

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

May 2024

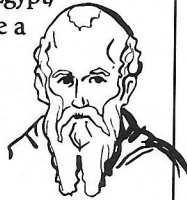
Saints by the Lake Area Churches

One Minute Meditations

St. Athanasius of Alexandria

Born a Christian in Egypt,

St. Athanasius became a priest and a great defender of the Catholic faith. Recognized for his intelligence and holiness, he was chosen to be secretary to Bishop Alexander of Alexandria, and later succeeded him as bishop. Because of the terrible persecutions and political climate, he was exiled several times during his office. For the rest of his life, St. Athanasius worked to defend the divinity of Christ. He died in 373.



Stress and surrender

Stress can result from feeling powerless in difficulties, yet change isn't always up to us. Knowing when to step back and surrender can actually bring peace. Turning to God with trust gives us the power to navigate life's challenges with faith and serenity.

"St. Joseph the Worker stands as a symbol of quiet strength and faithfulness, teaching us that in the ordinariness of our work, we honor God in profound ways." Pope Francis



Spread the Gospel like Our Lady

On the feast of the Visitation (May 31), we celebrate when Mary carried the Good News of our salvation to Saints Elizabeth and Zechariah – that God took on our humanity to fulfill His promise of salvation. Today, we're also called to bring the same Good News as Mary did:

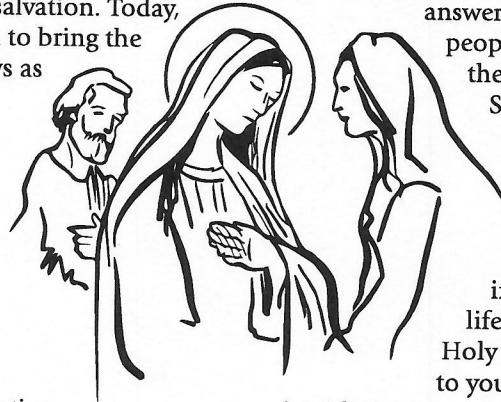
Be filled with Christ's presence: Jesus indwells in us (John 15:5) to empower us for mission. This is accomplished through the Sacraments – Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation. We need to offer God our open, receptive, and attentive hearts.

Become a quiet witness: Mary "*kept all these things, pondering them in her heart*" (Luke 2:19). Emulate her quiet witness by living with deep faith and

trust in God's plan, letting your actions demonstrate the strength of your beliefs.

Proclaim the greatness of the Lord: Mary's *Magnificat* recalls the ways God answered the needs of His people, culminating in the coming of His Son. Can you articulate your own *Magnificat* – recounting God's loving intervention in your life? If not, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal it to you so you can share it with others.

Serve with humble love: After receiving the news that she was to become the mother of the eternal King, Mary rushed to St. Elizabeth's side to serve her. Look for ways to imitate our humble Queen. Serve with love.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why is Pentecost the "birthday of the Church?"

Pentecost is referred to as the "birthday of the Church" because it marks the day when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles, empowering them to preach the Gospel across nations, effectively initiating the spread of

Christianity. This event, occurring fifty days after Easter, symbolizes the Church's emergence as a global community united under the teachings of Christ. It celebrates the moment when the Apostles began to baptize thousands, leading to the rapid growth of the Christian faith.



Four steps to inner peace

In the Catholic tradition, developing inner peace is deeply intertwined with spiritual practices and faith in God's plan. This journey involves key elements that help us find serenity and resilience amidst life's challenges.

Prayer is fundamental. Through regular prayer, we communicate with God, seeking guidance and strength. Heartfelt prayer fosters a deep sense of connection with God, helping us to alleviate anxiety and promote tranquility.

Sacraments are vital. Participation in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation, are direct encounters with God's grace, which cleanse,

heal, and fortify the soul against the struggles of daily life.

Listen for God's voice. Reading and meditating on the Scriptures provides insights and divine wisdom, helping us to align our thoughts and actions with God's will, thereby fostering a peace that transcends understanding.

Love is key. Jesus asked us to practice forgiveness and charity, which heal and build relationships, creating communities of support and love. Living out these values daily contributes to personal and communal peace, reflecting the Catholic approach to nurturing a peaceful heart.



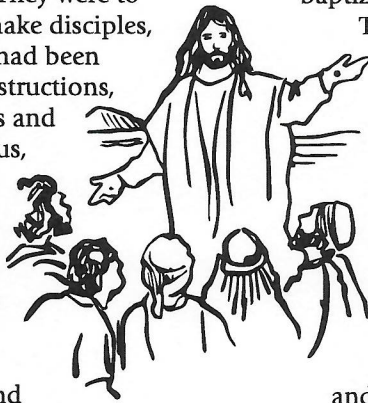
from Scripture

Matthew 28:16-20, The Holy Trinity

Jesus appeared to the Apostles on the mountain in Galilee to give them their final instructions. They were to go forth, baptize, and make disciples, and to teach what they had been taught. These are our instructions, too. Once we meet Jesus and experience His love for us, we can't keep Him to ourselves. We must proclaim Him.

Jesus also revealed to the Apostles, and to the crowd gathered with them, that God is a Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – three Divine Persons united in love. The belief that God is three, yet one, is distinct to

Christianity. When we became members of the Church, we were baptized in the name of the Trinity.



The Trinity is a mystery we may not fully understand, but we can still live in its love and power. We proclaim our faith in it whenever we make the Sign of the Cross: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Our ultimate goal is to follow Christ into the eternal life of the Trinity.

Q & A Do we have to pray the Rosary every day?

Praying a daily Rosary is not required but it is recommended. It is a meditative prayer that facilitates a deeper engagement with the mysteries of Christ's life, alongside the intercessory role of the Virgin Mary.

St. Dominic, who founded the Dominican Order, promoted the Rosary and credited praying the Rosary with ridding the Church of the Albigensian heresy. Pope St. Pius V attributed the



miraculous victory of Christian forces at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 to the Rosary. Since then, many popes have urged us to pray this prayer.

The repetitive nature of the Rosary's prayers, such as the Hail Mary, fosters a meditative state that can lead to a sense of peace. This repetition is not just a mnemonic device but a way to quiet the mind and open the heart to God's guiding voice. Moreover, praying the Rosary is also a way to seek Mary's intercession. As the Mother of Christ, her proximity to Jesus is seen as a powerful aid in bringing our prayers before God.

Feasts & Celebrations

May 9 - The Ascension of the Lord. This solemnity marks the completion of Jesus' mission of salvation and His triumphant entry into Heaven. *Note: In many dioceses, observance of Ascension has been moved to the following Sunday.*

May 10 - St. Damien of Molokai (1889). Born in Belgium in 1840, Joseph de Veuster became Father Damien at the age of 19. He ministered to lepers on the Hawaiian island of Molokai. He died of the disease after serving there for sixteen years. He is the

patron of lepers and outcasts.

May 20 - Mary, Mother of the Church (2018). On the Cross, Jesus gave us His mother to be our mother (John 19:27). Even in Heaven, she prays and cares for us as our spiritual mother.

May 21 - St. Cristóbal Magallanes and Companions (1937). Fr. Christopher Magallanes was part of the Catholic Action Movement in Mexico, resisting the anti-Catholic Mexican government. Despite great persecution, he established a seminary at Totatiche. He and his companions were martyred.



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