

Growing in FAITH™

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

March 2015

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Macedonia, OH 44056

One Minute Meditations

St. Agnes of Bohemia

Imagine refusing marriage proposals from not one but two kings and the Holy Roman Emperor. For Agnes, daughter of Queen Constance and King Ottokar I, none but the King of Heaven could win her heart. In 1236, after financing the construction of a Poor Clare monastery in Prague, she entered this monastery with seven other noblewomen. Agnes became known for prayer, obedience and mortification. She turned her back on her fortune and embraced poverty and kindness.



Year of Consecrated Life

Pope Francis declared this the Year of Consecrated Life. Celebrate the Church's treasure of those in consecrated life. (See www.usccb.org for details.)

"Dear brothers and sisters, may (the) Lenten season find the whole Church ready to bear witness to all those who live in material, moral and spiritual destitution, the Gospel message of the merciful love of God our Father, who is ready to embrace everyone in Christ."

Pope Francis



Follow the Holy Spirit to Heaven

During Lent, Catholics everywhere sharpen their consciences to prepare for Easter. As temples of the Holy Spirit, it is critical that we keep ourselves in mint condition. Nevertheless, even the most diligent caretaker can miss something. Fortunately, we have the Holy Spirit to assist with our Spring tune-up.

Give God full attention.

Whether it's by meditating on the limitless nature of

his love, or by making sacrifices like turning off music or TV to better hear the whispering of the Holy Spirit (1 Kings 19:12), occasional silence is essential to learn how the Holy Spirit wants to work in our lives.

Read love letters from the Lord. Since

humans were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the Bible, studying it is like having a conversation with the Lord. What better way could there be

to strengthen our relationship with him than by reading and meditating on his very words?

Open the floodgates of grace. Growth in our relationship with God comes through grace.

For example, we obtain grace by receiving him in the Eucharist at Mass, or

obtaining guidance and forgiveness from him in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. The means by which we may receive grace are endless. The Holy Spirit guides the Catholic Church, so it makes sense to make the Holy Spirit our guide, too.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

The word "lord" refers to someone having power or authority. When we call Jesus, "Lord," we acknowledge his power over sin and death as evidenced by his Crucifixion and Resurrection. We dedicate ourselves to his service.



Why do Catholics call Jesus, "Lord"?

"The New Testament uses this full sense of the title 'Lord' both for the Father and...for Jesus, who is thereby recognized as God himself" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #446). Therefore, Christians bend our knees to him as our Lord and no one else.

Accept your gifts from the Holy Spirit

To guide us in our spiritual growth, the Holy Spirit offers us gifts of sanctifying grace. These gifts perfect basic virtues that will lead us to Heaven. When properly used, we stay focused on God.

Wisdom: This gift helps us stay focused on God's will and his plan for us.

Understanding: Lets us grasp truths. It means seeing with the heart, not just the mind.

Counsel: Also called "right judgment," counsel enables us to weigh all the alternatives to make the right choice.



Fortitude: The ability to remain firm against all pressures. (Also called courage.)

Knowledge: A person with knowledge sees more than one dimension of an issue to determine the right path.

Piety: Helps us think of ourselves as children of God and be eager to serve him.

Fear of the Lord: The wonder and awe God inspires encourages us to respect him and all his creations.

Accepting these gifts means identifying and using them. Just don't forget to call on the Holy Spirit for guidance when you do.

from Scripture

Mark 14:1-15, 47, Make Jesus' Passion our own.

It is important to recall the events of Jesus' Passion. It is even more important to share in his suffering and great love during his Passion.

St. Paul said, *"We hold this treasure in earthen vessels ... always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body"* (2 Corinthians 4:7-10).

He means that everything that happens in our lives – the good and the bad – can be part of our bond with Jesus.

Every day our frustrations, our fears, our loneliness, our temptations, can

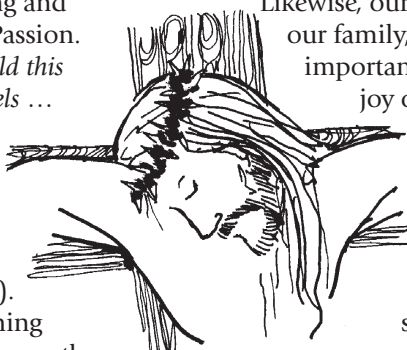
become ways in which we share in the suffering and death of Christ.

Likewise, our joys, our good health, our family, our friends, are all important ways to share in the joy of his Resurrection. The

point is to offer everything to Christ.

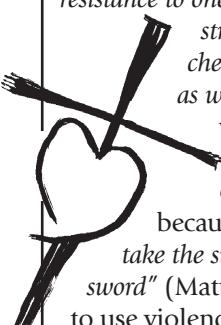
St. Alphonsus wrote, "We should consider not so much the sorrows Jesus suffered as the love with which he bore

them." Disciples of Jesus can have the same attitude toward suffering as he did and can share in his joy of Resurrection.



Q & A Are Christians required to be pacifists?

Jesus told his disciples, *"... offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on (your) right cheek, turn the other one to him as well"* (Matthew 5:39). He



wanted his disciples to strive for peace when confronted with violence because he knew that *"all who take the sword will perish by the sword"* (Matthew 26:52). We are never to use violence to solve problems.

That doesn't mean, however, that we are required to stand by while others attempt to deny either the individual citizen or particular governments fundamental rights, including that of self-defense. War can be morally justified as a last resort but we should do everything possible to avoid war before it starts.

Certainly Christians must speak out against acts that provoke war. Too, we are required to fight racial, ethnic and religious discrimination. Better still, when we fight injustice, we actually work to promote peace. That's the Christian way. In fact, Jesus turned the violence of the Cross into the ultimate act of love.

Feasts & Celebrations

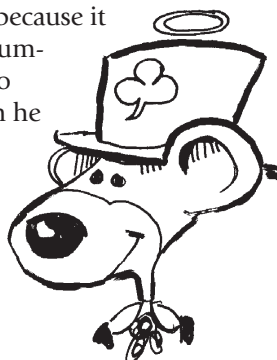
March 9 – St. Frances of Rome (1440). Although she preferred a life of service, Frances' parents selected a nobleman as her husband. She and a new sister-in-law formed a society of women to serve the poor. Frances continued to honor her family and serve the poor.

March 17 – St. Patrick (493). Born in Scotland, St. Patrick was kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave. He escaped but later returned as bishop of Ireland and is credited for establishing the Church there.

March 23 – St. Toribio de Mogrovejo

(1606). A brilliant scholar, he was working as a professor when chosen to lead the archdiocese of Lima in Peru. He was ordained priest and bishop and worked to strengthen his diocese.

March 29 – Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion. The Sunday before Easter is called Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion because it recalls Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem when he was greeted by crowds waving palms and cheering. It marks the beginning of Holy Week.



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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)

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