

Growing in FAITH™

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

February 2012

Praised Be Jesus Christ! Now and Forever!

One Minute Meditations

Lenten Obligations

Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday (February 22nd) and Good Friday (April 6th). In addition, all Catholics 14 years old and older must abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all the Fridays of Lent. The U. S. bishops define fasting as eating one full meal. Some food (not equaling another full meal) is permitted as necessary to maintain strength.

"And with your spirit" explained

When a man is ordained a priest, the Holy Spirit comes upon him, enabling him to perform the sacred rites of the Mass and consecrate the Eucharist. When we respond, "And with your spirit," we acknowledge that since God works through the priest offering the Mass, it is actually Jesus Christ who is the head of the community gathered together, and it is his Spirit who is leading the Liturgy, regardless of who the particular priest may be.



Convert your heart during Lent

When we were young Catholics, Lent meant giving something up and welcoming it back at Easter. Now we know that Lent is so much more. Lent is about conversion. Each year we have the chance to leave behind old ways of living to embrace new life. The goal is not just to abstain from sin during Lent but to root it out of our lives forever.

The moment of truth.

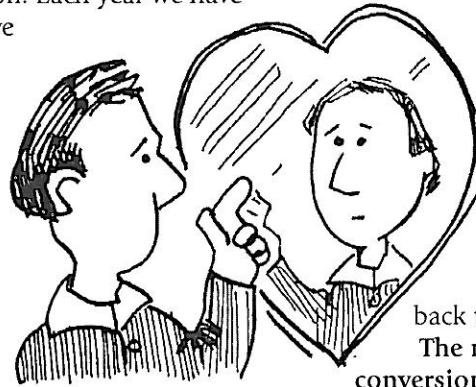
Conversion begins with accepting responsibility for our failures. Start by taking an honest look at your life and identify all the ways that sin keeps you from living the way Jesus taught us to live. Know that it may take courage to face your shortfalls.

The moment of cleansing. There can be no healing or conversion when you harbor unconfessed sin. Make a full Confession to a priest in the

Sacrament of Reconciliation. Tell him everything. Don't worry if you have been away for a while. The priest will be happy to guide you and to welcome you back to God's friendship.

The moment of conversion.

There can't be just one moment of conversion. It is necessary to convert our hearts every day. Daily prayer, frequent Confession, and regular reception of the Holy Eucharist will keep our hearts filled with God's love. Then we can embrace new life at Easter.

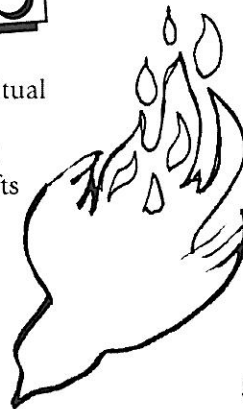


Why Do Catholics Do That?

Charisms are special spiritual gifts given to some of the Church's members. St. Paul explains charisms as the gifts that the Holy Spirit distributes among us, such as healing, prophecy, working miracles, and uttering wisdom (1 Corinthians 12).

What are charisms?

Other charisms include papal infallibility and priestly celibacy. Religious orders have charisms such as teaching or nursing. These charisms are not rewards for personal holiness, but are freely distributed among the faithful to be used for the good of all.

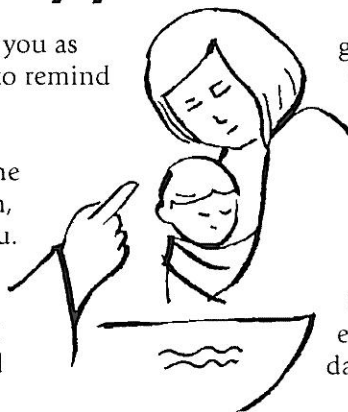


On the day you were baptized ...

On the day you were baptized, God claimed you as his own. He gave you the name "Christian" to remind you that you belong to Christ.

