

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering **hope** and **joy** in the Catholic faith.

July 2021

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE PARISH

StThomasWestSpringfield.org

One Minute Meditations

God is the current of life

"Each one of us is merely a small instrument. When you look at the inner workings of electrical things, often you see small and big wires, new and old, cheap and expensive lined up. Until the current passes through them there will be no light. That wire is you and me. The current is God."
Mother Teresa

Saying "no" is not a sin

Saying "no" is hard for many of us. Not wanting to let anyone down, we say "yes" until we are overburdened, frustrated, and unhappy. Remember it is not a sin to say "no." God needs workers, but He wants the willing, joyful kind. Our "yes" should come from a heart enthusiastic about doing His work.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment" (Matthew 22:37-40).



Love one another, especially those who are different

In a time of widening political and cultural divides, it can be easy to lose sight of the dignity of people different from ourselves. Yet, as Catholic Christians, we know that Jesus asks that we see everyone as family.

"Love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor" (Romans 12:10).

Treat others with kindness, not because they

are kind, but because you are. It's easy to be kind to those we love and respect. It's critical to be kind to people we don't like or don't know. Kindness is best offered when nothing is expected in return.

Don't build yourself up by making others look small. No one is impressed

by a bully. Treat all of God's children with honor, love, and respect.

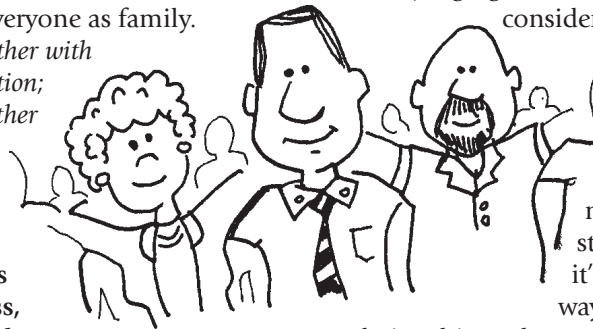
Practice empathy. People's reactions tend to reflect their circumstances. Avoid judging and instead offer the consideration you'd like to receive.

Meet in person instead of online.

Social media makes it easy to stay in touch but it's also the quickest way to damage

relationships. Choose to meet in person when possible. In person or online, we must be wise in the words we use.

Forgive those who have hurt you, help those who need you. Treat all people – including yourself – with love and compassion. When we treat people the way we want to be treated, life will instantly get better.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

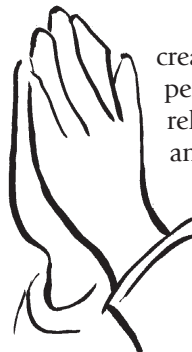
Why do Catholics pray?

Prayer is our response to God's invitation: "Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), #2560).

That encounter is our connection to God, who

created us and wants to have a close, personal relationship with us. Our relationship with Him is nurtured and strengthened through prayer – raising our hearts and minds to God ..." (CCC, #2559).

It is through prayer and in prayer that we come to know and love Him best.



Welcome back to Mass!

Now that many dioceses across the country have reinstated the obligation to attend Mass, we once again honor Sunday as a celebration of the living presence of Jesus in the midst of His people.

Meet Him in the flesh. The Eucharist is the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. There is no substitute for taking Him into our bodies to feed our souls.

Receive His protection. Divine love and protection are showered on God's children through the supernatural gift of grace. The



more open we are to it – by actively participating in Mass – the more we enjoy the benefits.

Love Him back. The Third Commandment requires that we designate Sunday as our day to honor God. Mass is the most important way we fulfill our obligation to show gratitude to God. *"If you love me you will keep my commandments"* (John 15:15).

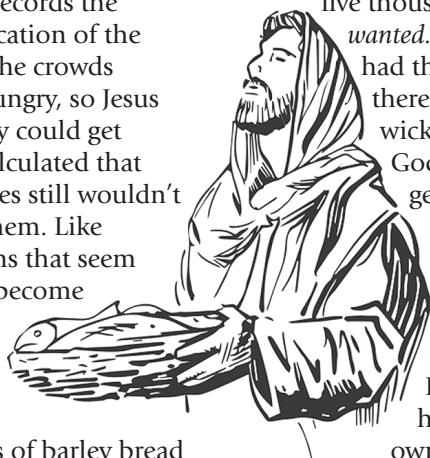
If you are worried about your exposure to disease in church, consult your physician and your pastor for advice on extra protections you can take.

from Scripture

John 6:1-15; Loaves and fishes

This Gospel passage records the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes. The crowds following Jesus were hungry, so Jesus asked Philip where they could get enough food. Philip calculated that two hundred days' wages still wouldn't buy enough food for them. Like Philip, we face problems that seem too big for us and can become intimidated.

The Apostle, Andrew, went a step further than Philip; he found the boy with five loaves of barley bread and two fish. The boy, in turn, offered to Jesus what little he brought – all of it. What a surprise when Jesus fed the



five thousand *"as much...as they wanted."* Even after they'd had their fill of bread, there were still twelve wicker baskets left over! God can't be outdone in generosity.

When we are faced with many problems at once, it can be overwhelming. It's easy to react like Philip and give up hope. While on our own, we may not have much to offer, if we offer what we have to God, He can do something amazing with it.

Q & A What is expected of Catholics?

Every household has basic ground rules: "Be respectful," "Clean up your messes," etc. This way, everybody benefits. Like every family, the Catholic Church has "house rules" as well:

Come home every weekend: "You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor." God wants to see us back in person – often!

Take responsibility: "You shall confess your sins at least once a year." Since we are prone to sin, we're obligated to reconcile with God at least once a year.

Reconnect: "You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season." In the Eucharist, Jesus nourishes us with his Body and Blood at every Mass!

Practice detachment: "You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church." Fasting helps us free our hearts for God's love.

Help around the house: "You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church." Whether we donate money, time or resources, every little bit helps. (CCC, #2042-2043)

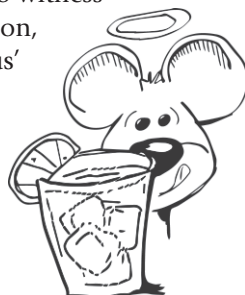
Feasts & Celebrations

July 16 – Our Lady of Mount Carmel (1251). Carmelite tradition holds that Our Lady appeared to St. Simon on Mount Carmel and gave him a scapular. Wearing one has become a popular way to honor the Blessed Mother.

July 22 – St. Mary Magdalene (1st century). Mary Magdalene was the woman from whom Jesus expelled seven demons in St. Luke's gospel (Luke 8:2). She helped to support Jesus' ministry out of her own money and stood by the Cross of Jesus with his mother. Known as the "Apostle to

the Apostles," Mary was the one who first informed the Apostles of Jesus' Resurrection.

July 25 – St. James (1st Century). When Jesus called St. James and his brother, John, to become apostles, they left their father in a fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee. St. James was one of three apostles to witness Jesus' transfiguration, the raising of Jairus' daughter, and the agony in Gethsemane. St. James was the first of the apostles to be martyred.



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To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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Publishers of *Growing in Faith™* and *Partners in Faith™*
(540)662-7844 (540)662-7847 fax
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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible - Revised)