



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

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Church of the Incarnation, Mantua, NJ

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One Minute Meditations

St. Aloysius Gonzaga

Born in 1568 to the Marquis of Castiglione Castle in Italy, St. Aloysius was living at the court of Francesco de' Medici as a page when he met St. Charles Borromeo. In 1585, St. Aloysius entered the Jesuit Order. His studies for the priesthood were disrupted by famine and a plague. He volunteered to tend the sick. He died of the same plague at the age of twenty-three. He was known for his purity, penances, and theological brilliance.

Encountering God's heart

It's one thing to "know about" God — like knowing someone's name and zip code — but knowing His heart is a different matter. Jesus founded the Church so everyone everywhere could encounter God and experience His redeeming, transforming love. If just "knowing about" Jesus isn't enough for you — good! He's always calling us to experience His love more.

"A first essential setting for learning hope is prayer. When no one listens to me any more, God still listens to me. When I can no longer talk to anyone or call upon anyone, I can always talk to God. When there is no longer anyone to help me deal with a need or expectation...he can help me...if I pray, I am never totally alone."

Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*

You are a passion of Christ

Want to know someone? Find out what he or she loves. So what is Jesus passionate about? It's simple — He is passionate about you. Not humanity in general, but you.

When Jesus looked at the crowds, He didn't see a blur of faces. He saw each person—knew them, loved them. The Crucifix and the Eucharist aren't just symbols; they're proof that His love goes to staggering lengths to be with us and bless us. It's a love so personal and intense, it demands a response. So how do we respond?

Start simple: "Thank you. I love you." We assume people know we love them, but it still matters to say it out loud. The same is true of Jesus. In His appearances to St. Margaret Mary and later to St. Faustina, He shared how deeply wounded He is by indifference and ingratitude, especially in the Eucharist. He also promised immense grace to those who console Him with

love, thanks, and attention.

Come to the Feast. At every Mass, Jesus gives everything—His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1374). He gives us His whole Heart, hoping we'll give ours

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love" (John 15:9).

in return. He is as present now as He was at the Last Supper. Simply showing up to be with Him is an act of love — and a bold act of faith.

Receive His Mercy. When we come to Him in Confession, genuinely sorry, He doesn't scold—He celebrates. Not because of our sin, but because He gets to pour out His mercy. *"Souls that make an appeal to My mercy delight Me"* (*Diary of St. Faustina*, 1146). Confession doesn't just free your soul—it fills His Heart with joy.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

A Eucharistic procession — a public act of worship during which the Blessed Sacrament is carried by a priest through the streets — is a centuries-old tradition.

Dating back to the Middle Ages, at the center of the procession is the Blessed Sacrament in a radiant vessel called a monstrance. Behind the priest (or deacon), the faithful follow, praying and

Why do Catholics hold Eucharistic processions?

singing in reverent joy.

When these processions move beyond church walls and into the streets, they become more than a ritual — they become a living proclamation of Christ's Real Presence. No speeches, no signs — just silent reverence and an open invitation for others to encounter the Lord Himself.

Words can build—or break—bridges

“The way we communicate is of fundamental importance.” Pope Leo’s point is that words can build up or tear down, open hearts or shut them tight. In a noisy world, choosing how we speak is one of the most important choices we make.

Manners matter. Real communication doesn’t bulldoze others. It doesn’t chase agreement at all costs. It doesn’t feed off competition. A healthy conversation makes space for different viewpoints while still seeking the truth. Winning an argument might feel good—but it rarely changes hearts. And changing hearts is the point.

Speak the Truth—with love. Truth isn’t always popular. Sometimes it’s hard. But truth, spoken without love, loses its

power. As Pope Leo put it, we must never separate “the search for truth from the love with which we must humbly seek it.” This is especially vital when carrying out spiritual Works of Mercy like counseling the doubtful, instructing the ignorant, or even admonishing the sinner. The goal isn’t just to be right—it’s to bring people closer to Truth Himself.

Ditch the stereotypes. People don’t fit neatly into boxes. When we lean on lazy labels, we lose the chance to see each other clearly—and we only deepen division. As Pope Leo said, “Let us disarm communication of all prejudice and resentment ... Let us disarm words, and we will help disarm the world.”

from Scripture

Matthew 16:13-19, Founded on the “Rock”

The events in this passage lay the foundations for the Catholic Church, intended to last for the rest of time. In it, Jesus asks His disciples, “*Who do you say that I am?*” It was a question about Jesus’ identity, rather than about the persuasiveness of His teaching or His popularity. Catholicism centers around who Jesus is. The Truth is true, regardless of popular opinion.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Simon answered for the disciples, identifying Jesus as the Son of God, the Messiah (Matthew 16:16). For this, Jesus

changed Simon’s name to Peter (“Rock”), reflecting a change of identity and mission. He gave Peter (and his successors) the keys to the kingdom — a sign of authority to interpret Scripture, forgive sins, and (re)admit people into the Church.

This truth has been handed down through the ages, from the Apostles to the bishops to us. The Holy Spirit would lead Peter — and his successors, the popes — to continue speaking and acting in truth as the visible head of the Church.

Feasts & Celebrations

June is the month of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, wounded by our sins, yet blazing with divine love for us. We’re encouraged to receive Holy Communion worthily and visit Him in the Blessed Sacrament.

June 3 – St. Charles Lwanga and his companions (1886). While serving under Ugandan King Mwanga II, St. Charles and his friends faced persecution for their faith. When Lwanga and his companions refused King Mwanga’s immoral demands, the king ordered them all to be executed, which they underwent in joyful anticipation.

June 17 – St. Emily de Vialar (1856).

Born into the French aristocracy, St. Emily used her inheritance to found a religious order—the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition. They cared for the sick and started schools in Europe, Africa, and Asia.

June 19 – St. Romuald the Abbot (1027). Born in Ravenna, Italy, St. Romuald fled to a Benedictine monastery to do penance, after witnessing his father kill a relative in a duel. St. Romuald sought solitude as a hermit, yet many came seeking guidance. He founded several monasteries, including the Camaldolese.

June 28 – The Immaculate Heart of Mary. In response to the request made by Our Lady of Fatima, Pope Pius XII consecrated the world to Mary’s gentle and devout Immaculate Heart in 1942 and initiated this feast in 1944.

Q & A How can I get more out of using Scripture in prayer?

The practice of *lectio divina*, or “sacred reading” is a Catholic devotion with ancient roots. The best-known form was developed by Guigo II, a twelfth-century Carthusian monk, and consists of four steps.

Reading: The first “rung” of the ladder is simply to read. Consider reading the Gospel of the day, a favorite verse, or an event from Christ’s life, e.g., the Anointing at Bethany (John 12:1-8).

Meditating: Reread and wait for the Holy Spirit to point you to something. Sit with it for a while. What do you feel? Can you imagine what’s happening in the passage?

Praying: God always speaks to us through Scripture (Hebrews 4:12). This is the time to ask Him to shed light on it. God reveals His heart to us and us to ourselves.

Savoring: This stage is called “contemplation” — a resting in God. It’s the moment when a conversation between friends settles into a comfortable silence.

Lectio divina is a guiderail for prayer, rather than a strict set of steps. Don’t worry: God knows what we need and how best to reach our hearts.

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