On the day you were baptized, you were exorcised. The priest asked God to cast out the power of Satan, to free you from Original Sin, and asked the Holy Spirit to dwell within you.

The day you were baptized, the priest blessed the baptismal water and asked God to make it holy so that through it, you might be made holy. Then you – or our parents and



godparents for you – renounced Satan, his works and empty promises, and professed faith in the Trinity, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection of the Body.

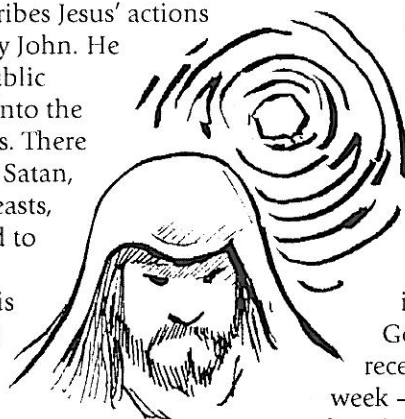
You may not remember the day you were baptized, but ask God to help you always remember your dignity, so you may live as a beloved child of a great Father and one day experience the eternal life he promised on the day you were baptized..

from Scripture

Mark 1:12-15, The Path to Easter

This Gospel describes Jesus' actions after his baptism by John. He prepared for his public ministry by going into the desert for forty days. There he was tempted by Satan, was among wild beasts, and was ministered to by angels.

The lessons of this Gospel can help us prepare not only for Easter, but for the rest of our lives. Temptations surround us. Satan is constantly trying to tear us away from God. The wild beasts represent every kind of danger and evil. But the angels



provide God's protection for us. We can rely on them to help us if we ask for God's help.

We can use Lent to fulfill Jesus' proclamation, "Repent, and believe in the gospel."

The best way to resist evil is to stay in a state of grace. Go to Confession frequently, receive the Eucharist every week – daily, if possible, and pray as often during the day as you can. When you spend as much of your day with God as possible, Satan and his temptations won't be able to get through your defenses.

Q & A Why Do We Canonize Saints?

Canonization is the declaration by the pope that a person is worthy of veneration as a saint because he or she lived a life of heroic virtue or remained



faithful to God through martyrdom and is now in Heaven with God.

The process of canonization is lengthy. After a person dies, supporters can introduce a cause for sainthood on his or her behalf. A thorough investigation of the candidate is performed which includes examining all writings and hearing the testimony of witnesses who knew the individual. If it's decided that he or she did live a life of heroic virtue, the person is declared Venerable.

Before the candidate can achieve the next step, Beatification, a miracle must be attributed to the person's intercession with God. The miracle must be a suspension of the natural law, such as a healing that can't be explained. The candidate is then known as Blessed.

The final step is canonization, which requires a second confirmed miracle. The person is then known as Saint.

Feasts & Celebrations

February 10 - St. Scholastica (547). Twin sister to St. Benedict, St. Scholastica established a community of religious women about five miles south of her brother's monastery. One day during prayer, St. Benedict saw a dove rising from his sister's convent and recognized it as his sister's soul rising to Heaven upon her death.

February 22 – Ash Wednesday. The first day of holy and penitential Season of Lent. Ashes from the burnt palms of the previous Passion Sunday are blessed and placed on the forehead as a sign of penance.

February 23 – St. Polycarp (156). Bishop of Smyrna, Asia-Minor, St. Polycarp was a disciple of the apostle St. John and a friend of St. Ignatius of Antioch. He faithfully cared for his flock despite being surrounded by pagans and a government opposed to his religion. Before he was martyred, he thanked God for making him worthy of a martyr's death.

