

Growing in FAITH™

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

January 2017

Good Shepherd Catholic Church

Rev. Leon Juchniewicz, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Genevieve

St. Genevieve was born in Nanterre near Paris in 422.

She became a nun at the age of 15 and moved to Paris, where she became known for her piety. When Attila the Hun marched on Paris, Genevieve convinced the inhabitants to pray and fast. Attila retreated, leaving Paris untouched. Again, when King Childeric occupied Paris, she crossed enemy lines to bring food to prisoners and convinced the king to release them. She is the patroness of Paris.

Hope in God

Even the saints experienced times when their faith in God's goodness was tested, yet they never gave up hope; they knew that whatever happened, God's unchanging love would see them through. When you feel disheartened, pray for God's grace and hope in him.

"I have told you this that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world" (John 16:33).



Resolve to have perfect faith

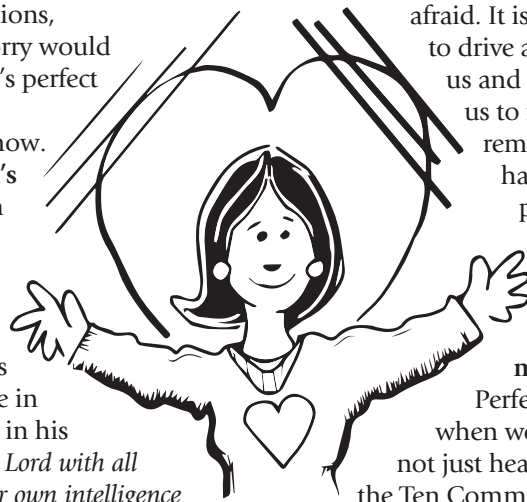
Imagine having complete confidence that God is with you in all things. Think how differently you would respond to troubles, temptations, or hardships. Worry would be obsolete. That's perfect faith and it is possible. Here's how.

Believe in God's love. Perfect faith comes from believing that God loves you without limit or condition. God is love, so to believe in God is to believe in his love. *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, on your own intelligence do not rely"* (Proverbs 3:5). The key is to remember that God loves you and only wills your good.

Banish fear. *"There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear*

has to do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love" (1 John 4:18). We were not created to be afraid. It is Satan who wishes to drive a wedge between us and God and tempts us to fear. When we remember that God has consistently proven himself to be faithful and dependable, only faith is left.

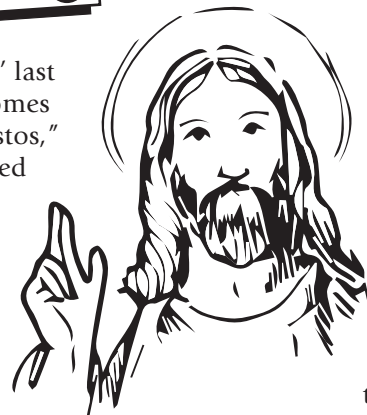
Practice makes perfect. Perfect faith results when we live God's word, not just hear it. Adhering to the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes and the two Great Commandments (love God, love your neighbor), we notice God's hand in our lives and trust in him grows.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics call Jesus "Christ"?

"Christ" is not Jesus' last name, but a title. It comes from the Greek "Christos," which means "Anointed One." Ancient Jews enthroned their kings in a ceremony by anointing them with oil. This anointing distinguished the king as being the



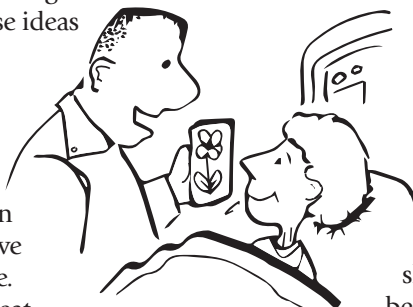
one chosen by God to deliver Israel from its enemies. So in calling Jesus "Christ," Christians affirm not only his Lordship over all creation, but also his mission as Savior and the promised Messiah of the Jews.

