

# Growing in FAITH™

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

March 2019

St. James Catholic Church

## One Minute Meditations

### St. Matilda

From early on, St. Matilda was known for her beauty, holiness and intelligence. She was happily married to Henry the Fowler and had five children. Beloved by her subjects, she was known for donating generously to the poor. When Henry died, Matilda's sons, Otto and Henry the Quarrelsome, fought over the crown. After a failed rebellion, Henry died and Matilda left to live in a convent. Upon her death, she donated everything she owned, including her burial shroud.



### Opportunities for holiness

It often seems that everyday life can't allow for a deep connection with God. When we are at work, or play, or at rest, we can do all things in a holy way. Each hour brings its chances for patience, kindness, unselfishness, and other virtues.

*"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need"*

(Hebrews 4:16).



## The new you

Lent is our chance to leave our old ways behind and adopt a new way of life. When Easter comes, what will the new you be like?

**Be a more positive thinker.** This is the keystone habit that will help you form the other important habits. Squash negative thinking and trust that God will work with you to accomplish goals you set that are in harmony with his will.

**Focus on what's important.** First, identify what is most important to you – family, friends, faith, and so on. Then eliminate everything else. Not only will you be free to focus on what is most important, this habit will spill over into other areas of your life, such

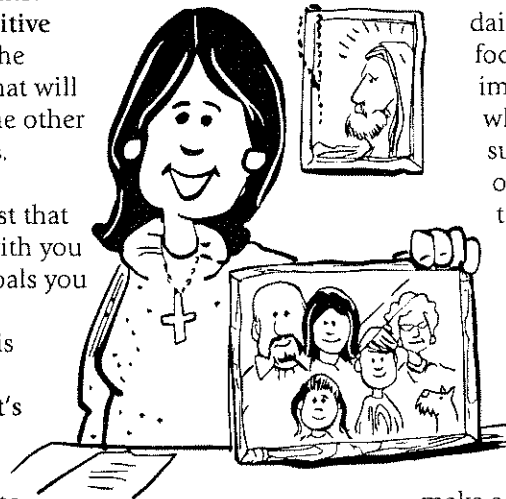
as tasks, projects, and communication.

**Find a powerful prayer routine.** The best prayer routines are the ones we follow every day. A firm, daily routine helps you focus on what's important, not just what comes up. Make sure to concentrate on Scripture and add time to listen, too.

### Add kindness.

Kindness is genuinely caring for others, wanting the best for them, and taking action to demonstrate that caring. Each day,

make a decision to add an act of kindness to your day. Let someone go ahead of you in line, give a sincere compliment to a stranger, praise a coworker's effort, greet a passerby.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

### Why do Catholics bow at the names of Jesus and Mary?

Bowing is a sign of honor given to royalty and to others of high status. Jesus is the Son of God and our king. Therefore, Mary, his mother, is the Mother of God and our queen. "A bow of the head is made when the three



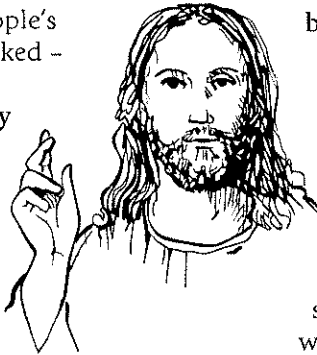
Divine Persons are named together and at the names of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Saint in whose honor Mass is being celebrated" (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, #275a).

# Jesus always gives more than we ask

During his time on Earth, Jesus exceeded people's expectations. He always gave more than was asked – but exactly what was needed.

A paralyzed man sought a cure for his body but Jesus cured his soul (Mark 2:1-12). A man's friends brought him to Jesus to heal his body, but Jesus forgave his sins. As God, Jesus has the power to heal. As man, he identifies with our deepest needs and gives us what is required to overcome them.

A widow needed strength to bury her son



but Jesus gave him life (Luke 7:11-17). God's love for us is bigger than we can imagine and moves him to shower us with miracles.

Invited to attend a wedding, he elevated the marriage to a Sacrament (John 2:1-12). At his Mother's request, Jesus blessed a new marriage by replenishing their empty wine stocks with better refreshment than they could have imagined. When we ask for her help, she makes sure her Son gives us what we need and more than we can imagine.

