

Growing in FAITH

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

August 2003

One Minute Meditations

Take it on faith

Legend says that St. Augustine was walking along a beach pondering the mystery of the Holy Trinity when he spotted a boy filling a bucket from the ocean and emptying it into a hole. The boy said he was trying to fit the ocean into the hole. St. Augustine cried, "But you can never do that!" The boy replied, "And neither can you ever figure out the Holy Trinity," and vanished.

Some things we just have to take on faith.

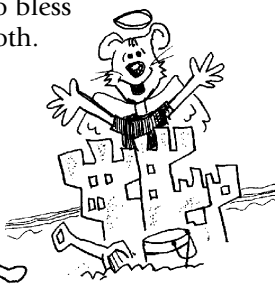
Another reason to attend Sunday Mass

There are special intentions for which each Mass is offered. By attending Mass, we help those people or causes – including the priest who offers the Mass.

Most important, the entire Church benefits from our attendance at Mass and grows stronger as a result.

Bless, don't curse!

Instead of judging or criticizing someone else, ask God to bless you both.



Should Catholics be happy?

Catholics know that God intends for us to be happy with him in Heaven, but does that mean we aren't meant to be happy on Earth?

In fact, God's presence anywhere we are brings the peace necessary for happiness. The more often we are with him, the happier we'll be. Consider these suggestions for increasing happiness in your life.

Go with the flow. Flow means you are so caught up in an activity that you become absorbed by it. Flow creates harmony, and harmony leads to happiness. To achieve flow, we have to let God place us where he wants us to be.

Let joy and pain work together. Truly happy people don't fear pain because they know God will give them

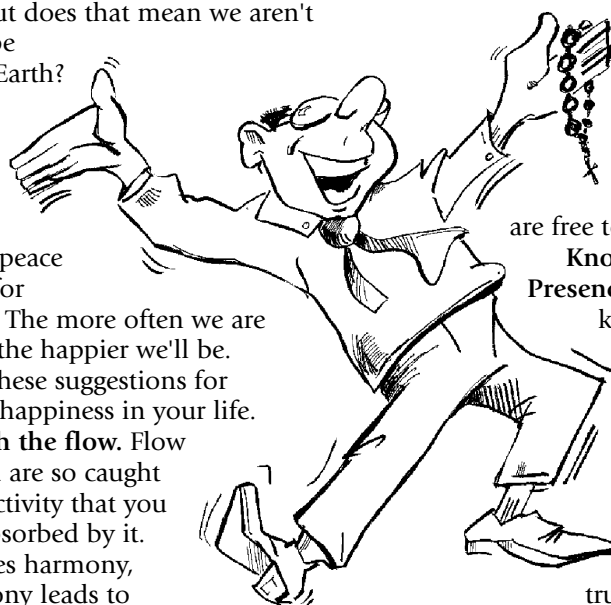
the grace they need to deal with it.

Instead of running from it, we need to feel it, deal with it, and then let it flow away from us as soon as possible. Once we are done with pain, we are free to feel joy.

Know the Divine Presence. Happy people know that God is always present in their lives and seek frequent opportunities to make themselves aware of him. In particular, truly happy people

remember that God walks with us through the messy parts of our lives, like illness, life changes, and tragedy.

This confidence leads to joy that spills over to other people – just as God intends.



Why do Catholics Do That?

The homily that the priest (or other ordained minister) offers is a form of Christian instruction designed to help listeners apply the readings and Mass texts to daily life.

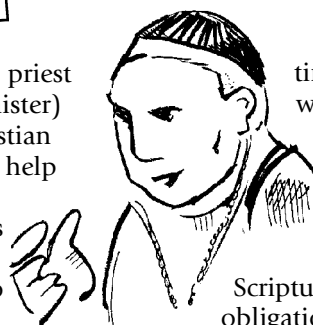
Many homilists also use the homily as a

Why does the priest say a homily at Mass?

time to speak about issues we face today in light of God's Word.

The basic job of the homily is to help us know the gift of God as it has been revealed in

Scripture, and to understand the obligations that flow from it.



