

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

September 2024

St Mark Church - St James Church

Emporium - Driftwood Pennsylvania

One Minute Meditations

St. Peter Claver

Born into a farming family in Spain in 1580, St. Peter joined the Jesuits at the age of twenty and was ordained in 1615. While serving in Colombia in 1610, he was horrified by the slave trade. Rushing to meet each arriving slave ship, he brought water, medicine, food, and clothing to the enslaved people on board. He taught them about God and baptized nearly 300,000 individuals. St. Peter lived humbly and penitentially, in solidarity with those he served.



Don't delay to seek Love

Don't wait to become perfect before seeking God's love, or you never will. The good news is, we don't have to. God already loves us — infinitely. When we accept His love and grace with open hands, it will transform our hearts.

"My steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you" (Isaiah 54:10).



Find true peace

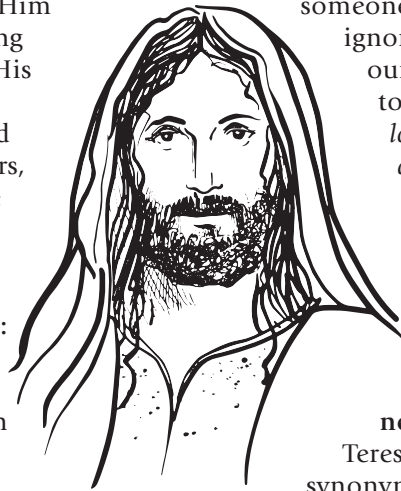
As Catholics, we understand that the key to true happiness and peace lies in proclaiming Christ as our Lord and following Him faithfully. By knowing Jesus, experiencing His love, keeping His Commandments, and serving Him in others, we will find genuine joy, fulfillment, and peace.

Know Jesus and experience His love: God invites each of us to enter into a deep friendship with Him (John 15:15). This friendship is characterized by mutual respect, intimacy, and cooperation. Jesus reveals His love for us through the Scriptures, the Sacraments of the Church, and especially through the Mass. In prayer, ask God to reveal His personal, everlasting love for

you. That's a prayer He is eager to answer.

Love Him back: Do you know someone who claims to care but ignores what you say? Jesus, our greatest Friend, asks us to listen to Him. *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments"* (John 14:15). By living the Ten Commandments and the Eight Beatitudes (see Matthew 5:3-ff), we demonstrate our love for Jesus.

Serve Him in our neighbors: For Mother Teresa, serving the poor was synonymous with serving Jesus (Matthew 25:40). She prepared their beds and treated their wounds as if He were the next to use them. By performing ordinary tasks with love and intentionality, we can experience true and lasting happiness.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why are there Church's precepts?

Just as families have household rules guiding how each member contributes to supporting the home, the Catholic Church has issued rules, called precepts, that act as the principal obligations of every Catholic. These are: attend Mass every Sunday



and Holy Day of Obligation, receive Communion and attend Confession at least once annually, study Catholic teaching, observe the Church's marriage laws, give children religious training, to strengthen and support the parish community, do penance, and join in the Church's mission.

Mistakes can be blessings

Do you dread making mistakes and feel remorse when you do? Instead, realize that mistakes are simply outcomes we didn't expect and can lead to growth.

Start by admitting your mistake. You can only learn from a mistake if you admit you made one. Acknowledging the error takes the focus away from assigning blame and moves it toward understanding a future course of action.

Enlist help. Talking to someone else about what happened gives you the benefit of another's experience. He or she may have made a similar mistake

or know of a solid solution. Plus, describing the event forces you to think it through and may even help you see opportunities you didn't know were there.

Decide on change. Ask, "What will I do better next time?" Real growth and change happen when you see possibilities for improvement.

Benefit from mistakes. If you can learn from the current error, you may be able to avoid a future one. Remember, God is the only one you know who doesn't make mistakes.

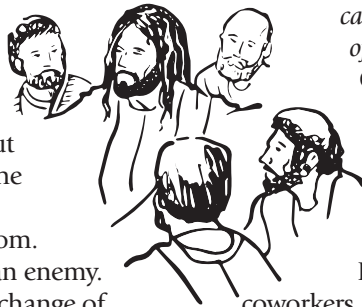


from Scripture

Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48, The demands of discipleship

In this Gospel passage, the disciples hear about an unfamiliar man who healed in Jesus' name. Their initial reaction was one of jealousy. They seemed more concerned about losing the spotlight than the healing itself. Jesus put things into perspective. The man shared their goal of building up God's Kingdom. They gained an ally, not an enemy.

Discipleship requires a change of heart, lifestyle, and habits. Jesus was very clear: if we choose to follow Him, we cannot harbor private sins on the side. If our sins lead others into sin, our responsibility is even greater.



These are serious words, but the opposite is great news: "Whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19).

God rewards us for the good we do for others.

Our example holds powerful influence.

Being a faithful disciple isn't easy.

Embracing unfamiliar

coworkers, rooting out sin, and setting a good example can be challenging, but we are not alone, nor are we without grace. Whatever God asks us to sacrifice, the reward will be infinitely greater.

Q & A How can I get better at defending my beliefs?

One good way to be sure you can explain what you believe is to have solid information at your fingertips.

To start, keep a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* handy. It summarizes what we believe and why, with an excellent glossary to help navigate. Your library may have one or you can buy it from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (www.usccb.org, 800-235-8722).

Read some common questions and answers about Catholic faith and practices by Church experts. For example, a helpful resource, *Catholic Answers to Catholic Questions*, by Paul Thigpen, Ph.D., is available at Our Sunday Visitor books (www.osv.com, 800-348-2440). Or, ask your priest for a Church-approved recommendation.

Know the common misconceptions. There are many misunderstandings about the Catholic Faith. Knowing what the Church actually teaches on topics like the Eucharist, Mary, the Saints, and salvation will prepare you to clarify these points.

Don't forget to ask for help from the Holy Spirit. In fact, just let the Spirit do the talking.

Our Mission

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)

Feasts & Celebrations

Sept. 3 - St. Gregory the Great (604). St. Gregory resigned as chief prefect of Rome to become a monk at the Abbey of St. Andrew. As Pope, he used his political skills to make peace with the invading Lombards, save Rome from famine, and restore order within the Church itself.

Sept. 15 - Our Lady of Sorrows. In Luke 2:35, Simeon predicted Mary's sorrows as "a sword piercing" her soul. Despite her sorrow, Mary stood at the foot of the Cross, dignified and fearless while others ran away.

Sept. 27 - St. Vincent de Paul (1660). St. Vincent de Paul was devoted to the spiritual and physical relief of the poor and sick. He founded several hospitals and ransomed over 1,200 galley slaves from North Africa.

Sept. 29 - The Feast of the Archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. Three archangels entrusted with important missions to mankind, such as St. Gabriel's visit to the Blessed Mother, announcing she was to be the Mother of God.

