

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

March 2024

St. Mary's Church and St. Rita's Church

Rev. Peter DiTomasso, MSSCC, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

Pope St. Zachary

Born to a Greek family in Calabria, Italy, St.

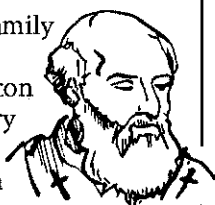
Zachary was deacon to Pope Gregory III before succeeding him as pope in 741.

As pope, St. Zachary skillfully negotiated peace for Italy several times, most notably with the Lombards and the Franks. St. Zachary supported St. Boniface's German mission, ransomed slaves sold by Venetian merchants, and supported the restoration of churches. He carried the Church through troubled times with charity, prudence, and skillful leadership.

Trust

St. (Mother) Teresa of Calcutta refused donations beyond the current needs of her community. Accepting such help would mean she didn't trust God to provide for their needs. When we rely on God, we demonstrate our faith, just as Mother Teresa did.

"God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it"
(1 Corinthians 10:13).



Finish Lent strong

The last weeks of Lent can feel like the last yards of a marathon. We're just pushing ourselves to reach the finish line of Easter. Instead, think of Lent as a time of silence, simplicity, and sacrifice that helps us become the people God wants us to be. That's the real point of Lent.

Silence: Prayer is oxygen for the soul. It is during prayer when God speaks to our hearts. Lent done right removes distractions so that our prayer is richer and our focus more attentive. It is critical to find time to be with Him in attentive silence each day.

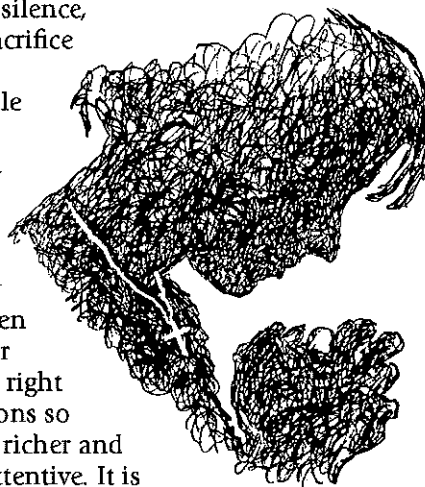
Simplicity: Avoid material clutter. Consider the six month rule – if you haven't worn it or used it in the last

six months – give it away. Not only will you help those in need, decluttering creates room in our homes and hearts for God.

Sacrifice: Through sacrifice we give back to God what we owe Him. While we can't repay Him for His gifts in equal measure, we can express gratitude with small sacrifices that show our return back to Him in gratitude and love.

Sacraments: Sacraments are the fuel for fighting evil. During Lent, these spiritual battles intensify. Weekly

Mass and monthly Confession keep up our spiritual strength. Don't fight on fumes. Fuel up with the Sacraments.

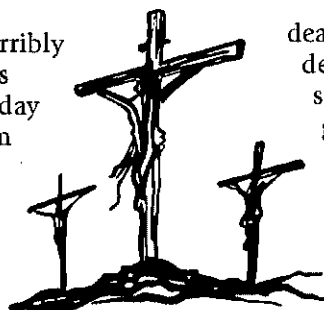


Why Do Catholics Do That?

Although it recalls a terribly sad event, Good Friday is "good" because it is the day when Jesus saved us from our sins, reconciled us with God, and reopened Heaven. Out of what seemed like defeat, God brought victory. By His

Why do Catholics call Good Friday "good"?

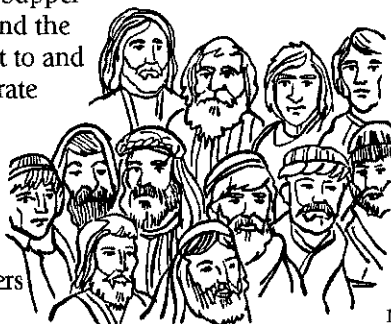
death, Jesus conquered sin and death. On Good Friday, we see more clearly God's goodness, justice, wisdom, power, and love. "God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).



