

# Growing in FAITH™

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

February 2013

**St. Peter Damian Church**  
Rev. Walter Takuski, Pastor

## One Minute Meditations

### February's saint

The Year of Faith saint for February is St. Rose Philippine Duchesne.

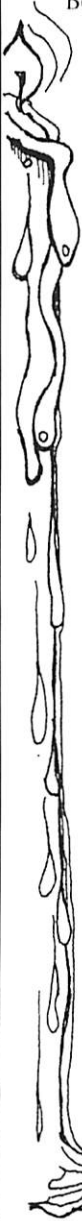
Born in Grenoble, France, she joined the Visitation nuns at age 19 but suffered when convents were closed during the French Revolution. At its end, she became a member of the Society of the Sacred Heart and came to the Louisiana Territory as a missionary in 1818. She opened the first free school for girls west of the Mississippi river, and the first Catholic school for Native Americans.

### Advice from Brother Lawrence

Have you ever wondered if your desires were in harmony with God's will? Brother Lawrence said to be sure they are, simply develop an attitude of faith, hope, and love. Then you won't want anything else. (*Practice of the Presence of God*, Brother Lawrence)

### The Cross

"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his Cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23).



## Lent leads us back to God

"For gracious and merciful is he, slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment" (Joel 2:12). Lent may be a penitential season, but it is also a wonderful reminder that no matter how we let sin interfere in our relationship with God, he always wants us back. Gracious and merciful is he.

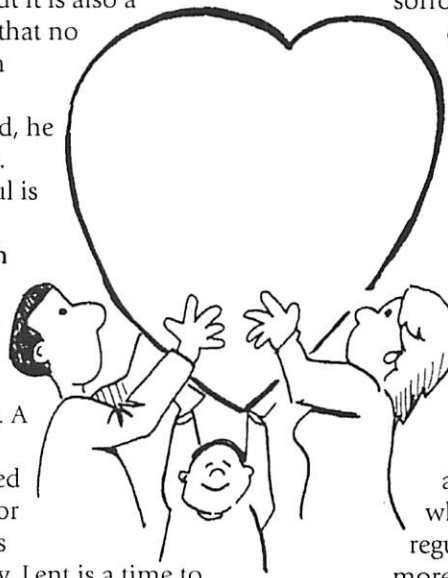
"Return to me with your whole heart." Throughout the year, sin creeps into our daily lives almost without our noticing. A bad habit such as becoming preoccupied with material goods or gossiping can keep us from loving God fully. Lent is a time to examine our lives and sweep aside whatever keeps us from giving God our whole heart.

"Rend your hearts, not your

garments." God doesn't just want outward acts of repentance because they can be performed without real sorrow. Our Father wants a change of heart. Start with Confession and then determine to practice virtues such as prudence, temperance, and fortitude.

"Gather the people, notify the congregation." Help spread God's love to his people. Make a point of

inviting someone to attend Mass with you who may not attend regularly or become more active in your parish to build it up. Lent is also the time to attend Mass more often than just once a week and join in the prayers of Christ's Church.



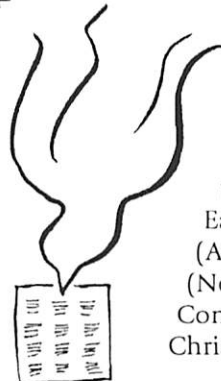
## Why Do Catholics Do That?

Holy days of obligation "complete the Sunday observance by participation in the principal liturgical feasts which honor the mysteries of the Lord, the Virgin Mary, and the saints." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2043)

Different countries can have

## What are Holy Days of Obligation?

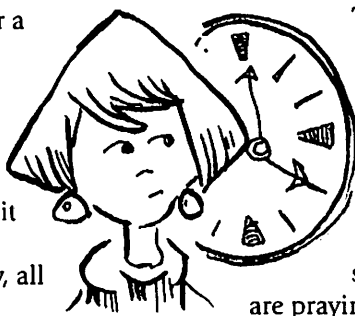
different holy days. In the United States we have six: the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (January 1), the Ascension (40 days after Easter), the Assumption (August 15), All Saints (November 1), the Immaculate Conception (December 8), and Christmas (December 25).