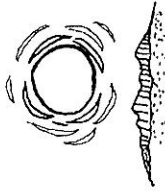


Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible)



LENT 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>"Lent is the liturgical season of forty days which begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the celebration of the Paschal Mystery (Easter Triduum). Lent is the primary penitential season in the Church's liturgical year, reflecting the forty days Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying" (<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>).</p>	<p>27 Raise the level of your prayer today and really think about the meaning of the words you are saying.</p>	<p>28 Put a cross, crucifix, or other image of Jesus in each room of your home to help keep you focused on him.</p>	<p>22 ASH WEDNESDAY Attend an Ash Wednesday liturgy and wear the cross of ashes all day.</p>	<p>23 Choose Lenten offerings of prayer, penance, and almsgiving.</p>	<p>24 Abstain from eating meat today, and make your meals truly penitential.</p>	<p>25 Pick a saint to learn about and imitate. Ask for his or her special help and protection during Lent.</p>
<p>4 Choose someone who has passed away or someone who needs extra help as your Mass intention today.</p>	<p>5 Pray an extra Rosary today and every day this week.</p>	<p>6 Forgive someone who has hurt you.</p>	<p>29 As an extra Lenten offering, give up something you enjoy -- just for today.</p>	<p>1 MARCH Resolve to say only positive things about yourself and others today.</p>	<p>2 Pray for the people in the world who can't afford to have meat as a regular part of their diets.</p>	<p>3 Make a list of the ways you can support the poor, and resolve to do one activity each week.</p>
<p>11 Take one idea from today's Gospel reading or homily to implement during the coming week.</p>	<p>12 At the end of the day, make an examination of conscience. Pick one change to make.</p>	<p>13 Look for evidence of God at work in your life today.</p>	<p>7 Ask Jesus to heal whatever separates you from feeling God's bountiful love.</p>	<p>8 Read the Ten Commandments (<i>Exodus 20:1-17</i>) and resolve to live them.</p>	<p>9 Share a meatless meal with friends and tell them why you are abstaining.</p>	<p>10 Visit a nursing home and read to a resident, take someone for a walk, or pay someone attention.</p>
<p>18 LAETARE SUNDAY Celebrate the halfway point of Lent. Do something fun after Mass today.</p>	<p>19 Go to a private room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret.</p>	<p>20 Ask God for a new grace today that will bring you closer to him.</p>	<p>14 Deal with anyone in your life who may be interfering with your relationship with God.</p>	<p>15 Try to find the time to read an entire Gospel at one sitting. (Hint: St. Mark's Gospel is the shortest.)</p>	<p>16 Make a fresh start on your Lenten journey today. Renew your Lenten observances.</p>	<p>17 Attend a parish Reconciliation Service or go to Confession on your own.</p>
<p>25 Look around your neighborhood today for signs of new life.</p>	<p>26 Get up an extra 15 minutes early each day for the next two weeks and spend that time in prayer.</p>	<p>27 Call Catholic Relief Services (877-HELP-CRS or www.catholicrelief.org) to see how you can help.</p>	<p>21 Resolve to go the entire day without judging or criticizing anyone.</p>	<p>22 Pick one way you can simplify your lifestyle to make more room for God.</p>	<p>23 Figure out how much money you saved by abstaining from meat and give it to the poor.</p>	<p>24 Trim down your possessions and give what you don't need to the poor.</p>
<p>1 APRIL Place palms around each image of Jesus in your home. Welcome the Messiah into your heart.</p>	<p>2 Recite the Profession of Faith or the Apostle's Creed each day this week.</p>	<p>3 Notice someone who may be hungry for love or attention and satisfy that hunger.</p>	<p>28 Make a conscious effort to see everyone with loving eyes today.</p>	<p>29 Today, pray for someone you don't like.</p>	<p>30 Eat a pretzel as a reminder that Catholics used to fast from milk, butter, eggs, cheese, cream, and meat.</p>	<p>31 Perform some act of service for your parish. Ask at the rectory for suggestions.</p>
			<p>4 Forgive an offense you may have suffered and let God be the final judge.</p>	<p>5 Look for someone who is poor or homeless and share your food.</p>	<p>6 Meditate on the Stations of the Cross today. Try to imagine yourself at the scene of each one.</p>	<p>7 Think about a way in which you might have betrayed Jesus. Ask his pardon.</p>