

Growing in FAITH™

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

August 2010

One Minute Meditations

Attitude of gratitude

True happiness doesn't come when you have all you want but when you want all you have. *"A tranquil mind gives life to the body, but jealousy rots the bones"* (Proverbs 14:30).

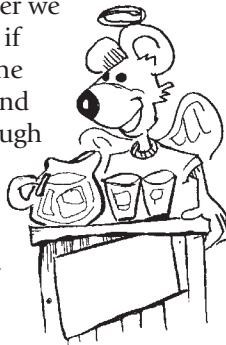


The gift of work

Work can feel like a treadmill. The routine can be exhausting and the job seem pointless. When we treat our labor as a gift back to God, there is an additional purpose to it other than just a paycheck. *"There is nothing better for man than to eat and drink and provide himself with good things by his labors. Even this, I realized, is from the hand of God"* (Ecclesiastes 2:24).

Life's baggage

Sometimes we hold onto hurts and wrongs for years, carrying them throughout our lives like suitcases. We hold the offenders responsible long after the misdeed. Think how much lighter we would feel if we shed the baggage and went through life forgiving and forgetting.



"Where is God when I need him most?"

Two men, upset over the murder of a friend, were walking to the next town. Along the way, they struggled to understand how such a thing could happen and worried that God had abandoned them.

A stranger who was also walking to the same town joined them, heard their conversation, and explained how the recent events could be seen as part of God's plan. At dinner that night, the stranger miraculously turned out to be the very friend they were grieving. Though they didn't realize it, God was walking with them (Luke 24).

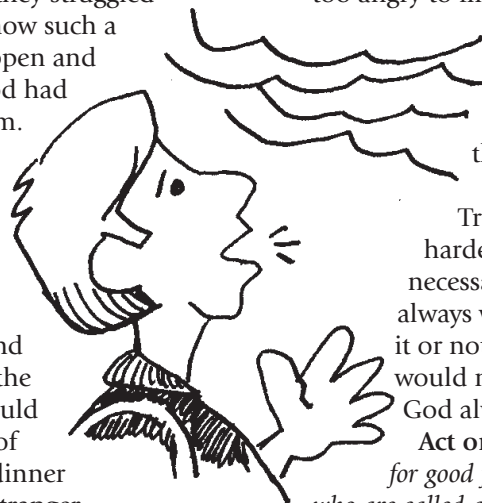
Why can't we find him? Sometimes, events or experiences in our lives can lessen our awareness of God and make

him appear distant. As a result, we can become too worried, too sad, or too angry to find him. For example, preoccupied by grief, the two friends on the road failed to recognize God walking right next to them.

Believing is seeing.

Trust in God is often hardest when it is most necessary. The truth is that he is always with us whether we "feel" it or not. He promised that he would never abandon us, and God always keeps his promise.

Act on faith. *"... All things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose"* (Romans 8:28). Mary, Jesus' mother, also was distraught by his death. Yet instead of being overwhelmed by it, she stood with dignity at the foot of his cross. She acted on the faith that God would prevail. And her reward for her faith in his promise was amazing.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

What is a Vigil Mass?

In the Jewish calendar, days are measured from sundown to sundown and celebrations begin the night before. Following this practice, the Church allows solemn liturgical celebrations to begin after 4:00 pm of the prior evening. Therefore, you can fulfill your obligation for Mass on a



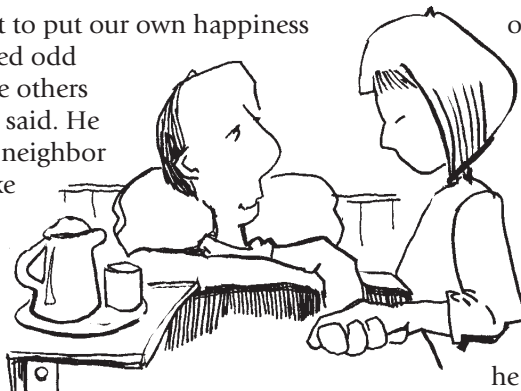
Saturday evening because it is really a Sunday celebration.

