years before entering it (Numbers 14:34).



In the desert, Jesus was tempted by Satan. Temptations surround us as part of our fallen world. Satan constantly works to tear us away from God. Jesus was not immune from his efforts but triumphed over Satan fully.

The best way for us to resist Satan and the presence of evil is to stay in a state of grace. We do this by going to Confession frequently, receiving the Eucharist at least every week, and praying as often during the day as we can. When we keep ourselves in God's presence, Satan and his temptations won't have a chance.

Q & A

Why do we say, "God is love?"

Love is an exchange between persons. In Scripture – God's inspired word –



God's love for us is compared to the love between family members: a father for his son, a mother for her children, a husband for his wife. We say "God is love" (1 John 4:8), because he himself is an eternal exchange of love (CCC 221).

Throughout the Old Testament, God continually showed his people, Israel, proofs of this love. He never stopped saving them, forgiving them, and providing for them. God does the same for us today.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). Jesus showed us the Father's love in words and deeds. He taught us to call God, "Our Father," forgave people's sins, healed their sickness, and fed them. Christ expressed this love perfectly on the Cross. "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 14:13).

Feasts & Celebrations

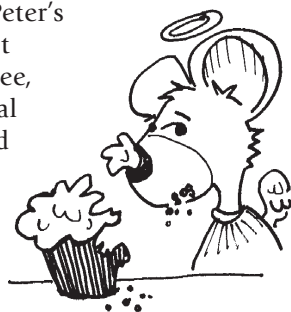
Lent begins February 18th, and commemorates the **Passion of Our Lord**. One observance is to pray before the Stations of the Cross in church and meditate on Jesus' journey to Calvary.

February 14 – St. Cyril (869). Along with his brother St. Methodius, St. Cyril was a missionary, teacher, and patron of the Slavic people. He invented an alphabet still used in some Eastern liturgies, and preached the Gospel in an easily understood manner. He died in Rome after taking the monastic habit.

February 21 – St. Peter Damian

(1072). Childhood deprivation may have created a desire for an austere life. St. Peter Damian became a devoted and disciplined monk but was called to service as a bishop and served as advisor to seven popes. He retired to monastic life and died in the care of his brother monks.

February 22 — St. Peter's Chair. Marking St. Peter's establishment of the Holy See, on this festival we thank God for his Church and pray for its holy preservation.



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)