

Growing in FAITH™

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

March 2025

St Mark Church - St James Church

Emporium - Driftwood Pennsylvania

One Minute Meditations

St. Agnes of Bohemia

Imagine refusing marriage proposals from 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. Elected abbess, she continued to perform the lowliest tasks in the community. She exchanged letters with St. Clare of Assisi, which survive today.

Scripture is God's love letter

Sacred Scripture isn't just a record of events that happened long ago but is intended for us today. When we read the Bible through the lens of Church teaching, we see God revealing the ways of the love of His heart for each of us, "back then" and still today.

"And what is the secret of perseverance? Love.

Fall in Love, and you will not leave him." —St.

Josemaría Escrivá

Cultivate a heart for Lent

Just as an experienced gardener prepares the soil before planting to ensure healthy growth, we must prepare the "soil" of our hearts during Lent. This season invites us to clear away obstacles that hinder our relationship with God and nourish our spirits through prayer and the Sacraments. By doing so, we cultivate the "good fruits" that lead to a renewed and vibrant spiritual life.

Uproot the Weeds: Studies suggest that forming a new habit takes at least three weeks, depending on its nature. Begin by uprooting unhealthy habits and replacing them with holy, life-giving practices. Start small but be consistent — like waking up just five or ten minutes earlier to pray. Even small acts of self-discipline build the spiritual strength needed to face greater

challenges, including temptations.

Nourish the Soil: Spiritual growth isn't possible without grace. Mother Teresa, despite her incredible work, insisted on a daily Holy Hour, affirming, "How can we last even one day living our life without hearing Jesus say, 'I love you' — impossible." Follow her example by creating and following a routine of daily prayer, weekly Mass, and monthly Confession.

Preserve the Fruits: Commit to practices that bring new life, like choosing kindness over gossip, and prayer over screen time. By nurturing these habits, you'll encounter Jesus' love more deeply and reflect that love to others.

As we journey through Lent, may our hearts become fertile ground where faith, hope, and love can blossom abundantly.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics give something up for Lent?

Catholics around the world make sacrifices during Lent to remind us that God is greater than anything the world can offer. By giving up small comforts or practicing acts of self-denial, we acknowledge that every good gift comes from Him. The sacrifice serves to remind us.

True love requires sacrifice. God demonstrated this perfectly by giving His only Son for our salvation (John 3:16). Our Lenten sacrifices help us imitate this divine love. By uniting our sacrifices with Christ's ultimate sacrifice on the Cross, we become more like Him.

The virtue that leads to a balanced life

Prudence is the virtue of wise decision-making, guiding us to apply moral principles in everyday life with clarity and integrity. It empowers us to navigate complex situations with fairness and sound judgment.

Act justly and fairly by treating others with justice, free from favoritism or prejudice. For example, when caring for children, prudence ensures we give equal attention to each child, fostering an atmosphere of respect and equality.

Balance courage and caution by finding the middle ground between fear and recklessness. Prudence empowers us to make bold yet responsible choices. For

example, taking out a mortgage for a comfortable home is a prudent investment, whereas going into excessive debt to impress others is not.

Master desires and avoid greed to keep from becoming enslaved by life’s pleasures. This virtue helps us avoid excessive consumption. Prudence allows us to appreciate good food, fine entertainment, or the latest technology without falling into excessive consumption.

Prudence brings us practical wisdom. When we practice prudence, we not only make better decisions but also move closer to living a balanced, fulfilling life.

from Scripture

John 9:1-41, Faith gives us true sight

In this Gospel reading, Jesus cured a blind man on the Sabbath by making mud and smearing it on the man’s eyes. This cure was two-fold; the man received both physical sight and the sight of faith. As he was being questioned by the Pharisees, his understanding of who Jesus was moved from knowing Him as simply a man, to acclaiming Him as a prophet, and finally, to worshipping Him as the Son of God.

While the faith of the cured man progresses, the spiritual sight of

the Pharisees does the opposite. In their anger, they were blinded to the truth—that the curing of the blind man was God’s work. Furious that Jesus failed to observe the Sabbath, they refused to believe that the man had been blind from birth and had been healed by Jesus.

In Baptism, we are given the gift of faith—the ability to “see” God and our life in relation to him. The longer we follow Jesus and learn from Him, the better we understand Him. However, through sin, we can become spiritually blind.

Q & A Why don’t I feel better after Confession?

After Confession, many feel lighter, more peaceful. Other times, we may feel no change, or even sadness. Still, we are forgiven. Here’s how to find peace.

Make amends: That lingering unease might be God’s gentle nudge to make things right. Forgiveness is given in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, but healing continues through restitution. If you confessed to stealing \$20, you’re forgiven—but you still need to return it. Making amends completes the reconciliation process.

Reject false guilt: “Healthy” guilt alerts us to sin, like a burglar alarm. Once you’ve confessed, the alarm should turn off. If guilt lingers, recognize it as a temptation to doubt God’s mercy. God doesn’t hold grudges and neither should you. If you’re struggling, seek help from a priest, counselor, or trusted Catholic friend.

Then do what pleases Him most – be still and let Him love you.

Feasts & Celebrations

March 6 - St. Colette (1447). St. Colette was born in Corbie, France. She was orphaned at seventeen and gave her inheritance to the poor. She later became a Franciscan Tertiary and later reformed the Poor Clares. She founded seventeen convents under the reformed rule.

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

March 19 – St. Joseph, Husband of Mary. Jesus’ earthly foster father and husband to the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph is a model of fatherhood and protector of families.

March 20 – St. Cuthbert (687). St. Cuthbert joined the Benedictines at the Melrose Abbey. For his holiness, fervor and charity, he was made abbot of the Lindisfarne Abbey. He retired to be a hermit.

March 25 – the Annunciation. The angel Gabriel visited the Blessed Virgin Mary with the extraordinary news of her role as the mother of God. Even at her young age, she had complete confidence in God’s grace and trusted in his wisdom.

Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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