

Growing in FAITH

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

September 2011

Saints John and Paul Parish
Father Joseph R. McCaffrey

One Minute Meditations

Use your treasure for good

As Catholics, we know that meeting fundamental human needs - our own and others - comes before satisfying our desires for luxuries. Early Church fathers proposed using possessions to alleviate need and suffering, rather than accumulating them. How can you use your surplus to ease suffering around you?

Why is the fish a Christian symbol?

Throughout Church history, the fish became known as a symbol of Christianity. That's because the Greek word for fish, *ichthus*, contains the first letters of the Greek words for "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior."

God is your advance guard

God will never send you into a new situation alone.

Remember how he led the children of Israel out of Egypt with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night? He not only goes before you, he stands beside you and behind you to provide protection and comfort.



When is someone's business yours?

What would you do if you saw a friend poised on a window ledge about to jump? Would you watch while he jumped or would you rush forward and drag him to safety? Of course you would do anything necessary to keep him from harm.

What if you found your friend about to sin? Would you try to stop him or would you mind your own business? After all, you're a sinner, too. Who are you to judge?

The Church teaches that there are grave consequences for those who continue in sin, and God expects us to remind each other of that. *"He who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death"* (James 5:19-20). We

know that sin destroys relationships, stifles joy, and destroys peace. And that's not what we want for the people we love. Here's what you can do.

Pray for your friend (that he comes to his senses).

Be alert in the event that God wants you to confront him.

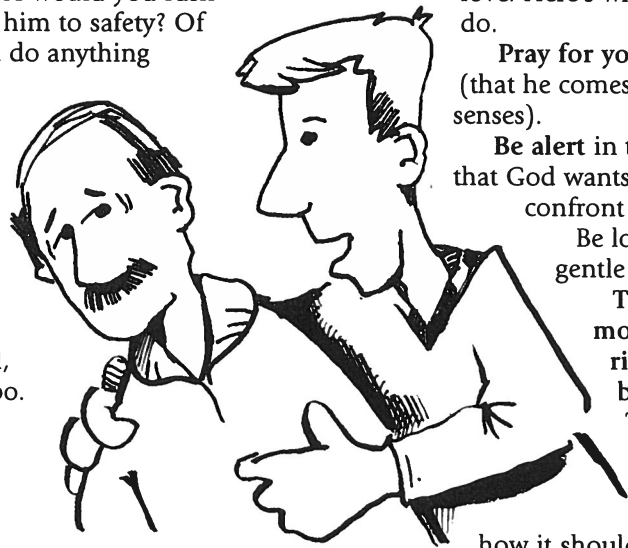
Be loving and gentle if you do.

Try to model the right behavior.

That way your friend can see

how it should be done.

Minding your own business may save you discomfort, but it won't save your friend. As Catholics, it is our job to help everyone we love return to God.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

People who love and follow Jesus become members of a family. Since Jesus taught us that our life does not end with death, this family - called the Communion of Saints - includes believers on Earth, in Heaven, and in Purgatory.

In Heaven, saints have a better

Why do Catholics honor the saints?

standing with God than anyone on earth, so we ask them for help. Learning about them shows love for them and we ask that they show love by praying for us.



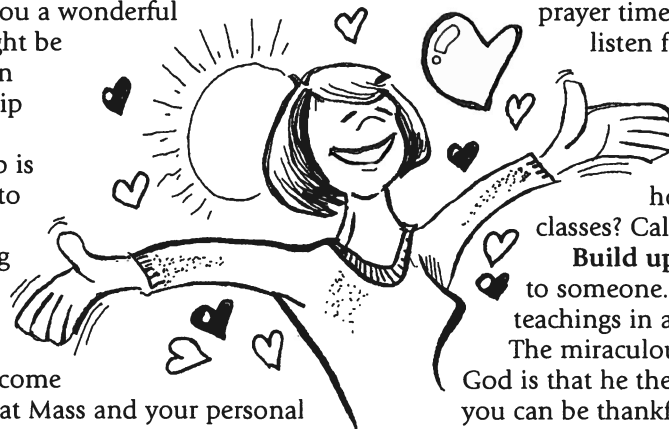
Stewardship is gratitude that overflows

Whenever someone gives you a wonderful gift you didn't expect, you might be moved to do something nice in return. That's where stewardship starts.

