

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

January 2020

St Mark Church - St James Church

Emporium - Driftwood Pennsylvania

One Minute Meditations

St. Thomas Aquinas

Against his family's wishes, St. Thomas Aquinas joined the newly founded Dominican Order of Preachers. A brilliant, humble scholar, he taught theology at universities in Paris, Cologne, and Rome, and advised popes, kings, and students. His greatest achievement was his *Summa Theologica*, a thorough, logical, concise treatise on the faith. Exhausted by constant work and travel, St. Thomas collapsed en route to a Church council and died at Fossanova. He is the patron of students and schools.



Well-placed faith

Our world is filled with pain, sorrow, and suffering. Putting our faith in worldly powers guarantees disappointment. Putting faith in God guarantees that we will never be disappointed.

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32).



Shed bad habits in the New Year

Bad habits are sinful inclinations acquired through repetition. Unless we overcome them, they come between us and God and can destroy our peace. Working to overcome our bad habits puts us on the path to true holiness.

Identify the root.

It sounds simple, but recognizing what causes us to sin repeatedly is the first step to overcoming the behavior. That doesn't mean it's easy to do. It can be uncomfortable to look at our failings, but change won't come without courage. Ask for help if you need it.

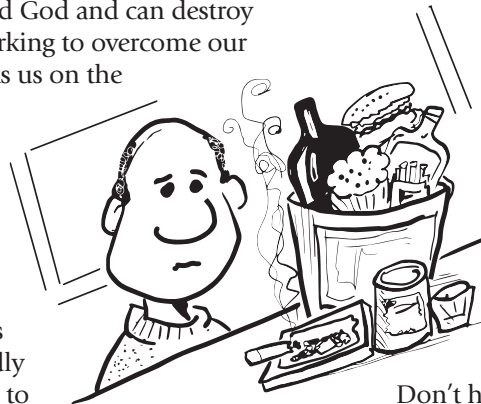
Replace a bad habit with a good one. Once we understand what is behind our bad habits, we can replace

them with new and healthy ways to deal with the underlying issue. If we overeat or drink too much when

stressed, for example, we can adopt exercise or meditation to cope instead.

Eliminate triggers.

Make it easier to cure bad habits by avoiding the conditions that nurture them. Do you want to avoid eating junk food?



Don't have it around you at home or at work. Want to change a gossip habit? Avoid the people with whom you gossip. Change your environment to change your behavior.

Find good influences. It may not be necessary to lose your old friends, but consider finding new ones who already live the way you want to live.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why are Catholics called "catholic"?

"Catholic" means "universal." In the Greek, it also means "wholeness" or "fullness." Firstly, the Church is catholic because her members have a universal mission. Jesus commanded his Apostles to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them" (Matthew



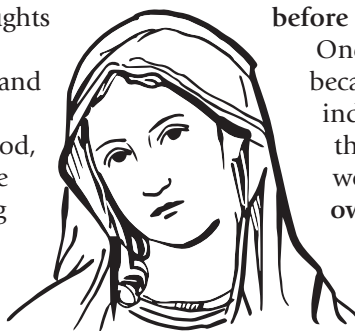
28:19). Secondly, the Church is catholic because, being founded by Christ and united to him, her members have the "correct and complete confession of faith, full sacramental life, and ordained ministry in apostolic succession" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) #830*).

The keys to Mary's success

Jesus loved his mother dearly, and his last thoughts on Earth were of her. We know she is Queen of Heaven, but what did she do to receive His love and great reward?

When Mary agreed to become the mother of God, she could have expected an easy life but Scripture tells us that all Mary expected was the joy of doing God's will. **She put God's will before her own.**

Mary didn't have to go with Joseph to Bethlehem for the census. She chose to go with Joseph as his wife. **She put Joseph's needs**



before her own.

Once there, the couple lodged with animals because there was no room at the inn. Instead of indulging in self-pity, Mary graciously received the shepherds and the Magi, who came to worship her baby. **She put their joy before her own discomfort.**

Throughout her life, Mary said "yes" to God, put his will first, and thought of others before herself. If we follow her example, we'll receive our reward in Heaven, too.

from Scripture

Matthew 4:12-23, The common call

This Gospel passage recounts the call of the first disciples. They may not have known Jesus personally at first, but they knew about him through John the Baptist (John 1:35-42). When invited to know Jesus better and follow him closely, the men dropped what they were doing "at once" and left everything behind.

Under Christ's leadership, the disciples went on to do amazing things. They worked miracles, brought the Gospel to distant lands, converted countless souls for heaven, and suffered hardships, even martyrdom. The secret of their success was their relationship with Christ as



their God, Savior, Teacher, and Friend who promised to be with them always (Matthew 28:20).

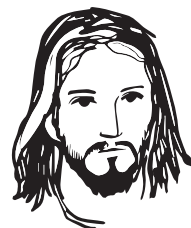
All of us are called to be saints – intimate friends of God. Jesus invites each of us to know him personally and follow him closely. While few of us are called

to leave everything, we can still offer everything we have to God's service. We can still imitate the first disciples who dropped everything "at once" to accept God's invitation. Knowing Jesus personally and closely makes for a great adventure.

Q & A Why are we required to respect Jesus' name?

As the Son of God, Jesus' name is "above every name" (Philippians 2:9) and commands respect.

It is the name God gave himself when he became man (Luke 1:31). In Jesus' day, there was no internet, no media, no network to use to find out if someone was reputable or reliable. All people had was



their good name and the way others used it with respect. He knew he would need a recognizable name.

Jesus' name tells us of his mission. The angel Gabriel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to name the child "Jesus," "for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). And he did.

There is great power in Jesus' name. Jesus promised his disciples that whatever they asked in his name, he would do (John 14:14). In his name, the Apostles cast out demons (Luke 10:17), cured the sick and even raised the dead (Acts 3:16; 4:10). "There is no other name under heaven...by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Feasts & Celebrations

Jan. 1 – Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. On this holy day of obligation, we honor Mary, but also Jesus as God. In their honor, pray a Rosary and attend Mass.

Jan. 6 – St. André Bessette (1937). Born near Montreal, Canada, André joined the Congregation of the Holy Cross at twenty-five and was the doorkeeper for their school. During an epidemic, everyone in his care was miraculously healed. He helped build a beautiful chapel to St. Joseph.

Jan. 12 – The Baptism of the Lord

(1st century). Jesus began his public ministry by getting baptized by St. John the Baptist. Jesus was free of sin, but he allowed himself to be baptized in order to "fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). By his baptism, Jesus declared his willingness to fulfill God's saving plan.

Jan. 20 – St. Fabian (250). During his long reign as pope, Fabian organized Rome into seven districts, countered a heresy in Africa, and founded churches in France. He was martyred during the Decian persecutions.



Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.
 Success Publishing & Media, LLC
 Publishers of Growing in Faith™ and Partners in Faith™
 (540)662-7844 (540)662-7847 fax
<http://www.growinginfaith.com>
 (Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible)