# Growing in FAITH™

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

March 2019

**Sacred Heart Church**
Robbinsdale MN.

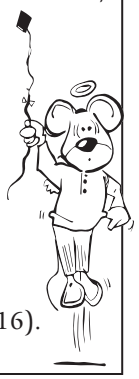

## One Minute Meditations

### St. Matilda

From early on, St. Matilda was known for her beauty, holiness and intelligence. She was happily married to Henry the Fowler and had five children. Beloved by her subjects, she was known for donating generously to the poor. When Henry died, Matilda's sons, Otto and Henry the Quarrelsome, fought over the crown. After a failed rebellion, Henry died and Matilda left to live in a convent. Upon her death, she donated everything she owned, including her burial shroud.

### Opportunities for holiness

It often seems that everyday life can't allow for a deep connection with God. When we are at work, or play, or at rest, we can do all things in a holy way. Each hour brings its chances for patience, kindness, unselfishness, and other virtues.

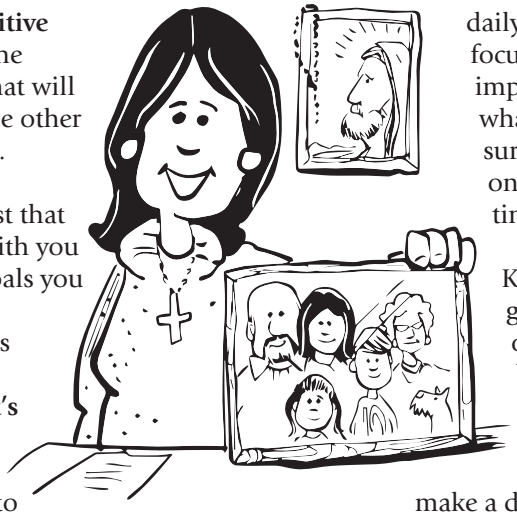


*"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need"* (Hebrews 4:16).

# The new you

Lent is our chance to leave our old ways behind and adopt a new way of life. When Easter comes, what will the new you be like?

**Be a more positive thinker.** This is the keystone habit that will help you form the other important habits. Squash negative thinking and trust that God will work with you to accomplish goals you set that are in harmony with his will.



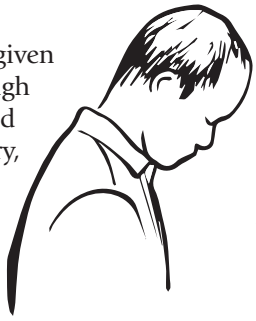
**Focus on what's important.** First, identify what is most important to you – family, friends, faith, and so on. Then eliminate everything else. Not only will you be free to focus on what is most important, this habit will spill over into other areas of your life, such as tasks, projects, and communication.

**Find a powerful prayer routine.** The best prayer routines are the ones we follow every day. A firm, daily routine helps you focus on what's important, not just what comes up. Make sure to concentrate on Scripture and add time to listen, too.

**Add kindness.** Kindness is genuinely caring for others, wanting the best for them, and taking action to demonstrate that caring. Each day, make a decision to add an act of kindness to your day. Let someone go ahead of you in line, give a sincere compliment to a stranger, praise a coworker's effort, greet a passerby.

## Why Do Catholics Do That?

### Why do Catholics bow at the names of Jesus and Mary?



Bowing is a sign of honor given to royalty and to others of high status. Jesus is the Son of God and our king. Therefore, Mary, his mother, is the Mother of God and our queen. "A bow of the head is made when the three Divine Persons are named together and at the names of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Saint in whose honor Mass is being celebrated" (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, #275a).

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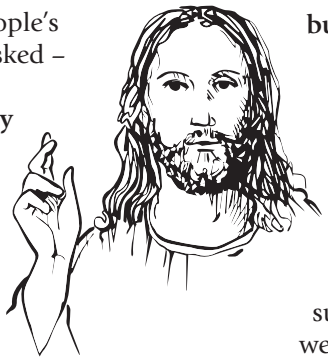
# Jesus always gives more than we ask

During his time on Earth, Jesus exceeded people's expectations. He always gave more than was asked – but exactly what was needed.



