



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. Elizabeth of Portugal

St. Elizabeth followed the footsteps of her great-aunt and namesake, St. Elizabeth of Hungary: she was born to royal parents, practiced fervent spirituality, great generosity and penances. She married King Denis of Portugal. Despite a difficult marriage and family conflicts, she remained patient and charitable. She is known for her care for the poor and sick, and for resolving political conflicts peacefully. After her husband's death, St. Elizabeth entered the Third Order of St. Francis.

Prayer is a response to Love

God wants a relationship with us. This is a central truth of our faith. "The living and true God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer. In prayer, the faithful God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2567). So, next time you feel called to pray, say, like Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10).

"By mercy you have washed us in the Blood, and by mercy you desire to converse with your creatures... Loving Madman! ...Your mercy constrains you to give even more to mortals, namely, to leave yourself to them in food."

St. Catherine of Siena

Step out and let Christ meet you where you are

"Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water" (Matthew 14:28). St. Peter showed remarkable courage when he stepped out of the boat in the middle of a storm. While God may sometimes call us to follow Him in dramatic or difficult moments, more often He invites us in the quiet, ordinary circumstances of daily life — to step out of what's comfortable and meet Him in our prayer, our relationships, and our service.

Prayer: The greatest challenge in deepening your prayer life is often just beginning. Start with a Gospel passage, read slowly, reflect, respond, and rest in God's presence. Light a candle. Sit in front of an icon. Play sacred music. Let beauty draw your heart to God. Ask the Holy Spirit to renew your desire, focus, and love for God. Step out of the boat — and you'll find Christ waiting.

Relationships: The virtues — patience, self-control, fidelity, honesty — aren't just about personal growth; they're about

loving others well. Show kindness to someone who frustrates you. Have a real conversation with someone with whom you disagree. Forgive, even if it's undeserved. These small choices shape us into Christ's likeness.

Service: "...the Son of Man came ... to

"Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid" (Matthew 14:27).

serve" (Matthew 20:28). Loving service doesn't require grand gestures. True holiness is forged in everyday acts: give away a piece of clothing you love but don't need. Help with the dishes, even when it's not your turn. Offer a break to a tired parent by watching their children. When service flows from love, it transforms both the giver and the receiver — and conforms our hearts to Christ's.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

The Church teaches that many souls, though destined for Heaven, undergo purification after death, a process called Purgatory. Purgatory prepares us to see God clearly.

Scripture supports this: Judas Maccabee offered prayers for the dead (2 Maccabees 12:43–46), and Jesus mentioned sins forgiven in the next life (Matthew 12:32). St. Paul described a

Why Do Catholics Believe in Purgatory?

judgment in which a person is saved, but their works are tested by fire. This fire isn't Hell (since they are saved), but a purifying fire, which aligns with the idea of Purgatory (1 Corinthians 3:13–15).

Purgatory is mercy. The souls there benefit from our prayers — and they pray for us in return. It's part of God's loving plan to make us truly ready for His presence.

Outsmart temptation with grace in action

When temptation strikes, the first line of defense is often simple: say “no” or avoid the situation entirely. But when that’s not enough, there are deeper, proven strategies that can help us respond with grace and strength.

First, think of temptation as an opportunity for holiness. God always gives us a choice, and when we say “yes” to Him and “no” to sin, He responds with even more grace. If another person is involved, pray for him or her. That small act of charity not only pleases God but disarms the enemy. As Scripture says, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

Second, don’t just resist temptation—replace it. Trying

not to think about sin often leads us right back to it. Instead, follow the advice of Philippians 4:8: focus on what is true, honorable, and good. For example, swap out gossip for words that build others up, or replace a bad habit with a holy one.

Finally, don’t overlook small victories. Faithfulness in little things strengthens us for bigger battles. Telling the truth in a pressure situation, showing patience in traffic, or keeping a promise all train the soul for harder moments. “Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities” (Matthew 25:23). Grace builds on effort. Use every moment well.

from Scripture

Luke 11:1-13, The Our Father is a school of prayer

If you’ve ever found yourself thinking, “I want to pray better,” this Scripture reading is for you. In it, Jesus teaches His disciples the Our Father — a masterclass in prayer, compact and profound. It’s not just one prayer, but four in one.

First, it’s a prayer of praise and thanksgiving, placing God above all. Second, it’s a petition, where we ask for our daily needs — spiritual and material. Third, it’s a plea for mercy, as we ask for forgiveness and the grace to forgive others. And finally, it’s a declaration of trust in God’s providence, a surrender of our will to His.

Praying the Our Father well means acknowledging that God knows what’s best for us — even when His will challenges ours. It’s an invitation to deeper faith.

God always answers prayer — but not always how or when we expect. Sometimes the answer is “Yes.” Other times, it’s “No” or “Wait — I have something better.” Jesus also makes it clear that persistence matters. Like the neighbor in the parable who keeps knocking at the door, we’re called to ask, seek, and knock with confidence. Prayer isn’t just about getting what we want — it’s about drawing closer to the One who loves us most.

Q & A

Can we console Jesus?

If you saw a close friend in deep pain, you wouldn’t walk by thinking, “She will get over it — I’m busy.” You’d drop everything, run to her, and ask, “What can I do?” This is the logic — and the love — behind consoling the Heart of Jesus. It’s not just a pious tradition; it reaches into the very core of our faith.

Jesus is fully human. He felt real emotions — joy, grief, betrayal, and sorrow. He understands our pain, and we can share in His, since He is also fully God, He stands outside of time. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He saw not only every sin but also every act of love, repentance, and faith. That means your love today can truly console His Heart in His Passion.

Words like “consolation” or “reparation” might sound outdated, but they mean something simple and powerful: to love Jesus where He has been wounded, to bring gratitude where there was ingratitude, and to respond with compassion where He was abandoned. Even small acts of love — a kind word, a prayer, a moment of sincere repentance — touch Him deeply.

Feasts & Celebrations

July 9 – St. Augustine Zhao Rong and Companions (1648-1930). This feast honors St. Augustine Zhao Rong, a soldier-turned-Catholic priest, and his martyred companions, forming a group of 120 Chinese Christians and Catholic missionaries. They were canonized by Pope St. John Paul II in 2000.

July 16 – Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (1251). The Blessed Mother appeared to St. Simon Stock in England, carrying the brown scapular, a sign of her favor of the Carmelite Order, and promised whoever wore the scapular until death would avoid the fires of Hell.

July 18 – St. Camillus de Lellis (1614). Born in Italy, St. Camillus aimed for holiness despite battling a gambling addiction and a hot temper. After gambling away his possessions, including his shirt, Franciscan brothers gave him a job. He was ordained a priest, and later founded the Order of the Camellians, caring for the grievously sick, prisoners, and the plague victims.

July 31 – St. Ignatius of Loyola (1556). Ignatius spent several years defending Spain and suffered serious injuries. While recovering, he began a religious conversion and a lifelong dedication to education. He wrote spiritual exercises and started a community of priests now known as the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

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