

# Growing in FAITH™

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

September 2014

**St. Cecilia Church**

Rev. James L. Secora, Pastor

## One Minute Meditations

### Pope St. Gregory the Great

A great pope of the Church, Pope St. Gregory gave up the privileges of being a rich man's son to serve God. As a young man, he became one of seven deacons of Rome. He then became Rome's Chief Magistrate but resigned to become a monk turning the family estate into the Abbey of St. Andrew.



Elected pope at age 50, St. Gregory made peace with the invading Lombards, saved Rome from famine, and restored order within the Church itself.

### Our rock

Although the world may change, God stays the same. He can be trusted to provide love, support, strength, patience, wisdom, insight, and creativity when we need it. All we have to do is ask. *"For I the Lord do not change ..."* (Malachi 3:6).

### Power in number

*"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* (Matthew 18:20).



## God loves me; this I know."

We are loved immeasurably by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Why, then, do we often fear God as a stern taskmaster who imposes impossible rules and waits to catch us in misdeeds? Instead, let's be confident in his warmth.

**God is love.**  
*"Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God ... for God is love"* (1 John 4:8). God's very nature is love. He isn't capable of ill will, ridicule, or bad feelings. He can only love and want us to love.

**God is only capable of wanting our good.** When someone loves us, he

wants the very best for us. *"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope"* (Jeremiah 29:11).

**God doesn't want us to wonder about him.** We don't have to guess who he is. He makes it easy to come to know him. "... Let

*him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practice steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I*

*delight, says the Lord"* (Jeremiah 9:24). We get to know him through seeking him in prayer and action.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

## Why do we say the Church is "Apostolic?"

The Church was founded on the Apostles, sent by Christ to *"make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you"* (Matthew 28:19-20). The Apostles conferred their mission and authority on their successors with the imposition of



hands, still done today.

The faith of the Apostles was preserved through time via this apostolic succession. "[The Church] continues to be taught, sanctified, and guided by the Apostles until Christ's return, through their successors in pastoral office" (CCC 857).

## Mistakes can be blessings

Do you dread making mistakes and feel remorse when you do? Instead, realize that mistakes are simply outcomes we didn't expect and can lead to growth.

**Start by admitting your mistake.** You can only learn from a mistake if you admit you made one. Acknowledging the error takes the focus away from assigning blame and moves it toward understanding a future course of action.

**Enlist help.** Talking to someone else about what happened gives you the benefit of another's experience. He or she may have made a similar

mistake or know of solid solution. Plus, describing the event forces you to think it through and may even help you see opportunities you didn't know were there.

**Decide on change.** Ask, "What will I do better next time?" Real growth and change happen when you see possibilities for improvement.

**Benefit from mistakes.** If you can learn from the current error, you may be able to avoid a future one.

Remember, God is the only one you know who doesn't make mistakes.

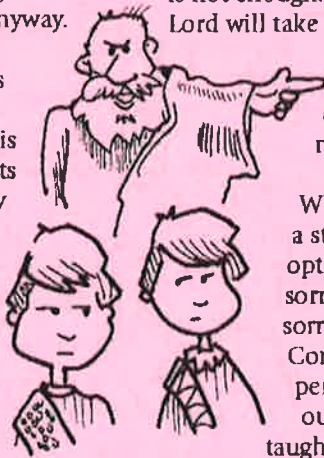


### from Scripture

#### Matthew 21:28-32, Honest obedience.

Jesus told of a man who asked his two sons to go work in his vineyard. The first said, "No," but went anyway. The second said, "Yes," but didn't go. Which son did as the father asked?

The father in the parable is God. The first son represents the outcasts of society. They said "No" to God at first, but repented of their sins and changed. The second son represents the Jewish religious leaders. They said "Yes," but it was just lip service. They followed rules rather than change their hearts.



Saying, "Yes, God, I believe in you," is not enough. If we presume that the Lord will take us into Heaven just because profess our faith, we will be disappointed. Words are not enough. True obedience is lived. When we realize we are in a state of sin, we have two options. We can say we're sorry, or we can show we're sorry by going to Confession, doing sincere penance and amending our lives. Living as Jesus taught us is our way of "working in our Father's vineyard."

### Q & A Why is the Our Father called, "The Perfect Prayer?"

One reason we call the Our Father, "The Perfect Prayer," is because Jesus taught us to pray it (Luke 11:1-13). It is actually four prayers in one. First, it is a prayer of praise and gives God the glory that he is due.

Second, it is a prayer of petition in which we ask God to provide what we need.

Third, it is a prayer asking for forgiveness and the strength to be forgiving. And last, it is a prayer of acknowledgement. It leads us to admit that God knows what is best for us and reminds us to submit to his will rather than our own. That's what makes it the perfect prayer and the perfect prayer model.

The Our Father is a good beginning to heartfelt prayer. Jesus encourages us to ask for God's help, seek God's will, and open the door to God's grace in our lives.

**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)

### Feasts & Celebrations

**Sept. 13 - St. John Chrysostom (407).** A powerful public speaker, he was a brutal critic of clergy who abused their office and royals who turned a blind eye to the suffering of the poor. He died in exile as a result.

**Sept. 27 - St. Vincent de Paul (1660).** St. Vincent de Paul, was devoted to the spiritual and physical relief of the poor and sick. He founded several hospitals, and ransomed over 1,200 galley slaves from North Africa.

**Sept. 21 - St. Matthew.** Also known as Levi, he was a notorious tax collector. St.

Matthew left everything when Jesus called him to spread the Gospel. He wrote the Gospel According to Matthew.

**Sept. 29 - St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael, the Archangels.** Members of the third hierarchy of angels around the throne of God, archangels are entrusted with important missions to mankind such as St. Gabriel's visit to the Blessed Mother to tell her she had been chosen as the mother of God.



