

Growing in FAITH™

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

April 2016

St. Francis of Assisi Parish

Rev. Anthony Francis Spilka, OFM Conv., Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Madeleine Sophie Barat

Born in Burgundy, France, St. Madeleine Sophie received a rigorous education from her older brother Louis. She loved to learn and grew up to be an excellent teacher. With the help of Father Varin, she founded the Society of the Sacred Heart, which was dedicated to educating young women. She took her final vows in 1802. In 1826, her society received formal papal approval. She spent the rest of her life founding schools to teach children.



Seeing with new eyes

It's easy to be nice to people who are nice to you or who are considered "respectable" company. Don't be fooled by outward appearances, though. Everything done to our brothers and sisters Jesus counts as done to him. When you see someone you want to avoid, remember he or she is Christ in disguise and act accordingly.

"Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels"
(Hebrews 13:2).



How will you fill your God-shaped hole?

St. Augustine wrote, "You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee," (*Confessions*, Saint Augustine). Humans are created with a longing for something infinitely good, true, and beautiful - God. If we try to fill that longing with things that are not God, we are unsatisfied.

Make room. We pursue money, friends, power, or possessions, thinking that we will be happy if we accumulate enough. The problem is that earthly rewards don't last and distract us from what does. King Solomon could have chosen all the riches, esteem, and power in the world

but rejected them because they would distract him from God.

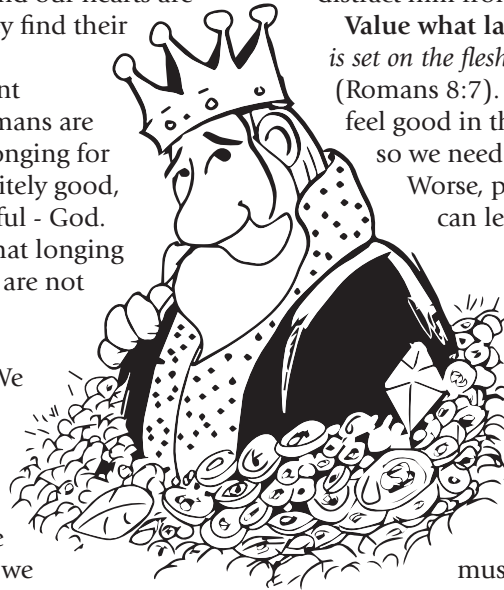
Value what lasts. "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God" (Romans 8:7). Pleasure makes us feel good in the moment but fades so we need more to feel good.

Worse, pursuit of pleasure can lead to sin. Pleasure is not happiness.

Happiness results when God shares himself with us and we draw close to him.

Grow in love. Having received the gift of divine life, we must give it to others.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11). When we share God's life and love, we grow in that very life and love.



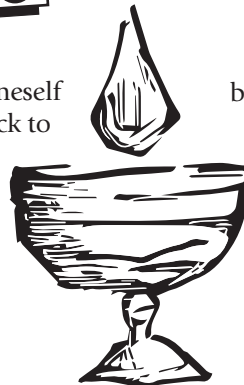
Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics bless themselves with holy water?

The practice of blessing oneself with holy water harkens back to the washing rituals of the Old Testament Jews, who had to bathe before entering the temple.

Today, when we bless ourselves with holy water, it brings to mind our own

baptism. It was at our baptism that our souls were washed clean of original sin and we were officially made members of the Church. We also received the gift of faith. In blessing ourselves, we renew our baptismal promise.



Glance toward Heaven throughout the day

St. Therese of Lisieux confided that, "For me prayer is a surge of the heart, it is a simple look towards Heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy." Adding short, heartfelt prayers to our activities can keep us looking toward Heaven throughout the day:

The Jesus Prayer – "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Try repeating it 100 times a day.

"Teach me, O Lord, to do your will, for you are my God." Say this when beginning a



chore, task, or project.

"May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace." A prayer for the souls in Purgatory.

"Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like yours." Pray this for humility and love.

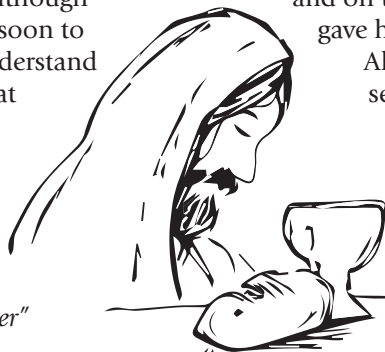
"Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ." She is always willing to help.

"Thy will be done." It's what Jesus said.

from Scripture

John 13:31-33a, 34-35, Love one another

The Last Supper was a confusing night for the Apostles. Although Jesus talked of his glory soon to come, they didn't yet understand Jesus' glory involved great suffering. Jesus prepared them by giving them an important command that would help: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you should also love one another" (John 13:34).



demonstrated throughout his life and on the Cross, when he gave his life for us.

Also important is the second part of this command. "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Jesus

intended for Christians to stand

This is carefully worded by Our Lord. Jesus wanted his followers to be clear this love is not a warm and fuzzy feeling. The love we are to have for each other is to be as sacrificial as the love he

out in the world by behaving differently than non-believers. He is no longer visible on Earth with us, so he left us to be his hands and his heart to those around us.

Q & A What is Heaven like?

Heaven is our true home. Jesus said, "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told

you that I am going to prepare a place for you?" (John 14:2). "Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live



forever with Christ... Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1023, 1024).

To give you some idea of what Heaven is like, think of the people you love and the happy times you enjoy here and now on earth. Those things are glimpses of the joy we will experience in Heaven, which is an eternal moment of love. In Heaven, there is no suffering or sorrow. "He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, (for) the old order has passed away" (Revelation 21:4). Finally, in Heaven we will see God face-to-face.

Feasts & Celebrations

April 3 – Divine Mercy Sunday. In 1931, Jesus appeared to St. Faustina and asked that the Sunday after Easter become the "Feast of Mercy." Jesus promised that anyone who honors him as the King of Mercy and prays the Chaplet of Divine Mercy—the prayer he gave to St. Faustina—will receive special graces and great mercy.

April 4 – The Annunciation (first century). The angel Gabriel visited the Blessed Virgin Mary with the extraordinary news of her role as the mother of God. Even at her young age,

she had complete confidence in God's grace and trusted in his wisdom. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

April 11 - St. Stanislaus (1079). As Bishop of Krakow in 1072, St. Stanislaus attempted to reform the violent and depraved king of Poland, Boleslaus II. When his efforts failed, he excommunicated the king. In retaliation, Boleslaus murdered the saint. He was canonized in 1253.



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