

Growing in FAITH™

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

August 2015

St. Francis of Assisi Parish

Rev. Anthony Francis Spilka, OFM Conv., Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe

Ordained a priest at a young age,

Maximilian Kolbe

was determined to combat religious indifference in his native Poland (now Ukraine) and published a successful magazine to preach the Gospel. When the Nazis invaded in 1939, they noticed Fr. Kolbe and he was eventually imprisoned at Auschwitz. One day, ten men were chosen to die as punishment for a prisoner escape. Fr. Kolbe offered himself instead of a family man. The man saved, Francis Gajowniczek, was present at Fr. Kolbe's canonization.



Hospital for sinners

It can be disappointing when fellow Christians don't seem to act Christ-like. Yes, the Church is made up of imperfect people who may let us down occasionally. Still, the Catholic Church was founded by Jesus, safeguards the Sacraments and helps us grow in holiness. And Jesus never disappoints.

"If we really want to love we must learn how to forgive."

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta



Polish your Catholic compass

Our Catholic faith is like a compass that can point us to a clear path to Heaven. If we aren't careful to keep our compass in working order, however, we can get pulled off course and lose our way.

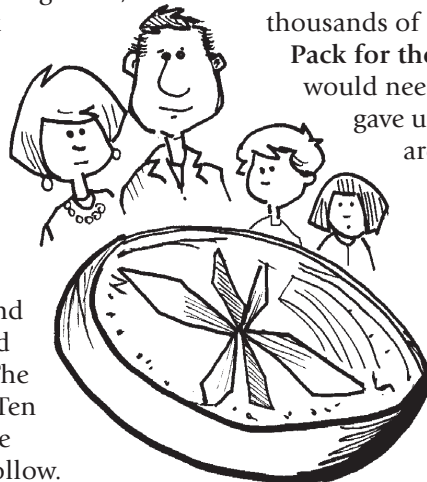
Keep a sharp lookout. God made us in his image and likeness and we will be happiest when we avoid temptation and do what is good and loving in his eyes. The Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments are roadmaps we can follow.

Follow the well-worn path. We don't have to forge our own path. We have the Catholic Church to guide us. For example, an excellent source of answers to puzzling questions is the

Catechism of the Catholic Church. It is a summary of what Catholics throughout the world believe in common. The Church also offers us thousands of saints as models.

Pack for the trip. Jesus knew we would need extra strength so he gave us the Sacraments. They are encounters with God and provide sanctifying grace. Fortify your traveler's spirit with the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation as often as possible. **Journey toward God's voice.** While

God speaks to us in many ways, his voice is most clearly discerned in Scripture. A daily dose of the Word of God is a sure way to stay on the path to Heaven.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics gesture before the Gospel reading?

God created us to know him, to love him, and to serve him. In Mass, when we make the three Signs of the Cross on our foreheads, lips, and hearts before the Gospel reading, we are dedicating



ourselves to God. We pray, "Lord, be on my mind, be on my lips, be in my heart." We ask God to be in us as we hear the Gospel, so that we can truly "love and serve the Lord" by our lives.

Still waiting for God to say "yes?"

Even the most faithful Christians can get discouraged in prayer. It can be disheartening when you have your heart set on something, pray hard for it, but the hoped for result doesn't happen. It is important to remember that God hears you and he always answers prayer. He loves you more than you can imagine and wants the best for you. In fact, he knows what you need better than you do.

Answers to prayer usually fall into one of three responses: 1) Yes, 2) Not right now, and 3) I have



a better idea. The best approach is to make your request, trust him to do the right thing, and then look for his answer. Try not to get set on any one answer.

Perhaps God wants you to wait to increase your appreciation or because he doesn't think you are ready yet. Perhaps he has something better in mind. Whatever the answer – and there is always an answer – remember that it comes from his incredible and personal love.

from Scripture

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23
Clean hearts vs. clean hands

The religious leaders sent investigators to check up on Jesus and didn't like what they saw. Not only were Jesus and his followers ignoring some traditional rituals, Jesus scolded the leaders for being hypocrites when they did observe them. They were outwardly obedient so they could look holy instead of taking steps to actually be holy.

For example, devout Jews performed a cleansing ritual before each meal. The Pharisees liked to believe this ceremony kept them from being considered unclean. They were critical because Jesus' followers didn't perform this ceremony. Jesus told them that they were



wrong to think being clean on the outside made them acceptable to God. God cares more about the state of our hearts than our hands.

Hypocrisy is when we pretend to be something we aren't and have no intention of becoming. Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites because they went through the motions of worshipping God so they could appear holy in the eyes of the Jews. We become hypocrites when we follow religious practices carefully but allow our hearts to remain distant from God.

Q & A If Jesus paid for our sins, why is Confession necessary?

Jesus's sacrifice paid the price for our sins "once for all" (Hebrews 10:10), and made it possible for us to go to Heaven. It did not make us sinless. We retain the inclination to sin.



Fortunately for us, God's mercy is greater than our sins.

On Easter evening, Jesus gave to his Apostles the power to

forgive (or not forgive) sins in his name. "He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained'" (John 20:22-23). "Christ has willed that...his whole Church should be the sign and instrument of the forgiveness and reconciliation that he acquired for us at the price of his blood" (CCC 1455).

In Confession, we receive God's loving mercy, his forgiveness, and the grace to make a fresh start. Although we experience Confession with the priest, he is acting in the person of Christ. Rather than deny the redeeming power of his sacrifice, the sacrament of Confession continues its effects.

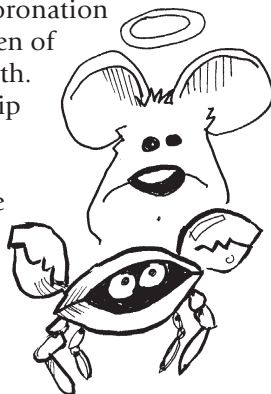
Feasts & Celebrations

August 12 – St. Jane Frances de Chantal (1641). Born wealthy in Dijon, France, Jane married the Baron de Chantal and had four children. Widowed after only seven years, she founded the Order of the Visitation with St. Francis de Sales, for those unable to enter a convent. Altogether, she founded sixty convents.

August 19 – St. John Eudes (1680). Born on a farm in Normandy France, John was priest and parish missionary in the Diocese of Seez. Concerned with the spiritual state of the clergy, he reformed and started seminaries. To

promote devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, he founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary (Eudists).

August 22 – The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In 1954, Pope Pius XII established this feast to celebrate the Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth. Mary's queenship is rooted in scripture and tradition. As the mother of the King, Mary can intercede for us in Heaven.



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