# Called to Trust

## What it means to rest in God's love

by Leisa Anstlinger



### From being thrown about to being cradled with care

A friend and I were reflecting on the passage from Jeremiah in which we hear, "Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel." (Jer 18:6) We spoke about the care with which the potter must carefully touch the clay as it spins on the wheel, otherwise it falls apart, and we thought together about what it means to place oneself in God's firm yet gentle care. But then my friend shared something I have never forgotten. She said that she had taken a pottery class once and that as a potter first works with a piece of clay, it has to be thrown onto the wheel, to soften it so that it will become pliable in the potter's hands. Ah...it does feel like that sometimes in our lives of faith, doesn't it? We



feel tossed about a bit, especially at first, until we learn to more readily rest in God's love. As we learn to trust, though, something changes. We more easily recognize the cradling care of our good and gracious God. We are transformed from being a non-responsive "blob" of clay to being a responsive work of art in the making.

**How do we grow in trust of God?** Learning to trust God takes an initial leap of faith, in which we recognize that God has always been with us, and always will be, through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

**Jesus teaches us to trust** in words and through his actions. He tells us to remember that if God cares for the birds and the flowers, surely God will care for us; and he reminds us to not be afraid; fear wears away trust quickly and deeply. At key moments in his life and ministry, we are told that Jesus spent significant time in prayer, discerning and committing to the Father's loving will, and he teaches us to do the same.

**The challenge:** Trusting in God sounds so easy, until we really have to do it. Then we, like many disciples and believers throughout the centuries, find this simple practice is not so simple. Worry, fear, or concern sets in, and no matter how much our hearts tell us to trust, our heads begin to list all the ways in which trusting doesn't make sense. We hear Jesus' words, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me." (Jn 14: 1) And we understand the importance of following Jesus' lead: rely on prayer; place our cares

before God; act in faith even when fear or a troubled spirit reappears. Trust!

**Let's get practical.** Some of the simplest daily details of our lives are changed for the better when we learn to trust. We will consider practical steps toward living and growing in trustful faith on the reverse of this sheet.

**Let's be spiritual.** What we have not really said yet is that developing this sense of trust comes from growing in a deep relationship with God. We cannot trust someone we do not know. Trusting to the point of placing one's life in the hands of another will be possible only to the extent that we have a relationship with that other person. Our

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relationship with God is like any relationship: it takes time, attention and the willingness to open our hearts and minds to the One who loves us beyond measure.



The Stewardship Project  
[www.CatholicLifeandFaith.com](http://www.CatholicLifeandFaith.com)

**"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. ...By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jn 13: 34a-35)**



# Practical Ways to Grow in Trust

## Learn from Jesus and Mary

In the Gospels we see evidence of Mary's and Jesus' essential willingness to trust in God's plan. From them we learn:

**Trust that God's ways are best:** Mary's response to the angel's announcement that she was to be the mother of the Messiah is a lesson in trust. When you wonder how you can serve, forgive, and give as God calls us to, learn from Mary's example.

**Trust in God's love, even when things are bleak:** Jesus' complete trust even as he walked the road to the cross teaches us the true depth of God's love and the extent to which we can trust when the circumstances of our lives are difficult, painful, or hurtful.

**Trust in God's ways with the practical, daily aspects of our lives:** This is where "the rubber meets the road" in living as a good steward. When we give more than we are accustomed to giving, of our time or money, our talents or attention, something in us feels that we will not have what we want or need because we have

given it to someone else. The answer to this is to trust God and prioritize our lives accordingly.

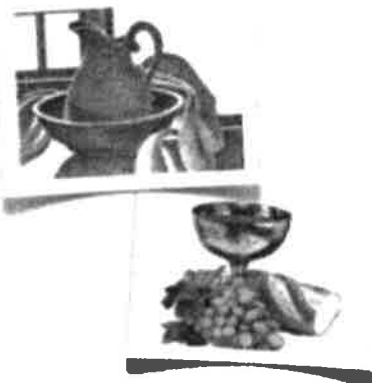
**Trust God with the fullness of life:** Learning to grow in trustfulness of God is a big-picture process as well as one that touches the little details of our lives. Place yourself in God's caring embrace each day; end the day by offering prayers of gratitude and petition, by asking for forgiveness, and relying on God's mercy. Doing so daily builds a foundation of trust in moments of sunlight and in times of darkness.

**Trust in the Holy Spirit's gentle and persistent promptings:** How can we know what or how much we need to serve, give, share, or care? When we feel something touch our heart that calls us beyond ourselves for the sake of another, we can be sure the Holy Spirit is calling. Trust in that gentle yet persistent call, and respond as generously as you are able. "The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor 9: 6-7)



# Trust

*Then Mary said,  
"Here am I, the  
servant of the Lord;  
let it be with me  
according to your  
word." (Lk 1:38)*



*After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord -- and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." (Jn 13:12-14)*

## In what ways do you trust God?

**It is best for us to look for evidence of ways we are living well in order to grow in the future.** How do you already trust God in your life? What areas of your life need attention in order to grow in this sense of trust in the coming year? Use this space to record your thoughts and your commitment for the future:



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*Celebrating Bob Hauser's 20  
years as Director of Music and  
Liturgy at St. Cecilia.*

**Sept. 13**

Following the 5 p.m. Mass  
On the South Lawn

Iowa Pork Producers will be grilling  
tenderloins. Beer and soda provided.

Bring a salad, veggie, or dessert to share.

**MUSIC FOOD FUN**

In order to provide enough food, reservations requested:  
[www.stcames.org](http://www.stcames.org) or 515-233-3092