

Growing in FAITH™

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

April 2017

St. Raphael Catholic Church

Rev. John M. Connell, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Zita of Lucca

Born to poor, pious parents in

Monsagrati, Italy,

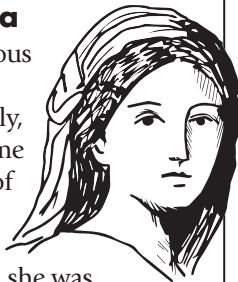
St. Zita became the servant of the wealthy Fatinelli

family when she was twelve. For her hard work, piety, and generosity, she was despised by her fellow servants and overburdened by her employers. Eventually, her love and humility won over her enemies, and she was given charge of all household affairs. Famous for helping the sick, the poor, and the imprisoned, she is the patroness of domestic workers.

Heart to heart

There is nothing wrong with "pestering" God (Matthew 7:7), but think: if this were all we did with our loved ones, what quality of relationship would that be? Instead, God seeks a personal relationship with each of us — to converse with us heart-to-heart. Of course, tell him what's on your heart, but don't forget to listen to him, too.

"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you"
(James 4:8).



Healthy habits for happy hearts

Human beings are creatures of habits — we love our comfortable routines. Healthy diet and exercise practices make our bodies strong. The same is true of spiritual habits. They can strengthen our souls. The key to living a happy life is to develop healthy habits of the heart.

Humility. Humility is closely tied to gratitude and is the appropriate response to contemplating the greatness of God. Regularly meditating on God's immense acts — creating the universe out of nothing, sacrificing himself to save us — is a sure way to appreciate his love and generosity.

Prayer. Happy Catholics use prayer to connect to God and gain distance from

worldly preoccupations that can weigh heavily. Develop a prayer routine that helps you "pray constantly." For example, start with a morning offering, recite the Angelus at noon, pray a daily Rosary, perform a brief examination of conscience at night, and sit in silent prayer for at least 15 minutes.

Trust. No one asks for discomfort but we get into trouble when we go out of our way to avoid it. In so doing, we can put ourselves before God and others. Healthy

Catholics know that there is no avoiding suffering and it can even be meaningful. Trusting that God loves us dearly and will use our suffering for good makes the suffering easier to bear.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics believe in the "Real Presence"?

We believe that Jesus is really, truly, and substantially present in the Eucharist because we have it on divine authority. Referring to the Eucharist, Jesus told his disciples, "whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life" (John 6:54). Jesus makes this



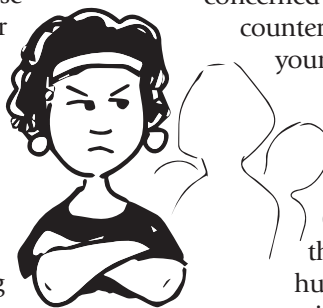
promise to us every time we receive the Eucharist at Mass. When the priest, acting in the person of Christ, consecrates the bread and wine, Jesus becomes really and truly present, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

Take an antidote for a deadly sin

Some sins are considered especially deadly because they lead to other sins. Fortunately, the “Capital” or “Deadly” sins such as envy, pride and lust have antidotes. For example:

Envy is wanting what someone else has. Heavy doses of gratitude will help. Our peace is restored when we remember that all good gifts come from God and are glad for others’ good fortune and grateful for our own.

Pride is seeking attention and honor that belong to God. Pride makes us focused on ourselves,



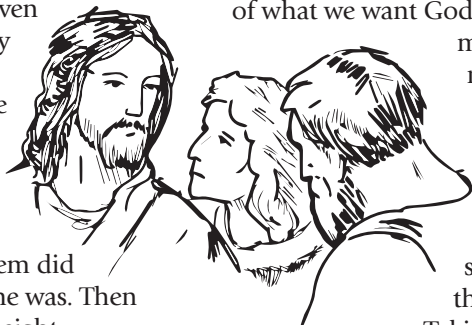
concerned about how we appear to others. Humility is a counter. Purposely draw attention to others, rather than yourself. Praise and thank God daily for your gifts.

Lust is focusing on sexual self-gratification rather than glorifying God. Sexuality is a gift from God and not inherently impure. Lust, however, is misuse of that gift, straying from God’s intentions for us. Love, willing the good of the other, is at the heart of what it means to be human. Love for God and each other is the antidote.

from Scripture

Luke 24:13-35, Jesus hides in plain sight

Jesus was so close to Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus, he could have tripped them. Yet neither man recognized him. Jesus even gave clues to his identity that he quoted from Scripture. The men were too caught up in the pain and disappointment of the crucifixion. Only when he broke bread with them did they see Jesus for who he was. Then he was gone from their sight.



Both Cleopas and his friend had formed such clear ideas of what they wanted Jesus to be that they failed to see him for who he was. They expected a

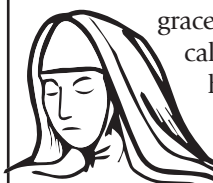
warrior king and almost missed the universal savior. Aren’t we like that, too? Don’t we have such expectations of what we want God to be that we miss who he really is?

Christ’s presence in our lives isn’t revealed so much by the song of angels as the whisper of a

prayer. Taking the time to be alone with God, to read Scripture, and seek him in the people around us will help us uncover Christ’s presence everywhere.

Q & A Why are there religious orders?

Historically, religious orders were founded in response to a need within the Church. Each order receives a special



grace from the Holy Spirit, called a charism, which helps to build up the Church. For example, the charism of the Sisters of Life is to

protect human life in all its stages.

There are two “kinds” of religious orders: contemplative and active. Members of contemplative orders live apart from the world in closed-off communities. They devote themselves entirely to prayer. Members of the active orders do their work in the world, though there is often a contemplative element to their life as well.

Religious life is “a permanent state of life recognized by the Church, entered freely in response to the call of Christ to perfection...characterized by the profession of...[vows]” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*). All religious orders have the mission to spread the Gospel by how they live. They vow to live in poverty, chastity, and obedience so they can dedicate their lives, hearts, and minds completely to God’s service.

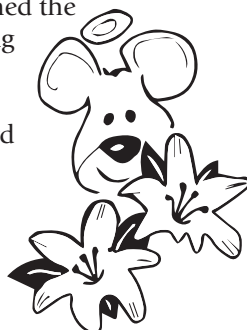
Feasts & Celebrations

April 1 – St. Hugh of Grenoble (1132). St. Hugh was the bishop of Grenoble, France, and as bishop, he worked hard to reform his diocese of corruption. St. Hugh was also the friend and patron of St. Bruno, giving him the land where the Grand Chartreuse was built. With his help, St. Bruno founded the Carthusian order.

April 9 – Palm Sunday. The Sunday before Easter is called Palm Sunday and recalls Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem, when he was greeted by crowds waving palms and cheering,

“Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest” (Matthew 21:9). It marks the beginning of Holy Week.

April 24 – St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen (1622). In his native Prussia, St. Fidelis became a lawyer and championed the poor and oppressed. He joined the Franciscans. During the Protestant Reformation, St. Fidelis worked hard to bring people back to the Catholic faith. He was martyred by an angry mob.



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