

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

November 2024

St Mark Church - St James Church

Emporium - Driftwood Pennsylvania

One Minute Meditations

St. Josaphat of Volhynia

Born in Lithuania in 1580, St. Josaphat, a Ruthenian

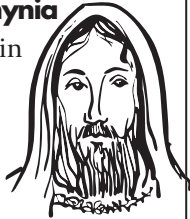
Archbishop of Plotsk, made the unpopular decision to unite his diocese with the Catholic Church. In response to the death threats his efforts provoked, he declared, "I am here among you as a shepherd, and you ought to know that I would be happy to give my life for you." Despite relentless persecution by a schismatic faction, he remained steadfast in his mission and was ultimately martyred by an enraged mob.

Be prepared, not afraid

Jesus warns us to expect trials but assures us not to be afraid. Following Him doesn't mean life will be easy, but it promises unshakable peace and everlasting joy. Trust in Him and prepare your heart to receive Him.

"Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master"

(Matthew 25:21).



Become friends with God's friends

Befriending a saint whose story resonates with your own can deepen your connection with God. Through their writings, prayers, and practices, saints offer wisdom for living faithfully and acquiring virtue. They aren't distant figures but companions in faith. Find a special, "holy friend" to encourage you to grow in holiness.

Adopt a saint: Choose a saint whose life, interests, or profession appeal to you. Learning how someone achieved extraordinary virtue can attune you to how God might be working in your life.

Read their writings: The saints' meditations, letters, and books on the spiritual life can enrich our experience

of God's love, while giving practical advice for living our Faith.

Imitate a saintly practice: Wake with your alarm to offer your day to God. Offer a small sacrifice daily for priests. Make space in your heart for God by decluttering your home. Refuse to gossip.

Pray with them: When asking earthly friends for help or prayers, we aren't "praying" to them. It's the same with our heavenly friends. When you pray, invite some "holy friends" to add their prayers to yours.

Join them at Mass: "In communion with and commemorating the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, the Church offers the Eucharistic sacrifice" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1370). At every Mass, we're in the company of the saints.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics believe in Purgatory?

This doctrine has scriptural roots. In Jesus' parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man (Luke 16:19-31), the Rich Man, though suffering after death, expressed concern for his brothers. Other references include 2 Maccabees 12:43-46, Wisdom 3:1-6, Zechariah 13:8-9, and 1

Corinthians 3:13-15. Purgatory reflects God's mercy and generosity, because it reflects His desire for us to be with Him and experience the fullness of Heaven. Our prayers for those in Purgatory help hasten their purification, drawing them closer to eternal joy.



Stay grounded this Christmas season

Advent and Christmas can be a magical time, but the hustle and bustle of the secular season can leave even the calmest person feeling overwhelmed. Stay grounded by honoring your priorities, making time to recharge, and focusing on Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Honor your priorities: Setting and keeping priorities will help streamline your holiday schedule. An example of "holiday priorities" might include spending time with loved ones, taking time for daily prayer, and refusing to overspend. You'll feel more at peace because you're putting first things first.



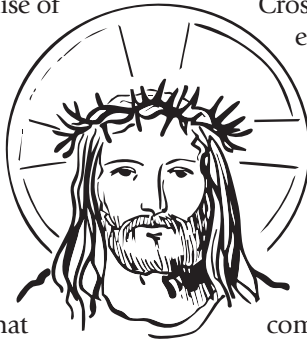
Make time to recharge: Remember the importance of getting enough rest, especially when juggling extra social commitments, projects, decorating, and travelling. Resting takes any form that helps you feel refreshed – napping, praying, walking, reading, listening to music.

Seek the Prince of Peace: For Christians, Advent and Christmas commemorate that Love came to Earth as a child. We know true peace is only found in Jesus. Consider devoting five minutes daily for Him. Pray for His peace to reign in your heart.

from Scripture

John 18:33b-37, Jesus' Kingdom is "not of this world"

Throughout the years of slavery and oppression, God's promise of a triumphant Israelite king kept hope alive. Many clung to the image of an avenging savior who would destroy their enemies and make Israel a nation to be feared. Jesus, bound, beaten and seemingly powerless before Pilate, the powerful Roman governor, was not what they had in mind. They didn't want a king who talked of love, suffering, and service; they wanted one who would wipe their enemies off the face of the earth. They wanted Jesus to come down off the Cross.



Yet it was Jesus' sacrifice of love on the Cross that conquered the real enemies of sin and death.

Jesus is King and He has a Kingdom, but as He teaches Pilate and us, His power is not of this world. His kingdom is about peace, justice, integrity, repentance, charity, forgiveness, compassion, and care for the poor and needy.

Do our lives and actions reflect that awareness? As Christians we are challenged to become more "Christ-like" in our actions, and that means becoming more like Jesus, our King.

Q & A How can we admonish the sinner without judging?

The phrase "Don't judge me!" is often used to deflect correction and excuse sinful behavior. So how can we kindly speak the truth when it's needed?

Judge acts, not people. God gives us the ability to recognize whether actions—our own or others'—are right or wrong. However, we can't judge a person's heart, soul, or intentions. Only God knows their motives.

Start with humility. Jesus said, "First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly..." (Matthew 7:5). Before offering correction, ensure you are living an authentically holy life yourself.

Pray and fast. Some situations require more than words. Prayer and sacrifices on behalf of others can have a powerful impact, especially when it's not possible to intervene directly.

Love is the goal: Speaking the truth to a loved one is difficult, but it's an act of love. True correction looks out for the person's well-being. When done with care and compassion, the person will sense that the correction comes from love, not judgment.

Feasts & Celebrations

November 6 - St. Jean-Theophane Venard (1861). Born into a pious family in Poitiers, France, St. Jean-Théophane was ordained in 1852 and sent as a missionary to Vietnam, to minister to persecuted Catholics. Eventually, he was arrested and martyred.

November 9 - Dedication of the Lateran Basilica (1724). The Lateran Basilica was built by Emperor Constantine and is the pope's cathedral. The Church-wide feast of the Lateran's dedication is an expression of the Church's unity with Rome.

November 13 - St. Frances Xavier Cabrini (1917). Mother Cabrini started the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Italy and founded 67 institutions to care for the sick and forgotten in Europe, S. America, and the U.S. She was the first U.S. citizen to be canonized.

November 30 - St. Andrew, Apostle (1st Century). The son of a Galilean fisherman and brother of Simon Peter, he introduced Jesus to Peter. After the Resurrection, he conducted missions in Turkey, Greece, and Macedonia. He was martyred on a X-shaped cross.



Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

Success Publishing & Media, LLC
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(540)662-7844 (540)662-7847 fax
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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible)