

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

October 2024

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE PARISH

StThomasWestSpringfield.org

One Minute Meditations

St. Teresa of Avila

Born in 1515, St. Teresa joined the Carmelites—over family objections—in 1535.

Soon after, she became so ill that the sisters dug a grave for her. St. Teresa recovered and wrote a book on prayer called *The Interior Castle*, based on her suffering. In 1562, she founded a stricter order whose nuns wore rough brown habits and sandals instead of shoes. Despite initial resistance, she founded several convents of Discalced Carmelites and helped reform the Carmelite friars.

"I need all eternity to love them."

Jesus confided these words to Gabrielle Bossis referring to us. By spending time with God, we get vital graces and limitless love. God wants to spend all eternity with us. Can you give five minutes to Him today?

"Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people"

(Psalm 125:1-2).



Holiness grows from deep roots in God's Love

God is crazy-in-love with each of us: *"In this is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us"* (1 John 4:10).

Holiness begins when we accept His "crazy love" (John 15:9) and return it. We can do this by meeting God in the present moment, renewing our "Yes" to Him each day, and receiving the Sacraments:

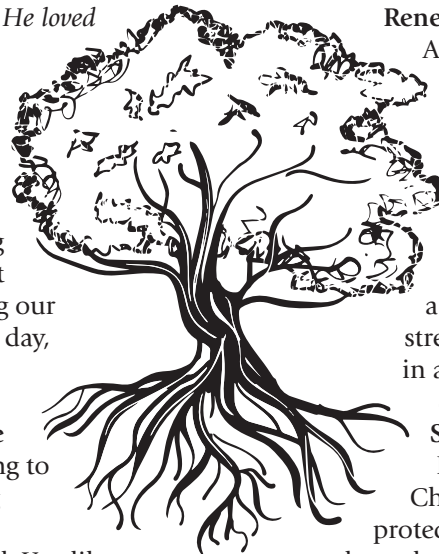
Meet God in the "now." It's tempting to delay approaching God until life is wonderful or awful. Yet, like any loving parent, He delights to be with us always (Proverbs 8:31), even when life is messy, unfinished, or imperfect. He knows we can't change ourselves without His grace. Give Him your heart

"as is," and receive the grace of the present moment.

Renew your "yes" daily.

Aligning with God's teachings and Commandments, as revealed in Scripture, affirms our "yes" to Him, showing trust in His plan over our own. Beginning each day with a sincere "yes" in prayer strengthens us to say "yes" in all areas of life.

Stay close to the Sacraments. Living the Faith is a battle, and the Church encourages us to protect ourselves with grace through the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist (in the Mass) and monthly Confession. In the Sacraments, God pours His grace and love into us, empowering us to share His love with others.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics wear saints' medals?

One way to recognize a Catholic is the crucifix or saint medal he or she may wear. Often blessed by a priest or deacon, these symbols represent the protection of God, Our Lady, or the saint depicted. Rather than being "good luck



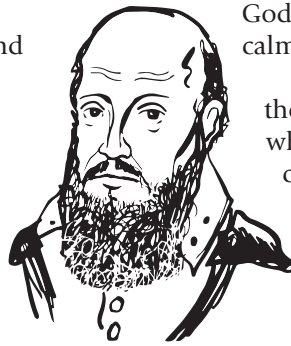
charms," they are sacramentals—consecrated objects meant to open the wearer's heart to God's grace. More than just adornments, they serve as constant, holy reminders to live out the values of the Catholic Faith in everyday life.

Advice on patience from a saint with a temper

St. Francis de Sales, usually known for his meekness and patience, also had a fiery temper, and struggled against it all his life. Here are his tried-and-true tips for staying patient in a bad moment:

Avoid speaking while angry. St. Francis said, "It is better to drive it away quickly than to start a discussion with it." Even if you're right, what is said in anger is rarely effective. Most of the time, you end up apologizing anyway.

Regain self-control "quietly and simply." Only



God never has "bad hair days." Focus on staying calm. Be patient with everyone, including yourself.

Prayer always helps. St. Francis said to call on the Lord as the apostles did in the storm. Jesus, who calmed the wind and the waves, "will command your passions to cease and there will be a great calm."

Apologize quickly. If your anger does get the better of you, offer an act of gentleness towards the person right away (or as soon as you're feeling better). The sooner, the better.

from Scripture

Mark 10:46-52, a blind man leads

Bartimaeus was a blind beggar who saw Jesus clearly. When he heard Jesus was near, he cried out, "Son of David," a title reserved for the Messiah. Although people tried to quiet him, Bartimaeus persisted until Jesus noticed him and called him over.

Immediately, Bartimaeus threw off his cloak and ran to Jesus. Even the little he had was discarded to get to Him.

Bartimaeus stood before Jesus humbly, but he was confident that Jesus had the power to do whatever he asked. The only person in Mark's Gospel to call Jesus, "Master," Bartimaeus asked Jesus

for his sight. When his prayer was answered, Bartimaeus followed Jesus as His disciple.

It is this faith, this profound trust, that Jesus wants to elicit from the crowd and from us. The difficulties of being Christian in the world can blind us to the joys of following Him. Like Bartimaeus, approach Jesus with excitement and humble confidence. When

we throw off our fear and doubt, we become true disciples who can tackle the difficult task of leading others down the road to God.



Q & A How can I fully experience the Body and Blood of Christ at Communion?

God's grace is powerfully at work in this most accessible of Sacraments. To fully embrace this grace-filled experience, try these simple practices:

Prepare your heart. Just like medicine works best when taken correctly, being spiritually ready helps the Sacrament work more deeply in us. Dress respectfully, fast for one hour from food and drink, and confess any serious sins beforehand. These actions open us to

fully receive this healing medicine for our souls.

Be real with God. If you're struggling, don't hold back. Talk to Him! Echo the words of Scripture, "I believe; help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). God welcomes your honesty, doubts, and questions. Ask Him to reveal His love to you in a personal way.

Say "Thank you!" We're taught to thank a giver for a gift, even when it's not what we expected, because the real gift is the love behind it. At Mass, we receive Love Himself. Thank God for this life-changing gift, trusting that the joy of His presence will grow within you over time.



Feasts & Celebrations

October 1 – St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1897). At the age of 15, Thérèse Martin became a Carmelite nun in Lisieux, France, and served others with "quiet acts of love." Her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, includes her "Little Way" to holiness in daily life.

October 2 – Feast of the Guardian Angels. All of us have a guardian angel, in charge of protecting us and watching over us. Remember to thank the Guardian Angels for the work they have done in helping us.

October 9 – St. Denis (258). Originally born in third-century Italy, St. Denis was sent with two companions, Rusticus and Eleutherius, to Christianize Gaul (modern day France). St. Denis became the first bishop of Paris. The three men were martyred by the pagan authorities for their success in converting souls to Christ.

October 18 – St. Luke the Evangelist (1st Century). St. Luke was a Christian physician from Antioch. His Gospel and Acts of the Apostles were probably written between 70AD and 85AD.



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)