

Growing in FAITH™

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

February 2017

Good Shepherd Catholic Church

Rev. Leon Juchniewicz, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

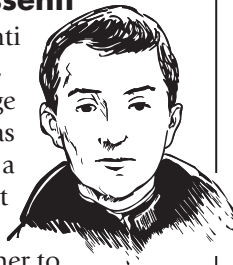
St. Gabriel Possenti

Francesco Possenti was born in Assisi, Italy, into a large family. He was often sick as a child. He lost two sisters and his mother to illness by the time he was four. At 18, he joined the Passionists and was named Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows. He inspired others by his prayer and faithfulness in the little things. He suffered from tuberculosis shortly after entering, which he endured patiently and cheerfully until his death.

Serve without complaint

Every job has aspects about it that are tedious, messy, and unrewarding, yet they are necessary. However, they can be opportunities to grow in virtue: humility, patience, self-discipline, etc. When you dread doing your work, smile and say a prayer, *"and your Father, who sees in secret, will repay you"* (Matthew 6:4).

"The works of God are all of them good; in its own time every need is supplied" (Sirach 39:16).



Love and live your faith

Faith in God is not a passive virtue resting in the background of our lives. Belief and love for God compels us to an active life of serving, sharing, and living our faith daily.

Embrace excellence. All that we do becomes a prayer when we give our employers, communities, neighborhoods and families our best abilities in God's name.

Celebrate the Eucharist. No Catholic life is complete without weekly Mass attendance. Do what is necessary so you can receive Communion.

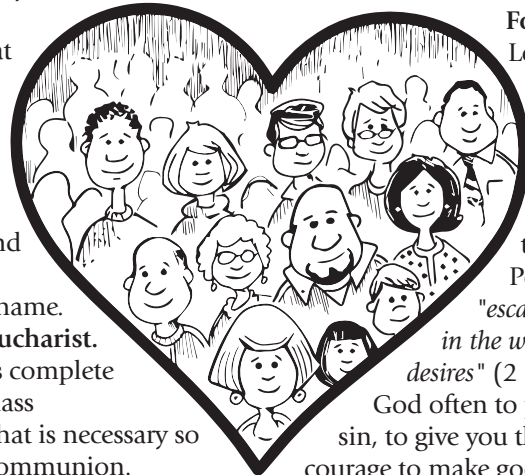
Become family. Register in your parish and look for ways to get involved in a parish ministry, such as lecturing, ushering, singing, or becoming a Eucharistic minister.

Be joyful. Scripture comforts us with the assurance that God will not rest until we find our way home to him. Reject Earthly worry and live with joy. God is in control.

Forgive often. Learn to practice this critical skill – and to ask for it when needed.

Flee temptation. St. Peter tells us to *"escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires"* (2 Peter 1:4). Ask God often to protect you from sin, to give you the wisdom and courage to make good choices.

Listen to God. Be sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. God will reveal when you've messed up, and rejoice with you when you get it right.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics venerate relics?

The saints were ordinary people, like us, but they had an extraordinary love for God. Relics—their remains and personal possessions—represent those who are in glory with God. Just as we treasure things that once belonged to someone we loved



or admired—a piece of clothing or jewelry, for example—we treasure the relics of saints. Although relics themselves have no special properties, venerating them reminds us of the virtuous examples of the saints.

Know him, love him, and serve him to be happy forever

The Baltimore Catechism taught us that God made us to “know him, to love him, and to serve him in this world, and to be happy with him forever in the next.” In truth, God loves us and wants us to love him back.

Knowing him. Each of us was created with a place in our hearts just for God. Until we discover it, we may try to fill it with earthly things but nothing else fits. Remove the clutter, turn to God and the reward is peace.



Loving him. Jesus asked us to love God with all our hearts because surrendering to God is the best way to experience his infinite love. Show your love by praying daily, seeking Communion with him often, and thanking him for his goodness.

Serving him. When we make sure others have enough to eat, warm clothes to wear, and a place to stay, Jesus takes it personally. It’s what he asked us to do.

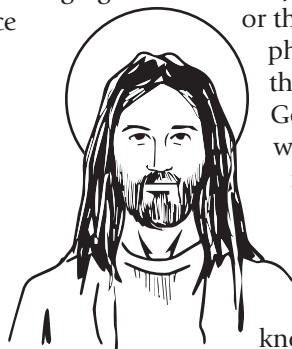
The reward for doing all this is eternal happiness.

from Scripture

Matthew 6:24-34, Our choice.

In Jesus’ day, scribes and Pharisees often lived comfortably while urging the people to heights of sacrifice and penance they didn’t observe themselves. The message was right but the messengers were flawed. Instead, Jesus took on our humanity and spoke with authority. He experienced hunger and thirst, and didn’t always have a place to sleep. So when he counseled his listeners to trust God with all their needs, he knew what he was asking.

Jesus said don’t worry. By that he meant don’t be anxious and concerned



beyond our immediate needs. Stability in this world for the rich or the poor comes not from physical provisions but from the inner peace that only God can provide. By worrying about our physical needs, we draw attention away from attaining the inner stability so necessary for peace.

From experience, Jesus knows we have a choice. We can live in the world or we can live in God’s Kingdom, but we cannot do both. Jesus wants us to invest in our future with him. God will take care of the rest.

Q & A Does being a “good Catholic” mean following all the rules exactly?

The ancient Jews had a lot of rules. Jewish Law dictated what you could eat, how to stay ritually clean, and how to spend Saturdays. Yet, when asked what the most important commandment was, Jesus’ answer brought his listeners back to the basics: “*You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind...you shall love your neighbor as yourself*” (Matthew 22:37).

Jesus didn’t give rules so much as he laid down principles. At the Last Supper, Jesus gave his disciples a New Commandment: “*Love one another as I love you*” (John 15:12). This New Commandment gives us the whole Law in its simplest form: Catholicism, at its heart, is about love—Christ-like love for God and others. Being a good Catholic isn’t about following all the rules perfectly for perfection’s sake, but about falling in love with God. Once that happens, following the Commandments and the Beatitudes takes care of itself. They cease to be rules and become a lifestyle.



Feasts & Celebrations

Feb. 3 - St. Ansgar (865). Ansgar was born in Picardy, France. He was sent to the nearby Benedictine monastery after the death of his mother. After taking vows, he traveled to Denmark and Sweden to preach the Gospel. In 831, he was appointed Papal Legate to the northern lands by Pope Gregory IV. He was known for his holiness and ascetic lifestyle.

Feb. 5 - St. Agatha (251). At an early age, Agatha dedicated herself to God and promised to preserve her chastity. She kept this vow, even under

torture. To strengthen her, God sent a vision of St. Peter who healed her. She is the patroness of nurses and miners.

Feb. 6 - St. Paul Miki and Companions (1596). St. Paul Miki, a Jesuit missionary in Japan, was arrested during religious persecution and, along with 25 other Catholics, forced to walk more than 300 miles to Nagasaki where they were crucified. It is said they preached the whole journey and ran to their crosses praising God.



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)