



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

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Church of the Incarnation, Mantua, NJ

Rev. Stephen J. Rapposelli, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Clare of Assisi

Born to a noble family in Assisi, St. Clare was eighteen when St. Francis was invited to preach at the church of San Giorgio. She was so inspired, she renounced everything to serve God in poverty, penance, and simplicity. Others joined, forming the first Order of Poor Ladies (Poor Clares). St. Clare is most famous for protecting Assisi from invasion by displaying the Blessed Sacrament on the fortress walls, causing the enemy to flee in terror.

The promise of the Assumption

This month, we celebrate Mary's Assumption, body and soul, into Heaven. What is often thought of as a "privilege" unique to Mary is actually a "preview" of what we are made for: endless joy, dwelling in the life and love of the Trinity, souls and bodies. It's another reminder that Catholicism isn't just about spiritual truths but concrete, physical, and tangible realities.

"I want to stress what I think that we...need more; the joy and delight in God which meet us in the Psalms...[The Jews] did not know that He offered them eternal joy; still less that He would die to win it for them. Yet they express a longing for Him, for His mere presence, which comes only to the best Christians" C.S. Lewis.

The Saints and the secret to true happiness

The saints understood that real happiness is about knowing where to find peace, perspective, and joy—no matter what life brings. This month, we look at four saints who show us what it takes to live with true happiness.

Simplicity – St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis gave up wealth and comfort to follow Christ completely. In doing so, he made space in his heart to receive everything from God with peace and joy. While most of us aren't called to material poverty, we can imitate his spiritual poverty—letting go of sin and distractions to focus more fully on our relationship with God.

Trust and Love – St. Thérèse of Lisieux. St. Thérèse's "Little Way" was built on doing small things with great love. Her "humble confidence" in God's mercy gave her strength through illness, loss, and interior suffering. Her path invites us to respond to life's challenges not with fear or striving, but with trust and consistent, simple acts of love.

Holy Humor – St. Philip Neri. St.

Philip Neri understood the spiritual power of joy. Known for his deep prayer life and playful spirit, he used humor to lift others out of gloom, deflate pride, and open hearts to God. He once shaved half his beard just to make

"Thou dost show me the path of life; in thy presence there is fulness of joy, in thy right hand are pleasures evermore."
Psalm 16:11

people laugh. His life reminds us that holiness isn't dour—joy, laughter, and reverence can all go hand-in-hand.

Faithful Friendship – Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati. Blessed Pier Giorgio balanced an active social life with a deep love for the poor and for Christ. He surrounded himself with friends who shared his love for the faith, frequently inviting them to Mass and Eucharistic Adoration. Whether hiking mountains or visiting the sick, he lived with joy rooted in friendship—with others, and above all, with Jesus.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

The Gospels contain many well-attested accounts of miracles, often witnessed by large crowds. It makes sense that the Creator of the natural order would occasionally suspend it to reveal His power. At the heart of our faith stands the greatest miracle of all—the **Resurrection of Jesus Christ**.

Why do Catholics believe in miracles?

St. Paul wrote, *"If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain, and your faith has been in vain"* (1 Corinthians 15:14). God continues to work miracles today to bless those who experience them directly and to strengthen our trust in His providence, love, and divine presence.

The Queen who leads us home

When Jesus entrusted Mary to St. John at the foot of the Cross (John 19:27), He gave us one of His greatest gifts: His own mother. In that moment, we were welcomed into His family. As Queen of Heaven, Mary blesses us in many ways. We look to her as:

As Mother: Jesus gave us the person closest to Him on earth to help draw us even closer to Him. He was not content simply to be our Savior—He wanted to be our Brother. Mary is not a barrier to Christ but a window into His heart. Through her, we come to know Him more intimately.

As model: Mary is also a model of faithful discipleship.

Though sinless, she had no supernatural powers or hidden knowledge. She rejoiced and suffered, worked and traveled, just as we do. Her life shows us how to remain faithful in the face of sorrow, uncertainty, and loss—and that perseverance in faith is always rewarded.

As intercessor: God does not need Mary's prayers or assistance to act on our behalf, yet He chooses to involve her in His work. Her intercession—like ours—finds its power in Christ's perfect prayer to the Father. As Queen, Mary is not passive in heaven; she actively cares for us, her children, with a mother's love.

from Scripture

Luke 14:1, 7-14, Humility is holy "self-forgetfulness"

Fewer things are more awkward than accepting an honor publicly—only to discover it wasn't meant for you. In this Gospel passage, Jesus offers a clear lesson: the safest way to "move up" in God's Kingdom is through humility.

In Jesus' time, a person's status at a banquet was reflected in how close they sat to the host. Like today, not everyone knew who had been invited. If you mistakenly sat too close, you could be asked—publicly—to move down. It was wiser to take a lower seat and be invited higher, if appropriate.

Humility is often misunderstood. It's

not weakness, self-doubt, or putting yourself down.

True humility is honest self-awareness—recognizing your flaws and limitations, but also your gifts, strengths, and constant need for God's grace. The humble person doesn't seek to be the center of attention. Instead, they reflect God's goodness and elevate others.

Jesus isn't giving us etiquette tips. He's showing us the posture of the heart that honors God, protects our soul, and prepares us for the only banquet that matters—the eternal one.

Q & A What is a "rule of life" and why should I make one?

A rule of life is simply a structured way to integrate regular prayer into your day. It's a long-standing practice among priests, monks, and nuns—but it's not just for the consecrated. Everyone needs time each day to be with the One who loves us most. Your personal rule can be as simple or as detailed as you need; what matters is remaining faithful to the time you commit.

At first, the idea of a rule of life might seem intimidating. But in reality, most of us already follow one. Maybe we always wake up at the same time or never skip a morning jog. Prayer can—and should—become part of that rhythm. It's not just a duty; it's an investment that transforms us and blesses those around us.

In the *Introduction to the Devout Life*, St. Francis de Sales encourages us to "begin all prayers... in the presence of God." He emphasized the value of consistency—staying faithful to a few well-chosen prayers is more effective than rushing through many. If, during prayer, you feel God inviting you simply to rest in His love, don't worry about finishing every word. The goal is not to check boxes, but to draw close to Him.

Feasts & Celebrations

August 8 – St. Dominic de Guzman (1221). Born to a noble family in Spain, St. Dominic studied to become an Augustinian canon regular, but left to preach against the widely popular but dangerous Albigensian heresy. He founded the Order of Preachers, or "Dominicans," who successfully defeated this heresy. He's also credited with receiving the Rosary from Our Lady and teaching it to others.

August 15 - The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1950). Declared a dogma of our faith by Pope Pius XII, the Assumption celebrates Mary being taken up into Heaven body and soul at

the end of her life. It is a Holy Day of Obligation this year.

August 27 – St. Monica of Hippo (387). St. Monica is best known for converting her wayward son and pagan husband by her patience, piety, and prayers. Her son, St. Augustine, became a great saint and Doctor of the Church.

August 29 – The Beheading of St. John the Baptist (1st Century). Today we recall the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist, whose mission was to prepare the Jews for Jesus' coming by calling them to repentance. He was arrested and executed for preaching the truth to powerful enemies. Caving into the pressure of his courtiers, King Herod permitted his niece's request – the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

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