

# Growing in FAITH™

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

March 2009

## One Minute Meditations

### Follow the crowd?

Many of us feel tempted to follow the crowd to be accepted and admired. That means letting others make our choices. The difference with following God instead is that he doesn't want to make our choices. He wants us to choose the good and not the evil, but he wants us to be the ones who choose. Following God frees us to be completely ourselves.

### Unforgivable sin

Is there something you have done that you fear God won't forgive? Do you think God's justice is greater than his love? Jesus made it clear that God forgives sins if we repent, confess our sins, and turn to him in faith for his forgiveness. God is eager to forgive us if only we will ask.

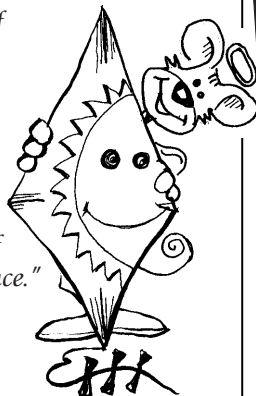
### Mother Teresa said ...

*"The fruit of silence is prayer.*

*The fruit of prayer is faith.*

*The fruit of faith is love and*

*The fruit of love is silence."*



## Jesus always gives more than you ask

In his mission on earth, Jesus always exceeded people's expectations. He always gave more than was asked – but exactly what was needed.

**A paralyzed man looked for a cure but Jesus gave him what he really needed** (Mark 2:1-12). When a man's friends brought him to Jesus for a cure for his paralysis, Jesus said, *"Son, your sins are forgiven."*

As God, Jesus has the power to heal. As a man, he identifies with our deepest needs or sufferings and gives us what we really need to overcome them.

**People were hungry and Jesus used a small meal to feed thousands** (John

6:1-15). Phillip told Jesus he thought feeding such a large group was impractical yet five loaves and two small fish fed them all.

Don't allow your estimate of a task keep you from taking it on. Let Jesus provide the resources.

**A widow was about to bury her son but Jesus restored him to life** (Luke 7:11-17). The widow couldn't have imagined that such a miracle was possible.

Yet, *"When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her ..."* God's love for us is bigger than we can imagine and moves him to shower us with miracles. Don't hesitate to ask him for what you need and praise him when he delights you with the result.



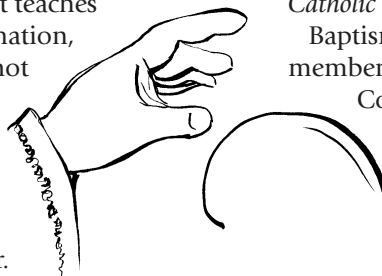
## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why do Catholics believe some Sacraments can't be repeated?

The Council of Trent teaches that Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders cannot be repeated because they place upon the soul an indelible sign. Their power leaves a distinctive mark that lasts forever. (See the *Catechism of the*

*Catholic Church*, 1582.)

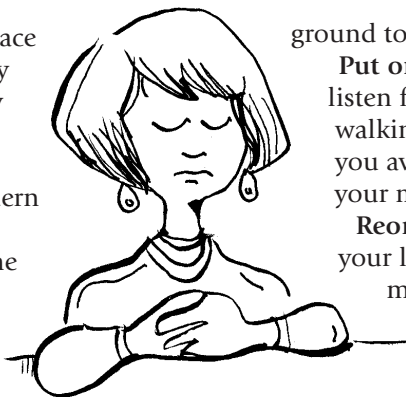
Baptism marks us forever as members of the Body of Christ, Confirmation marks us as soldiers of Christ, and Holy Orders marks someone as a priest of Christ. No matter where we go or what we do, these marks remain.



## Tune in to God

The Holy Spirit is everywhere but the fast pace of our lives may make it hard to find him. Try these tips to open up and tune in to the Holy Spirit in your life.

**Slow down.** Most of us move at a fast pace that is often dictated by the demands of modern life. If we are to be attentive to the Spirit, we have to close the day planners and turn off the phones and computers for a time every day. God wants us to pay attention to him. Remember, he knocked St. Paul to the



ground to get his notice.

**Put on the brakes.** Create silence so you can listen for God's voice. Try deep breathing, slow walking, Eucharistic Adoration – whatever helps you avoid distraction both inside and outside your mind.

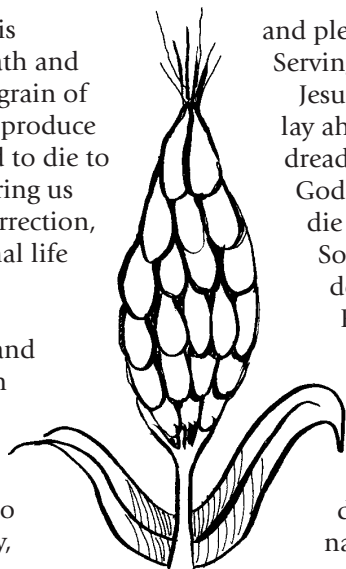
**Reorganize.** Where does the Holy Spirit fit in your life? If you have trouble finding him, you may need to reorder your life to remove the barriers between you and the one who loves you most.

### from Scripture

#### John 12:20-33, Obedience yields new life

Jesus tried to warn his disciples about his death and prepare them for it. A grain of wheat dies in order to produce new life, and Jesus had to die to pay for our sins and bring us new life. With his resurrection, he proved he has eternal life and can offer it to us.

Then he said that we must "hate" our lives and be willing to lose them so we can live. He meant that we have to be ready to lay aside our attachment to goods, worldly security,



and pleasure to serve God freely.

Serving God brings eternal life.

Jesus knew that his crucifixion lay ahead and being human, he dreaded it. He also knew that God sent him into the world to die for our sins in our place.

So, Jesus said no to his human desires in order to obey his Father. Although we will never have to face such a difficult task, we are still called to obedience.

Whatever the Father asks we should be willing to do and bring glory to his name.

### Q How can I keep & from losing steam during Lent?

Lent can seem like a long penitential season but it is meant to be the Church's gift to you. Instead of just giving up a favorite food or a bad habit, try thinking

of Lent as a time for changing your perspective. Lent is a great time to reorder our priorities. The Gospel call is to provide only what

you need and share the rest. We all need food, clothing, and shelter. Beyond that, see what you can share with others who have less.

What can you move out of your way so you can grow closer to God? For example, fasting from television or computers during Lent will free up time you can spend in prayer. Giving up a favorite food like chocolate or beer makes you more conscious of people who always do without.

When you say "no" to something during Lent, say "yes" to something better. For example, the extra time you spend in prayer may bring you greater peace or a renewed sense of God's love for you.

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### Feasts & Celebrations

**March 3 - St. Katharine Drexel (1955).** A Philadelphia heiress, St. Katharine Drexel gave up her fortune to become a nun. She established 50 missions for Native Americans in 16 states and founded Xavier University in New Orleans, the first university for African-Americans in the U.S.

**March 4 - St. Casimir (1483).** Born a prince of Poland, St. Casimir's strong conscience was instilled by a great teacher, John Dlugosz. When Casimir's father sent him to take over Hungary, fifteen-year-old Casimir assessed the odds against winning the war and turned back out of concern for his

troops. He resolved never to be involved in war again.

**March 17 - St. Patrick (493).** Born in Scotland, St. Patrick was kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave. Although he escaped, he later returned to become the bishop of Ireland and is established the Church there.

**March 20 - St. Joseph (?).** Husband to the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph is a model of fatherhood and a protector of families.

