

# Growing in FAITH™

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

April 2009

## One Minute Meditations

### When bad things happen

When bad things happen consider this: Jesus knows how you feel. Without cause, he was beaten, tortured, humiliated, and murdered. It doesn't get much worse than that. Asking Jesus to help you accept your sufferings will make them easier to bear.

### Susanna's choice

When Susanna had to choose between sinning with two wicked elders or be falsely accused of adultery, she took her chances with the law rather than sin (Daniel 13:22). She was saved when Daniel uncovered the truth.

When choosing between what is popular versus what is right, remember Susanna's choice and her salvation.

### Easter all year long

"Sunday recalls the day of Christ's Resurrection. It is Easter which returns week by week, celebrating Christ's victory over sin and death."

Pope John Paul II, *Dies Domini*, [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).



## Our new life can begin on Easter

Easter is more than just a happy ending to Jesus' travels on earth. In fact, it sparked a new life for Jesus; one even greater than before.

Easter can help us journey toward a new life, too; one that draws us closer to God. Here are some suggestions for how to find the right path.

**Find a map.** Our faith holds all the tools needed to find peace, personal well-being, and security. The Catechism of the Catholic Church will point the way, as will the Sunday Mass readings. Your pastor or religious education staff may be able to recommend a Scripture study guide you can use to personalize what you

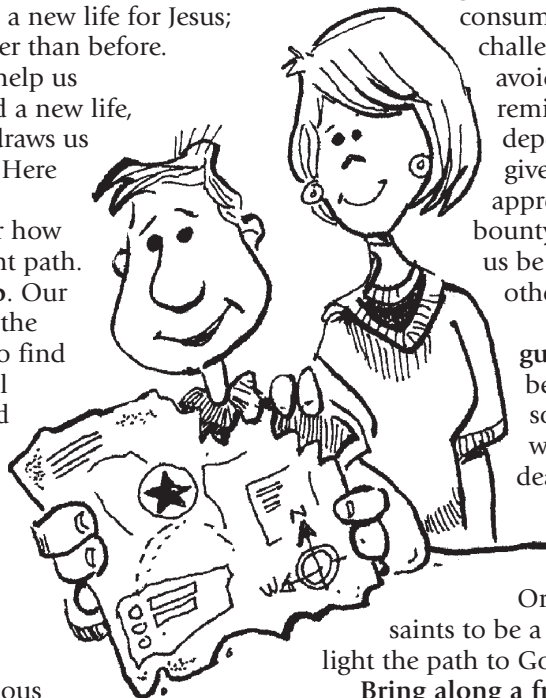
read.

**Travel light.** Weaning ourselves from consumerism is the challenge of our time. But avoiding excess can remind us of our dependence on God, give us a greater appreciation of the bounty we have, and help us be more sensitive to others in need.

**Follow a spiritual guide.** The journey can be easier when someone lights the way. Perhaps a priest, deacon, or nun in your parish can become a spiritual mentor.

Or choose one of the saints to be a role model who can light the path to God.

**Bring along a friend.** Spiritual companions can help us maintain perspective, and challenge us to grow, and make the trip more enjoyable.



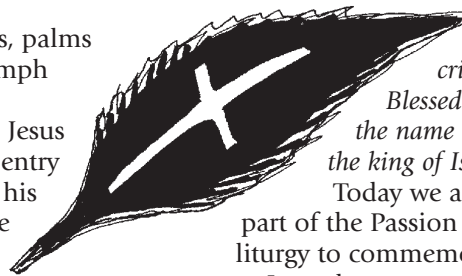
## Why Do Catholics Do That?

### Why do Catholics distribute palms on Palm Sunday?

To the ancient Jews, palms were a symbol of triumph often used in victory celebrations. So when Jesus made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem before his passion and death, the crowds "took palm branches and went out

to meet him, and cried out: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, (even) the king of Israel" (John 12:13).

Today we are given palms as part of the Passion (Palm) Sunday liturgy to commemorate that last trip to Jerusalem.