At its very core, stewardship is thankfulness that overflows into giving of your time, treasure, and talent as a way of thanking God for all he has given us.

How can you practice stewardship in your own life?

Put God first. Let nothing come in the way of your attendance at Mass and your personal



prayer time. Open your heart wide to God and listen for his response.

Get involved in your parish.

Where can you use your talents? Greeter before Mass? Eucharistic minister to visit the sick and homebound? Extra help during CCD classes? Call your parish rectory to find out.

Build up the Body. Each day, try to be Jesus to someone. Think of ways you can live his teachings in all aspects of your life.

The miraculous thing about showing gratitude to God is that he then gives you even more for which you can be thankful.

from Scripture

Mark 7:31-37, Jesus cures a deaf man.

People with hearing impairments are often pretty isolated from the world. Not only is it difficult for them to hear what is being said, they may have problems pronouncing words clearly. Often hearing people don't have the patience to speak slowly or listen carefully to someone who has hearing difficulties. Communication with the world can be frustrating and difficult.

Jesus cured the deaf man in this



Gospel story because he was clearly moved by compassion to help him, but this healing was also meant to be symbolic. Hearing and speaking are what open us up to the world. Not only does Jesus cure the man's

hearing and open him up to the world, but opens up his heart to God. This is something Jesus does for all of us.

When our hearts are open, we are more compassionate to

people like the man in this Gospel story. Jesus' healing touch in the Eucharist helps us listen better and speak more clearly to God and those we meet. Maybe we can help bring God's healing touch to others, too.

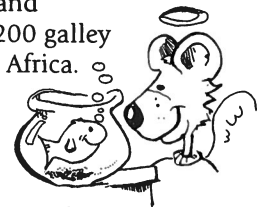
Feasts & Celebrations

This month we honor Our Lady of Sorrows and celebrate her birthday (Sept. 8). Despite her own suffering, Mary always accepted the will of God. She is a model for faith and trust.

Sept. 13 - St. John Chrysostom (407). A powerful public speaker, he was a brutal critic of clergy who abused their office and royals who turned a blind eye to the suffering of the poor. He died in exile as a result.

Sept. 27 - St. Vincent de Paul (1660). St. Vincent de Paul, was devoted to the spiritual and physical relief of the poor and sick. He founded several hospitals, and ransomed over 1,200 galley slaves from North Africa.

Sept. 29 - St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael, the



Archangels. Members of the third hierarchy of angels around the throne of God, archangels are entrusted with important missions to mankind such as St. Gabriel's visit to the Blessed Mother to tell her she had been chosen as the mother of God.

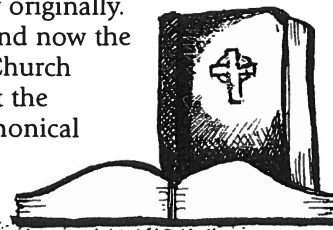
Q What's the difference between Catholic & Protestant Bibles?

A There are seven Old Testament books in Catholic Bibles that may not be in Protestant versions. They are Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, 1 Maccabees, and II Maccabees. In addition, Catholic Bibles often include additional material such as footnotes, explanations, and introductions that may not be found in Protestant Bibles. These are to assist the reader in understanding what the biblical writers meant. Otherwise, there is no great difference between Catholic and Protestant Bibles.

In 1534, Martin Luther translated the Bible into German and grouped the seven books in question, called

deuterocanonical books, under the title Apocrypha and said that they didn't meet his standard for Sacred Scripture. However, he did say they were useful and good for reading. We don't really know with complete certainty why he did this, but some historians speculate that Luther only accepted Old Testament books written in Hebrew originally.

Then and now the Catholic Church insists that the deuterocanonical books be treated as Sacred Scripture.



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.)