

# Growing in FAITH™

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

February 2010

## One Minute Meditations

### A warm "hello"

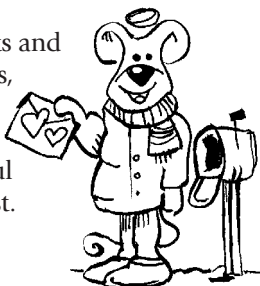
Mass is a community celebration. Try to arrive five to ten minutes before Mass is to begin and greet the people around you. Stay for the entire Mass and visit after it is over. Making others who may be new to your parish feel welcome strengthens the entire Body of Christ.

### Amen

The word "amen" shares the same root as the Hebrew word for "believe." When we say it at the end of our prayer, we affirm our belief in what we just said. "To believe is to say 'Amen' to God's words, promises, and commandments" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1064).

### Your harvest

When you plant tomato seeds in a garden, you will harvest tomatoes. In the same way, whatever is planted in your heart and mind will be your harvest. Avoid seeds like violence, negativity, and self-indulgence. When you plant positive thoughts and attitudes, you will reap a beautiful harvest.



## Catholics leave their mark on the world

As Catholics, we believe that it is possible to build a just society despite the challenges of modern life. In fact, the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching can help us to understand how we can work to create a better world. As Lent begins this month, why not use these principles to figure out

where you can make a greater difference:

**Life and dignity of the human person.** People are the clearest reflection of God among us. That makes human life sacred and Catholics act to uphold the dignity and rights of all people.

**Call to Family, Community, and the Common Good.** Catholics work for the good of everyone, especially working to support marriage and family.

**Rights and Responsibilities.** All people have a right to life and basics required for human decency such as food, shelter, health care, education, and employment.

**Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.**

Jesus brought hope and compassion to the less fortunate, and he asked that we continue his work.

**Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers.** The economy exists to serve people, not the

other way around. Workers have the right to productive work and to fair wages

**Solidarity.** Loving our neighbor recognizes no boundaries.

**Care for God's Creation.** Out of love for God, we care for the earth and all that he created.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why do Catholics observe Lent?

Lent is the primary penitential season in the Church year. It begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the celebration of the Easter Triduum, reflecting the forty days Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying before his



public ministry.

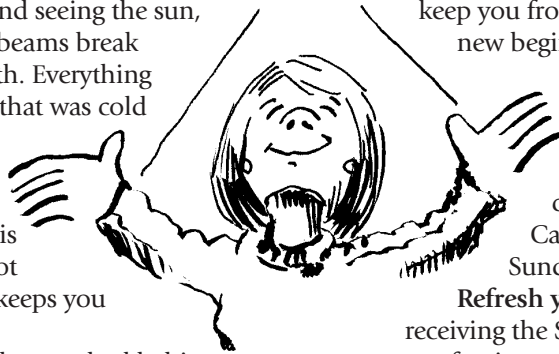
This helps us remember the great events of salvation history. "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

# Stand in the Light during Lent

Imagine looking up to the sky and seeing the sun, so powerful and bright that great beams break through any gray to touch the earth. Everything that was dark is now light and all that was cold feels warmth.

Jesus is like that sun. His glory shines rays of hope on each of us, warming us with the strength of his love. During Lent this year, why not remove anything in your life that keeps you from standing in his light?

**Refresh your sight.** Eliminate whatever bad habits



keep you from seeing Christ's light. Let Lent be a new beginning to your lifelong journey down the right path.

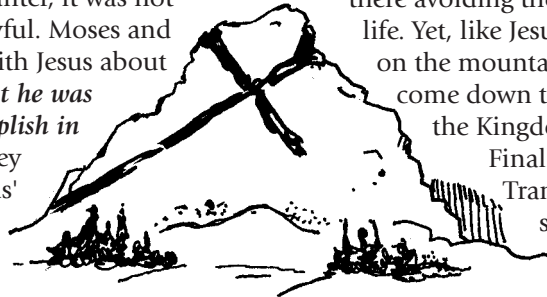
**Refresh your faith.** Find your way to the light. Recommit to the promises made at Baptism and Confirmation. (You can find them at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' website: [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).) Sunday Mass can help you stay on track.

**Refresh your soul.** Clear your way to the light by receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Jesus is ready to forgive us if we ask.

## from Scripture

### Luke 9:23-36, Linger on the mountaintop.

While the Transfiguration was a fantastic encounter, it was not particularly joyful. Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus about "his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem." They referred to Jesus' death, as the shadow of the Cross loomed.



Like Moses' exodus from slavery in Egypt however, Jesus' exodus would deliver his people from the slavery of sin.

When he offered to build shelters for the three men, Peter clearly wanted to remain on the mountaintop in this holy moment. Sometimes we have an

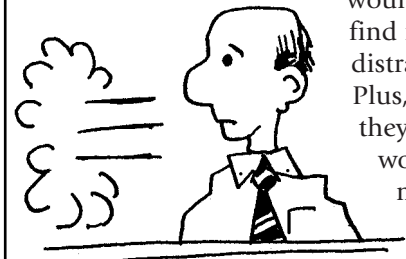
inspiring experience and want to stay there avoiding the realities of daily life. Yet, like Jesus, we cannot linger on the mountaintop but must come down to take our place in the Kingdom.

Finally, God used the Transfiguration to speak a message – the same one he spoke at

Jesus' baptism. He confirmed Jesus as his son, the Messiah, and added, "Listen to him." The son of God has God's power and authority. If we believe that Jesus is the son of God, then surely we will want to do what he says.

## Q & A Is it permissible to leave Mass early after Communion?

Imagine if some of your dinner guests gobbled their food and bolted when they finished. Not only would you think it rude, your other guests



would find it distracting. Plus, they would miss out on

the rest of the evening.

The same is true for Mass. Jesus is present for the entire Mass, so ducking out before it is over means walking out on him. Can you imagine meeting with an earthly king and leaving before he concluded your time together?

Lastly, participating in Mass is intimately linked to our call to go forth and live the Gospel. The final blessing and dismissal prepares us to share what we have received with our brothers and sisters. If we leave directly after Communion, we miss this important component.

## Feasts & Celebrations

**February 11 – Our Lady of Lourdes (1858)** A heavenly lady who called herself, "The Immaculate Conception," appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous, a poor girl from a village in France. After the first vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a spring with miraculous healing waters emerged from a nearby cave.

**February 17 – Ash Wednesday.** Marking the first day of Lent, ashes from the palms of the previous Passion Sunday are blessed and placed on the forehead as a sign of penance. One form of Lenten observance is to pray before the Stations of the Cross, meditating on

Jesus' walk to Calvary.

**February 22 – St. Peter's Chair (1st century).** We celebrate St. Peter's establishment of the Holy See and pray for the preservation of God's Church.

**February 23 – St. Polycarp (156).**

As Bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp faithfully cared for his flock despite being surrounded by pagans and a government opposed to his religion. Before being martyred, he thanked God for making him worthy of a martyr's death.



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