

Growing in FAITH™

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

March 2007

One Minute Meditations

Saints and sinners

No matter how far we stray, we know God will always take us back. Many of our greatest saints were sinners first.

Rich in many ways

Many of us are like the rich man in Jesus' story of Lazarus, the beggar. Lazarus lay at his door starving and sick but went unnoticed by the rich man (Luke 16:19-21). Do you have "scraps" of free time, friendship, courage, or enthusiasm that you can give to someone who needs to be nourished?

A prayer for Lent

God of all mercy and steadfast love, we do not always live the way you want us to. Forgive us. Help us during this season of Lent to examine how we can be more faithful followers of Jesus Christ, your son. Guide us in our pilgrimage of discipleship. May our words and actions truly reflect your will for us. Amen.

The Essential Catholic Prayer Book,
Liguori
Publications.



Easy ways to share your faith

There are people in our lives who may never read the Bible, go to church, or come to know God unless we help them. Here are some suggestions for how you can share your gift of faith:

Let it show. Add blessed candles, Christian pictures and icons to your home decor. A religious statue in your garden may prompt passers-by to ask you about your faith.

Give holy gifts. Choose gifts or cards that express Christian sentiments. Giving someone a medal or statue of a patron saint shows thought, time, and care.

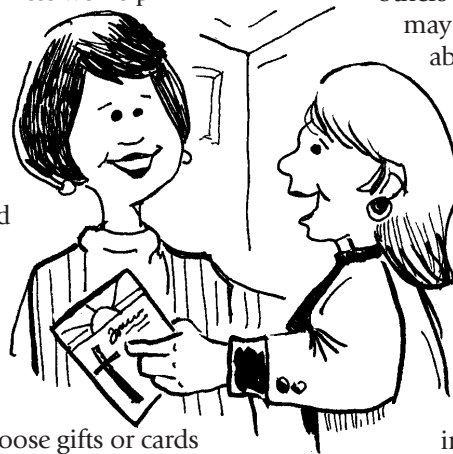
Bless everyone. Include "May God bless you" in your answering machine greeting, your stationery and your signature at the bottom of a note or letter.

Wear it proudly. Wearing holy medals or a crucifix on a chain tells others you are Catholic and may prompt questions about your faith.

Share wonder. Look for evidence of God's love every day, and then share what you notice with someone else.

Demonstrate justice. Try to be fair to people at home, at your job, in the neighborhood, and all around you.

"Be not afraid." Drugs, gambling, alcohol, financial trouble, or wayward family members can drag anyone toward despair. Whatever your struggle, remember you can fail over and over and still know that God will give you the strength you need.



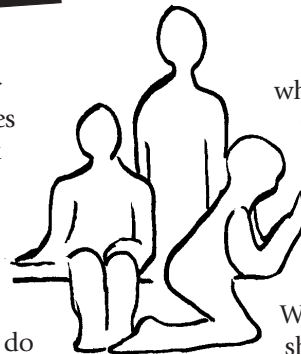
Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics stand, sit, and kneel at different times during Mass?

The Mass involves our hearts, minds, and bodies when we adopt different postures. They help us focus but each posture also has a special meaning.

We stand to show respect and honor as we do

when the celebrant (representing Christ) enters and leaves, when we receive Communion, or when we hear the Gospel read. We sit when we listen to the homily to help us focus on the words being said. We kneel at the Consecration to show penance and adoration.



What makes Catholics unique?

It is said that Catholicism is not just a religion, it's a culture. What makes us unique goes beyond our Sunday worship.

Consider these examples:

Catholics rely on Scripture and tradition.

The pope and clergy teach us how to apply Scripture to issues we face today. We also build on wisdom from Church leaders who have gone before us. This application is known as tradition.

We sense God's presence sacramentally.

While symbols help us recognize his



presence, the Church teaches that Jesus is truly present in the bread and wine – not just symbolically.

Although they have died, we still commune with the saints. It's a network of friends who lead us to God.

Catholics support both celibacy and marriage.

The Church teaches that if we are not married, we should be celibate.

Outreach, charity, and social justice are central to Catholicism.

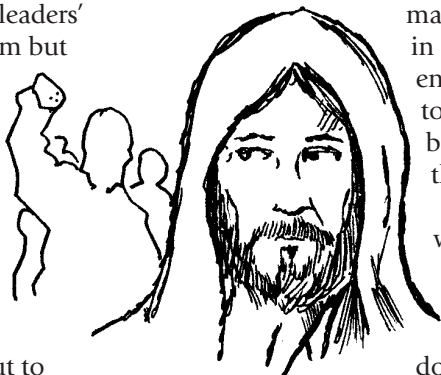
Catholics belong to a neighborhood community and a worldwide church led by the pope. This connection gives us a sense that we are all God's people.

from Scripture

John 8:1-11; Jesus can't be trapped.

In the prior passage, Jesus frustrated the Jewish leaders' attempts to entrap him but they returned with another test: a woman caught in the act of adultery. They pretended sincerity in asking Jesus for his judgment.

If Jesus declared that she should be put to death, he would violate Roman law forbidding the Jews to administer capital punishment. If he freed her, he would violate Jewish law. As is often the case when we try to pin God down, he did something few would have been



able to predict. Instead of answering in man's terms, he answered in God's. Jesus encouraged the accusers to judge themselves before judging her and they left in shame.

How many times do we clearly see the faults of others while missing or ignoring our own? What good does it do to point out others' failings and neglect the ones that separate us from God? Jesus knew our nature and created the Sacrament of Reconciliation to help. What a great opportunity to remember God's infinite mercy and forgiving heart.

Q & A Why do we talk about 40 days of Lent when there are more than that between Ash Wednesday and Easter?

Since the earliest days of the Church, Lent has been a time of preparation for Easter in imitation of the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert preparing for his public ministry. While the Church wanted to link the two, it was important not to overshadow the observance of the Resurrection that takes place at Mass every Sunday.

As a result, Sundays during Lent are not considered days of fasting and are exempted from our Lenten observance. That leaves us free to celebrate the resurrection each week without the penitential shadow Lent casts.

So if you count the days, Monday through Saturday, from Ash Wednesday until Lent ends with the celebration of the Pascal Mystery (Easter Triduum), you will come up with 40.



Feasts & Celebrations

March 3 - St. Katharine Drexel (1955). A Philadelphia heiress, St. Katharine Drexel gave up her fortune to become a nun. She established 50 missions for Native Americans in 16 states and founded Xavier University in New Orleans, the first university for African-Americans in the U.S.

March 4 - St. Casimir (1483). Born a prince of Poland, St. Casimir had a very strong conscience. When his father sent him to take over Hungary, fifteen-year-old 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 17 - St. Patrick (493). Born in Scotland, St. Patrick was kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave. Although he escaped, he later returned to become the bishop of Ireland and is credited with establishing the Church there.

March 19 - St. Joseph (?). Husband to the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph is a model of fatherhood and a protector of families.



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