

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

February 2022

St. Mary's Church and St. Rita's Church
Rev. Peter DiTomasso, MSSCC, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

Want to make better decisions?

The best decisions are those made in harmony with God's will. And, a close relationship with God brings a strong sense of what He wants for us. When we grow distant and distracted, our perception of His will grows dim and the right course of action becomes less obvious. Prayer and Scripture reading help to bring clarity.



The right way to pray

Think of prayer as a focused conversation between two people who love each other. There is no one right way to pray. It is most rewarding when you talk to your loved one as often as possible, giving Him the best of your attention. Pope John Paul II said, "Pray any way you like, so long as you do pray." God is always ready to listen.

"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."
St. Teresa of Calcutta



Rediscover God's love for you

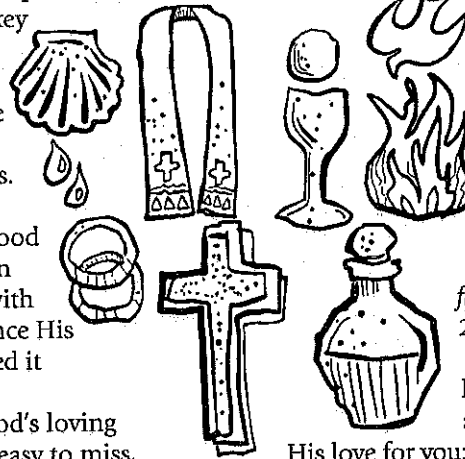
"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). In these challenging times, being grounded in God's personal, powerful love is key to staying strong, positive, at peace, and able to handle whatever happens. A time of uncertainty is a good time to strengthen our connection with God and experience His love when we need it most.

Make room. God's loving presence may be easy to miss, especially if we do more talking than listening. Sometimes prayer means we talk at God instead of to Him. It is best to listen in the silence of our hearts. In prayer, open your heart to hear what He has to say. "Speak, Lord, for your

servant is listening" (1 Sam 3:10).

Embrace the Sacraments. More than just symbols, Sacraments are personal encounters with God's unlimited love and grace. For example, in Confession, we receive Christ's powerful, healing love. In the Eucharist, we encounter Jesus and his love for us, "in the flesh" (Matthew 26:26-28) at every Mass.

Find a devotion that helps you focus on God and better understand His love for you: the Rosary, Eucharistic Adoration, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, praying novenas, reciting litanies, attending daily Mass. Devotions highlight some aspect of God's intensely personal love for us and gives us ways to respond.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics call St. James the "brother of the Lord?"

St. Mark's Gospel names St. James as one of Jesus' "brothers" (6:3). In the original languages of the Bible, "brother" included other male relatives. Additionally, tradition holds that Cleopas was St. Joseph's



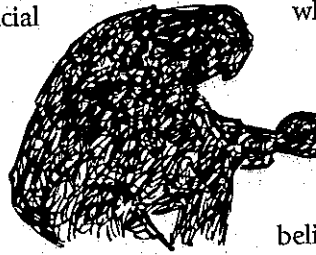
brother and James was his son, making him Jesus' cousin. Either way, the Church has always taught Mary's perpetual virginity, meaning Jesus (who was miraculously conceived) was her only child. This explains why Jesus entrusted Mary to St. John and not a sibling He didn't have (John 19:26-27).

Find peace in difficult times

If you follow news about national or world events, the reporting can rob you of peace. With stories of financial insecurity, unemployment, disease, depression, and division, how can we find peace?

Talk it out. Bringing worries into the light and confiding them to someone we trust can cut them down to size. Even better – talk about worries with God. Prayer has the added advantage of surrendering your problems into powerful hands. “Jesus, I trust in You!”

Focus on what you can do, not what you can't.



Stress results from feeling powerless. Focusing on what we can't do can “paralyze” our problem-solving abilities. Start making a list of steps you can take toward solving your problem. Whatever is beyond your control, leave to God.

Immerse yourself in God's all-powerful love. Whether we feel it or not, whether we believe it or not, we are God's precious children. He watches over us very closely. He knows what we can handle and is more than ready to help us with all the rest.

from Scripture

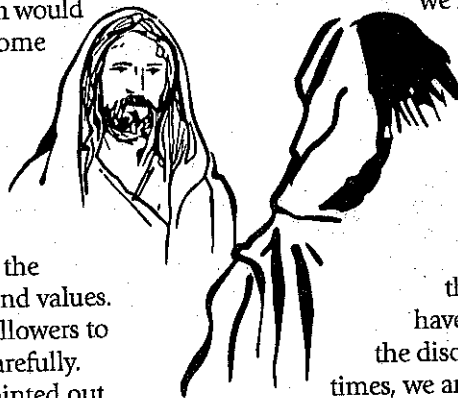
Luke 6:39-45, Fraternal correction begins with “me”

There is a danger of following someone who doesn't know the way to God. In Jesus' time, a young man would apply to a rabbi to become one of his students. The student would live with the rabbi, study with him, and assist him with his work. As a result, the student might take on the teacher's philosophy and values. Jesus cautioned His followers to choose their leaders carefully.

Then again, Jesus pointed out that it's easier to see someone else's faults and miss our own. Jesus gave the example of a man trying to warn his friend of a speck of dust in his eye, when

he himself is blind to the plank of wood in his own. Therefore, Jesus said we must first deal with our own faults before correcting others.

We are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ – God Himself – through whom we have eternal life. Like the disciples in Biblical times, we are called to stay close to Christ, let His grace transform us, and to live according to His values. Finally, we are called to bring Him to others.



Feasts & Celebrations

Feb. 2 – Presentation of the Lord. In accordance with Moses' Law, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple forty days after his birth. Simeon praised God for revealing the long-awaited Savior, saying, “Lord, now you let your servant depart in peace, according to thy word” (Luke 2:29).

Feb. 5 - St. Agatha (251). St. Agatha dedicated herself to God and kept this vow despite torture and imprisonment. God sent her a vision of St. Peter to comfort her, heal her, and fill her dungeon with heavenly light.

Feb. 22 – St. Margaret of Cortona (1297). St. Margaret's conversion came after the sudden death of the man she was having an affair with. Shaken, she repented and became a Franciscan tertiary. She founded a hospital and an order of Tertiary sisters to operate it.

Feb. 28 – Sts. Romanus and Lupicinus (460). Saint Romanus became a hermit when he was 35. Later, his brother St. Lupicinus joined him in religious life. Together they founded two monasteries and a convent.



Q & A How can we celebrate the Presentation?

The Presentation is when Jesus' parents brought Him to the Temple to consecrate Him to God, in accord with ancient Jewish Law. Celebrating the feast of the Presentation of Our Lord

began as early as the fourth century AD. **The candle connection.** We recall Simeon's prayer, in which he honored Jesus as “a light to reveal [God] to the nations” (Luke 2:32). Priests bless hundreds of candles and give them to the faithful for home use, lending this feast its other name: Candlemas.

Pancakes and crêpes are the traditional food for this day because of their light color. Treat yourself to anything that reminds you of the light and joy of this last “Christmas” feast day, like white chocolate, ice-cream, popcorn, mashed potatoes, etc.

Give back. God gave everything He had to save us because we mean everything to Him. Mary and Joseph made a ritual sacrifice in gratitude for their Son. In gratitude for His sacrifice, put something extra in the poor box at church in His honor.

Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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