

# Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

May 2023

St Mark Church - St James Church

Emporium - Driftwood Pennsylvania

## Welcome all God's children

God loves each of us uniquely and fiercely no matter where we come from or how we look. Those of us who follow Him know that it's not just important to love each other. It's God's law.

**Celebrate diversity.** Invite foreigners or people who are different from you to your home or church. Jesus was once a foreigner in a strange land and was grateful for the hospitality He received. There is great diversity in the Communion of Saints.

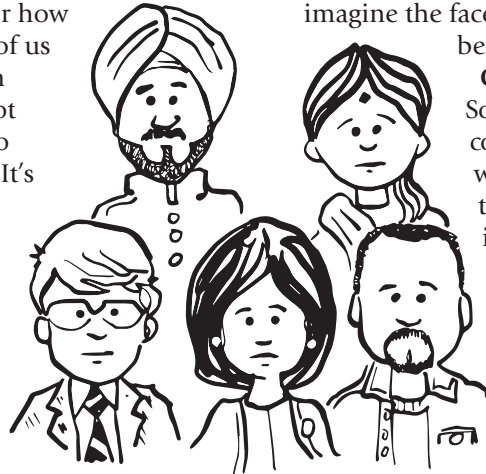
**Practice patience.** It can be tough to listen to someone with a speech impediment or a heavy accent. Imagine, though, how grateful that

person will be when you offer your attention. Perhaps it would help to imagine the face of Christ in the face before you.

**Counsel the ignorant.** Someone from another country, background, or with different abilities than yours might behave in what looks like an inconsiderate way out of ignorance or limitations. He might appreciate being informed.

**Speak up.** Don't stay quiet when you witness prejudice, and be positive about diversity if friends or relatives start criticizing others' faith, cultures or abilities.

**Act with love.** The God of love gave of Himself so we could be reunited with Him. We share that love when we assume the best of others and look for the good in all God's children.



## One Minute Meditations

### Act in confidence

Jesus does not want us to be troubled by worldly concerns.

*"My peace I give you"* (John 14:27). When you feel

yourself starting to worry or stew about a difficult situation (or person), act out your belief that your prayer for resolution will be answered. Substitute positive, cheerful thoughts for negative ones. God is in control.

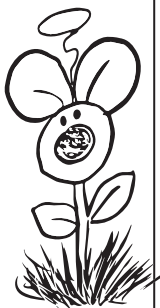


### Your Lenten change

Lent is a time when we make changes that bring us closer to God. During Lent, many of us fast from our favorite food or drink, and approach Easter a little lighter in spirit and in body. Don't forget that a Lenten change can continue beyond Easter. Consider continuing your Lenten fast on Fridays throughout the year, or for a week each month, for example. Find ways to make your Lenten change permanent.

### Rest and relax

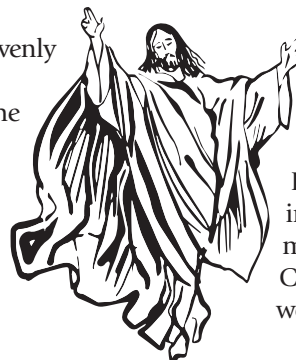
God expects us to be sure to rest. *"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28).



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why do Catholics celebrate the Ascension?

Jesus' Ascension into heavenly glory is good news. Sacred Scripture explains that in the Ascension, Jesus, the High Priest, entered the heavenly temple to pray for us with the Father (Hebrews 9:24). Secondly, from his throne in heaven,

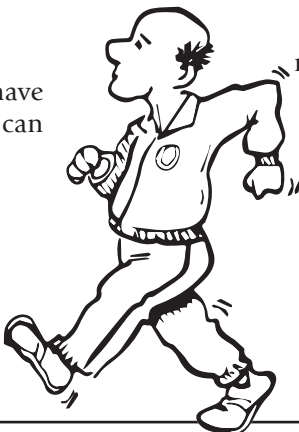


Jesus sends us the Holy Spirit, who keeps us connected to Him, especially in the Eucharist. Lastly, since Christ entered into eternal glory, we as the members of His Body, the Church, may hope to follow if we remain faithful to Him.

# Take good care of yourself. You belong to God.

Taking care of ourselves can become a low priority in the midst of other obligations. Yet caring for our bodies and minds is a duty we have to God. He needs us strong and healthy so we can help build up His kingdom.

**Body:** What you put into your body is even more important than what you put on it. Take steps to make your diet healthier and more nourishing. Avoid drugs or excessive alcohol. Doctors urge daily exercise and eight hours of sleep each night.



**Mind:** Become picky about what you feed your mind, too. What you watch, read, and listen to influences the way you look at the world. Evidence shows that it's hard to regularly watch violent shows or movies and still be a calm and happy person. Programs or movies that portray infidelity or promiscuity as acceptable behaviors eventually dull our sense of sin. Feed your mind positive, Gospel-centered images that will build you up and inspire you. Surround yourself with people who do the same.

## from Scripture

### John 20:19-23, "Receive the Holy Spirit"

This Gospel passage gives us a glimpse of how the apostles spent their first Easter Sunday – hiding in a locked room.

They were terrified the Romans would find them and execute them. To their surprise and great relief, Jesus appeared to them in glory and spoke words of peace. He showed them His glorious wounds as "living proof" of His Resurrection.

Then Jesus gave them a mission: "Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained" establishing the Sacrament of Penance (John 20:23). He gave them the Holy Spirit, anticipating the feast of



Pentecost. Now, having authority to forgive sins, the apostles and their successors could continue

Jesus' work after He returned to heaven.

Jesus' appearance to His apostles reveals the fullness of God's mercy. He also sent the Holy Spirit to them. He descended powerfully on Pentecost, the birthday of the Church. That same

Spirit is gifted to us in Baptism and dwells in our souls. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal God's love to you and help you become more like Christ each day.

## Q & A What is the meaning of the Miraculous Medal?

The Miraculous Medal, given to St. Catherine Labouré in 1830, was designed by the Blessed Mother to teach us three things:

**Mary prays for us:** The medal's front reads: *O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.* We don't



pray to her; she prays for us! Of course, we can go directly to Jesus anytime. In fact, Mary's role is to bring us to Jesus as swiftly and safely as possible.

**Evil can be defeated:** Mary is shown crushing Satan's head, recalling the prophecy of his defeat (Genesis 3:15). Mary's humble "yes" to God paved the way for Christ's victory over death, sin, and evil. When we give God our "yes," then Christ's victory bears fruit in our lives.

**Grace is always available:** St. Catherine asked why only some of the gemstones in Mary's rings radiated light. Her answer? The dim gems symbolize "the graces for which souls forget to ask." God's grace is always available to us. All we have to do is ask.

## Feasts & Celebrations

**May 3 – Sts. Philip and James (1st Century).** St. Philip was born in Bethsaida and followed John the Baptist before he followed Christ. After the Ascension, St. Philip preached in Asia Minor, where he was martyred. St. James, son of Alphaeus, was also one of the twelve Apostles.

**May 10 - St. John of Ávila (1569).** Born to wealthy, pious parents, St. John left a budding career as a lawyer to become a priest. At the request of his bishop, he worked and preached to renew the faith of Catholics in Andalusia.

**May 18 – Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord (1st Century).** This solemnity marks the completion of Jesus' mission of salvation and His triumphant entry into heaven. *Note: In many dioceses, observance of Ascension has been moved to the following Sunday.*

**May 25 – St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi (1607).** Born to a distinguished Florentine family, Catherine de' Pazzi became a Carmelite nun. Upon making vows, she experienced ecstasies, and became a mystic and a healer.



**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)