

Growing in FAITH™

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

June 2011

St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church

Fr. John Hall

One Minute Meditations

Baptismal bargain

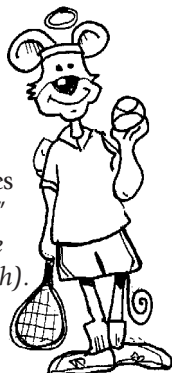
When we are baptized, God forms an unbreakable covenant with us promising his unconditional love. *"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:38-39). Our part of the bargain is to obey him and love him, and put him first in our lives. At Baptism, we are marked as God's for life. That can never change.

A perspective check

"Do not lose your inward peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset."
St. Francis de Sales.

Adoration

"The acknowledgment of God as God, Creator and Savior, the Lord and Master of everything that exists ... The first commandment of the law obliges us to adore God"
(*Catechism of the Catholic Church*).



What's the big deal about sin?

Dealing with sin is uncomfortable and following God's rules is hard. The world tells us that sin doesn't exist, so isn't it enough to just try to be good people? Frankly, just doing that makes us better than most.

God's rules rule. While we may think we are "good" and others may look up to us, eventually God will decide if we have been what he considers "good." Since his opinion is the one that matters, his rules rule.

Sin is real. The world tells us that sin doesn't exist but Catholics know that "sin is a deliberate thought, word, deed, or omission contrary to the eternal law of God." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*)

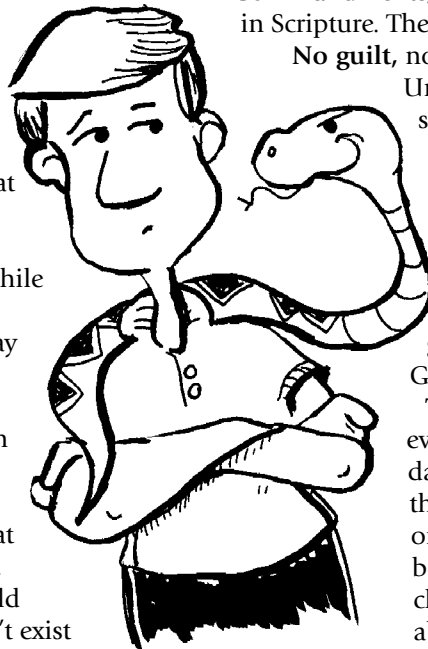
The law can be found in the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and in Scripture. The law says sin is real.

No guilt, no forgiveness.

Unconfessed sin separates us from God. *"For you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us up to our guilt"* (Isaiah 64:6). Avoiding guilt means missing God's forgiveness.

The plan. Each evening, examine the day's actions and ask if they would please God or not. Resolve to do better and take steps to change. Seek

absolution through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Then when you finally meet God he will say, *"Well done, my good and faithful servant"* (Matthew 25:23).



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do we celebrate the "Sabbath" on Sunday?

The first Christians were Jews who observed the traditional Sabbath Friday night and then celebrated the Eucharist in homes on Sunday in honor of the Resurrection (Acts 20:7). Eventually, they were excommunicated from Judaism and expelled

from the temple and synagogue.

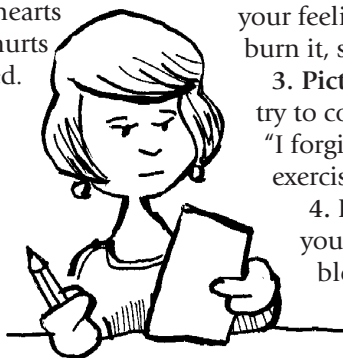
No longer permitted to practice the Hebrew faith, they moved the Sabbath to Sunday. Thus the first Christians transformed the Sabbath service into the Liturgy of the Eucharist or the Mass that eventually evolved into the Lord's Day we observe today.



A few minutes a day to greater happiness

Resentment or anger takes up space in our hearts that is meant for love and happiness. And it hurts us more than the ones for whom it is intended. One sure way to be happier right now, is to spend a few minutes offering forgiveness to anyone who has hurt you.