## from Scripture

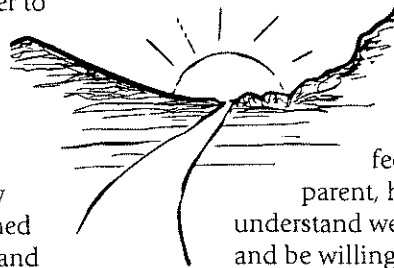
**Luke 15:1-3, 11-32. Jesus promises we can always return home.**

In this Gospel reading, Jesus told the story of the Prodigal (or reckless) Son. It goes like this. One day, the younger son demanded his father to give him his share of the estate. He left to squander it far from home.

When his money was gone, his situation grew desperate and he returned to his father, humbled and asking for mercy. The father was overjoyed to have his son back and threw a huge party. The older son, however, resented his brother's welcome and complained to his father that he didn't

get half the amount of celebrating for his work—and he was the "good one!"

Jesus promised that when we approach God with a truly repentant heart, we can always come home. It's not that God wants us to feel bad, but, like any parent, he wants us to understand we did something wrong and be willing to change. Through this parable, Jesus shows us that God is a loving, generous Father whose deepest nature is merciful, forgiving love. We are reminded that we can always come home.



## Q What is saintly & advice for A Confession?

It can be tempting to approach Confession like it's just another (unpleasant) obligation. In fact, Confession is more than "checking items off the list." It's an encounter with God's mercy. Try these timely tips from the saints to make the most of Confession:



**St. John Bosco – Be regular and consistent:** "Go to confession once a month, and not oftener than once a week, unless your confessor advises it." Also, "Once we have chosen a confessor, we must go to him steadily [or else] he cannot advise us."

**St. Francis de Sales – Be intentional:** "However small the sins you confess may be, always have sincere sorrow for them together with a firm resolution to correct them in the future." Also, "Don't be satisfied with confessing [only] your venial sins...accuse yourself of the motive that led you to commit them."

**St. Faustina Kowalska – Don't limit God's mercy:** "Each one can become a great saint, so great is the power of God's grace. It remains only for us not to oppose God's action."

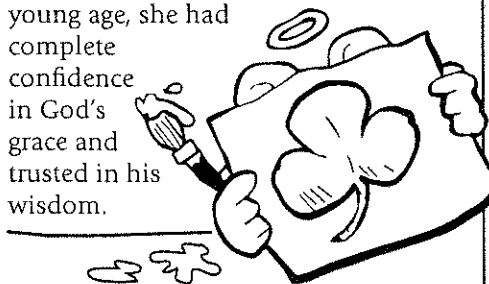
## Feasts & Celebrations

**March 6 – Ash Wednesday.** The first day of Lent. Ashes from the burnt palms of the previous Passion Sunday are blessed and placed on the foreheads as a sign of penance. Ash Wednesday is a day of abstinence from meat and fasting—eating one simple meal and two smaller meals that together don't equal a full meal.

**March 9 – St. Frances of Rome (1440).** Although she preferred a life of service, Frances' wealthy parents required that she marry. With a sister-in-law, Vannozza, Frances formed a group of women dedicated to serving

the poor. Frances honored her husband, cared for her children until their deaths, and served the poor and sick. She even converted her house into a hospital.

**March 25 – The Annunciation of the Lord (1st century).** The angel Gabriel visited the Blessed Virgin Mary with the extraordinary news of her role as the mother of God. Even at her young age, she had complete confidence in God's grace and trusted in his wisdom.



