

# Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

November 2021

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

## One Minute Meditations

### Happiness

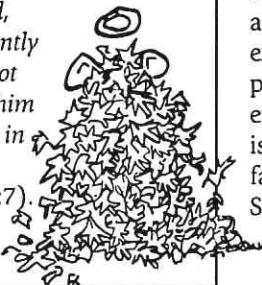
As a loving Father, God wants us to be happy. True happiness is: "Joy and beatitude over receiving the fulfillment of our vocation as creatures: a sharing in the divine nature and the vision of God. God put us into the world to know, love, and serve Him, and so come to the happiness of paradise" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, # 1720). The happiness the world offers doesn't last, but the happiness God offers is forever.

### Nurture faith

Spiritual growth doesn't stop with formal religious education. To know God better, start with the Bible and consider adding spiritual reading. (Hint: ask a priest for recommendations.) Read so that you may learn more about God's ways.

### Patience makes sense

Don't be tempted to compare yourself to others. God's plan for you is unique. "*Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over him who prospers in his way*" (Psalm 37:7).



## Prepare for an amazing truth

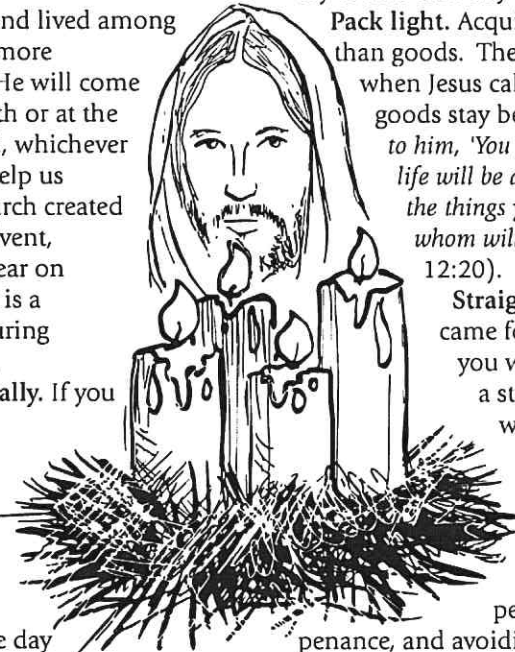
At Christmas we celebrate the truth that God came and lived among us. What's even more amazing is that He will come again at our death or at the end of the world, whichever comes first. To help us prepare, the Church created the season of Advent, beginning this year on November 28. It is a watchful time during which we can ...

**Live intentionally.** If you knew that Jesus would come for you tomorrow, how would you spend today? Chances are you would devote the day to asking and granting forgiveness, spending time with loved ones, and preparing your heart for your Savior.

Try to live each day that way.

**Pack light.** Acquire graces rather than goods. The graces come along when Jesus calls for you, but the goods stay behind. "*But God said to him, 'You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?'*" (Luke 12:20).

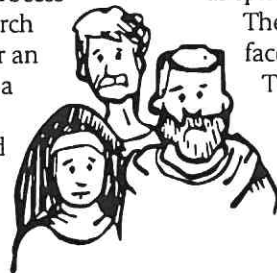
**Straighten up.** If Jesus came for you tomorrow, you would need to be in a state of grace to go with Him. Prepare now by never missing Mass, going to Confession regularly, performing heartfelt penance, and avoiding sin so that you'll be ready to greet Jesus with joy anytime. The truth is, Jesus really could come tomorrow – or even today!



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why do Catholics honor saints?

Canonization is the process through which the Church acknowledges that, after an extensive investigation, a person demonstrated extraordinary virtue and is now in Heaven, face-to-face with God. Saints are offered to us



as spiritual guides to lead us to God. The saints were real people who faced problems similar to our own. They allowed God's grace to transform them. When we are facing difficulties, trials, and temptations, we can look to the saints and be encouraged by their faithfulness.

# Thankfulness is good for the health

Studies show that people who are thankful are less likely to be depressed or unhappy, and find they enjoy simple pleasures like sunsets and good health. Here is how you can join them ...

**Calculate your ratio.** For three days straight, keep track of how many times you think grateful thoughts versus complaining. This is your Grateful to Grumbling Ratio. The higher your G2G Ratio, the happier you will be.

**Gather inspiration.** Ask others what inspires their gratitude. You will probably discover something for which



you can also be thankful but haven't thought of.

**Fast.** Forgo something you like such as food, TV, the internet. It will make you thankful for it when you get it back.

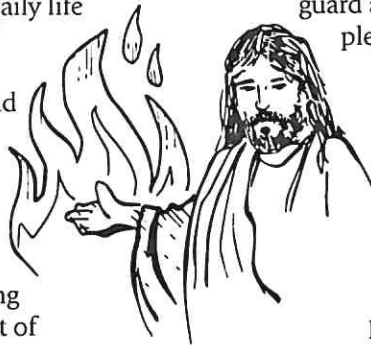
**Guard the company you keep.** Attitudes are contagious. Do the people around you encourage gratitude or griping? Consider changing your environment or your friends to lean toward gratitude.

**Detach.** Have you noticed that the people who have the least seem the happiest? Take stock of your possessions. Keep only what you need.

## from Scripture

### Luke 21:25-28, 34-36, the Advent of hope

The virtues of patience and perseverance aren't strengths for most of us. Often the concerns of daily life overshadow our pursuit of holiness. We can get lured into sin by the comforts and pleasures the world has to offer. We can forget our ultimate goal is Heaven. Knowing this, Jesus warned His followers about the end times, hoping to shake them (and us) out of "drowsy" complaisance.



in God's friendship will have no reason to fear. The key is, He said, to stay on guard against sin and worldly pleasure.

Advent is a time of waiting for the coming of Christ. God has promised us that if we are faithful to Him, we will be rewarded. This is a time when we must pray for patience and perseverance to keep us ready

for the arrival of our Savior. Then we can hold our heads high and stand confident expecting our promised reward.

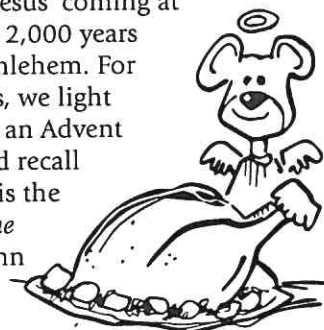
## Feasts & Celebrations

**November 17 – St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1231).** The daughter of the King of Hungary, she married at the age of 14. Her beloved husband was killed after only six years of marriage. She joined the Secular Franciscan Order and spent her life caring for the poor.

**November 21 – Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.** God promised his people a king who will be triumphant over their enemies. Jesus is our King. In Baptism and Confirmation, we are brought under His kingship.

**November 22 – St. Cecilia (230).** A native of Rome, St. Cecilia was forced to marry although she wanted to consecrate herself to God. She eventually converted her husband and both were martyred for the faith.

**November 28 - First Sunday in Advent.** During Advent, we prepare to celebrate Jesus' coming at Christmas 2,000 years ago at Bethlehem. For four weeks, we light candles in an Advent wreath and recall that Jesus is the "Light of the world" (John 8:12).



## Q & A Is our belief in Purgatory rooted in the Bible?

In the Old Testament, the Jewish leader Judas Maccabee required his soldiers to offer prayers and sacrifices for dead comrades who died wearing "magic" amulets in service of pagan gods – a serious violation of the covenant. *"Turning to supplication, they prayed that the sinful deed might be fully blotted out"*



(Maccabees 12:42). By offering prayers on their behalf after their death, Judas Maccabee demonstrated his faith that the prayers could still benefit the dead.

In the New Testament, Jesus speaks of the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit that won't be forgiven in this life or in the next (Matthew 12:32). We conclude that other sins are forgiven in the next life.

If we die in God's friendship but still have attachment to venial sin, purification will be necessary. It is difficult to see a beautiful landscape through a dirty window. To enjoy the view, the window must be cleaned. Likewise, Purgatory cleans us up so we can enjoy the view, in this case, the beatific vision of God.

### Our Mission

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