

# Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

September 2022

St Mark Church - St James Church

Emporium - Driftwood Pennsylvania

## One Minute Meditations

### The most important thing

When Jesus promised to be with us always, He wasn't just talking symbolically. He meant that He would stay with us – Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. In fact, when we go to Mass, we meet Jesus, Himself, “truly, really, and substantially contained” in Holy Communion (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, # 1374). Don't miss a single Sunday Mass. He is there every time.

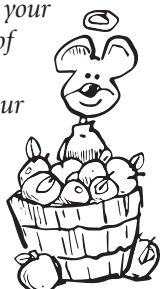


### Our “Call”

When God calls, He asks that His children respond. Throughout history, when the Father called a chosen people, prophets, and kings to service, they responded. Jesus called His apostles and disciples. They responded. God calls each of us. Have you responded? Are you where He wants you to be?

*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, on your own intelligence do not rely; In all your ways be mindful of him, and he will make straight your paths”*

(Proverbs 3:5-6).



## Four tools for spreading the Good News

Before He ascended, Jesus told His disciples, “Go...make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). We are all called to preach the Gospel, sometimes by words, but always by the holiness of our lives. Jesus gave us four must-haves for this task:

**Peace:** The confidence that all things, even our greatest sufferings, will be for our good is peace. Living a Gospel-centered life brings peace and sets us apart in what we choose: music, recreation, dress. These choices are counter-cultural and testify to our faith. Be at peace: our security is in the Truth, not others' opinions of us.

**Simplicity:** We can't give what we

don't have. To give Christ to others, we must make room for Him in our own hearts. For example, buy only what's necessary and limit time on social

media. Frequent the Sacraments and Mass. Pray daily.

**Charity:** Jesus uses us to communicate His love to others. In addition to acts of mercy for the poor, charity requires treating others with dignity, respect, patience, and kindness – even when it's challenging.

**Joy:** We experience joy when we receive God's love. This means keeping our hearts open to accepting the Good News, not giving into bitterness and resentment, reminding ourselves of the ways God has shown His love for us. Don't keep it to yourself. Tell others.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

### Why do some churches have altar rails?

Altar rails, or “Communion rails,” located between the sanctuary and the front pews, helped facilitate the Communion distribution when everyone received Communion on the tongue while kneeling. The rails encouraged the faithful to be reverent before the Face of God –

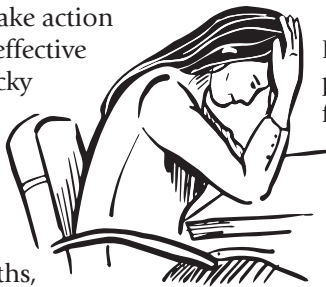
literally. Called, “the people's altar,” the rails were also where communicants offered their spiritual sacrifices to God directly as they received Him. We can do this without rails, but kneeling for Communion is a powerful reminder of Who we are receiving.



# Managing sticky situations, gracefully

When we find ourselves in a difficult situation, it can be tough to know how to respond. We want to take action that comes from our faith perspective and is effective at the same time. Try these tips to manage sticky situations with grace:

**Stay calm.** We are more likely to make regrettable decisions when we're anxious, afraid, or angry. We make it worse by raising our voices, storming around, saying whatever comes into our heads. Instead take deep breaths, pray a calming prayer, invoke your guardian angel.



Staying calm is key.

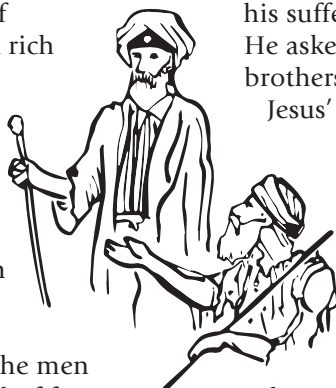
**Be realistic.** Accept that you can't fix everything. Instead, focus on what you can do. Leaning on prior experience and advice from experts or trusted friends, pick the best course of action. Surrender the outcome to God.

**Learn.** God often allows difficulties to bring about a greater good. Maybe the experience helped you grow in virtue, taught you a new skill, gave you a new perspective. It's okay to ask God, "why?" Keep what you learn for the future.

## from Scripture

### Luke 16:19-31, Riches okay, but not hard-heartedness

In this Gospel passage, Jesus directed a parable to those who turn a blind eye to the suffering of others. In His story, a rich man ignored a desperately hungry man, Lazarus, lying in misery at his gate. The rich man feasted daily and lived in luxury. The poor man hoped for scraps and dodged dogs.



After their deaths, the men experienced a reversal of fortunes. Lazarus rested with Abraham and the patriarchs – the closest thing to heaven prior to Jesus' Resurrection. The rich

man was in agony. He begged Abraham to send Lazarus to alleviate his suffering but Abraham refused. He asked Lazarus to warn his brothers but was denied again.

Jesus' parable isn't condemning wealth, but the hard-heartedness of the rich man. The rich man knew Lazarus by name but was insensitive to his plight. He wasn't evil, but he knew what God asked him to do and didn't do it.

When we live our faith, we transform our prayers into deeds of love as Jesus asked. The reward for doing what Jesus asked will be eternal joy.

## Q & A Why do some parishes pray the St. Michael prayer after Mass?

The Leonine prayers were first promulgated by Pope Leo XIII in 1884, for recitation after Mass but not as part of Mass itself. They consisted of the Hail Mary (three times), Hail, Holy Queen,



O God our Refuge and strength, the Prayer to St. Michael, and the invocation to the Sacred Heart (three times) and were said

kneeling at the foot of the altar. Although abolished in 1964 they are still sometimes used after Masses in the extraordinary form.

Other popes have invoked St. Michael's protection. Pope St. Gregory the Great invoked St. Michael's protection during a plague. Pope St. John Paul II recommended saying the St. Michael prayer daily to protect the family. And Pope Francis, in the light of recent crises, recommended all Catholics recite the prayer. Some bishops have joined the call by recommending Catholics pray it after Mass.

St. Michael led the faithful angels in overthrowing Satan and his rebellious angels (Revelation 12:7). Scripture tells us he is tasked with protecting God's people against the devil.

## Feasts & Celebrations

**September 15 – Our Lady of Sorrows.** In Luke 2:35, Simeon predicted Mary's sufferings as "a sword piercing" her soul. In her sorrow, Mary stood at the foot of the Cross, dignified and fearless while others ran away. Instead, she responded with faith and love.

**September 17 – St. Hildegard of Bingen (1179).** Born in 12th century Germany to noble parents, St. Hildegard had visions from when she was very young. She joined the Benedictines and eventually became an abbess. She wrote

on spirituality, music, medicine, and science. She is a Doctor of the Church.

**September 26 – Sts. Cosmas and Damian (c.303).** These saints were Arab brothers who studied medicine in Syria and lived their Christian faith by treating people without charge. They were martyred for their faith.

**September 29 – Sts. Michael, Gabriel, and Rafael, Archangels.** Three archangels who were entrusted with important missions to mankind, such as St. Gabriel's visit to the Blessed Mother to tell her she had been chosen as the Mother of God.



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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible)