

# Growing in FAITH™

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

June 2021

St. Christopher Parish

## One Minute Meditations

### Baptismal bargain

When we are baptized, God forms an unbreakable covenant with us promising His unconditional love. *"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:38-39). Our part of the bargain is to obey him and love Him, and put Him first in our lives. At Baptism, we are marked as God's child for life. That won't change.

### A perspective check

*"Do not lose your inward peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset."*

St. Francis de Sales

### Adoration

*"The acknowledgment of God as God, Creator and Savior, the Lord and Master of everything that exists ... The first commandment of the law obliges us to adore God"* (Catechism of the Catholic Church).



## Make a difference to your parish

The Catholic parish is a place of wonder and awe. It is in the arms of our parish that we experience God's love, and share it with others. Each parishioner is important to a parish, especially now. Consider these ideas to make a difference to yours:

### Take your place.

As pandemic restrictions ease around the country, you can once again take a seat at your parish table. You take it when you attend weekend Mass, seek peace from Sacraments such as the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick, and participate in parish ministries.

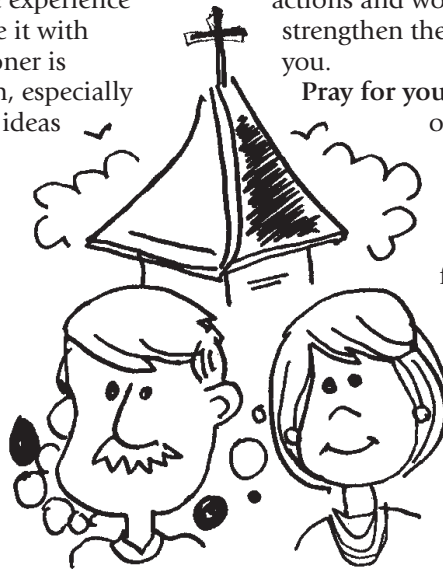
**Boost the faith of others.** Even the strongest Catholics can sometimes falter

in their faith. Look for opportunities to share Gospel values through your actions and words and you will strengthen the faith of those around you.

**Pray for your parish.** This is one of the most important contributions you can make. Join parish intentions to your own in daily prayer. Pray for parish ministries. Offer prayers for your priests and parish staff.

**Build it, serve it, or pay for it.** When there is a need in the parish, don't wait for an invitation. Your parish family depends upon your efforts.

**Help it grow.** Invite friends, coworkers, or neighbors to join you in worship. Your parish might be the spiritual home they've been searching for.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

### Why do priests wear a white collar?

The white collar or "Roman collar," dates back to the 15th century when priests placed linen or cotton collars over their outer clothing to be easily distinguished. This evolved into the collar we see on most priests today when wearing their black "clerics."



According to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), "Outside liturgical functions, a black suit and Roman collar are the usual attire for priests." When wearing a white collar, it means he's "on duty" to give blessings, offer counsel, and administer Sacraments.

# Savor a saintly summer

The slower pace of summer offers opportunities to nurture faith in creative ways not feasible in hectic times. Consider these ideas:

**Visit a shrine.** Holy places where relics are preserved, an apparition has taken place, or one that encourages a particular belief or devotion offer opportunities for prayer and pilgrimage. Look for directories of shrines in the U.S., including [www.catholicshrines.net](http://www.catholicshrines.net) or from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) <http://ow.ly/OYvJ30bAayl>.

**Attend daily Mass.** Meeting God in the

Eucharist begins a summer day with grace. Daily Mass is a full Catholic immersion in Christ, in the Sacraments, and the saints, all at once.

**Gather with other Catholics.** As we emerge from pandemic conditions, spending time with other Catholic friends can provide a community of faith-filled companions. Attend Mass together, socialize together, brainstorm Gospel-centered life solutions together.

**Look for signs of God's love.** Find a park or green space near you where you can center your heart and mind on Jesus. Observe His creation and become more aware of His presence.



## from Scripture

### Mark 5:21-43, Faith in action.

As the leader of the local synagogue, Jairus was probably pressured by the Pharisees to avoid or reject Jesus. It was a courageous act for him to publicly approach Jesus, bow before him, and beg for a cure for his daughter. Jairus' faith in Jesus was that strong.

On the way to Jairus' home, Jesus was delayed by a woman with a serious hemorrhage. According to Jewish law, her constant bleeding would have excluded her from most social contact. She thought Jesus wouldn't want to touch her and secretly grabbed His cloak



believing that any contact would cure her. In fact, she was cured, but Jesus told her that it was her faith that provided the cure. We should never allow fear of our unworthiness to keep us from God.

By the time Jesus finished with the woman, Jairus was told of his daughter's death. Jesus simply said, "Do not be afraid; just have faith" (Mark 5:36), and Jairus' great faith was rewarded. No matter how desperate your situation may appear, trust Jesus to help. Even death is under His control.



## Q & A

### Is there really such thing as sin?

Dealing with sin is uncomfortable and following God's rules is hard. The world tells us that sin doesn't exist. While we may think we are "good" and others may look up to us, eventually God will decide if we have been "good." Since His opinion is the one that matters, His rules rule.

**Sin is real.** The world tells us that sin doesn't exist but Catholics know that "sin is a deliberate thought, word, deed, or omission contrary to the eternal law of God." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*) The law can be found in the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and in Scripture. The law says sin is real.

**Unconfessed sin separates us from God.** "For you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us up to our guilt" (Isaiah 64:6). Avoiding guilt means missing God's forgiveness. Each evening, examine the day's actions and ask if they would please God or not. Resolve to do better and take steps to change. Seek absolution through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



## Feasts & Celebrations

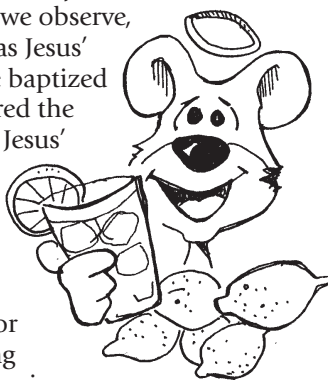
**June 11 - Sacred Heart of Jesus.** The image of Jesus with His heart exposed in unquenchable flame is a reminder of His intense and eternal love for us.

**June 22 - Immaculate Heart of Mary.** In response to a request by Our Lady of Fatima, Pope Pius XII consecrated the world to Mary's gentle and devout Immaculate Heart in 1942, and initiated this feast in 1945.

**June 21 - St. Aloysius Gonzaga (1591).** St. Aloysius prayed vigorously and fasted from age 7. Upon joining the Society of Jesus, he was ordered to cut back on penance in order to

study and spend time with the other students. He died while nursing the sick.

**June 24 - Nativity of St. John the Baptist.** The only saint whose birth and death we observe, St. John was Jesus' cousin. He baptized and prepared the people for Jesus' coming. He even baptized Jesus and was later executed for denouncing Herod's marriage to his sister-in-law.



### Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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