

Growing in FAITH™

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

November 2018

St. Raphael Catholic Church

Rev. John M. Connell, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Gertrude the Great

Born in 1256 in Germany, St. Gertrude was raised and educated by the Benedictine nuns.

Eventually, St. Gertrude became a nun herself. When she was about twenty-six, she began having visions of Christ, which continued until her death. She recorded them in a book called the *Herald of Divine Love* for her fellow nuns. She was known for her personal holiness, her kindness to the rich and poor, and her prayers for the souls in Purgatory.

Roomful of friends

Learning about the saints is like walking into a room full of strangers. You scan the faces looking for a friendly one who beckons you over. Scan the saintly faces until you find one with whom you would like to become friends.

"Only the one who can see hope in death can also lead a life of hope."

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Images of Hope: Meditations on Major Feasts*



Stewardship is about love, not money

When you hear "stewardship," do you think, "fundraising?"

In fact, real stewardship is about love. When we practice good stewardship, we become more fulfilled, have a greater sense of purpose, and live happier lives. And while it's not just about money, good stewards have all the money they need.

Good stewards are motivated by love. Strong families come together and are formed in love. Loving family stewards put the needs of members first before spending time or money on anything else, especially themselves.

In God's family, we also come together in his love to care for each other. As stewards, we find ways to use

our time and gifts to meet the needs of God's family through our parish.

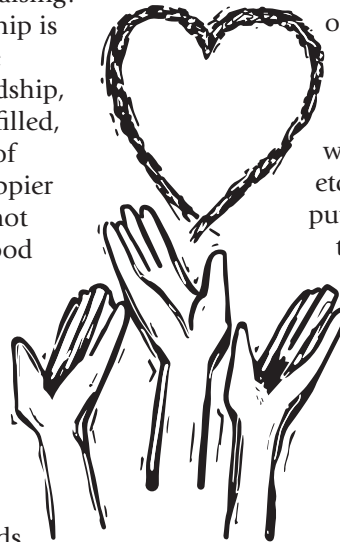
Good stewards lend their strength. Take stock of the gifts you have: faith, wisdom, prosperity, energy, etc. Then ask where you can put your talents and resources

to work for your parish so you can take your place at

God's table. When you do, you will make God's family stronger and healthier.

Good stewards show gratitude. Practicing good stewardship means understanding that God has generously given us gifts

which we, in turn, use for his purpose. Everything we have and everything we are comes from God. He deserves the best we have to give. What God wants most is our love.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics attend Mass on holy days of obligation?

Just as many families gather to celebrate major life events, so does the Catholic Church when she requires Catholics to celebrate certain feast days by attending Mass together. These feasts include: Christmas, Mary's Immaculate Conception, Easter, and Christ's Ascension



and the Assumption of Mary into Heaven. All Sundays—in honor of Easter Sunday—are also holy days of obligation for the same reasons. The other holy days are listed on the website of the US

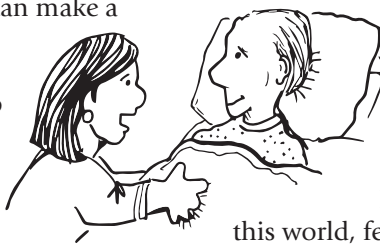
Conference of Catholic Bishops: <http://www.usccb.org>.

“Be not afraid”

When someone we love is dying, we may want to help but don't know what to do. We can feel powerless. Yet when they are transitioning from this life to the next, we can make a significant difference to our loved ones.

Bring love. Jesus never turned away from the sick and dying. He always had a loving hand to comfort them and their families. Sometimes just holding a hand says more than words.

Bring attention. Ask him stories about his life. Let him know he has inspired you. You'll treasure these moments after he is gone.



Bring comfort. Remind her how much God loves her and is waiting to welcome her. Encourage her to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick.

Bring peace. Although someone may lose his ability to speak, he can still hear. Pray out loud, read from scripture or a favorite book.

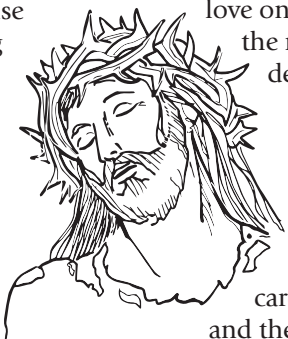
Bring strength. When someone is leaving this world, fear can be overwhelming. Remind her of Jesus' words, "Be not afraid."

from Scripture

John 18:33b-37, Christ, the real King

Throughout the years of slavery and oppression, God's promise of a triumphant Israelite king kept hope alive. Many clung to the image of an avenging savior who would destroy their enemies and make Israel a nation to be feared.

Jesus, bound, beaten and seemingly powerless before Pilate, the powerful Roman governor, was not what they had in mind. They didn't want a king who talked of love, suffering, and service; they wanted one who would wipe their enemies off the face of the earth. They wanted Jesus to come down



off the Cross. Yet it was his sacrifice of love on the Cross that conquered the real enemies of sin and death.

Jesus is King and he has a Kingdom, but as he teaches Pilate and us, his power is not of this world. His kingdom is about peace, justice and care for the poor, the needy and the marginalized in society.

Do our lives and actions reflect that awareness? As Christians we are challenged to become more "Christ-like" in our lives, and that means more like Jesus the King.

Q & A

Who are the Church Fathers?

The Church Fathers were the early Christian writers and teachers of the faith who lived after the Apostles and preserved and handed on their

teachings. At the Last Supper, Jesus told his Apostles, "[The Holy Spirit] will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you"



(John 14:26). This collection of teachings—called Tradition—was handed on by the Apostles to their followers, the Church Fathers.

The Church Fathers include bishops, writers, thinkers, and martyrs. The most important thing the Fathers did, and why we still look to them today, is that they preserved "the written proof" of what the Apostles taught and handed on. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, on essential points of doctrine, the Fathers agreed with each other and with the Apostles on principles such as Jesus' divinity and humanity, Mary's sinlessness, and the Eucharist as the Body of Christ. Thanks to the Church Fathers, we can know what the Church believed—and still believes to this day.

Feasts & Celebrations

Nov. 1 – All Saints Day. A Holy Day of Obligation when Catholics are required to attend Mass, we commemorate people of extraordinary virtue who have gone before us to live eternally in the presence of God.

Nov. 2 – All Souls Day. This day we pray for the dead, especially our loved ones and the souls in Purgatory. Our prayers and sacrifices can help them get to Heaven faster.

Nov. 10 – Leo the Great (461). A native of Rome, St. Leo was elected pope while on a mission in Gaul. As

pope, he defended the faith from heresy and worked for the unity of the Church. He also protected Rome from being destroyed by Attila the Hun and later by the barbarians.

Nov. 12 – St. Josaphat (1623). Born in Lithuania, St. Josaphat, the Ruthenian Archbishop of Pototsk, made the unpopular choice to bring his diocese into communion with the Catholic Church. He suffered persecution by a schismatic party and was eventually martyred by an angry mob.



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)