Such Masses of anticipation, also called Vigil Masses, have been helpful to workers, caregivers, or others for whom attending Sunday Mass may be difficult or impossible.

Coping when others need us

Society tells us that it's our right to put our own happiness first. In fact, we may be considered odd or abnormal if we cheerfully serve others instead. Yet, that's not what Jesus said. He told us that serving God and our neighbor comes first, even if it doesn't make us happy. That isn't always easy.

Caring can be difficult. Some of life's biggest challenges come when a loved one is disabled, ill or even dying, and dependent upon us. Putting aside our



own needs to care for someone who may not even be able to appreciate it is hard. It may help to remember that Christ had special compassion for the sick and disabled and he appreciates it when we do, too.

There is a reward. Mother Teresa said, "if you love until it hurts, there can be no more hurt, only more love." When we take someone into our care or go out of our way to help, we aren't just serving our neighbor. We are serving the Lord who loves us, and he never forgets a good deed done in his name.

from **S**cripture

Luke 14:1, 7-14, a pure heart

Throughout his public ministry, Jesus criticized the Pharisees' desire for prestige and praise instead of a heart-felt service to the people in their care.

When a leading Pharisee invited Jesus to dinner, our Lord took it as an opportunity to encourage service to the poor and sincere humility

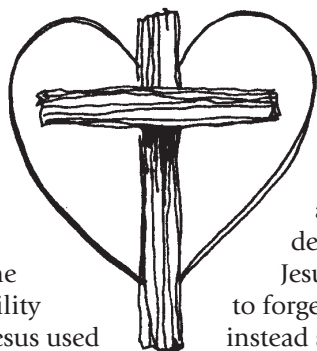
To make his point, Jesus used the example of being a guest at a banquet. How embarrassing to sit in a place of honor only to have the

host ask you to move and make room for someone more important. Instead,

Jesus suggested behaving with true humility and taking the lowest place at the table.

There is great honor in being invited by your host to "move up" but even if no such invitation comes, those around you will appreciate your desire to put others first.

Jesus went on to encourage us to forget about being admired and instead serve people in need – and Scripture is full of examples of how he lived this advice. Such service is the way to fulfillment.



Feasts & Celebrations

August 11 – St. Clare. Born to a noble family in Italy, St. Clare followed St. Francis of Assisi into poverty over her family's strenuous objections. She founded a sister order to the Franciscans called the "Poor Clares."

August 14 – St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe. A Polish Franciscan, St. Maximilian was imprisoned in 1941 by the Nazis at Auschwitz. When the jailers chose a man with a family to execute in punishment for another's escape attempt, St. Maximilian offered himself instead.

August 15 – Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Declared a dogma of our faith in 1950 by Pope Pius XII, the Assumption celebrates Mary's taking up into Heaven body and soul at the end of her life.

August 28 – St. Augustine (430). Although quite decadent before his conversion, St. Augustine turned to Christianity and became a priest at the age of 36 and a bishop at 41. He was both feared and revered as a prophet who offered sinners no shelter or escape from personal responsibility.



Q & A How can I be a happier person?

We know that God wants us to be happy with him in Heaven, but he also wants us to be happy on Earth, too.

Don't be afraid. Happy people don't fear pain because they know God will give them the grace they need to deal with it. Instead of running from pain, we need to feel it, deal with it, and then let it flow away from us when we can. Once we have dismissed pain, we are free to feel joy.

Don't fight him. When we are in a situation that is right for us, everything flows. Flow creates harmony, and harmony leads to happiness. To achieve flow, we have to let God place us where he wants us to be.

Walk with him. Happy people know that God is always present in their lives and they seek frequent opportunities to be with him. Consider going to daily Mass, increasing your daily prayer, or just find extra time each day to place yourself in his presence in some quiet spot.



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