A kinder, gentler you

Kindness is contagious. A recent study found that witnessing an act of kindness produces good feelings and inspires imitation. In the new year, try these ideas to be kinder and inspire others to do the same.

Make connections. In days past, households weren't easily relocated, so neighbors were lifelong relations. That made solving disagreements necessary and important. What resulted was a supportive network to help when necessary. Make sure you are part of a supportive network of friends and family wherever you are.

Be interested, not interesting. Many of us treat



conversation like a competitive sport that gives points for the cleverest, loudest, and longest speaker. Interrupting, insisting, and entertaining are not conversing. Instead, listening is a kindness that shows someone he is valued and understood.

Choose not to be offended. Being right is no compensation for broken friendships. If there is someone in your life who deliberately tries to offend you, walk away. Otherwise, look the other way when feeling slighted. Being kind is more rewarding than being right.

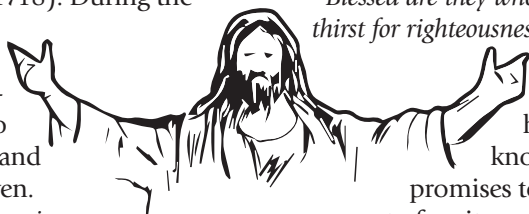
from Scripture

Matthew 5:1-12, paths to happiness

God wants us to be happy. When he created us, he put into our hearts the desire to be happy (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1718). During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave us the Beatitudes – guaranteed ways to obtain peace here and happiness in Heaven.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit ...” Recognize that we need God to compensate for our weakness. Depend upon his help.

“Blessed are they who mourn ...” God knows what you need even better than you do. Trust him to strengthen you and bring you comfort.



“Blessed are the meek ...” Jesus is meek and gentle. Imitate him and you will have everlasting peace.

“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness ...” Peacefully accept whatever happens knowing that Jesus promises to give you courage to face it.

“Blessed are the merciful ...” Mercy is love in the face of sin and injury. If we show mercy, we are guaranteed mercy.

Perhaps the real secret to happiness is remembering that when we follow Jesus, there will always be a happy ending.

Q & A

How do we make a good Confession?

Jesus knew that, even after Baptism, we would fall into sin, so he instituted the Sacrament of Confession. In confession,



we admit what we've done, apologize, and resolve not to do it again. In return, we receive absolution and the grace to fight against temptation. *“His mercy is infinitely greater than our sins”* (Pope Francis).

A good confession begins with a thorough examination of conscience. Using the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes as guides, reflect on instances when you have failed to love like Christ. Confess any mortal sins since your last confession and any venial (lighter) sins that you remember. For sin to be mortal, it must be serious, freely chosen, and committed knowing it was a sin.

After hearing your confession, the priest will ask you to make an Act of Contrition expressing sorrow for sins and a desire to change. He will give you absolution and assign you penance. Remember, God loves you dearly and he wants to forgive you; you need only ask for it.

Feasts & Celebrations

Jan. 1 – Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. Today, we honor Mary, but also Jesus as God. Today is a holy day of obligation. In their honor, attend Mass and pray a Rosary.

Jan. 7 – St. Raymond of Peñafort (1275). St. Raymond studied and taught canon (Church) law in Barcelona, and later joined the Dominican Order. He was called to Rome to work for Pope Gregory IX. He was appointed archbishop of Tarragona, Spain. He

retired after two years, only to be elected head of the Dominicans. He is the patron saint of lawyers.

Jan. 9 – Baptism of the Lord. Jesus began his public ministry by getting baptized by St. John the Baptist. Jesus was free of sin, but he allowed himself to be baptized in order to *“fulfill all righteousness”* (Matthew 3:15). By his baptism, Jesus declared his willingness to fulfill God's saving plan. It is also at this time when God revealed Jesus as his *“beloved Son”* (Matthew 3:17).



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