**A paralyzed man sought a cure for his body but Jesus cured his soul** (Mark 2:1-12). A man's friends brought him to Jesus to heal his body, but Jesus forgave his sins. As God, Jesus has the power to heal. As man, he identifies with our deepest needs and gives us what is required to overcome them.

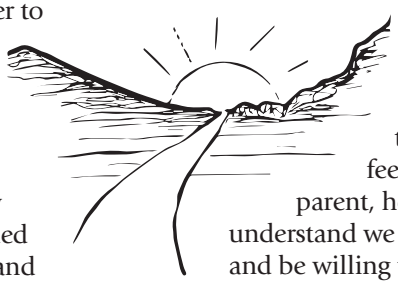
**A widow needed strength to bury her son but Jesus gave him life** (Luke 7:11-17). God's love for us is bigger than we can imagine and moves him to shower us with miracles.

**Invited to attend a wedding, he elevated the marriage to a Sacrament** (John 2:1-12). At his Mother's request, Jesus blessed a new marriage by replenishing their empty wine stocks with better refreshment than they could have imagined. When we ask for her help, she makes sure her Son gives us what we need and more than we can imagine.

## from Scripture

**Luke 15:1-3, 11-32. Jesus promises we can always return home.**

In this Gospel reading, Jesus told the story of the Prodigal (or reckless) Son. It goes like this. One day, the younger son demanded his father to give him his share of the estate. He left to squander it far from home.



When his money was gone, his situation grew desperate and he returned to his father, humbled and asking for mercy. The father was overjoyed to have his son back and threw a huge party. The older son, however, resented his brother's welcome and complained to his father that he didn't get half the amount of celebrating for his work—and he was the "good one!"

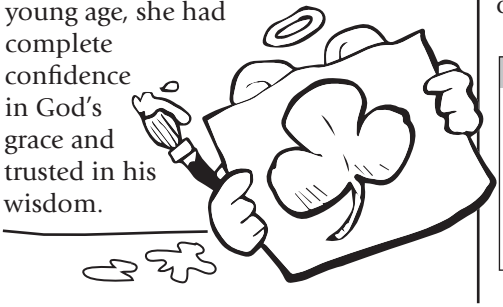
Jesus promised that when we approach God with a truly repentant heart, we can always come home. It's not that God wants us to feel bad, but, like any parent, he wants us to understand we did something wrong and be willing to change. Through this parable, Jesus shows us that God is a loving, generous Father whose deepest nature is merciful, forgiving love. We are reminded that we can always come home.

## Feasts & Celebrations

**March 6 – Ash Wednesday.** The first day of Lent. Ashes from the burnt palms of the previous Passion Sunday are blessed and placed on the foreheads as a sign of penance. Ash Wednesday is a day of abstinence from meat and fasting—eating one simple meal and two smaller meals that together don't equal a full meal.

**March 9 – St. Frances of Rome (1440).** Although she preferred a life of service, Frances' wealthy parents required that she marry. With a sister-in-law, Vannozza, Frances formed a group of women dedicated to serving the poor. Frances honored her husband, cared for her children until their deaths, and served the poor and sick. She even converted her house into a hospital.

**March 25 – The Annunciation of the Lord (1st century).** The angel Gabriel visited the Blessed Virgin Mary with the extraordinary news of her role as the mother of God. Even at her young age, she had complete confidence in God's grace and trusted in his wisdom.



## Q & A What is saintly advice for Confession?

It can be tempting to approach Confession like it's just another (unpleasant) obligation. In fact, Confession is more than "checking items off the list." It's an encounter with God's mercy. Try these timely tips from the saints to make the most of Confession:

**St. John Bosco – Be regular and consistent:** "Go to confession once a month, and not oftener than once a week, unless your confessor advises it." Also, "Once we have chosen a confessor, we must go to him steadily [or else] he cannot advise us."

**St. Francis de Sales – Be intentional:** "However small the sins you confess may be, always have sincere sorrow for them together with a firm resolution to correct them in the future." Also, "Don't be satisfied with confessing [only] your venial sins...accuse yourself of the motive that led you to commit them."

**St. Faustina Kowalska – Don't limit God's mercy:** "Each one can become a great saint, so great is the power of God's grace. It remains only for us not to oppose God's action."

**Our Mission**

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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