"By this all men will know that you are my disciples..."

Each Triduum begins by recalling the Last Supper during which Jesus gave us the priesthood and the Eucharist as His means of remaining present to and in His Church. On Holy Thursday, we celebrate discipleship and are all asked to renew our commitment to following Jesus.

Disciples act with love. "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). True followers of Jesus know that how we treat others proves that we know Him and follow Him.



Disciples answer the call. God chooses us first, but we must answer the call. If Peter had not dropped his nets and followed Jesus, he would not have been a disciple. Discipleship involves a choice to drop everything for Him.

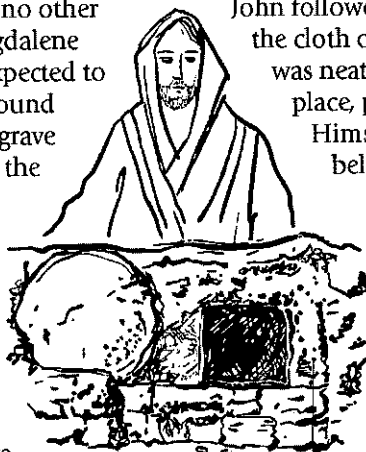
Disciples make other disciples. Ultimately, we need to do what Jesus did, which is to make more disciples. This was His final command, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). The Catholic Church's mission is to make disciples who make disciples.

from Scripture

John 20:1-9, Jesus - not death - has the last word

The Resurrection is the keystone of our Faith, making a claim no other faith can. When Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb, she expected to find a body. Instead, she found the stone rolled back, the grave clothes neatly folded, and the tomb empty. She concluded, wrongly, that thieves had taken the Lord's body, and she ran to tell Peter and John.

When Peter and John arrived, Peter entered first and also saw that the grave clothes had been left behind, not left in a heap, but neatly arranged. No grave robber would have taken the



body and left the clothes behind.

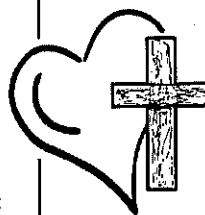
John followed Peter and saw that the cloth covering Christ's face was neatly folded in a separate place, perhaps by Christ Himself. He saw and believed.

The Resurrection proves that Christ is who He says He is. Therefore, we must give Him our final allegiance. Because Jesus rose from the dead in glory, we also have the hope of rising

in glory with Him on the Last Day. Christ - not death, sin, or evil - has the last word.

Q & A What are the Corporal Works of Mercy?

As followers of Christ, we're encouraged to care for each other. Jesus' parable of the judgment of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31-46) lists the ways we can care for those in physical need: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." (Matthew 25:35).



These are the Corporal Works of Mercy: to feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to visit the sick and imprisoned, to shelter the homeless and to bury the dead. Essentially, "it is by what they have done for the poor that Jesus Christ will recognize His chosen ones" (Catechism of the Catholic Church #2443).

The Corporal Works of Mercy are about being aware of others' needs and responding to them. Living the Corporal Works of Mercy is how we can make our love for God and others visible and effective. "Whatever you did for one of these...you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).

Feasts & Celebrations

March 8 - John of God (1550). Moved to repentance by a homily of St. John of Ávila, St. John left his career in the Portuguese military to establish a hospital for the sick and poor. After his death, his assistants formed the Brothers Hospitallers.

March 19 - St. Joseph, Husband of Mary (1st century). Jesus' earthly father and husband to the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph is a model of fatherhood and a protector of families.

March 24 - Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion (1st Century). On

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, we recall Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, when He was greeted by cheering crowds waving palms. This Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week.

March 26 - St. Margaret Clitherow (1586). St. Margaret converted to Catholicism soon after she married, when Catholicism was illegal in England. Margaret continued to practice her faith, even hiding priests in her house so they could say Mass. She remained joyful, faithful, and peaceful until her martyrdom.



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