

# Growing in FAITH™

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

November 2017

## One Minute Meditations

### St. Catherine Labouré

Born the ninth of eleven children to a French farming family, St.



Catherine eventually joined the Daughters of Charity. Shortly after, the Blessed Mother appeared to Catherine and asked to have a medal engraved with her image and the words, "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee" engraved on it. The devotion spread quickly, but no one knew St. Catherine's involvement until soon before her death. She was canonized in 1947.

### Counting Blessings

How do we handle inconveniences like an irritating coworker, a last-minute schedule change, or occasional miscommunication? God allows us trials so we can grow in virtue, to encourage us to trust him and open ourselves to his grace.

The next trial you face, thank God for his "blessings" and pray for his patience, humility, and grace.

*"The Mass is long, you say, and I reply: 'Because your love is short.'" —St.*

Josemaría Escrivá



## Do what Jesus did

It is hard to imagine how wonderful Heaven is or the joy that awaits us there. Jesus' mission of salvation while on Earth made Heaven possible for us, if we live a life of holiness and grace as he did. Jesus hoped we would do what he did ...

**Service.** While on Earth, Jesus' purpose was to serve God and others. He even performed servant tasks such as serving food and washing feet. He asked that we model his servant's heart.

**Love.** When he walked among us, Jesus reached out to those who felt unloved, comforted those who were suffering, and helped people draw closer to his Father. Try to show love in

these ways every day.

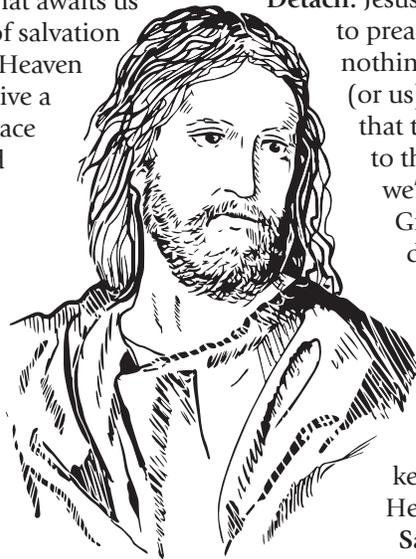
**Detach.** Jesus sent his disciples out to preach with almost nothing. He didn't want them (or us) distracted. He knew that the more stuff we have to think about, the less we'll think about God.

Give away whatever you don't absolutely need.

**Pray.** Jesus drew strength from time alone with God.

Spending quiet time with God each day will help keep you on the path to Heaven.

**Sacrifice.** The most perfect sacrifice offered to God was Jesus' death on the Cross. Yet, when we give up time, effort, or something we value out of love for God and others, we imitate Jesus' generosity.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why do Catholics honor saints in our churches?

Saints are spiritual role models whose examples we can follow to Heaven. Viewing statues and images of them in our churches helps us to recall their heroic virtue and faithful love for God.

The statues, and the saints

themselves, are not meant to be objects of worship.

Instead, we recognize the good these holy people did and honor their examples. Just as in praising a painting we honor the painter, in praising the saints, we honor God who made them.



## God loves us as we are

Most of us care about how we come across to other people. Choices about how we live, work, or dress can be influenced by a desire for others' approval. While it is only human to want to be liked, it's important to remember that God's opinion matters most. The best part? God always loves us.

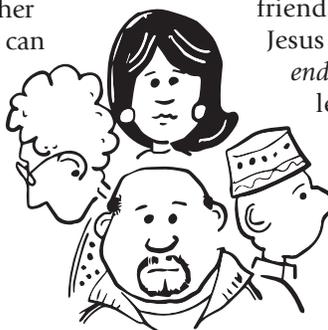
**His love never changes.** Human standards change over time. Someone considered "in" today, can be "out" in no time. God's love is unchanging and unending.

Friends come and go. Sooner or later,

friendships change or friends may move on. But Jesus said, "... behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). God never leaves.

**He loves us for who we really are.** There's nothing God doesn't know about us, and he adores us anyway. Go figure.

**If God likes you, others may, too.** To please God, we have to fill ourselves with love for him and other people, and that makes us even nicer to be around.



### from Scripture

### Matthew 25:31-46, Judged on love

In this Gospel reading, Jesus describes the coming of the Son of Man, that is, his glorious return on the last day. Jesus will appear at the end of time as the King of the Nations and the Judge of History. Everyone who has ever lived, from the first to the last, from the greatest to the least, will stand before Christ. All of us will be judged on how we loved, especially how we loved those who suffered among us.

The specific criteria for judgment is the basis for the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy,

which are: feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked and welcome the stranger, care for the sick and imprisoned, and bury the dead.

In the end, we will be judged on our response to the suffering of others. Do we, like the "blessed," respond with compassion and mercy? Or do we, like the others, turn a blind eye and do nothing? The goal is to see Christ in others and to minister to their needs as he did.



### Q & A What are indulgences?

An indulgence is "the remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sin whose guilt has already been forgiven" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*). In other words, after certain conditions have been met, the Church prays that the punishment for one's sins – either on Earth or in Purgatory – will be reduced or eliminated.

Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross and the prayers and good works of the saints during their lifetimes make indulgences possible. The Catechism compares this idea to something like an infinite bank account. The Church draws from the "treasury" of spiritual goods – prayers and sacrifices – of the saints and applies the benefits to those completing the indulgence (CCC #1476). To gain an indulgence, certain requirements must be met, including attending Confession, receiving Holy Communion and praying for the intentions of the pope.

Indulgences are only effective for sins that have already been forgiven in the Sacrament of Confession. Otherwise, we could be in danger of presuming on God's mercy or assuming God's forgiveness without true contrition.

### Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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### Feasts & Celebrations

**Nov. 1 – All Saints Day – a Holy Day of Obligation.** In the early Church, there was a desire to celebrate saints and martyrs by assigning each a feast day. However, the Christian persecutions were so horrible that there weren't enough days in the calendar for individual commemorations. Pope Gregory IV designated Nov.1 as All Saints Day.

**Nov. 14 – St. Lawrence O'Toole (1180).** St. Lawrence was born in County Kildare, Ireland. When he was twelve, he was dedicated to God's service. St. Lawrence became Dublin's

second archbishop and a papal legate. He was canonized in 1225.

**Nov. 16 – St. Margaret of Scotland (1093).** Queen Margaret of Scotland was dedicated to caring for the poor. She washed beggars' feet and gave them alms. She fed orphans and destitute adults before eating her own meals.

**Nov. 26 – Solemnity of Christ the King.** God promised his people a king who would triumph over their enemies. Jesus is our King. In Baptism and Confirmation, we are brought under his kingship.