### 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)

# LENT 2019

## St. James Catholic Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>"Lent is the liturgical season of forty days which begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the celebration of the Paschal Mystery (Easter Triduum). Lent is the primary penitential season in the Church's liturgical year, reflecting the forty days Jesus spent in the desert in fasting and prayer" (<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>).</p> <p><b>10</b> Stay a few minutes after Mass and ask God to bless this Lent and help you grow in holiness.</p>	<p><b>II</b> Start a journal for your prayer intentions. Wait and see how God, who always answers prayer, answers yours.</p>	<p><b>12</b> Call Catholic Relief Services (877-HELPCRS or www.catholicrelief.org) to see how you can help those in need.</p>	<p><b>13</b> Today (and every day), refrain from gossiping, tea, juice, soda, etc.</p>	<p><b>14</b> Go on a "water fast," just for today and drink only water. Pray for those who may not be able to afford to drink coffee, tea, juice, soda, etc.</p>	<p><b>15</b> Pray for God to bless someone you don't like, or who you know doesn't like you.</p>	<p><b>16</b> Pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, given to the world through St. Faustina to help repair the hurt caused by sin. Find it at <a href="http://www.usccb.org">www.usccb.org</a>.</p>
<p><b>17</b> <i>St. Patrick's Day</i> St. Patrick evangelized Ireland. In his honor, explore ways to support your parish religious education program or youth group.</p>	<p><b>18</b> Choose a virtue and practice it all week: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, faith, hope, or charity.</p>	<p><b>19</b> <i>Solemnity of St. Joseph</i> St. Joseph served God faithfully. What God said, he did. Resolve today to fulfill your responsibilities without complaining.</p>	<p><b>20</b> Be determined to go the entire day without judging or criticizing anyone.</p>	<p><b>21</b> Lent is a demanding time for parish priests. Call your parish office to offer extra support or help.</p>	<p><b>22</b> Turn off the TV, computer, or other electronics for 30 minutes today. Offer this time to God in prayer or reading Scripture.</p>	<p><b>23</b> Jesus, truly present in the Eucharist, waits for us in the tabernacle of every Catholic church. Make time to visit him, if only for a little while.</p>
<p><b>24</b> Take one idea from today's Gospel reading or homily to put into practice this coming week.</p>	<p><b>25</b> <i>The Annunciation</i> We celebrates Mary's "Yes" to God, in agreeing to be the Mother of Jesus. Pray for the courage to respond faithfully to whatever God asks.</p>	<p><b>26</b> Ask God for a new grace today that will help you experience his personal love for you.</p>	<p><b>27</b> Make a fresh start on your Lenten journey today. Renew your Lenten observances.</p>	<p><b>28</b> Go through today only saying kind words. No snarky remarks or sarcasm allowed.</p>	<p><b>29</b> Browse a Catholic bookshop and find a good book to read during the rest of Lent.</p>	<p><b>30</b> Show Jesus you are willing to carry your cross by tackling something difficult, you've been putting off.</p>
<p><b>31</b> <i>Laetare Sunday</i> Make Sunday special. Invite friends and neighbors over for a potluck meal after Mass.</p>	<p><b>I</b> <i>April</i> Make a good examination of conscience with the Ten Commandments as a guide. You can find them in Exodus, Chapter 20.</p>	<p><b>2</b> Find 30 minutes to read today's Gospel: John 5:1-16. Write down two thoughts it inspired and keep them with you throughout the day.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Reach out to someone you know who is having a difficult time. Send an anonymous card with an encouraging message and enclose a gift card.</p>	<p><b>4</b> <i>St. Isidore of Seville</i> Find an unfamiliar term in the glossary of the <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> and read about it until you can explain it to someone else.</p>	<p><b>5</b> Consider making today a day of fasting, in addition to abstinence. When tempted to snack, remember those who can't afford nutritional basics.</p>	<p><b>6</b> Attend a Reconciliation Service or go to Confession on your own. Make a sincere Confession and experience the joy of God's forgiveness.</p>
<p><b>7</b> After Mass today, go out for coffee or breakfast with other parishioners from your parish.</p>	<p><b>8</b> Every day this week, get up 15 minutes earlier to pray.</p>	<p><b>9</b> Spread joy! Smile at everyone you meet, regardless of how you feel.</p>	<p><b>10</b> At least for today, give up worrying! When you are tempted to worry, pray instead and move on.</p>	<p><b>11</b> Fill a small Easter basket with treats and give to a friend. Include a prayer card, a Rosary, and a religious book.</p>	<p><b>12</b> Attend a Stations of the Cross service if your parish offers one. If not, find them on the USCCB website here: <a href="http://www.usccb.org/">http://www.usccb.org/</a>.</p>	<p><b>13</b> <i>Pope St. Martin</i> Pope St. Martin was martyred for his beliefs. In his honor, pray for Christians persecuted around the world.</p>
<p><b>14</b> <i>Palm Sunday</i> Today's Gospel narrates the events of Holy Week. Place yourself in the scene and "walk through" Holy Week with our Lord.</p>	<p><b>15</b> Tonight and every night this week, pray for the catechumens coming into the Church at the Easter Vigil.</p>	<p><b>16</b> Go for a walk and look for signs of new life.</p>	<p><b>17</b> Read the seven penitential psalms in the Old Testament book of Psalms that express remorse for sins: 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143.</p>	<p><b>18</b> <i>Holy Thursday</i> The Church celebrates the Last Supper, when Jesus instituted the Eucharist and the priesthood. Celebrate by going to church tonight.</p>	<p><b>19</b> <i>Good Friday</i> Today is a day of fasting and abstinence. Read and meditate on John's account of Jesus' passion and death (John 18-19).</p>	<p><b>20</b> <i>Holy Saturday</i> Choose an "Easter challenge" to help you continue to grow closer to God after Lent.</p>