## The keys to holiness

To many of us, prayer means using a Bible or a Rosary and committing exclusive time to God. Yet St. Paul exhorts us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). How can we do that and still function during the day?

Do God's will. It can be tempting to reserve God only for prayer time or Mass time and go it alone the rest of the time. However, if we also determine to do God's will throughout the day, all that we do becomes a prayer and we "pray without ceasing."



Think Godly thoughts. God is always with us. We can speak directly to him whenever we want, especially when we need help or advice, or just want to talk. Of course, this continuous conversation should include praising and thanking him and saying, "I love you." But this means rejecting thoughts that won't lead to God - resentments, grudges, or sinful thoughts. Eventually we will find that we are praying without ceasing and our prayers will be fruitful beyond our imaginings.

### from Scripture

#### Luke 9:28-36, Transfiguration of the Lord

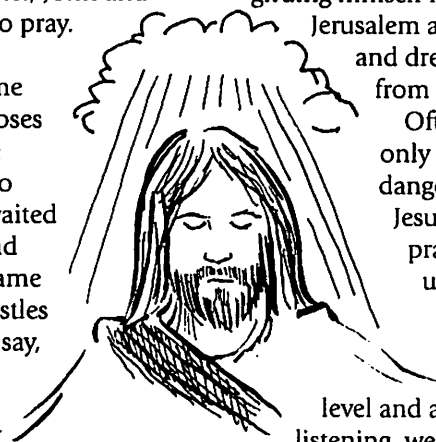
The Transfiguration of the Lord is one of the most spectacular events in Scripture. Jesus took Peter, John and James up a mountain to pray. While there, Jesus was transformed and became dazzling. Elijah and Moses appeared and the three discussed Jesus' travel to Jerusalem and what awaited him there: his death and resurrection. A cloud came over them and the Apostles heard a heavenly voice say, "This is my chosen Son, listen to him."

This Gospel shows that Jesus was a man of prayer. In fact,

one interpretation is that this was a glimpse into Jesus' prayer. He was girding himself for the final trip to Jerusalem and what awaited him and drew prayerful comfort from the great prophets.

Often we turn to prayer only in times of trouble or danger but, by example, Jesus showed us that prayer is something for us to learn and to do regularly. When we do so, our prayer reaches a higher

level and a greater meaning. By listening, we learn to hear God's voice in us.



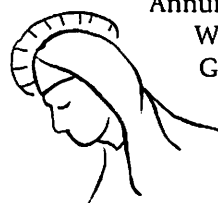
### Q & A How do we know Mary was conceived without sin?

This is called the Immaculate Conception. Contrary to what many think, it refers to the conception of Mary, not of Jesus (that's the Annunciation).

When the archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary at the Annunciation, he greeted her with, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28). "Full of grace" is the key to the Immaculate Conception.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they committed the first (Original) sin and their descendants (us) were all born with the stain of Original Sin. We also have personal sins we commit. We are not full of grace until we are baptized. Of course after baptism we still commit sin. At that point we need the Sacrament of Penance to get back to a state of grace.

For Gabriel to say Mary was full of grace means that she was without sin, even Original Sin. God granted Mary this gift since she was to be the mother of the Savior. She was a pure vessel for carrying Christ in her womb.



### Feasts & Celebrations

Lent begins this month, and it is devoted to the Passion of Our Lord. One form of observance is to pray before the Stations of the Cross in church and meditate on Jesus' walk to Calvary.

February 10 - St. Scholastica (543?). Twin sister to St. Benedict, St. Scholastica established a community of religious women about five miles south of her brother's monastery.

February 13 - Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday. The first day of Lent. Ashes from the burnt palms of the previous Passion Sunday are blessed and placed

on the forehead as a sign of penance. Lent is our chance to amend our ways and become "new" at Easter.

February 23 - St. Polycarp (156). Bishop of Smyrna, Asia-Minor, Polycarp was a disciple of the apostle St. John and a friend of St. Ignatius of Antioch. Before being martyred, he faithfully cared for his flock despite being surrounded by pagans and a government opposed to his religion.



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