

Immaculate Conception Church Family
Rev. Randy C. Tochtrop, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

God is our strength

Life can be exhausting and we can become overwhelmed by what it takes to be good. It is important to remember that we don't struggle alone. "If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?" (Romans 8:31-32).

A new approach

St. Paul said the whole law is summed up in love. While he was talking about Mosaic law, laws are given to preserve order. Jesus presented a new fresh approach. Out of love, He came not to abolish the Law, but to bring it to perfection. The relationship between heaven and earth is love.

"Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14).



Who do you say that Jesus is?

Jesus said to his Apostles, "But who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15).

In *Mere Christianity*, C.S.

Lewis wrote that there are three ways to answer this question. Perhaps Jesus was a liar, deliberately misleading others by claiming to be God. Or, was He insane, deluded into thinking He was God? Finally, perhaps He is what He said He is – God.

Liar: If Jesus deliberately misled others, He would have been evil. Yet, his friends wrote that He did incredible acts of good, was honest, kind, and compassionate. No one experienced Jesus as a bad man.

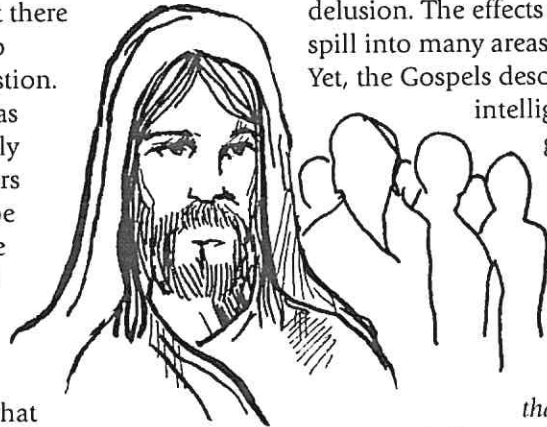
Lunatic: What if Jesus were insane

and deluded when believing He was God? Being out of touch with reality wouldn't have been confined to one delusion. The effects of mental illness spill into many areas of a person's life. Yet, the Gospels describe Jesus' wisdom, intelligence, and practical good sense. He had an ability to attract people who respected His authority.

Lord: When Jesus asked, "But who do YOU say that I am?", Peter

responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." It's the only answer that makes sense.

Ultimately, we each have to answer the question of who Jesus is for ourselves. We can pray for the faith of Peter to declare Jesus our Lord and our God.



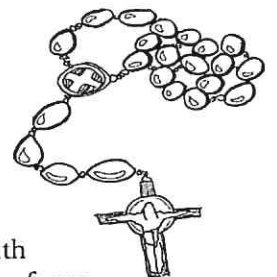
Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics pray the Rosary?

Popes, saints, and Catholics over the centuries have turned to the Rosary for miraculous help in seemingly impossible situations. The mysteries of the Rosary describe the events of Jesus' life, death and Resurrection. As we pray the Rosary, we revisit these events.

The Rosary is deeply ingrained in our Catholic identity. The rhythm of

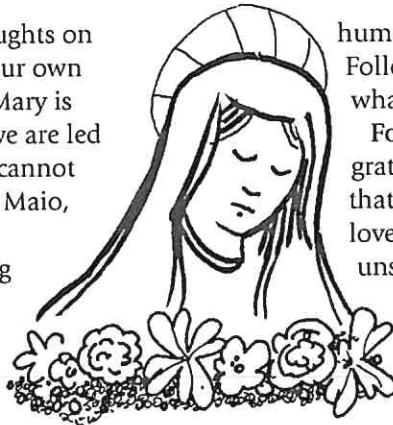
the Rosary is meant to still our minds and direct our hearts to communion with God, placing our focus on God and not on the world.



Mary brings us to the heart of her Son

Jesus so loved his mother that his last thoughts on the Cross were of her. He gave her to us as our own mother, and wants us to honor her. "Since Mary is rightly to be regarded as the way by which we are led to Christ, the person who encounters Mary cannot help but encounter Christ likewise" (Mense Maio, Blessed Pope Paul VI).

For her "yes." Without fully understanding what God intended, she unhesitatingly agreed to become his mother. Her "yes" made it possible for God to become



human and be crucified for our salvation. Following her example means saying "yes" to whatever God asks.

For her sacrifice. Wouldn't you be forever grateful to someone who gave up her child so that you and your loved ones might live? Mary loved her amazing child and she experienced unspeakable heartache as he was sacrificed for us. Praying the Rosary regularly reminds us of the life of Jesus and the desire of his Mother to bring us close to his heart.

from Scripture

Matthew 28:16-20, The Holy Trinity

Jesus appeared to the Apostles on the mountain top in Galilee, so they could receive their final instructions. They were to go forth, baptize, make disciples, and to teach what they had been taught.

These are our instructions, too. Once we meet Jesus and experience his love for us, we can't keep him to ourselves. We must share him.

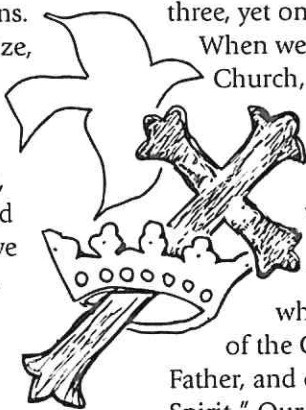
Jesus also revealed to the Apostles, and to the crowd gathered with them, that God is a Trinity — Father, Son, and

Holy Spirit — three Divine Persons united in love. The belief that God is three, yet one, is distinct to Christianity.

When we became members of the Church, we were baptized in the name of the Trinity.

The Trinity is a mystery we may not fully understand, but we can still live in its love and power.

We proclaim our faith in it whenever we make the Sign of the Cross: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Our ultimate goal is to follow Christ into the eternal life of the Trinity.



Q & A Why are Catholics urged to pray?

St. Therese of Lisieux said, "For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy." Practically speaking, prayer is how we connect with God.



Prayer helps us to hear God's voice. By praying, we learn about Him, come to understand what He wants for us, and how we reap the blessings He wants to give us. The more we pray, the closer to Him we become. "Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between God and man in Christ" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2564).

Through our Baptism, we are united with Jesus. When we pray often and regularly, we create the habit of being in His presence and in communion with Him. And, we tap into our Baptismal connection. Through a healthy prayer life, we enjoy a personal and living relationship with God.

God seeks to draw us each to Himself. Prayer is our answer to Him.

Feasts & Celebrations

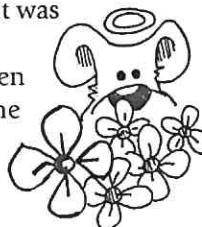
May 1 – St. Joseph the Worker. Entrusted with the care of the Blessed Mother and Jesus, Joseph was a carpenter dedicated to his family and obedient to God.

May 13 – Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord (1st Century). This solemnity marks the completion of Jesus' mission of salvation and his triumphant entry into Heaven. Note: In many dioceses, observance of Ascension has been moved to the following Sunday.

May 18 – St. Felix of Cantalice

(1587). Born to poor, pious parents in Italy, St. Felix was called "Brother Deogratias" because he was always thanking God. As a young man, he joined the Capuchins, who sent him to Rome to be the friary's official beggar. He was also friends with Saints Philip Neri and Charles Borromeo.

May 23 – Pentecost (1st century). After the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, the Holy Spirit was given to the Church at the first Pentecost. When the apostles received the Holy Spirit, the "new age" of the Church was born.



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