

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

August 2024

Gathered in Christ's Love

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One Minute Meditations

St. John Vianney

Difficulties with his studies almost cost St. John Vianney the

priesthood.

Ordained because of his goodness, he had a gift for reading souls. As the Curé (pastor) of Ars, France, he was confronted with people who were indifferent to Christ and comfortable in their lifestyles. To remedy this, he spent many hours fasting and praying. He spent as many as sixteen hours a day hearing confessions. His spiritual insight and good example reclaimed thousands of lapsed Catholics.



Don't avoid the fight

The ongoing battle for holiness can wear us down. The truth is that even if we fall a thousand times, we fight with Christ by our side. The effort pleases Him more than an easy and comfortable victory. He reminds us: Everyone who wants to be His disciple must take up their cross and follow Him.

"God dwells in our midst, in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar."

St. Maximilian Kolbe



Savor the fullness of Scripture

"To get the full flavor of an herb, it must be pressed between the fingers; so it is the same with the Scriptures. If you want to get the full flavor of the Scriptures, crush them by reading and meditation."

St. John Chrysostom. Immerse yourself in God's Word to grow in holiness in this life and be happy in the next. Here's how:

Get a Catholic Bible: Ensure you have a Catholic Bible, which contains all the inspired books. The Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition (RSVce) is an excellent choice, offering clear translations and helpful footnotes. It's also available online.

Read and listen: The Holy Spirit is

the ultimate guide to understanding Scripture. Pray for His guidance (John 16:13) and pay attention when a verse or word stands out to you.

Reflect on these moments as they often serve as conversation starters with God in prayer.

Savor slowly: Praying with Scripture is like enjoying a fine meal. Take it slowly, savoring small portions to fully appreciate its richness. Choose a random or favorite verse and meditate on it deeply.

Keep a record: It's not necessary to journal daily, but keeping a regular prayer journal helps document lessons, thoughts, and Bible verses that strike you from your time in prayer. This "oasis" can be a source of encouragement during tough times.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics have seven Sacraments?

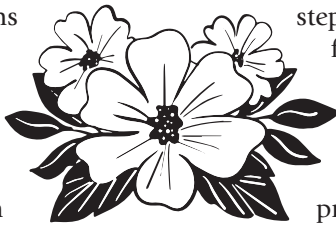
Sacraments are "efficacious signs, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church" to convey grace (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*). Grace is a share in God's divine life. Just as food, rest, and medicine maintain our bodies, the Sacraments maintain our



souls. The number of Sacraments was fixed at seven by the Council of Trent on March 3, 1547. These are Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Confession, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and Anointing of the Sick. Each has its roots in the New Testament Scriptures.

Use distractions to reconnect with God

The strain of a busy life can distract us from making holiness our focus. Yet, we have no hope of achieving holiness or true happiness unless God remains our focus. Pope Francis reminds us, "If the events of our life... risk suffocating the gift of prayer within us, it is enough to contemplate a starry sky, a sunset, a flower, to reignite the spark of thanksgiving." Use moments of distraction as opportunities to reconnect with God.



problem, it's okay to pause and troubleshoot. If discouragement dominates your thoughts and prayers, step outside yourself. Go for a walk, chat with a friend, read a psalm, or pray for the souls in Purgatory. These actions can help shift your focus and renew your perspective.

Cultivate holy wonder: Appreciating the beauty of creation can be a natural gateway to prayer. Stroll through a park, admire the flowers, or listen to the birds and the wind. Such beauty often reconnects us to God when words fail.

Combat tunnel vision: When confronted with a

from Scripture

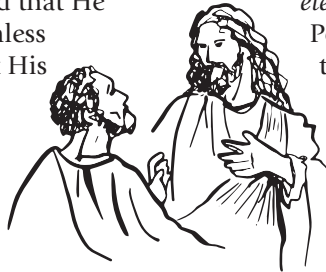
John 6:60-69, Live-giving truth

The sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel is foundational for Catholic understanding of the Eucharist. In this reading, Jesus declared that He is the Bread of Life and unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood, we will not have eternal life.

Jewish dietary laws strictly prohibited the consumption of blood, making Jesus' offer of His own shocking and offensive. His listeners failed to see beyond the graphic interpretation of His words and many abandoned Him.

Even the Apostles were troubled by this teaching. Yet, when Jesus asked if

they too would leave, Peter spoke for the group, saying, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).



Peter recognized the divine truth and life-giving power in Jesus' teachings, despite their challenging nature.

As followers of Christ, we are reminded to echo Peter's words:

"Master, you have the words of eternal life." This chapter not only emphasizes the importance of the Eucharist in Catholic faith but also highlights the need for trust and faith in Jesus' teachings, even when they are hard to understand.

Q & A

How do saints pray?

What do "holy people's" prayers sound like? We imagine sublime and poetic musings on God's perfection. In fact, the saints, while very holy, are also human and intimate with God. Here's a brief glimpse into some saintly prayers to inspire your own:

"If this is how you treat your friends, no wonder you have so few!" St. Teresa of Avila uttered this humorous phrase after being



thrown from her cart into the mud. It reflects her candid and down-to-earth relationship with God.

"Beware of Philip, Lord. He may yet betray you." St. Philip Neri, known for his wisdom, humor, and impulsive nature, knew his own weaknesses.

Rather than make excuses for himself, he confessed his errors and asked for increased graces to remain faithful to God.

"Jesus, may I put on a good face!" This prayer was recommended by St. Josemaría Escrivá to someone tasked with an "unpleasant and repulsive" chore. St. Josemaría said that sometimes the hardest cross can be fulfilling our toughest responsibilities with "a good face."

Feasts & Celebrations

August 12 - St. Jane Frances de Chantal (1641). Born wealthy in Dijon, France, Jane married the Baron de Chantal and had four children. Widowed after only seven years, she founded the Order of the Visitation with St. Francis de Sales, for those unable to enter a convent.

August 15 - Solemnity of the Assumption. Declared a dogma of faith in 1950 by Pope Pius XII, this celebrates Mary's being taken up into Heaven body and soul at the end of her life. Today is a holy

day of obligation.

August 19 - St. John Eudes (1680). Born on a farm in Normandy, France, John became a priest and parish missionary. He founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary (Eudists) in 1643 to promote devotion to the Sacred and Immaculate Hearts.

Aug. 24 - St. Bartholomew the Apostle (1st Century). Bartholomew is thought by some scholars to be the Apostle, Nathanael (John 1:46). After Jesus's Ascension, Nathanael spread Christianity to India and Armenia, where he was martyred.



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To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible)