

Growing in FAITH™

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

April 2015

St. Joseph Church

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One Minute Meditations

St. Bernadette Soubirous

Bernadette was a good but simple teen from a poor family in the south of France. The Blessed Virgin Mary chose to visit Bernadette eighteen times in a cave beside the Gave River (1858-59). A miraculous spring with healing waters poured from the spot and Lourdes remains one of the most visited religious sites in the world. Bernadette suffered terribly, but bravely, from learning difficulty, poor health, world scrutiny. After becoming a nun, she died at the age of 35.



We are one Body

On the road to Damascus, Jesus told Saul that when he attacked Christians, he attacked Jesus. "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting" (Acts 26:15). Our Lord cannot be separated from the members of his Body. We stand united with all who suffer for Christ.

"He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6:54

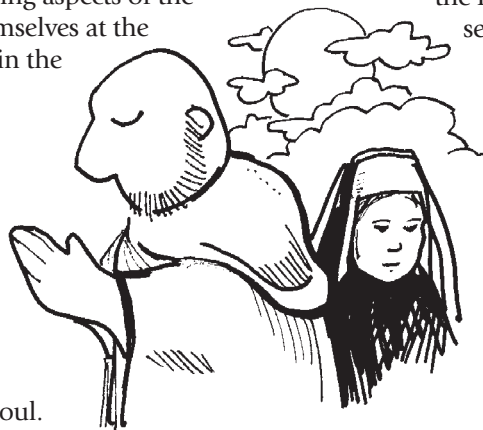


The Year of Consecrated Life

Most of us are called to a vocation of marriage and family, but some are called to live with Christ in a different relationship. For some of these chosen, this involves leaving aspects of the world to put themselves at the service of others in the Consecrated Life.

Caretakers of Christ's Church:

The role of a someone consecrated to God by vows of chastity, poverty and obedience is often as a caretaker of the soul. Whether it is teaching in schools, providing aid to the sick and dying, caring for those in need, or living a life dedicated to manual labor and prayer, they bring Christ's charity to the world.



Someone to pray for us: For the consecrated religious, praying can be a full time job. To better understand the needs of God's children and to learn the Father's will, they often separate themselves in some manner from worldly cares. This way, they can freely represent us on the front lines of the battle for salvation.

Real role models:

"Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Those living

the consecrated life try to live their baptismal promises more intensely and serve with open hearts and willing spirits. When looking for role models, we can look to these men and women striving to live a holy life for God.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics need faith?

"Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Christians know that Jesus is our Savior and our lives are in his hands. We also know that by virtue of his suffering,



death, and Resurrection, we have hope of sharing in his glory in Heaven. He said so.

It is through faith that all the other virtues flow. Through faith we believe, *"For with God, nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37).*

The path that Easter built

Easter is more than a happy ending to Jesus' travels on Earth. In fact, it leads to a new life for anyone who follows Jesus. Here are some ways to find the right path.

Use a map. Our faith holds all the tools needed to find peace, personal well-being, and security. The Bible, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Mass point the way.

Travel light. Avoiding materialism is the challenge of our time. Keeping only what we need reminds us of our dependence on

God, gives us an appreciation for what we have, and helps us be more sensitive to others in need.

Follow a guide. The journey can be easier when someone lights the way. Perhaps a priest, deacon, or religious in your parish can become a spiritual mentor. Or choose one of the saints to be a role model who can light the path.

Bring a friend. Spiritual companions can help us maintain perspective, challenge us to grow, and make the trip more enjoyable.

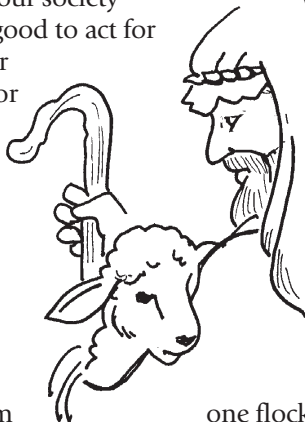


from Scripture

From Scripture: John 10:11-18, The Good Shepherd

This Gospel describes the ideal for our relationship with Jesus. In our society today, we are told that it's good to act for ourselves first, stand on our own, and do what is best for us as individuals. Our allegiance to others is secondary. The problem becomes, on whom can we rely for help when we encounter trouble?

In Jesus' day, a shepherd lived with his sheep, cared for them, and even put himself at risk to keep them safe. He kept them in a flock for safety to protect them from predators. Their shepherd was trusted and familiar, and



the sheep recognized his voice and wouldn't follow another, unknown voice. He was their Good Shepherd.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd for all of humankind. Jesus placed himself in the role of a shepherd and predicted that he would give his life for his sheep. Although his sheepfold began in

Israel, he hopes to have one flock made up of the whole world. His flock is the Church he founded and all who follow his voice are his sheep.



Q & A Is it better to say formula or spontaneous prayers?

Prayer is raising our hearts and minds to God and any form of prayer is key to maintaining a strong relationship with God.

Formula prayers are memorized prayers someone has written, while spontaneous prayers are vocalizations that come from the heart. Both types of prayer have the same goals – to praise God, ask for his help, to thank him, and reflect on his goodness.

When young Catholics are often taught formula prayers, such as the "Our Father", "Apostles Creed", and "Hail Mary", to help us learn about God and to develop the habit of speaking with him. Then, as we grow in our faith, praying spontaneously from the heart becomes another, more personal option. It is possible, and even fruitful, to combine both forms in our communication with God.

For example, spontaneous prayer during Eucharistic Adoration is made richer by enjoying the silence and presence of God. In turn, beginning Adoration with the Rosary – a formula prayer - can lay the groundwork for a higher level of spontaneous prayer.

Feasts & Celebrations

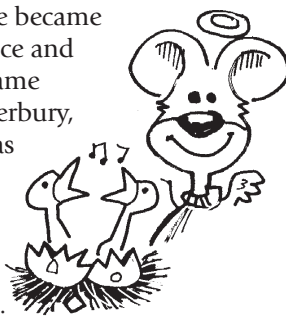
April 5 – Easter Sunday. The solemnity that marks Jesus' Resurrection. It is a Holy Day of Obligation.

April 11 - St. Stanislaus (1079). As Bishop of Krakow in 1072, St. Stanislaus attempted to reform the violent and depraved king of Poland, Boleslas II. When his efforts failed, he excommunicated the king. In retaliation, Boleslas murdered the saint as he said Mass.

April 12 – Divine Mercy Sunday. In 1931, Jesus appeared to St. Faustina and asked that the Sunday after Easter

become the "Feast of Mercy." Jesus promised that anyone who honors him as the King of Mercy and prays The Chaplet of Divine Mercy – the prayer he gave to St. Faustina – will receive special graces and great mercy.

April 21 – St. Anselm (1109). A native of Italy, St. Anselm initially enjoyed a carefree life at court. After his mother died, he became a monk in France and reluctantly became bishop of Canterbury, England. He was exiled for rebuffing the king's interference in Church matters.



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To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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Publishers of Growing in Faith™ and Partners in Faith™
(540)662-7844 (540)662-7847 fax
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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible)