

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

April 2020

Immaculate Conception Church

One Minute Meditations

St. Catherine of Siena

Born in Siena, Italy, St. Catherine was a doctor of the Church. A mystic from a young age, she had regular conversations with Jesus. At age sixteen, she joined the Third Order of St. Dominic and served the sick and the poor. For her reputation for holiness and wisdom, she was called on to be a peacemaker and counselor, even by popes! She is credited with coaxing Pope Gregory XI back to Rome from Avignon, France.



Necessary choice

Rather than a day to catch up on errands and chores, God intends Sunday to be a day of contemplation and of rest. Sunday is the day we set aside for God and moments of praise and worship.

"He said to them, 'Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here'"
(Mark 16:6).



4 reasons to be hopeful right now

It's hard not to worry these days with reports of viruses and financial concerns. Yet we in God's family have more reasons to be hopeful no matter how uncertain the world ...

God, our Father, knows what we need. *"If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him"* (Matthew 7:11). He will take care of us when we trust him.

He can work miracles when we ask. *"Know that the Lord works wonders for the faithful; the Lord hears when I call out"* (Psalm 4:4). *"Be strong and of*

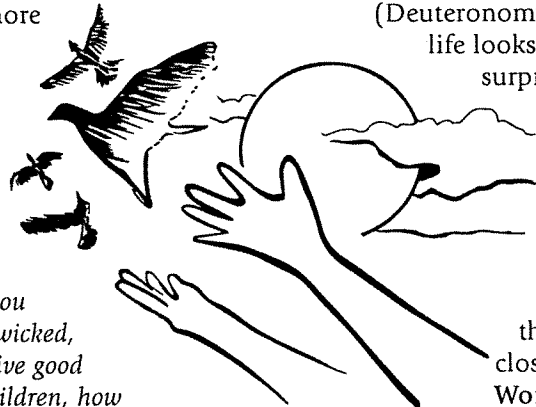
good courage, do not fear ... for it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you"

(Deuteronomy 31:6). Just when life looks bleak, God can surprise us.

He will never abandon us.

"You, Lord, are near to all who call upon you ..." (Psalm 145:18). Know that he is always close.

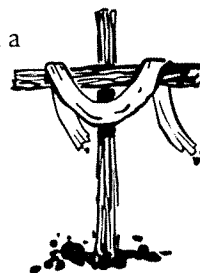
Worrying won't do any good. *"Can any of you by worrying add a moment to your lifespan? If even the smallest things are beyond your control, why are you anxious about the rest?"* (Luke 12:25). Don't waste energy on worrying about what is beyond your control. Enjoy your blessings.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics celebrate Easter on different dates?

Although celebrating Easter on a different day every year isn't strictly a Catholic practice, the reason why we do this has its roots in the Church's history. There was a dispute in the second century about the date of Easter: should it be celebrated



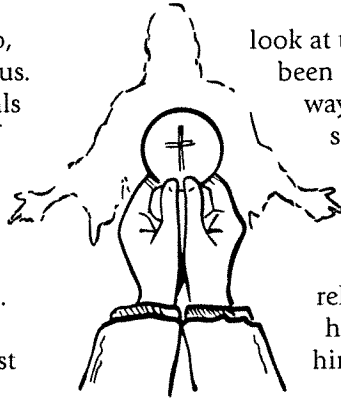
on the exact date or on the nearest Sunday? At the Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.), it was decided that Easter Sunday would be celebrated the Sunday after the first full moon after the Vernal (Spring) equinox.

Get personal with Jesus

The Easter season is a perfect time to develop, strengthen and deepen our friendship with Jesus. During this time of celebration, we can set goals that aim to deepen our knowledge and love of our Lord.

The Eucharist is the source. The best way to get close to Jesus is in the Holy Mass and by receiving Holy Communion. It is God's way of bringing us into communion with him.

Visit the confessional. Confession is a Sacrament that encourages us to take an honest



look at the way we are living. Even Catholics who have been away from Confession will find that the best way to get a new beginning with Jesus off to a great start is to visit the confessional. Clean that slate! Begin anew.

Spend time with him. We can spend time reading inspirational books and blogs, and chatting on Catholic sites, but to develop a relationship with Jesus, we need face time with him. Adoration is one of the best ways to keep him company.

from Scripture

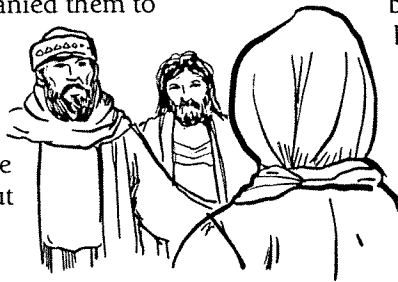
Luke 24:13-35, Jesus accompanies us

Imagine what it would be like to have a Bible study with Jesus! This was exactly what Cleopas and his friend experienced when Jesus accompanied them to Emmaus. Failing to recognize Jesus and still grieving his death, they unknowingly told the risen Christ all about it. In an unexpected turn of events, Jesus explained to them how his death and resurrection was part of God's saving plan.

The disciples invited Jesus to stay with them, even though they still didn't recognize him. Jesus took the bread,

blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples. Suddenly, they recognized him. He vanished, but their hearts burned with joy. They raced back to Jerusalem to share the Good News with their fellow disciples.

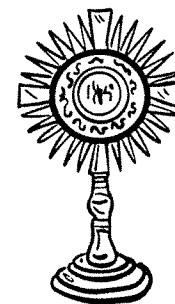
Cleopas and his friend's story is ours too. At every Mass, God speaks to our hearts through Scriptures. In the Eucharist blessed, broken and given to us, we encounter Jesus and receive him into our hearts. With the final blessing, we are sent to spread the Good News: Christ rose from the dead and reopened heaven for us.



Q & A

What is a monstrance?

In practicing or learning Catholicism, one can find some funny sounding words. "Monstrance" is one of them. It's



an upright container for the Blessed Sacrament (a consecrated Host), usually made of gold or silver and often shaped like a sunburst. The rays are meant to evoke the power and grace radiating from the Host. They also draw the eye

to the window (luna) at the center where the Host is. By means of it, Christ and the viewers can literally be face to face.

The monstrance is used to display the Blessed Sacrament for Adoration. Adoration of the Eucharist outside of Mass developed to satisfy the devotion of the faithful. When you love someone deeply, you want to see him – in person – and spend time with him frequently. God doesn't just want to hear our prayers; he wants to be with us always (Matthew 28:20). Jesus longs for us to visit him in our churches. He remains in the Blessed Sacrament so that anyone who seeks him can find him.

Feasts & Celebrations

April 19 – Divine Mercy Sunday. In 1931, Jesus appeared to St. Faustina and asked that the Sunday after Easter become the "Feast of Mercy." Jesus promised those who honor him as the King of Mercy and pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy would receive special graces and great mercy.

April 21 – St. Anselm (1109). St. Anselm left a rich court life to become a monk in France and reluctantly became bishop of Canterbury, England. He was exiled for rebuffing the king's interference in Church matters.

April 25 – St. Mark the Evangelist (1st century). St. Mark wrote the second Gospel largely based on St. Peter's perspective. Mark travelled with SS. Paul and Barnabas (Mark's cousin) through the island of Cyprus and is credited with founding the Church of Alexandria.

April 28 – St. Louis de Montfort (1716). A French priest with a passion for preaching the Gospel, St. Louis had a special devotion to the Blessed Mother, and his *True Devotion to Mary* is widely popular today.



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