

Growing in FAITH™

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

August 2011

One Minute Meditations

Quiet service

In the service of God not everyone is called to lead. There are times when we are to take a

background role and go unnoticed. No matter. When we serve with love, our service can be as important as that of the most prominent apostle.

Forgiveness, again

Jesus certainly had reason to harbor a grudge. He was falsely accused, unjustly imprisoned, cruelly murdered. Yet he forgave everyone and wants us to do the same.

Holding a grudge gives power over our life to the offending person or situation. As we let go of the grudge, that power disappears. Instead, there is room for compassion and understanding. That's what Jesus wants for us.

LAITY: The faithful who, having been incorporated into Christ through Baptism, are made part of the people of God, the Church.

The laity participate in their own way in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church)



What can you do with good old "Catholic Guilt"?

Our so-called "Catholic guilt" is actually a healthy warning signal that alerts us when something in our relationship with God needs fixing. When dealt with in positive ways, guilt can be good.

Get rid of it. Guilt is like a hot potato. It's not pleasant to hold for long. The idea is to get rid of it quickly.

Find the source. Examine your conscience and find the source. Then confess it during the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Remember: God always forgives even if people don't.

Make things right. Key to overcoming guilt is to make things right, but that is easier in some situations than others. Ask your priest for suggestions, if necessary.

Learn from your mistakes. Review what went wrong and resolve not to let it happen again. Remember how uncomfortable it was to carry guilt and how great it felt when the burden was lifted. Seal your commitment with the penance you receive from the priest.

The bad kind of guilt. Guilt is supposed to be a temporary feeling to nudge us back on track. Feeling constant shame that isn't associated with a corresponding sin is

unreasonable. If that's what you are feeling, try to identify the source. Are there people in your life skilled at making you feel guilty? If unsure, ask a priest or religious for help.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Often pictured as chubby cherubs with wings, angels are actually powerful beings who have been present since creation. They are spirits who act as God's servants and messengers and dwell with God in Heaven.

Angels are purely spiritual



Why do Catholics believe in angels?

creatures with intelligence and will, and are splendid and immortal. Some angelic duties recorded in Scripture have included announcing and assisting prophets, leading God's people out of danger, and announcing important births. In fact, the angel Gabriel announced the birth of Jesus, himself.

3 Ways to share Christ in your community

Pope John Paul II once said that those of us who know Christ can't keep him for ourselves. "We must proclaim him." Try these ideas for proclaiming Christ in your community:

Vote. When we cast our votes, we bring Christian principles into our local, state, or federal governments. To build a more just and compassionate society, look for candidates who most closely represent our Catholic values.

Speak with love. "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).



Our culture tells us it's funny to make jokes at others' expense or interesting to gossip. Instead, use Christ-speech, which is always positive.

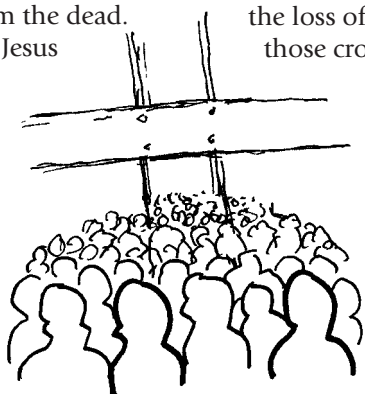
Spend responsibly. As consumers we can bring Christ to the marketplace by buying products that have been produced responsibly. Ask your retailer for information about how and by whom the products sold were made. If you don't like the answer, shop elsewhere. (For more information, go to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' website www.usccb.org social justice section.)

from Scripture

Matthew 16:21-27, Jesus predicts his Passion.

Jesus told the Apostles he must suffer, die, and be raised from the dead. When Peter objected, Jesus rebuked him. He explained that to be his disciples we must take up our cross and follow him.

Jesus never promised us, his followers, worldly success. We are not promised wealth, good health, constant bliss, or an easy life. The only thing Jesus promised us for this life is a cross. Most of us will have many crosses in our lives. Our crosses can take many



forms: an illness, the death of a loved one, the loss of a job. Actually we'd have those crosses whether or not we follow Jesus.

By denying ourselves, picking up our cross, and following Jesus, we will be joining ourselves to Jesus. That is how we can show our faith in God. Jesus will help us carry our cross by giving us his strength.

When others see how our faith carries us through our trials, it can help them come to Jesus. We evangelize by how we live our lives. In the process we gain eternal life.

Feasts & Celebrations

August 13 – Pope St. Pontian (235). Pontian spent most of his papacy defeating heresy and battling an antipope, Hippolytus, with whom he later reconciled. During the Roman persecution of the Church, Pontian and Hippolytus were exiled to the mines in Sardinia where they were martyred.

August 19 – St. John Eudes (1680). Born on a farm in Normandy, France, John was priest and missionary in the Diocese of Seez. Concerned with the state of the clergy, he instituted reforms and started seminaries. John

is best known for promoting the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary (Eudists).

