

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

September 2020

St. Raphael Catholic Church

Pastor, Fr. John M. Connell

One Minute Meditations

Mysteries of faith

Legend says that St. Augustine was walking on a beach puzzling the mystery of the Holy Trinity when he spotted a boy filling a bucket from the ocean and dumping it in a hole. The boy said he was trying to fit the ocean into the hole. St. Augustine cried, "But you can never do that!" The boy replied, "And neither can you understand the Holy Trinity," and vanished. Some things we just have to take on faith.



"God bless you"

When you sneeze, think of Pope St. Gregory, the Great. In 590AD, the bubonic plague was spreading to Rome. To combat the disease, the pope requested incessant prayer. "God bless you!" in response to a sneeze was part of that effort.

"You shall not fear the terror of the night nor the arrow that flies by day, Nor the pestilence that roams in darkness, nor the plague that ravages at noon" (Psalm 91:5-6).



Do you trust God?

"The Lord is my strength and my shield, in whom my heart trusts" (Psalm 28:7). Do you trust God with everything in your life or only some things? Do you give him your problems but take them back when he doesn't do what you want? It is when we have complete trust in God that our lives work well.



over all creation – He even has power over life and death. Through the ages, we have learned that all things are possible with God. More to the point, God's Son told us that God loves us with unimaginable intensity so he always wants what is best for us. In fact, God is more qualified than we are to take care of what we need.

Is God trustworthy? A person worthy of trust is one of good character and integrity. We have more than two thousand years of history that prove God means what he says and says what he means. He does what he promises.

Are you ready to really trust God? Start by thanking him no matter what. Everything that he allows to happen to us is for our good. Then remind yourself that God is fully in charge. Finally, ask him what you should do next and do it.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics believe the Eucharist is Jesus' Body and Blood?

The concept of transubstantiation means that, during Mass, the entire substance of bread changes into the substance of the Body of Christ. The entire substance of wine changes into the substance of His Blood. This change is brought about in the eucharistic

prayer through the Word of Christ and the action of the Holy Spirit.

However, the outward characteristics of bread and wine, the "eucharistic species," remain unaltered.

Jesus is truly present during Mass, Body and Blood, soul and divinity.

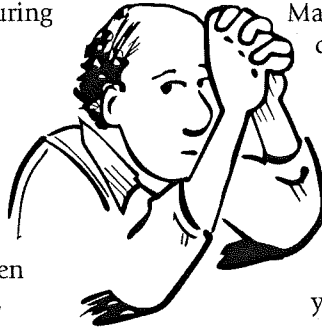


Make distractions a plus in prayer

There is no better way to build a relationship with Jesus than through prayer. Relying on His strength during difficult times is how we get through them. Yet when we become distracted during prayer, we can become discouraged and give up. Try these ideas for turning distractions into blessings:

Gently return. Start your prayer by placing yourself in the presence of God. When you wander, gently bring yourself back.

Practice recall. St. Frances de Sales said, "When your mind wanders or gives way to distractions,



gently recall it and place it once more close to its Divine Master. If you should do nothing else but repeat this during the whole time of prayer, your hour would be very well spent and you would perform a spiritual exercise most acceptable to God."

Turn distractions into prayer. If you start thinking about people and events unrelated to your prayer, pray about them and then return to the original subject of your prayer.

Pray out loud. When distractions overwhelm you, pray out loud.

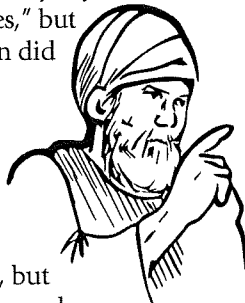
from Scripture

Matthew 21:28-32, Faithful obedience.

Jesus told of a man who asked his two sons to go work in his vineyard. The first said, "No," but went anyway. The second said, "Yes," but didn't go. Which son did as the father asked?

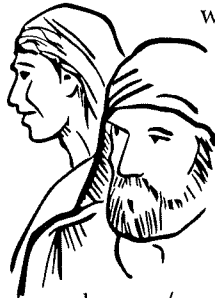
The father in the parable is God. The first son represents the outcasts of society. They said "No" to God at first, but repented of their sins and changed.

The second son represents the Jewish religious leaders. They said "Yes," but it was just lip service. They followed rules rather than changing their hearts.



Saying, "Yes, God, I believe in you," is not enough. If we presume that the Lord will take us into Heaven just because we profess our faith, we will be disappointed. Words are not enough.

True obedience is lived. When we realize we are in a state of sin, we have two options. We can say we're sorry, or we can show we're sorry by going to Confession, doing sincere penance and amending our lives. Living as Jesus taught us is our way of "working in our Father's vineyard."



Q & A How can I stop worrying about what other people think?

The problem with placing too much importance on other people's opinions of you is that you give them inappropriate power over you. In effect,



you are substituting other people's values and judgment for your own and there is no guarantee that they have your best interests – or your eternal future – at heart. Not everyone is interested in helping you get to Heaven.

Try instead to live by the rules detailed in the Ten Commandments and in the Beatitudes. They tell us to be devoted to God, to care for other people, to be honest and dedicated to truth, and to value the blessings God has given us.

Remember that there is value in being criticized or insulted even though you do the right thing. Not only can you offer it as penance for your sins, such suffering teaches humility and patience – two virtues that will help you get to Heaven. And when it comes down to it, the opinion of other people will pass, but God's judgment is forever.

Feasts & Celebrations

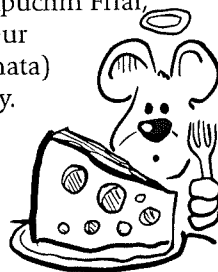
Sept. 8 - The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1st century). Tradition holds that Mary was born in Jerusalem after her parents had been childless for more than twenty years. Mary's birth brought them – and us - joy.

Sept. 15 – Our Lady of Sorrows. In Luke 2:35, Simeon predicted Mary's sorrows as "a sword piercing" her soul. This referred, in part, to a time when Mary would stand at the foot of her son's Cross. Still, Mary stood dignified and fearless while others fled.

Sept. 21 – St. Matthew (1st century).

Also known as Levi, he was a notorious tax collector. St. Matthew left everything behind when Jesus called him to spread the Gospel. He wrote the Gospel According to Matthew.

Sept. 23 – St. Padre Pio (1968). Francesco Forgione was born to farmers in southern Italy. Eight years after he became a Capuchin Friar, the five wounds of Our Lord's Passion (stigmata) appeared on his body. Despite intense personal and physical suffering, he remained dedicated to prayer.



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