



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

April 2025

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

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One Minute Meditations

St. Catherine of Siena

Born in 1347, St. Catherine began having divine visions as a young girl, and after much resistance from her family, she became a member of the Third Order of St. Dominic. She lived a life of solitude, prayer, poverty, mortification, and acts of charity. Her reputation for holiness spread and people began seeking her advice, especially to resolve political feuds peacefully. She is a Doctor of the Church for her works of doctrine and spiritual inspiration.

"Silent Saturday"

On Holy Saturday, also called "Silent Saturday," we recall Mary's silent waiting for Jesus' Resurrection. Waiting is part of God's plan, and He uses that time to heal and prepare our hearts for the next stage. Thank God for the seasons of waiting, as you prepare your heart and home to celebrate the joy of Easter Sunday.

Celebrate Mercy

Divine Mercy Sunday, established by Pope St. John Paul II in 2000, fulfills Jesus' request to St. Faustina Kowalska in the 1930s, calling the world to trust in His infinite mercy. It is celebrated on April 27 this year.

"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:3).

Anointed for a Mission

Living as Priest, Prophet, and King

In ancient Israel, priests and kings were anointed with oil as a sign that they were set apart for a sacred mission. In baptism, we too were anointed, marking us as belonging to Christ and sharing in His threefold office as priest, prophet, and king. As we approach our new life at Easter, we can take our proper place in His kingdom:

Priest

A priest serves as a bridge between God and humanity, offering sacrifices and interceding for others. We embrace our baptismal priesthood when we pray for others, make sacrifices on their behalf, and fully participate in the Mass with devotion and joy.

Prophet

A prophet is God's messenger, speaking the truth and calling people to conversion. A prophet's words have power because they flow from a holy life. We share in Christ's prophetic mission by living out our faith, teaching

others about God's love, and spreading the Gospel.

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

King

A true king protects, leads, and serves as a model of virtue. We fulfill our royal calling when we guide and educate others in the faith, resist sin, and strive to lead others to Christ. We are servant leaders when we build up the Church, defend what is right, and help others on their path to salvation.

By fully living our faith, actively participating in the Church, and embracing the Sacraments, we do more than follow Christ—we become His hands and voice in the world. This is our calling and our mission.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics venerate the Cross on Good Friday?

Veneration of the Cross is a devotion, traditionally observed during the Good Friday liturgy. The Church invites the faithful to bow, kneel, or in some other way venerate the image of the crucified Christ.

While physically kissing a statue may seem unusual, the act is not about the

object itself but about honoring the One it represents. Much like observing a moment of silence before a war memorial, we pause to remember and revere the greatest act of love. In this gesture, we express sorrow for sin, love for Christ, and gratitude for His saving victory.

Keep watch with Jesus

A Holy Thursday invitation

On Holy Thursday night, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives to pray. In His anguish, He turned to His disciples and asked, *"And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'So, could you not watch with me one hour?'"* (Matthew 26:40). Yet, they slept.

That same night, Jesus instituted the Eucharist, ensuring His presence would remain with us always. This Holy Thursday, set aside an hour to stay with Him.

Enter the Garden: Meditate on Matthew 26:36-46 or Luke 22:39-46. Listen to Jesus' prayer of surrender: *"Thy will be*

done" (Matthew 26:42). Make it your own, trusting that God will bring all things to fulfillment in His perfect way.

Make a spiritual Communion: St. Thomas Aquinas described this as a prayer of longing for the Eucharist when receiving it physically isn't possible. Though it cannot replace the Mass, it is deeply pleasing to God and nourishes the soul.

Simply be present: Prayer is not about many words or devotions but about being with Him. This Holy Thursday, offer Jesus your silent presence—attentive, open, and watchful—for He is always present to you.

from Scripture

John 20:19-31, "Doubting" Thomas believes

The two Resurrection appearances of Jesus to His disciples in this passage highlight God's merciful love. The first appearance was on Easter Sunday. He could have abandoned them, just as they had abandoned Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, but He didn't. Instead, Jesus appeared to them and gave them His peace, His Spirit, and the power to forgive sins in His name.

The second visit was for St. "Doubting" Thomas, who wasn't there the first time. He refused to believe that Jesus was really risen, despite the evidence of several eyewitnesses.

He demanded physical proof. Jesus appeared in the Upper Room and invited him to touch Him. St. Thomas, moved to faith, cried out, *"My Lord and my God!"* (John 20:28).

This passage reminds us we can always bring our doubts, fears, and need for forgiveness to God, especially on this Sunday — Divine Mercy Sunday. To the disciples who abandoned Him, Jesus extended His peace and forgiveness. For St. Thomas who had been struggling with doubt, Jesus came in person to strengthen his faith. "Jesus, I trust in You!"

Q & A

How can I be sure that I am discerning God's will in prayer?

God calls all of us to greater holiness, deeper intimacy with Him and greater charity for others. If you feel God is calling you, consider the "roots and fruits" more carefully before responding.

While the Holy Spirit often works through our "holy imagination," not everything that pops into our heads is from Him. God will never tell us to sin or contradict Church teachings, and His voice is always gentle (if firm) and brings a deep peace that remains, even when our emotions and situations change.

Assuming the "roots" are good, you can take the first steps in answering the call. Examples of "good fruits" would be an increase in virtue, greater attraction to the Sacraments, a concrete change in how we treat others, and even a change of heart in others.

It's always good to find a good spiritual director when discerning "big" decisions, e.g., a vocation. Be at peace: if you are seeking God's will in good faith, He will direct you where you need to be.

Feasts & Celebrations

April 13 – Palm Sunday. On Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, we recall Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, when He was greeted by crowds waving palms and cheering, *"Hosanna to the Son of David!"* (Matthew 21:9). This Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week.

April 16 – St. Joseph Benedict Labré (1783). Nicknamed "the poor man of the Forty Hours (Eucharistic) devotion," St. Benedict lived most of his life as a poor pilgrim. When he wasn't in church, he lived on the streets, in poverty and absorbed in prayer.

April 25 – St. Mark the Evangelist

(First Century). St. Mark wrote the second Gospel based on St. Peter's perspective and accompanied Saints Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journey in Cyprus. He is credited with founding the Church of Alexandria.

April 27 – Divine Mercy Sunday. Jesus promised St. Faustina that those who receive the Sacrament of Confession and the Eucharist on this day will receive complete forgiveness of sins and punishment—a grace akin to baptism. This extraordinary gift highlights God's desire to wipe away our past and renew us in His love.

April 28 – St. Louis de Montfort (1716). A French priest with a passion for preaching the Gospel, St. Louis had a special devotion to the Blessed Mother, and his True Devotion to Mary is widely popular today.

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