

Growing in FAITH™

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

September 2012

One Minute Meditations

Prayer to Mary

Non-Catholics often ask why we worship and pray to Mary. In fact, prayer is raising our hearts and minds to God. We don't worship or pray to anyone else. We ask for Mary's intercession with her divine Son. We honor her for the unique role she played in our salvation. But our prayer and worship is reserved only for God.

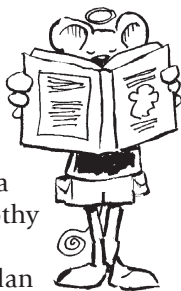
St. Ignatius' way

St. Ignatius came to holiness reluctantly. When a canon ball shattered his leg, he began a long and boring convalescence and requested romance novels to pass the time. Instead he was given books on the life of Christ and the saints. His heart was touched and thus began a lifelong love resulting in founding the Society of Jesus.

Daily prayer a must

"Daily prayer is the foundation of sanctity. Some prefer it in the morning. Some late at night.

However, whenever, wherever, it's a must!" Timothy Cardinal Dolan



A way to make better decisions

Adopting a formal decision-making process can be helpful in choosing a new job, buying a house, or even deciding for whom to vote in November's election. Try a process like this:

Begin with a prayer for guidance. Then identify the specific decision to be made as well as the objectives or outcome you want to achieve.

"Entrust your works to the Lord and your plans will succeed" (Proverbs 16:3).

Do your homework. Gather as many facts as you can from all sides of the question.

Write down every possible choice. Reject the choices that are incompatible

with your Catholic values or principles. Focus on the choices that remain.

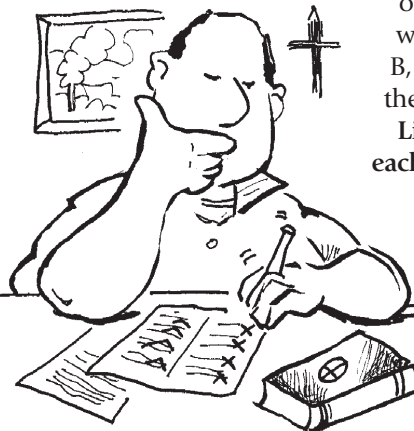
Consider the consequences of each choice on your list. Weigh the possible outcomes. For example, what will happen if I do A, B, or C and can I live with the consequences?

List the pros and cons for each choice. Prioritize the pros in order of importance to you. Do the same for the cons.

Look at the list to see if either side is lopsided. If so, choose the side that has more and better arguments in its favor.

If you get stuck, turn to someone you trust for an opinion. Share your decision process and ask for feedback and advice.

Make your decision and monitor your results for the next time.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics light candles?

Lit candles have many purposes. At Baptism, the lit candle symbolizes the Light of Christ in the soul of the baptized. In church, lit votive candles symbolize prayer intentions others have offered to God. The



sanctuary lamp remains lit as a reminder that Jesus is present in the tabernacle.

During Advent, we light candles to count down the weeks until Jesus' birth. At Easter, the candle reminds us that Jesus, the Light of the World, conquered the darkness of sin and death.

Painless ways to proclaim the Gospel

Jesus told his followers to “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). He knew that by spreading the Gospel, not only would we share his love with others, we each would deepen our own faith and renew our belief in the Gospel. Try these ideas for becoming an enthusiastic evangelist:

Be unapologetically Catholic. It is said that St. Francis of Assisi told his followers, “Preach the Gospel always. If necessary, use words.” Starting with Mass on Sundays, live your Catholic faith seven days a week, wherever you go.



Correct misperceptions. Very often, non-Catholics or even non-practicing Catholics misunderstand what we believe. Become an expert and offer gentle corrections. You may want to carry pamphlets that summarize our basic beliefs in your purse or wallet to hand out. (Tip: the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has an excellent selection: www.usccb.org, 800-235-8722.)

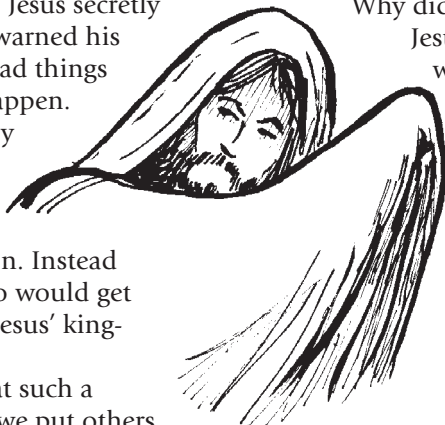
Volunteer to teach a religious education class. Can you imagine a more effective way to spread the good news than to our future generation?

from Scripture

From Scripture: Mark 9:30-37, don't be afraid to ask.

To avoid detection, Jesus secretly entered Galilee and warned his disciples about the bad things that were going to happen. Although confused by this serious turn of events, the disciples didn't ask for an explanation. Instead they argued over who would get the best position in Jesus' kingdom.

Jesus told them that such a reward comes when we put others before ourselves. In particular, our reward for caring for people who can't repay us will come straight from God. (A note for anyone in power.)



Why didn't the disciples ask Jesus to explain what was going on? Surely he would have told them what they needed to know.

Perhaps they were afraid that what he would say would make them uncomfortable or put them in danger. Don't we sometimes have the

same fears? Yet Jesus assures us that he will always tell us what we need to know so we can be with him in Heaven. All we have to do is ask.

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. 9 – St. Peter Claver (1654). A young Jesuit in Colombia in 1610, St. Peter Claver was horrified by the slave trade. He hurried down to each arriving slave ship and brought water, medicine, food, and clothing to its inmates. He taught them about God and baptized nearly 300,000 slaves.

Sept. 19 – St. Januarius (304). Bishop of Benevento, Italy, during a time of great persecution, Januarius visited Christians in prison and was arrested himself. He and his companions were thrown to wild beasts in the amphitheater but were not harmed by

the animals. They were later beheaded.

Sept. 20 – St. Andrew Kim Taegon, St. Paul Chong Hasang and companions (1839 to 1867). That Catholicism exists in Korea is due to the courage of these saints. Spreading the Gospel was difficult because almost all contact with the outside world was forbidden. Andrew and Paul, 98 Koreans and three French missionaries refused to renounce their faith or cease evangelizing and were martyred between 1839 and 1867.



Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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Publishers of Growing in Faith™ and Partners in Faith™
(540)662-7844 (540)662-7847 fax
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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible)