

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

March 2020

St. Raphael Catholic Church
Pastor, Fr. John M. Connell

One Minute Meditations

St. Toribio de Mogrovejo

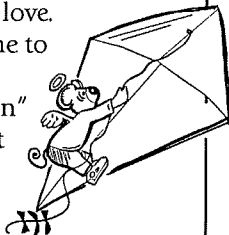
Born in Mayorga, Spain, St. Toribio was educated in law and became the Professor of Law at Salamanca University. His work and his holiness earned him the notice of the king, who named him to be the next Archbishop of Lima. Despite his arguments, Toribio was ordained a priest, consecrated, and sent to Peru. He spent his office reforming the then-corrupt diocese, catechizing the native Peruvians, and defending them from the abuses of the Spanish conquistadors.



Sunday rest

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.

"I would like everyone to feel loved by the God who gave his Son for us and showed us his boundless love. I want everyone to feel the joy of being Christian" (Pope Benedict XVI).



Dealing with difficult people Jesus' way

People who argue, fight, or refuse to cooperate can make our lives downright miserable. Yet, Jesus was masterful at dealing with difficult people. Following his example can save our sanity and our relationships.

Know when to ignore. When Jesus made his Nazareth friends and neighbors so mad that they wanted to throw him off a cliff, he knew there was no reasoning with them.

Passing through the midst of them he went away (Luke 4:30). When people speak harshly or offensively, the best response can be to disengage and walk away.

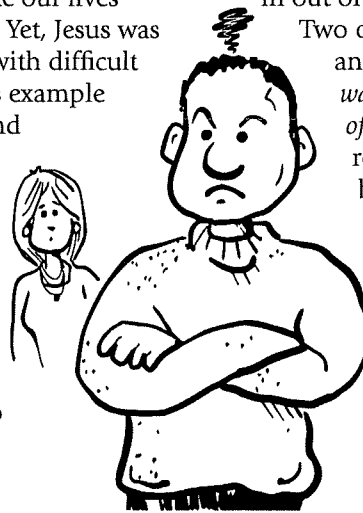
Know when to say "no." Sometimes others demand more from us than we

are able or willing to give, yet we give in out of guilt or fear of displeasure.

Two of his best friends, James and John, said to Jesus, "we want you to do whatever we ask of you" (Mark 10:35). In response to this stunning breach of boundaries, Jesus was calm and firm. He said "no" and didn't second-guess himself when he didn't make his loved ones happy.

Know when to stay calm. When Jesus took a Sabbath stroll with his friends (Matthew 12), Pharisees barged in and

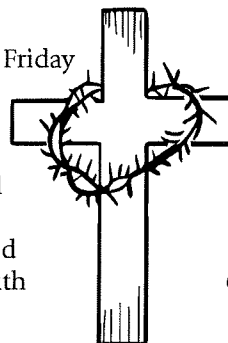
accused him of breaking the Sabbath. He remained calm and answered them peacefully. He wasn't afraid of being tripped up or trapped because he was unconcerned about others' opinions.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics call Good Friday "good"?

Although a sad day, Good Friday actually is "good" because it is the day when Jesus saved us from our sins, reconciled us with God, and reopened Heaven. Out of what seemed like defeat, God brought a greater victory. With



his sacrifice, Jesus conquered sin and death. On Good Friday, we see more clearly God's goodness, justice, wisdom, power, and love. "God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

3 ingredients for powerful prayer

A close, loving relationship with God depends on a rich prayer life. It is through prayer that God guides, consoles, strengthens, challenges, and transforms us. Ingredients of a strong prayer life can include a Scripture reading, quiet meditation, and expectation.

Meditate on Scripture each day: The Bible contains everything God wants us to know. Start each morning with a verse, a chapter, or a phrase that speaks to you and carry it with you



throughout the day.

Listen in silence: Listening is as important as talking. Spend 15 minutes in silence each day to listen to what God wants your heart to know.

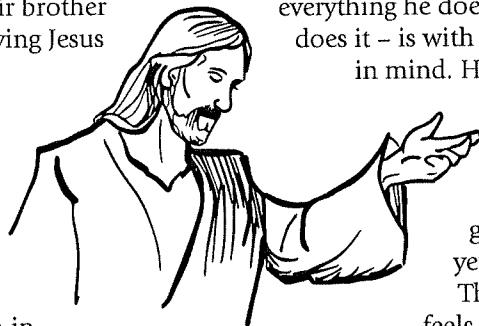
Wait in positive expectation. When we have faith that God personally loves us and wants what is best, we eagerly await the plans he has for us. "... faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). The conviction that God hears and answers us makes our prayer truly powerful.

from Scripture

John 11:1-45, Trust, and you shall be rewarded

God's ways can be puzzling. In this Gospel passage, Martha and Mary sent word to Jesus that their brother was seriously ill, believing Jesus could help. Yet, Jesus delayed in coming to them and Lazarus died. Despite this, Martha showed great faith: *"Even now I know that whatever you ask of God he will give you."* For her firm faith in God, she was rewarded generously.

God never leaves us in our troubles but draws closer to us. When the situation was at its bleakest for his friends, Jesus was with them. He wept;



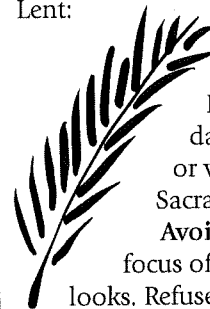
he wasn't insensitive to their pain. God's timing is not ours, yet everything he does – even when he does it – is with our best interests in mind. He was not too

late for Lazarus, but right on time and worked his greatest miracle yet.

The next time it feels like God isn't listening, remember Jesus' own words: *"Father I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me."* We can trust his response, while perhaps not what we want, will work for good.

Q & A Can you suggest a meaningful sacrifice for Lent?

The point of Lent is not to greet Easter a few pounds lighter but to be transformed. Try something new this Lent:



Make extra time for him each day.

Read the Bible, attend daily Mass, pray a Rosary, or visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Avoid the mirror. Take the focus off your appearance or looks. Refuse to compare yourself to others or accept others' view of you. Remember, your worth isn't in how others see you, but in God's infinite, unchanging love for you.

Give up one thing at every meal. Offer up a little something every time you eat – forego sugar in coffee, honey on cereal - to keep the idea, "it's Lent," in the forefront.

Offer the heroic minute. St. Josemaría Escrivá suggested jumping out of bed – no snooze button - as soon as the alarm goes off, "without granting a single minute to laziness. If, with the help of God, you conquer yourself in that moment, you'll have accomplished a great deal for the rest of the day."

Feasts & Celebrations

March 3 – St. Katharine Drexel (1955). A Philadelphia heiress, Katharine Drexel became a nun and used her inheritance to establish the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for African and Native American peoples. She founded missions for Native Americans and Xavier University in New Orleans, the first to admit African American students.

March 4 – St. Casimir of Poland (1483). When his father sent him to conquer Hungary, 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 19 – St. Joseph, husband of Mary (1st Century). Jesus' earthly father and husband to the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph is a model of fatherhood and a protector of families.

March 27 – St. John of Egypt (c.394). Born in modern Assiut, Egypt, St. John became a hermit when he was twenty. He lived an ascetic life but preached publicly on weekends. Also a prophet, he made two accurate predictions for Emperor Theodosius I.



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