

Growing in FAITH™

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

May 2025

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

One Minute Meditations

St. Augustine of Canterbury

St. Augustine was an Italian Benedictine monk who, with forty other monks, was sent to re-evangelize England. The Celtic population had already accepted Christ, but the incoming Anglo-Saxons hadn't. St. Augustine and his companions arrived at Ebbsfleet in 597, and were, thankfully, welcomed by King Ethelbert of Kent, who gave them permission to preach the Gospel. He also later converted. St. Augustine and his companions successfully converted southern England. He is called the "Apostle of England."

Happy Pentecost!

On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on the Blessed Mother and the Apostles in the Upper Room, in a display of divine glory. The Holy Spirit continues to guide the Church, just as He inspired the first Apostles to go preach to the ends of the earth. How might He be guiding you? (We celebrate Pentecost on June 8, this year.)

"Be the one"

"Be with Jesus. ... I always write that sentence, 'I looked for one to comfort Me, but I found no one.' Then I write, 'Be the one.' So now you be that one. Try to be the one to share with Him, to comfort Him, to console Him. So let us ask Our Lady to help us understand."

Mother Teresa

"Be not afraid"

What God wants most for each of us is to be happy with Him in Heaven. He uses the world to shape us and give us qualities that will help us get there untainted by sin. *"Indeed, like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand ..."* (Jeremiah 18:6). Sometimes that means allowing us to undergo trials that cleanse and strengthen us.

Don't judge a gift by its ugly wrapping paper. Some virtues can only be acquired through hardship. Avoiding discomfort will cause you to miss out on experiences God wants you to have. While they may be uncomfortable, God would remove them at once if they weren't good for your soul.

"Pray, hope and don't worry." This famous advice from St. Pio of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio) is both comforting and practical. Many of tomorrow's troubles exist only in our minds. Live your trust in God by refusing to think about what might

happen and instead deal with what is happening right now. Refuse to worry. *"Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span?"* (Matthew 6:27).

"Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

Accept aid. When overwhelmed, we may overlook the help God is already providing, mistakenly believing we must face challenges alone. This mindset can lead to pride — the temptation to act without God.

Instead, stay open to help from others, seek guidance in Scripture and Church teachings, and remain rooted in prayer and the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist. Once your storm passes, you'll be prepared to support others through theirs.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

In the well-known Marian apparitions approved by the Church — Guadalupe, Lourdes, Fatima, and Kibeho — the Blessed Virgin Mary's appearance seems to adapt to the local culture of those to whom she appears, while her central message remains consistent: a call to prayer, repentance and renewed devotion to the Faith.

For example, the miraculous image

Why do Catholics have different images of the Blessed Mother?

of Our Lady of Guadalupe features symbolic elements that the Aztec people would have understood, communicating the Gospel message in a way that resonated within their cultural context. This adaptation of Mary's appearance underscores her closeness to the communities she visits, reflecting the profound truth of her spiritual motherhood of all Christians.

The Ascension brings us closer to Jesus

The Ascension might have felt like a moment of separation to Jesus' disciples, but in reality, it brought them closer to Him in a deeper spiritual connection. Through His Ascension, Jesus became spiritually present everywhere, continually interceding on our behalf. He is always thinking of us, presenting our needs to the Father. When we pray, we are never alone—Jesus Himself is praying with us and for us.

Prayer "power-up." Prayer doesn't have to feel good to be good prayer. It can be a real struggle to pray throughout the day, to stay focused on God, and not get distracted. That's when we can lean on Jesus' perfect prayer to the Father. We

can join our prayers to His, and know they are pleasing to God.

Offer it up. Whether it involves suffering, fulfilling a necessary duty, or performing an act of charity, when we unite these actions with Jesus' self-offering on the Cross, they gain profound spiritual significance and immeasurable value for souls — especially our own.

Mass intentions. During Holy Communion or right after Mass, take a moment to present your concerns, and your desires to God, dedicating them to the service and glory of His love. Remember, God is never outdone in generosity!

from Scripture

John 14:23-29, "I am with you always."

This Gospel reading comes from Jesus' farewell discourse at the Last Supper. As He prepared to face His Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension, Jesus sought to strengthen His disciples, a close-knit group who had followed Him for three years. In this poignant moment, He reassured them of His continued presence, even after His departure. Before ascending to Heaven, Jesus promised, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20).

Jesus' message was clear: although His followers would no longer see Him physically, He would remain invisibly but powerfully present. If they kept His word, both He and the Father would

dwell within them through grace. Furthermore, He promised to send the Holy Spirit as a guide and comforter, granting them the gift of His peace and the assurance of His return.

It is natural to feel that being faithful would be easier if we could see and hear Jesus directly. Yet, He remains present in His Church—in her worship, prayer, sacraments, and acts of charity.

Above all, Jesus is profoundly present in the Eucharist, where His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity are truly present (CCC, #1374). We do not need to look back in time; we encounter Jesus at every Mass.

Q & A

How can I make a consecration to Mary?

The Marian Consecration, or *Total Consecration to Mary*, is a devotion dating back to the 1700s, introduced by St. Louis de Montfort. It involves entrusting one's life to Jesus through the Blessed Mother. This practice has been highly praised by many saints and popes, including Pope St. John Paul II.

Marian consecration does not involve worshipping Mary or treating her as divine. Instead, it acknowledges that Mary, as Christ's mother, always leads us to her Son. Mary serves as a bridge, guiding us closer to Jesus by the safest and most direct route.

On the Cross, Jesus gave His mother to humanity, saying, "Behold your mother" (John 19:26-27). St. John Paul II saw this as an invitation to deeper intimacy with Christ by drawing closer to the one closest to Him on earth.

Many who practice the consecration experience a deeper, more transformative prayer life, drawing closer to both Mary and Jesus. (Note: Catholic websites like EWTN and the National Shrine of St. Louis de Montfort provide free downloadable versions and instructions.)

Feasts & Celebrations

May 3 – Sts. Philip and James (First Century). St. Philip was born in Bethsaida and followed John the Baptist before he followed Christ. After the Ascension, St. Philip preached in Asia Minor, where he was martyred. St. James, the son of Alphaeus, was also one of the twelve Apostles.

May 12 – Sais Nereus and Achilleus (d.c.100). Little is known about the early lives of Saints Nereus and Achilleus. They were Roman soldiers of the Praetorian Guard but converted to Christianity. They resigned the army, refusing to serve the Emperor. They

were exiled from Rome to the island of Terracina and were beheaded.

May 29 – Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord (1st Century). Today marks the completion of Jesus' mission of salvation and his triumphant entry into Heaven. Note: In many dioceses, observance of Ascension has been moved to the following Sunday.

May 29 – Pope St. Paul VI (1978). Born in 1897, near Brescia, Italy, Giovanni Battista Montini spent most of his priesthood working for the Vatican. He was elected pope in 1963 and concluded the Second Vatican Council, went on many apostolic missions, and wrote several significant encyclicals. He died in 1978.

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