



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

September 2026

Church of the Incarnation, Mantua, NJ

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One Minute Meditations

St. Hildegard of Bingen

Born in 11th-century Germany to a noble family, St. Hildegard of Bingen experienced mystical visions from childhood, which she eventually embraced as a call to serve God and the Church. A Benedictine nun and later abbess, she became an influential spiritual leader, composer, writer, and scholar of the natural world. Popes, clergy, and political leaders sought her counsel. Recognized for the enduring depth of her theological writings, she is one of four women named Doctors of the Church.

Stay anchored in the storm

A change of seasons often brings new routines, shifting schedules, and unexpected demands. When plans change before lunch, an urgent project lands on your desk, or your to-do list grows faster than you can manage, pause. Remember that our lives, our future, our peace, and our hope rest securely in the hands of the One who calmed the storm.

"God is the friend of silence...The more we receive in silent prayer, the more we can give in our active life. We need silence to be able to touch souls. The essential thing is not what we say, but what God says to us and through us." – Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Living the Faith, sharing the Light

Jesus tells us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-15). These images show two aspects of living our faith: preserving the distinctiveness of our faith and making that faith visible in our actions. Both communicate God's love.

Keep the flavor: In the ancient world, salt preserved what was valuable and gave food its flavor. Jesus warns that salt can lose its distinctiveness. Our faith can, too, when distraction, compromise, or indifference weakens our relationship with Him. Prayer is not another obligation to complete. It is time invested in the relationship that gives everything else its meaning.

Light the lamp: Faith is meant to illuminate, offering direction, warmth, and hope. But like a lamp, faith needs fuel. Through the Mass and the sacraments, we are continually renewed in Christ and strengthened by His grace. Nourished by Him, we are called to carry His light beyond the church and into our homes, workplaces, parishes, and communities through lives of

compassion, courage, and service.

Share your gifts: God gives each of us different strengths. It can be tempting to keep these gifts to ourselves, yet true humility isn't hiding our gifts but using them to glorify God and serve the Church.

Serve in mercy: The Works of Mercy make our faith concrete. When we are attentively present to those lonely

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

("hungry") for love, support our parish's charitable outreach, or choose goodness over retaliation, we reflect God's love in personal, immediate, and practical ways.

Remember your first love: God calls us to live in His love, and to share it with others. Living in God's love is the secret to preserving the faith and living it well. Our starting and ending point is always God's love for us.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

What is the Confiteor?

The Confiteor is a prayer of repentance we offer at the beginning of Mass to acknowledge our sins and ask for God's mercy. The word Confiteor means "I confess," reflecting the prayer's opening words: "I confess to almighty God." As we say "through my fault," we strike

our breasts as a physical expression of sorrow and responsibility for our sins. This gesture reminds us that we worship God with both body and soul and helps prepare our hearts to participate more fully in the Eucharist.

Look closely; God is at work

We often expect God to work through dramatic signs or unmistakable miracles. Yet His providence frequently unfolds quietly and gradually. Pope Leo points to Jesus' parables of the Kingdom (Matthew 13:24-43) as an answer to an enduring question: Where is God, and how is He at work?

God's providence is constant, even when hidden: When events do not unfold as we hoped, we can assume God is absent or inactive. Jesus' parables invite us to trust that He is always at work, especially when His purposes are not immediately visible.

God works through what is small and ordinary: "God favors smallness, a sign of his discreet love, by which he

leaves us free to accept or reject him." For Pope Leo, wheat growing among weeds, yeast leavening dough, and a tiny mustard seed reveal a Kingdom that often advances quietly, patiently, and steadily.

We are called to imitate God: "God's way with us must also become the way in which we live." Building the Kingdom rarely requires extraordinary gestures. It begins with patience in difficulty, resisting rash judgment, fulfilling our responsibilities faithfully, and choosing love when it costs us. These ordinary acts become seeds through which God's Kingdom takes root and grows.

from Scripture

Matthew 21:28-32, The "yes" that matters

In this Gospel passage, Jesus tells of a father who asks his two sons to work in his vineyard. The first refuses but later repents and goes; the second readily agrees but fails to act. Jesus' point is clear: doing the Father's will matters more than merely professing obedience.

The parable challenges the religious complacency of the Pharisees, whose outward observance did not always reflect a heart open to God. By contrast, tax collectors and public sinners, though once far from God, responded to His mercy with repentance and conversion. Their former "no" became a genuine "yes," demonstrated not simply in words

but in a changed way of life.

This distinction remains essential for Christian discipleship. Faith cannot be reduced to appearances, good intentions, or religious language. A sincere "yes" to God takes concrete form through obedience, charity, repentance, and fidelity to our responsibilities. The parable is therefore both a warning against empty profession and a message of profound hope: our past does not determine our future. Whenever we turn back to God, He receives us with the joy of the shepherd who recovers the lost sheep (Luke 15:4-7).

sufferings with the same steadfast love.

September 21 – St. Matthew the Evangelist (1st Century). Also known as Levi, he was a notorious tax collector (Mark 2:14). Working for the Romans would have made him unpopular but very rich. Yet St. Matthew left everything when Jesus called him. He wrote the Gospel according to Matthew, addressed to Jewish converts to Christianity.

September 26 – Saints Cosmas and Damian (c.303). These saints were Arab brothers who studied medicine in Syria and lived their Christian faith by treating people without charge. They were martyred for their faith. Even in heaven, they continued to care for the sick and poor, as healing miracles were attributed to their prayerful intercession.

Feasts & Celebrations

September 4 – St. Rose of Viterbo (1251). Born to poor parents in Viterbo, Italy, Rose used her gift of preaching to catechize her village. Though very young, she also spoke out in support of the pope against the anti-papal Ghibellines. The Poor Clares refused to accept her but allowed her burial there. She died at age eighteen.

September 15 – Our Lady of Sorrows. In Luke 2:35, Simeon predicted Mary's sufferings would be a sword piercing her soul. In her sorrow, Mary stood at the foot of the Cross, dignified and fearless while others ran away. Today, we can look to her to accompany us in our

Q & A How can I go to Confession after a long time away?

The Church encourages regular Confession (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1458), but travel and changing routines can make good spiritual habits easy to neglect. If it has been a while, come home to Reconciliation. Like the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, God waits to welcome, forgive, and restore us.

Prepare your heart: An examination of conscience is more than listing failures. Consider where you have fallen short in loving God and your neighbor. Recognizing what sin has damaged helps begin the work of repair.

The priest will help: Feeling nervous is normal. The priest can guide you through the Sacrament, offer counsel, and help you receive God's mercy with confidence.

Penance begins healing: Penance helps repair the harm caused by our sin and directs us toward conversion and renewed faithfulness.

Grace offers a new beginning: Confession does more than forgive the past. Through absolution, we are reconciled with God and strengthened by grace to resist sin, grow in virtue, and begin again with greater freedom and hope.

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