

Growing in FAITH™

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

March 2018

Ascension of Our Lord Church

Rev. Walter Austin, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Margaret Clitherow

St. Margaret Clitherow was born in York, England in 1555. She was raised Protestant but became a Catholic soon after she married.

When Queen Elizabeth I outlawed Catholicism, St. Margaret continued to practice her faith, even hiding Catholic priests in her house so they could say Mass in secret. In 1586, Margaret was arrested. Instead of being afraid, she was serenely joyful during her time in prison. She refused to renounce her faith and died a martyr.



St. Joseph

March 19th, the Solemnity of St. Joseph, honors the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He is the patron of the Universal Church and protector of families.

"You are praising God when you do your day's work. You are praising him when you eat and drink. You are praising him when you rest on your bed. You are praising him when you are asleep. So when are you not praising him?"

St. Augustine



"Who, then, is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29)

Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) challenges our idea of who is a stranger. As followers of Jesus, we know that it is not acceptable to care only for people who are like ourselves. Our faith calls us to look beyond borders and see all people as neighbors. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?" (Luke 6:32).

Who is a neighbor? Jesus never directed us to like everyone, but he raised love of neighbor to the level of a Commandment. And he doesn't allow us to be selective.

The snarky coworker or unpleasant older person who lives next door?

Both are neighbors we are asked to love. Customers who harp on the tiny mistakes we make, or relatives who love to point out our flaws?

Neighbors. People from around the world whose values and behavior are foreign to us? Neighbors, all.

What is neighbor love? It starts by seeing those around us – truly looking past the outer appearance and learning names, personal stories, circumstances.

Praying for others – whether we know them personally or not – is a powerful way to love them.

Neighbor love isn't blind to others' sin but it requires focusing on our own first. We love neighbors best by letting them witness in us the fullness of a life in Christ.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics have crucifixes in church?

The crucifix – a cross with Jesus' body on it – reminds us of the price of our salvation and God's infinite love for us; "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son to death on a cross" (John 3:16).

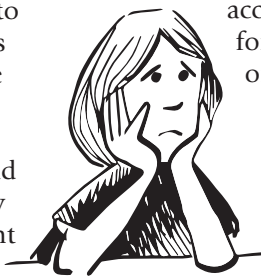


A crucifix helps us to remember that the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1545). During Mass, Jesus, through the priest, offers himself to the Father for us.

Why does God let bad things happen?

"If God is good, why does he allow bad things to happen?" In our hearts, we may know that God is loving and doesn't want us to suffer, but it can be difficult to see his plan when trouble strikes. The key is to stay close and trust his love.

Draw closer to him. Sometimes God allows bad things to happen because he knows that adversity can draw us closer to him. Take the Old Testament hero, Joseph, for example (Genesis 37-50). He was sold into slavery by his own brothers, falsely



accused by his master's wife, and unjustly imprisoned for years. Eventually he was released and became one of the most powerful men in Egypt.

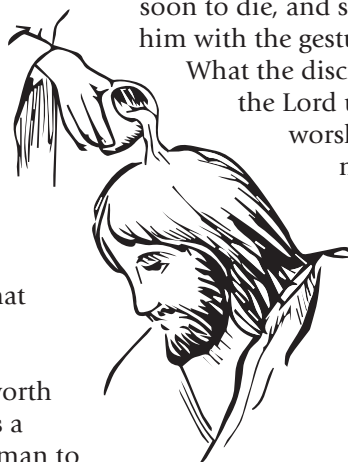
Stay connected. Throughout his suffering, Joseph kept his friendship with God strong so he could see God's hand in his life. When his brothers begged for forgiveness, Joseph was able to answer, *"Even though you meant harm to me, God meant it for good, to achieve his present end, the survival of many people."*

from Scripture

Mark 14:1-15, 47, Waste or worship?

In this reading, we follow the march of events toward Jesus' death. It begins in Bethany with a woman pouring a costly ointment over Jesus' head and horrifying the disciples with a frivolous use of an expensive material. However, Jesus silenced them, pointing out that "she has anointed my body beforehand for burying."

The ointment was costly – worth about one year's wages. It was a significant sacrifice for the woman to make. Yet, unlike the disciples, the woman understood that Jesus was



soon to die, and she meant to honor him with the gesture.

What the disciples saw as waste, the Lord understood as worship. Jesus saw her material offering as "a beautiful thing." She took one of her most honored possessions and gave it to Jesus in an unusual act of devotion. Rather than consider it a loss, Jesus felt honored by it.

Q & A How do I make a good Confession?

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation (Confession) can sometimes feel like an obligation instead of an encounter with God's mercy, but it doesn't have to be that way. Try these tips for a more joyful Reconciliation.

Examine your conscience. Compare your actions to the principles of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and the Beatitudes (Matthew 5). Bring to the confessional the significant ways you have failed to live up to them.

Confess the small ones, too. Participating in the Sacrament frequently means that you may only have venial (minor) sins to confess. Confess them anyway. Piling up venial sins can lessen our resistance and pave the way for mortal sin. Confessing keeps our consciences sharp.

Express contrition and resolve to avoid sin. Ask for the grace to continue growing in holiness and avoiding evil.

The point of the Sacrament is to reconcile us with the God who loves us more than we can imagine, and who is always eager to forgive us. Confession helps us come back and begin again.

Feasts & Celebrations

March 1 – St. David of Wales (c. 600). St. David is the patron saint of Wales. He was born into Welsh nobility, but instead chose to become a priest. He was later consecrated a bishop. He is best known for founding an ascetic monastery and ridding the area of the Pelagian heresy.

March 17 – St. Patrick of Ireland (c.461). Born in Scotland, St. Patrick was kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave. He escaped but later returned to become the bishop of Ireland and is credited for having established the

Church there.

March 19 – St. Joseph, Husband of Mary (1st Century). Jesus' earthly father and husband to the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph is a model of fatherhood and a protector of families.

March 25 – Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion (1st Century). On Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, we recall Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, when he was greeted by crowds waving palms and cheering. This Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week.



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To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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