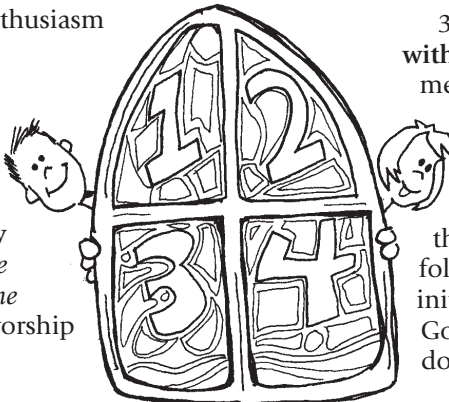


# 4 more reasons to love the Mass

Here are four reasons to refresh your enthusiasm for attending Mass:

1. **Meet God in the flesh.** Just because you don't feel the rush of the Holy Spirit or see a radiant light doesn't mean nothing is happening at Mass. He is there in the flesh.

2. **You're a baptized person needed by your community.** "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). We help worship God just by being there.



3. **You get something to take home with you.** The homily joins the Gospel message with the here and now of our lives. Its purpose is to give us something to think about and act on in the coming week.

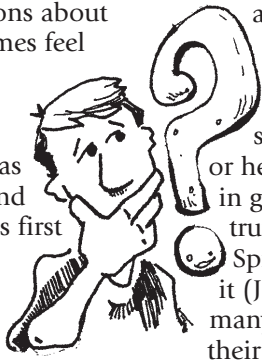
4. **"Do this in memory of me"** is the only direct order Jesus gave to his followers. That means God is the one who initiates this encounter with us. And when God asks us to do something, we should do it.

## from Scripture

**From Scripture: John 20:19-31, Doubting Thomas.**

Have you ever struggled with doubts or troubling questions about your faith? Do you sometimes feel that tough questions aren't welcome or acceptable to people of faith?

Even though Thomas was with Jesus for three years and witnessed the great miracles first hand, he still needed time, evidence, and first-hand observation before he could accept the Resurrection. Far from rebuking him, Jesus invited Thomas



to do whatever was necessary to convince himself of the truth.

In spite of his misgivings, Thomas didn't leave the group, nor was he excluded by them despite his non-conformance. As a result, he was able to find the answers in the context of that early church.

This encounter with Thomas suggests that every seeker is welcome to bring his or her doubts to God. He delights in guiding our search for the truth and promised that the Spirit would aid those who seek it (John 16:13). God knows that many faithful people who probe their doubts and fears finally reach the truth - and faith in the truth is what Christ desires for us.

## Feasts & Celebrations

This month we celebrate the Holy Eucharist - the heart of our faith.

**April 4 - St. Isidore of Seville (636).** Born to a family of three other saints, St. Isidore succeeded his brother as archbishop of Seville. St. Isidore established seminaries in every diocese, and founded schools. Some of his writings helped shape the spiritual outlook of the Middle Ages.

**April 25 - St. Mark (1st century).** St. Mark wrote the second Gospel largely based on St. Peter's perspective. Mark accompanied Sts. Paul and Barnabas (Mark's cousin) on their missionary journey through Cyprus and is credited with founding the Church of Alexandria.

**April 29 - St. Catherine of Siena (1380).** A mystic from a young age, St. Catherine had regular conversations with Jesus. At sixteen years old, she joined the Third Order of St. Dominic and served the poor. Although uneducated, she dictated many books on the Catholic faith.



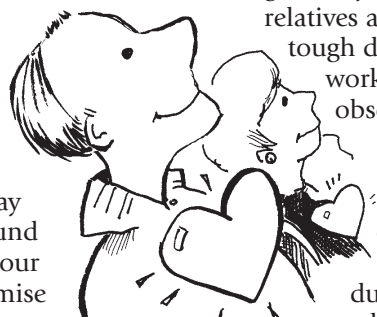
## Q & A What does it mean to keep the Lord's Day holy?

Sunday - the Lord's Day - is the day of the week we set aside just for God. We gather at Mass to listen to his Word and take part in the Eucharist. Our activities on Sunday should center around thanking God for our blessings and promise of salvation.

One of the best ways we can show God how much we love him is to

show love to each other. Sunday is a great day to devote to the care of relatives and friends, which may be tough during the week. Performing works of mercy is also a fitting observation of the day.

Sunday is also a time for the reflection and meditation necessary for our spiritual growth. It can be the one day in the week during which we slow down and listen for the voice of our Father, and actually have a chance of hearing it.



**Our Mission**

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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