1. **Make a list** of those who have hurt you and whom you still resent.
2. **Acknowledge the hurt** you feel toward each person. Try writing a letter describing



your feelings. Don't send the letter but put it in a drawer, burn it, shred it, or lock it away.

3. **Picture the face** of each person and instead of anger, try to conjure feelings of understanding and warmth. Say, "I forgive you," as you picture him or her. Repeat this exercise every day until the feelings become genuine.
4. **Retrain your brain.** When you see or think of your former "enemies," ask God to rain down blessings on him or her. It's hard to hate someone you bless.

from Scripture

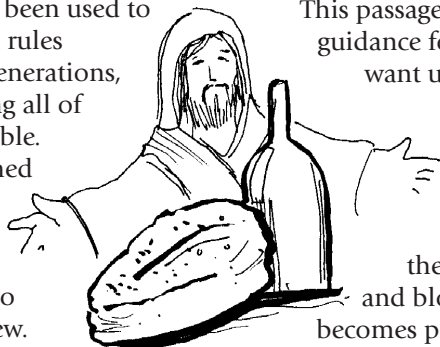
John 6:51-58, Christ as food for body and soul.

Jesus shocked his listeners with the instructions he gave in this passage. To people who had been used to living by prescribed rules handed down for generations, the idea of scrapping all of that was inconceivable. Their rules established clear, safe boundaries and compliance was all that was necessary to be seen as a good Jew.

But Jesus wanted more from them. He wanted them to stop honoring the letter of the law and to start living its spirit. In fact, he wanted

them to disregard the old ways and follow the new ones he described.

This passage is also meant as guidance for us. Jesus doesn't want us to just follow the formulas of our Catholic faith, he wants us to let it live in us and become part of us. By giving us the Eucharist – his body and blood – he lives in us and becomes part of us. In return, he demands active participation in our faith; he wants us to live his words, not just hear them. We must consume them and make them part of us.



Q & A Was Mary Magdalene a prostitute?

What did Mary Magdalene do to earn such an undeserved reputation? It has long been incorrectly thought that Mary



Magdalene was the adulteress threatened with stoning and forgiven by Jesus in John 8:1-11, but Scripture doesn't support that theory.

We do know that Jesus drove out seven demons from her (Mark 16:9).

What we also know about her is that she was one of a group of women who, of gratitude and generosity, helped to finance his ministry. "Accompanying him were the Twelve and some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who provided for them out of their resources" (Luke 8:1-3).

We know, too, that Mary Magdalene was loyal and courageous. Although the Apostles fled, Mary and some of the other women stayed with Jesus during his crucifixion. Perhaps that is why Jesus chose Mary to be among the first witnesses of the Resurrection.

Feasts & Celebrations

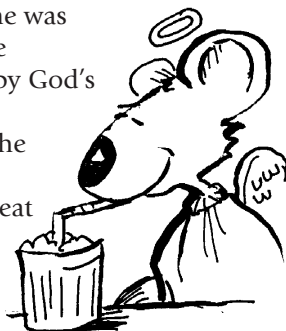
June 11 - St. Barnabas (1st Century). The Apostles changed his name from Joseph to Barnabas, meaning "son of encouragement," because he sold his property and gave the funds to the new Church.

June 21 - St. Aloysius Gonzaga (1591). St. Aloysius prayed and fasted from age 7. Upon joining the Society of Jesus, he was told to cut back and spend time with other students. He died nursing the sick.

June 24 - Nativity of St. John the Baptist (1st Century). The only saint whose birth and death we observe, St.

John was Jesus' cousin. He baptized and prepared the people for Jesus' ministry. He even baptized Jesus but was executed for denouncing Herod's immoral marriage.

June 29 - Saints Peter and Paul (1st century). Jesus chose Peter to lead the Church. The Gospels include some unflattering details about Peter, showing that he was ordinary, made extraordinary by God's grace. An early persecutor of the Church, Paul became the Great Apostle, also transformed by grace.



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