

Growing in FAITH™

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

September 2017

One Minute Meditations

St. Wenceslaus

Raised by his devoutly Christian grandmother, Ludmilla, King Wenceslaus worked closely with the Church to end the persecution of Christians in Bohemia. "The Good King" encouraged German missionaries, built churches, and cared for the sick and poor. Political conflict culminated in his assassination. One morning, led by his brother, Boleslaus, a group of nobles killed Wenceslaus on the doorsteps of a church. He was immediately recognized as a martyr and is one of the patron saints of Bohemia.



Pass on the gift

In the encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI said, "Love is God's greatest gift to humanity, it is his promise and our hope." As God's children, we convey his love to others through acts of charity.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, [then] I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me"
(Revelation 3:20).



You can change the world

Through the gift of free will, humans can choose to do good or choose evil. Most choose good, but when we learn of suffering caused by evil in the world, we can feel discouraged and powerless. Yet, through God, we have the power to transform the world.

Don't depend on you. *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight"* (Proverbs 3:5). Fixing this fallen world is beyond our abilities alone. God has the power, however, to bring true peace and healing to the world. Lay all your concerns at God's feet and then have confidence that he is at work.



Choose the good. Evil can be contagious. Sometimes the best way to live a life of good is to avoid bad influences or people that can pull us away from God. *"... Pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord"* (2 Timothy 2:22). The bonus? Your good life may inspire others.

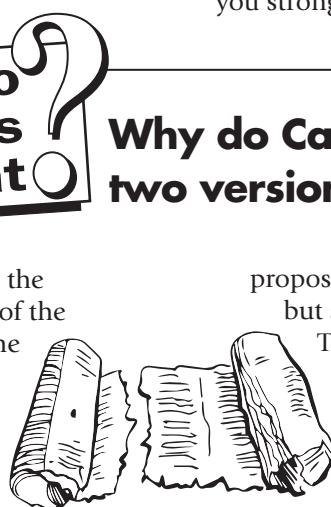
Sharpen your Sacramental sense. Sacraments are opportunities to share in God's divine life. These supernatural encounters with God

strengthen our will, enlighten our minds, and inspire us to a closer relationship with God. Don't miss an opportunity to meet Christ at Sunday Mass or the Sacrament of Reconciliation. His grace will keep you strong.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics have two versions of the Creed?

The Apostles' Creed is the summary of the beliefs of the early Church. The Nicene Creed is the expanded form of the Apostles' Creed, stemming from two Church councils (Nicaea, 325 AD; Constantinople, 381 AD) intended to combat Arianism, which



proposed that Jesus was not God but a kind of super-saint. Therefore, the Nicene Creed emphasizes Jesus' divinity and his divine Sonship (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no.465). The Nicene Creed is common to both the Western and Eastern Churches.

Maintain your spiritual health

Just as visiting the doctor for regular checkups is key to maintaining our physical health, consistent maintenance is important for good spiritual health. Try these suggestions to craft a schedule to stay in top spiritual condition:

Daily: Everything we need to know to strengthen our consciences and make good decisions is in the Bible. It is in Scripture that we discover God's guiding voice. Take time daily to pray, read Scripture, and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal its message for you.

Weekly: Attend Mass each Sunday and Holy Day.



Do whatever is necessary so you can receive Communion. This is key.

Monthly: When we hold ourselves accountable, our actions become more pleasing to God. Seek forgiveness each month in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession).

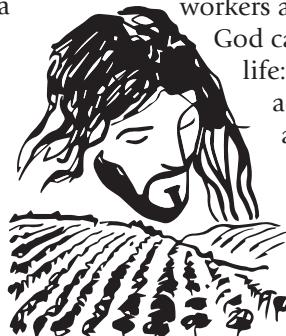
Annually: In our noisy world, it can be hard to hear God's voice. Find a Catholic retreat center near you and get away with God. Or, spend a whole day in a favorite park or vacation spot praying and listening. Center your day around God.

from Scripture

Matthew 20:1-16a, Better late than never

In this Gospel reading, Jesus compared God's kingdom to a vineyard in the charge of a generous landlord. In the parable, the landlord hired groups of workers at different times of the day: at the start of the workday, at midmorning, noon, midafternoon, and finally, at five o'clock in the evening. Yet he paid all the same wage.

The vineyard is God's kingdom and God is the landlord. Some Bible scholars propose that the earlier groups of workers represented the Jewish people, who had followed God's laws for thousands of years, while the



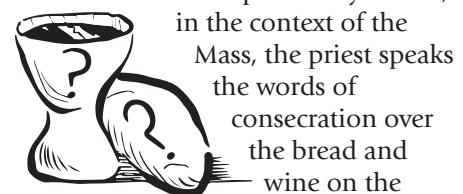
Gentiles were the latecomers. The workers also stood for those whom God calls at different stages of life: from infancy, adolescence, adulthood, and old age.

All the laborers received the same reward. It must have shocked Jesus' listeners to hear that the landlord paid those who worked one hour as if they'd worked for eight. Still, all were rewarded. Clearly, God's ways are not our ways. What is important is not how many hours we've served God, but that we served him when he called us.

Q & A

If God is everywhere, why do we have to attend Mass?

While God is everywhere, he is present in the Eucharist in a special way. When,



in the context of the Mass, the priest speaks the words of consecration over the bread and wine on the altar, they are mysteriously transformed into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ. Although the characteristics of the bread and wine remain, they are substantially different (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1376). In that moment, Jesus is as present as he was to his Apostles in the Upper Room.

The Eucharist does for our souls what food does for our bodies. You wouldn't go for weeks without eating and still expect to be strong and healthy. From the Eucharist, we receive all the graces we need for the rest of the week. Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Our need for strength and rest are satisfied by Christ. The Church commands us to receive weekly what is, in fact, essential for our spiritual well-being.

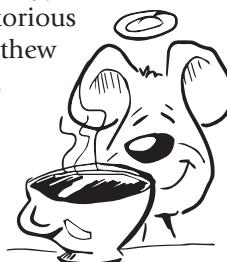
Feasts & Celebrations

Sept. 4 – St. Rose of Viterbo (1252). Born to poor parents in Viterbo, Italy, Rose used her gift of preaching to teach the women and girls in her neighborhood about the faith. As a young woman, she spoke out in support of the pope against the Ghibellines, who supported the emperor, Frederick II. She wanted to join the Carmelites, but was refused. She died at the age of seventeen and was buried at that same convent.

Sept. 14 – Exaltation of the Holy Cross (300s). St. Helena (mother of

Emperor Constantine), made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, retracing places in Jesus' life. She discovered three crosses, one of which was thought to be the Cross on which Jesus died. On the site, Constantine built the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher.

Sept. 21 – St. Matthew the Evangelist (1st Century). Also known as Levi, he was a notorious tax collector. St. Matthew left everything when Jesus called him to spread the Gospel. He wrote the Gospel According to Matthew.



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To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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