

Growing in FAITH™

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

May 2017

Ascension of Our Lord Church

Rev. Walter Austin, Pastor

Welcome all God's children

God loves each of us uniquely and fiercely no matter where we come from or how we look. Those of us who follow him know that it's not just important to love each other. It's God's law.

Celebrate diversity. Invite foreigners or people who are different from you to your home or church. Jesus was once a foreigner in a strange land and was grateful for the hospitality he received. There is great diversity in the Communion of Saints.

Practice patience. It can be tough to listen to someone with a speech impediment or a heavy accent. Imagine, though, how grateful that person will be when you offer your attention. Perhaps it would help to imagine the face of Christ in the

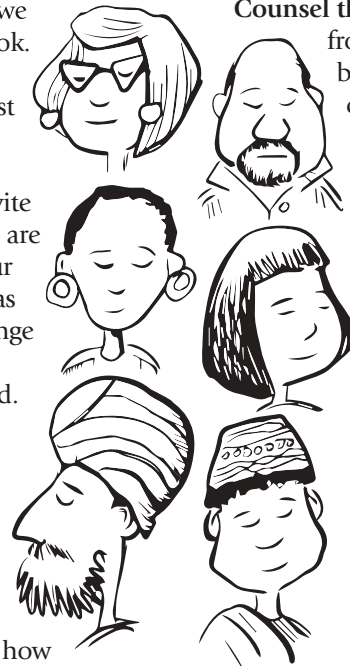
face before you.

Counsel the ignorant. Someone

from another country, background, or with different abilities than yours might behave in what looks like an inconsiderate way out of ignorance or limitations. He might appreciate being informed.

Speak up. Don't stay quiet when you witness prejudice, and be positive about diversity if friends or relatives start criticizing others' faith, cultures or abilities.

Act with love. The God of love gave of himself so we could be reunited with him. We share that love when we assume the best of others and look for the good in all God's children.



One Minute Meditations

St. Mary Magdalen de' Pazzi

Born Catherine de' Pazzi to a noble family in Florence in 1566, she entered the Carmelite order when she was sixteen, taking the name Mary Magdalen. Soon after, she began experiencing mystical ecstasies, which lasted until her death. She enjoyed a personal relationship with Jesus and had many conversations with him. She considered these graces as a sign of weakness, not holiness. She was known for her wisdom, charity, and her love for the Eucharist.



Gratitude, not greed

St. Paul wrote for Christians then and now when he warned against greed and materialism, "For the love of money is the root of all evils" (1 Timothy 6:10). Despite all evidence, many still believe money brings happiness, yet gratitude for all we have is the real key to happiness.

"The holy Rosary is a powerful weapon. Use it with confidence and you'll be amazed at the results."

St. Josemaría
Escrivá



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Angels are pure spirits with intelligence and free will (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 330). The belief in angels is a Catholic doctrine based on Scriptural evidence. Throughout the Bible, God sends angels to announce his will, punish,

Why do Catholics believe in angels?

strengthen, or console. Angels also protected and ministered to Jesus during his time on earth. We are also given guardian angels to watch over us (Matthew 18:10). Finally, the Church joins in the adoration of the angels at Mass (CCC #335).



Advice, comfort, and encouragement in the Bible

The Bible is full of practical life guidance that is as relevant today as it was when written. Its advice, comfort, and encouragement is timeless.

Advice - Written by a wise Old Testament scribe and teacher, Book of Sirach offers advice on just about everything we deal with today—friendship, education, finances, etiquette, marriage, family life, and more.

Comfort - In St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus gives comfort for the insecurities of daily life. For example,



"Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" (Matthew 6:26). For more, see Matthew 6:25-34, 7:7-11, 11:28, and 28:20.

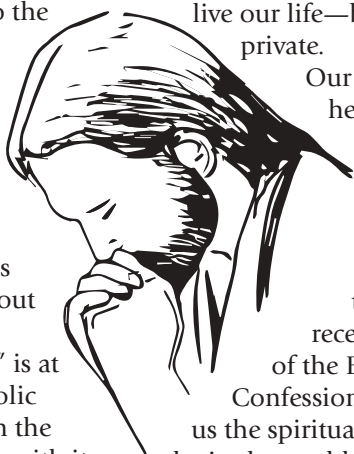
Encouragement - Need encouragement? Try Psalm 118, *"The Lord is with me, I will not be afraid."* Or, Psalm 40, *"I waited patiently for the Lord's help; then he listened to me and heard my cry."* And Psalm 23, *"I fear no harm for you are at my side; your rod and staff give me courage."*

from Scripture

John 17:1-11A, In the world, not of it

Following the Last Supper and just before his agony in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to the Father for his disciples, including us. He asked that all would remain united in his love, be protected from the influence of the devil, and ultimately be with him in eternity forever.

What Jesus did not ask was that God take his followers out of the world. Being "in the world, but not of the world" is at the heart of living our Catholic faith. We can try to abandon the world altogether or blend in with it, but neither option fulfills what God



asks of us. We are called to proclaim the Gospel in the world by how we live our life—both in public and private.

Our true home is not here on Earth, but in Heaven. It takes courage to place our hope in Christ and then live accordingly. Going to Mass and receiving the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Confession regularly will give us the spiritual strength needed to be in the world, but not of the world.

Q & A Do we really receive gifts from the Holy Spirit?

At Baptism, we receive actual, spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit intended to help us live virtuous lives. Traditionally



numbered seven (Isaiah 11:1-3), these gifts make us receptive to grace and the promptings of the Spirit. They grow stronger the more we use them. They are also strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Wisdom: This gift helps us stay focused on God's will and his plan for us.

Understanding: Lets us grasp truths of the faith with our mind and heart.

Counsel: Also called "right judgment," counsel enables us to weigh all the alternatives to make the right (moral) choice.

Fortitude: Courage, or the ability to remain firm in seeking the good against all pressures.

Knowledge: A person with knowledge sees more than one dimension of an issue to determine the right path.

Piety: This gift helps us think of ourselves as children of God and be eager to serve him.

Fear of the Lord: The wonder and awe God inspires encourages us to respect him and all his creations.

Feasts & Celebrations

May 1 - St. Joseph the Worker. Entrusted with the care of the Blessed Mother and Jesus, Joseph was a humble carpenter who was dedicated to his family and obedient to God.

May 2 - St. Athanasius (373). Born a Christian in Egypt, St. Athanasius became a priest and a great defender of the Catholic faith. Because of the terrible persecutions of the Church, he was exiled several times during his life.

May 25 - The Ascension of the Lord (1st century). This solemnity marks the completion of Jesus' mission of

salvation and his triumphant entry into Heaven by his own power. (Mark 16:19, Luke 24:51) Note: In some dioceses, this observance has been moved to the following Sunday.

May 31 - The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth (1st century). Today, we commemorate the Visitation, when Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth to share her joy at being favored by God. Three ways we can honor Mary include praying the Rosary, celebrating her feast days, and praising her to others.



Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible)