

Growing in FAITH™

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

February 2012

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Belchertown, MA

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.

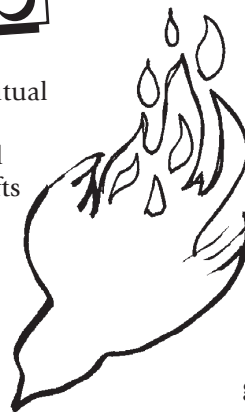


Why Do Catholics Do That?

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.

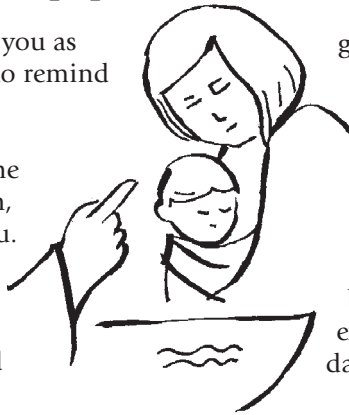


On the day you were baptized ...

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.

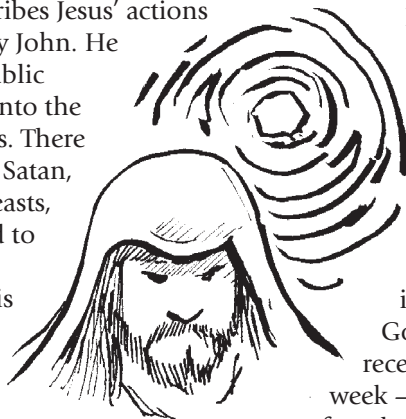
You may not remember the day you were baptized, but ask God to help you always remember your dignity, so you may live as a beloved child of a great Father and one day experience the eternal life he promised on the day you were baptized.

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.



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