August 25 – St. Louis of France (1270). After two reigns of violence, King Louis IX brought peace and justice to France. He improved the tax system and reformed laws, founded hospitals and visited their sick. He protected the rights of the common people. He died of typhus in a crusade against Muslim advances in Syria.



Q & A How can I resist temptation?

There is only one effective way to resist temptation and that is to say "no." But that is easier said than done.



Try these ideas for help:

Make a list of what most often leads you into sin. Do you have friends who love to gossip? Do you drink too much with coworkers? Do you spend too much money at the mall? Write your list down and make it complete. Then decide to reject each item on the list.

Practice saying "no" when you are alone. Say it out loud if you have to. Don't offer explanations. Just make it a "no." "I don't do that." "That's not me."

Remove yourself from temptation. In the Old Testament story of Joseph, his boss's wife "looked at him with longing" and followed him around but Joseph "would not agree to lie with her or even be near her" (Genesis 39:10). Avoid the gossiping friends, go straight home from work, stay away from the mall.

There is nothing more important than avoiding sin.

Our Mission

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Pray continuously

People who pray can face stressful and threatening times peacefully. Now is the ideal time to show parishioners how to boost prayer, enliven faith, increase love, and bring hope.



Lead Scripture-based lives

Every issue includes a research-based interpretation of a Gospel reading with suggestions for how to live its lessons. (Sources for this feature all carry the approval of the Catholic Church.)

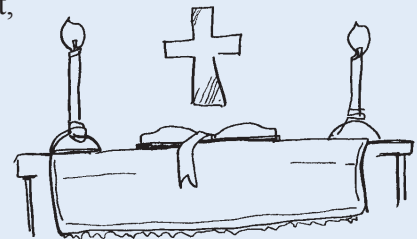


Learn about the Catholic faith

Many Catholics know the rituals of the Church, but aren't familiar with their underlying truths and revelations. Help parishioners learn the dogma behind the Church's formulas, and the traditions that enrich their practice.

Strengthen devotion to the Sacraments

Show parishioners how to celebrate the Sacraments as opportunities to experience God's presence in the world. Readers will be inspired to participate more fully in the Eucharist, and to treasure the gift of all the Sacraments.



Put faith into action

Pope John Paul II wrote, "Those who come into genuine contact with Christ cannot keep him for themselves, they must proclaim him." Readers will learn of the many ways to proclaim Christ, including acts of mercy, forgiveness, charity, and evangelization.

Readers can expect articles like these in future issues of *Growing in Faith*:

Becoming more prayerful

The peace the rosary brings ● Finding more time in the day for prayer ● How the saints prayed ● The three most effective forms of personal prayer ● Keeping company with Christ ● Prayer - the best way to combat worry.

Strengthening devotion to Sacraments

Making a better confession ● How to get more out of the Mass ● Baptism: New life and new ways of living ● When to ask for the Anointing of the Sick ● Sacrifice and Sacrament ● Confirmation and the Holy Spirit.

Learn more about Catholic worship

The Communion of Saints ● What are Precepts of the Church ● Why observe Holy Days of Obligation ● Getting practical help from the Bible ● Feast days and celebrations ● What is Sacred Tradition?

Putting Faith into Action

Jesus calls us to love ● The power of spiritual acts of mercy ● Why forgive? ● Who are the poor in spirit? ● Maintaining our Catholic identity ● Putting Christ back into Christmas ● Showing the face of kindness.

... and much more!

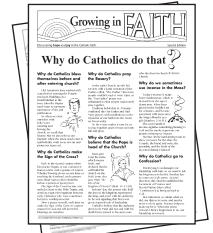
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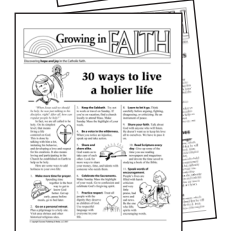
Why Do Catholics Do That?

Authoritative answers to questions Catholics ask about our faith practices. Readers will learn why we bless ourselves before and after entering the church, why we confess our sins to a priest, the meaning of the Sign of Peace, and more. \$20 value. Reproducible.



30 Ways to Live a Holier Life

Actually, more than 30 encouraging, upbeat and practical ways to love and participate in the Church Jesus established to help us be holy and happy. \$20 value. Reproducible for all parishioners.



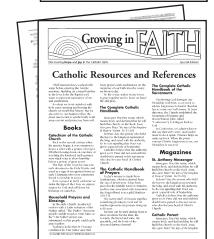
Finding the Joy in Daily Prayer

Hands-on tips to help Catholics build a stronger prayer life. Identifies four myths about prayer and gives examples of how to build a strong relationship with God through prayer. \$20 value. Yours to reproduce.



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Books, magazines, and websites that will enrich the Catholic library of any home. All suggestions are orthodox and all publications carry the approval of the Catholic Church. \$20 value. Reproducible for all parishioners.



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