Our special obligation to those we love

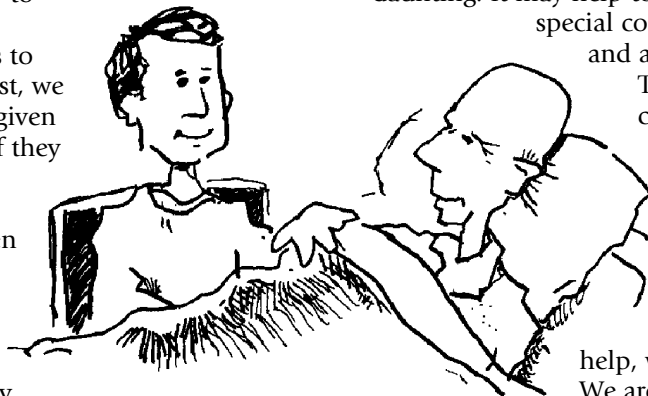
Society tells us that it's okay to pursue our own happiness unburdened by our obligations to others. But as followers of Christ, we know that our responsibilities given to us by God come first, even if they are not always what make us happy.

This is never truer than when a loved one is disabled, ill or even dying, and dependent upon us. While we feel compelled by loyalty, the obligation of service can be very

daunting. It may help to remember that Christ showed special compassion for the sick and disabled and asked us to do the same.

This means that we must love and care for the most vulnerable members of the Body, suffer with them, and alleviate their fears as they face illness or death. Sometimes that is as simple as being a comforting presence.

When we take another into our care or go out of our way to help, we aren't just serving our neighbor. We are serving the Lord we love.



Feasts & Celebrations

During August we honor the Immaculate Heart of Mary because she loves us with a mother's heart and wants us to be united with her son, Jesus.

August 6 – Transfiguration of the Lord. Tradition says that Mt. Tabor was the site of the Transfiguration during which Christ showed his disciples the splendor of his beauty. The Lord appeared radiant in the company of Moses and Elijah, and a voice was heard to say, *"This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."*

August 11 – St. Clare. Born to a noble family in Assisi, Italy, St. Clare followed St. Francis of Assisi into poverty at age eighteen over her family's strenuous objections. She founded a sister order to the Franciscans called the "Poor Clares."

August 15 – Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Declared a dogma of our faith in 1950 by Pope Pius XII, the Assumption celebrates Mary's body and soul being taken up into Heaven at the end of her life.



Q What happened & to meatless Fridays?

In 1966, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) published *Complementary Norms on Penance and Abstinence* which released U.S. Catholics

from a strict abstinence from meat on Fridays outside of Lent. But the bishops insisted that Friday be a day of penance throughout the year.

"Friday should be in each week something of what Lent is in the entire year. For this reason we urge all to prepare for that weekly Easter that comes with each Sunday by freely making of every Friday a day of self-denial and mortification in prayerful remembrance of the passion of Jesus Christ."

The bishops went on to say that, among these freely chosen penitential practices, "we give first place to abstinence from flesh meat. We do so in the hope that the Catholic community will ordinarily continue to abstain from meat by free choice as formerly we did in obedience to Church law."



from Scripture

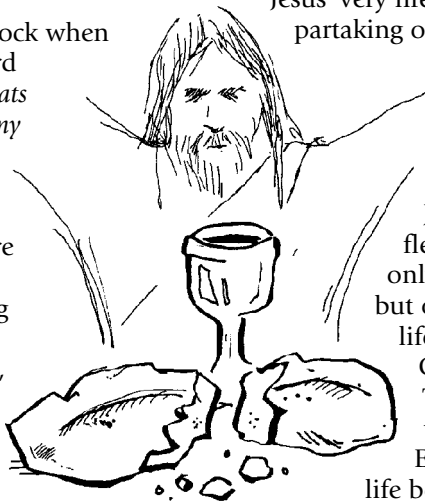
John 6:51-58, "I am the bread of life."

Imagine their shock when Jesus' audience heard him say, *"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life."* Not only did they consider this a hostile act, Jews were forbidden to drink blood so consuming human blood was unthinkable. At this, Jesus' audience became disillusioned. They wouldn't even

look beyond the surface of his words.

What Jesus wants us to know is that to be his follower we have to do more than just listen to his words. We have to share his life and his fate. It is Jesus' very life which feeds us by our partaking of it, internalizing it, making it our food.

We can observe all the rules and practices, and still never experience the life that Jesus came to give. His flesh and blood satisfy not only our physical hunger, but our hunger for genuine life – the life we share with God now and eternally. The more we experience union with God in the Eucharist, the more Jesus' life becomes our own.



Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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<http://www.growinginfaith.net>

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

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