

Growing in FAITH™

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

January 2016

Church of St. Elizabeth

Rev. James J. Weiner, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. John Bosco

St. John Bosco was moved by the plight of young abandoned boys in Rome. Using reason, religion and kindness he taught the boys how to unite their faith with work and play.

By opening the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales, he provided workshops for boys in shoemaking and tailoring. He got them off the streets, educated them, and helped them find jobs. In 1859, he founded the Salesians who were committed to education and mission work.

Never too busy

As Chancellor of England, St. Thomas More was swamped yet always found time to pray. He said, "I have much very important business to handle and I need light and wisdom..." When you feel overwhelmed, remember St. Thomas and ask God for the "light and wisdom" to meet your challenges.

"Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me"

(Matthew 25:40).



Celebrate life all year round

January is the month during which our Church celebrates life. This is when we take time to recognize that we are all reflections of God and have great value in his eyes from the moment of conception to a natural death. Celebrating life means being pro-human every day of the year.

Befriend a lonely or disabled person. Spend time with someone who is often alone. Take an elderly neighbor grocery shopping or bring her groceries if she is housebound. Treat an intellectually disabled friend to a movie. Often these folks are on shoestring budgets, can feel isolated, and will appreciate the help and friendship.

Support local food programs. Volunteer to provide meals to a local

food bank or soup kitchen. Collect canned goods in your church, neighborhood, work place, or community.

Steward your money. Research the institutions where you spend, save, or invest your money to find out what you are financially supporting. Does your favorite store support causes that you feel ultimately victimize others or disrespect your faith and beliefs? Stop shopping there. Does your bank fund organizations you find offensive? Put your money elsewhere.

Nurture patience. Ignore the crying baby at Mass. Respond to a sharp word with a kind one (even when you're right). Let someone ahead of you in line. People are more important than schedules.



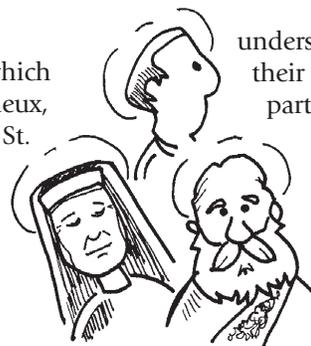
Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why are there "Doctors of the Church"?

There are thirty-six Doctors of the Church, which include St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Augustine. Church Doctors are saints who have special intellectual gifts. These men and women were found to have had a deep

understanding and orthodoxy in their writing and teaching, particularly in a topic or area.

While this does not mean that the works themselves are infallible, the Church considers the contributions made by these Doctors to be good guides for spiritual life.



Laying our gifts at the feet of the King

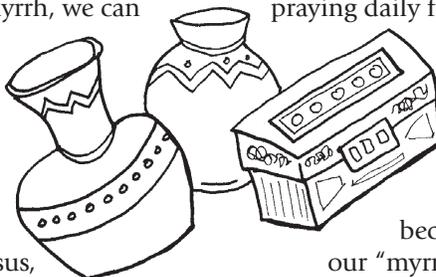
The three Wise Men gave Jesus gifts worthy of a king. We can also present him with our own royal gifts. While ours may not be actual gold, frankincense, and myrrh, we can still give to him the best we have.

Gold: The gift of kings, the “gold” we can offer the King of Kings is our talents and abilities. Like gold, our talents do the most good when given to others.

Frankincense: Frankincense was used as incense during worship and symbolized the prayers offered up to God. In the time of Jesus,

frankincense was used by priests whose job it was to intercede for the people. Our priestly ministry can be praying daily for those who need it, especially anyone we know who is struggling and particularly in need of strength and comfort.

Myrrh: A spice used to ease suffering, myrrh was a valuable gift. Mother Teresa once said, “I serve because I love Jesus.” Our kindness can be our “myrrh” offered to God – a valuable gift.



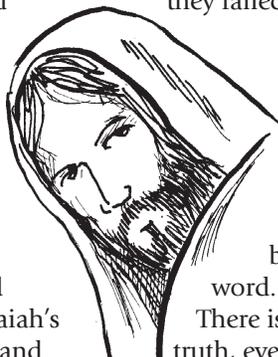
from Scripture

Luke 4:21-30, Live the truth

From the time God promised a Messiah, his people imagined a triumphant king with extraordinary abilities who would defeat Israel’s enemies. They didn’t expect someone ordinary, or even familiar, like Jesus.

Still, his friends and neighbors had heard reports about his amazing deeds and were excited when he read Isaiah’s prophecy about the Messiah and announced its fulfillment in him.

All of that changed when they heard the tough message Jesus had for the children of Israel. They wanted a comforting message from him, not one



that reminded them of how often they failed God. And when Jesus mentioned God’s grace to the Gentiles, a people they thought were inferior to themselves, they became angry and threw him out. They forfeited his blessings because they rejected his word.

There is no substitute for the truth, even when it is hard to hear. Turning our backs on the truth will close the doors to the kingdom to us. For a follower of Jesus, living the truth of the Gospel is the only way to fully enjoy God’s blessings and grace.

Q & A Why was Jesus baptized if he was without sin?

Much of what Jesus did in his ministry was to be an example for us. Though he was sinless, Jesus allowed himself to be baptized by John as a



visible sign of his willingness to obey the Father’s will. Doing the Father’s will is what he wants from us. After Jesus was baptized, the skies opened up and the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus.

“And a voice came from the heavens, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’” (Matthew 3:17).

Baptism is often called, “The Gateway Sacrament,” because it is the first one we receive when coming into the Catholic Church and the Sacrament that precedes all the others. It is usually administered to infants for that reason. Baptism is key to our own redemption so it is fitting that Jesus led the way. We follow him. “There is the whole mystery: he died for you. In him you are redeemed, in him you are saved” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1225).

Feasts & Celebrations

Jan. 1 – Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. Today, we honor Mary as the Mother of God. In celebrating this feast, we honor Mary, but also Jesus as God.

Jan. 3 – Solemnity of the Most Holy Name of Jesus. In January we celebrate the Holy Name of Jesus. “At the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth” (Philippians 2:10). In fact, the English letters IHS—representing the first three Greek letters in Jesus’ name—used to be written over the

doors of Christian homes.

Jan. 13 – St. Hilary of Poitiers (Late Third Century). St. Hilary converted to Christianity as a young man and was elected bishop around 350. St. Hilary spent most of his office battling the Arian heresy, which denied the Divinity of Christ. He was exiled to Phrygia (modern day Turkey). He spent his four-year exile writing and teaching against Arianism until the emperor begged him to return home.



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