

# Growing in FAITH™

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

September 2021

Immaculate Conception Church Family

Rev. Randy C. Tochtrop, Pastor

## One Minute Meditations

### Make time

Life can be so busy that it becomes impossible to find time to pray.

Instead we have to make time to pray. If we make time for God, he will help us find the time we need for everything else.

### Face forward

Continually reliving the past prevents us from looking ahead with hope. Follow St. Paul's example: *"Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 3:13-14).

### Our Lady of Sorrows

On September 15th we commemorate Our Lady of Sorrows. The title refers to Simeon's prediction that Mary would experience sorrows as if "... you yourself a sword will pierce" (Luke 2:35). Her greatest sorrow may have been watching her son die on the Cross.

If we ever want someone who understands our difficulties, we have only to look to Mary.



## "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Popular culture would have us believe that happiness comes from having the perfect spouse, the perfect home, the perfect job, and the perfect body. Without all that, happiness isn't possible. Consider this:

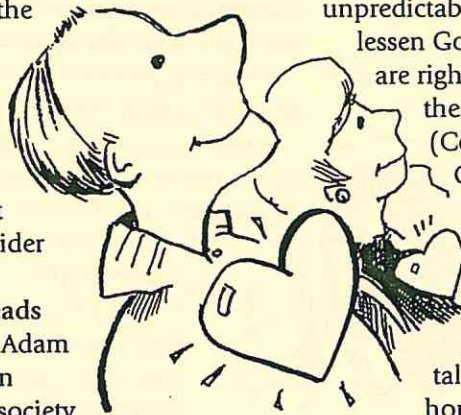
God's way leads to perfection. Adam and Eve were in Paradise until society convinced them that by eating a piece of fruit, they could become perfect and be even happier. Had they listened to God instead, their lives would have stayed perfect.

Only God loves perfectly. Sometimes we fear that showing our failings to

others will lessen their regard. The more perfect we appear, the more we will be loved and respected. Human love is unpredictable, but we can never lose or lessen God's love. He loves us as we are right now. In fact, Jesus created the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) to remind us of God's unconditional love.

God's idea of perfect is possible. Jesus said, "... be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48), but he wasn't

talking about muscles or homes. Perfection in Jesus' eyes means loving God with all our hearts, praying for our enemies, and taking care of the poor. To Jesus, love, obedience and service is the true measure of perfection and he wants us to let go of anything that gets in the way. That's the only "perfect" that is possible.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

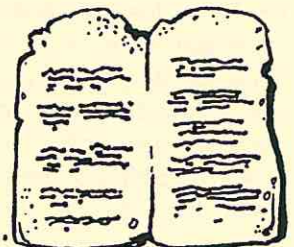
## Why do Catholics follow the Ten Commandments?

The Ten Commandments were given by God to the Israelites on Mt. Sinai after they left Egypt. They are considered divine law because God himself revealed them to help his people live holy lives. They formed the basis of Jewish life, so Jesus followed them, too.

The Commandments are standards of holiness for Christians, too. Obey them

and eternal happiness is ours. Disobey them and we suffer the consequences.

Jesus summarized the spirit of the Commandments in Matthew 22:36-40.



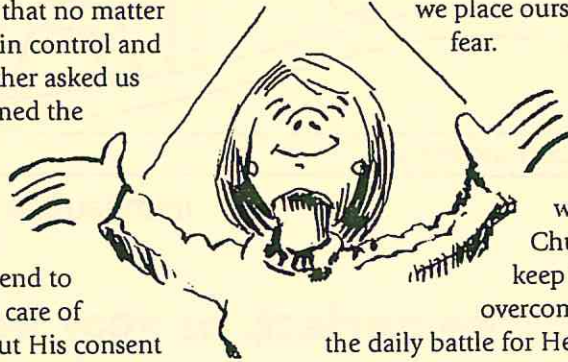


## Be not afraid

The phrase "be not afraid," made famous by Pope St. John Paul II, helps us to remember that no matter what happens in the world, God is in control and we are in good hands. The Holy Father asked us to put our trust in Jesus who redeemed the world.

Refuse to worry. Jesus reminded us that tomorrow isn't guaranteed to anyone (Luke 12:20). What brings us peace is to tend to today's challenges and let God take care of tomorrow. Nothing happens without His consent

and He won't permit anything that is bad for us. When we place ourselves in His care, we have nothing to fear.

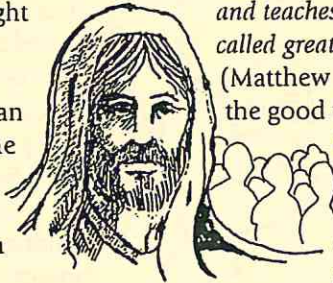


Keep your eyes on Him. Don't let the world blind you to God's presence in your life. We may not feel powerful at times, but when we stay close to Jesus through His Church, we receive the grace we need to keep fighting temptations to sin. God has overcome the world. With His help, we will win the daily battle for Heaven.

### from **S**cripture

#### Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48, The discipline of discipleship

In this Gospel passage, the disciples hear of an unknown man healing in Jesus' name. In their jealousy, it seemed the disciples were more concerned about losing the spotlight than in healing. Jesus added perspective. He pointed out that the man had the same goal as the disciples - to build up God's Kingdom. He was a teammate, not an enemy.



through those sins, we lead others into sin, our responsibility is doubled.

These are grim words, but the opposite is great news: "Whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19). God rewards us for the good we do to and for others.

Our example is powerfully influential.

Being a faithful disciple isn't easy. Rooting out personal sin and setting a good

example is difficult, but we're not alone or without grace to do the job. No matter what we sacrifice, the reward is infinitely better.

### **Q & A** Why do I have to go to Mass when I don't enjoy it?

A Catholic adult who lives an average lifespan can attend as many as 4,084 Sunday Masses. No ritual or event can sustain good vibrations 4,048 times. The truth is that the Mass is not meant to always make us feel good. It isn't actually about us - it's about God.

Mass is public worship. At every Mass, we worship God as a natural response to His overwhelming magnificence. This is not because God needs our praise, but because we need to praise Him. We recognize and honor all that is good about Him.

Mass is a sacrifice. When the gifts are brought to the altar, each of us offers our lives along with the bread and wine. We can do nothing of our own accord, so Christ accepts our offerings - our sacrifice - and joins it to His ongoing work of salvation.

Mass is a meal. Through the Eucharist, Jesus makes His home within us. We deepen our union with Jesus each time we receive His Word and His Body and Blood during Mass.

### Feasts & Celebrations

September 8 - The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1st century). Tradition says Mary was born in Jerusalem after her mother, Anna, and her father, Joachim, had been married more than twenty years without children. Mary's birth brought her parents joy, and we are joyful too - because Mary brings salvation to all of us with the birth of Jesus.

September 23 - St. Padre Pio (1968). Born to farmers in southern Italy, Padre Pio was an inspiring confessor and counselor. He received the five wounds of Our Lord's Passion (stigmata) eight

years after he became a Capuchin Friar. Despite intense personal and physical suffering, he remained dedicated to prayer.

September 28 - Saint Wenceslaus (929). As the king of Bohemia, Wenceslaus worked closely with the Church to end the persecution of the Christians in his country. He encouraged German missionaries, built churches, and cared for the sick, and poor. Political conflict led to his assassination by his brother. The "Good King" was immediately recognized as a martyr.



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