

# Our Lady's Basket

VOL. I

A publication of St. Joseph's Shelf



# Renew

YOUR  
RELATIONSHIP  
WITH GOD

MAGNANIMITY ♦ BEGINNING EVERY DAY WITH GOD  
CONFESSION ♦ DAILY SPIRITUAL READING ♦ AND MORE

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## Dear Reader,

**Renewal is a constant theme in the life of a faithful Catholic.**

St. Mark records that Jesus began His ministry with the command, “Repent, and believe in the Gospel” ([Mark 1:15](#)). Today, those words remain a constant call to us to examine ourselves and begin again.

We hope this little basket dedicated to Our Lady will help you renew yourself. You don’t need a grand conversion experience. Rather, for most of us, it’s a continual series of small, firm daily renewals that lead to a grand conversion.

Thank you for reading Our Lady’s Basket.

In Christ,

*Amber, Rose, and Vir Christi*

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# Our Lady's Basket

*Our Lady's Basket* is a publication of St. Joseph's Shelf, a website that provides practical Catholic reflections on ordinary life.

**Contributors:** Amber Kinloch, Rose Leigh, and Vir Christi



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Second edition

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# Magnanimity

## A CURE FOR THE TEPID, SHRINKING SOUL

BY AMBER KINLOCH



**December 31, 2019.**

That New Year's Eve found me kneeling in church before the exposed Blessed Sacrament feeling like a miserable failure. So many things were "off." My writing work was slow and unrewarding. Family life had been trying of late. Spiritually, I felt low and discouraged.

Oh sure, I'd keep going through it all. But I was in a "because I have to, not because I want to" state. That was dismal. I knew this wasn't pleasing to God and that I didn't want to live my life this way. But I just couldn't seem to summon the energy to make a joyful new beginning.

That's when God planted an idea in my soul: Why not pick a virtue to strive after in a special way in the coming year? Different ones sprang to mind, but the one that set my imagination blazing was magnanimity.

According to the dictionary,\* magnanimity is "loftiness of spirit enabling one to bear trouble calmly, to disdain meanness and pettiness, and to display a noble generosity." It is a virtue expressed in a largeness of heart where a person desires and attains great things, and sees others, likewise, as capable of great ideals.

Thinking about this, I wrote down a sort of "rule" to live by in 2020. Here it is:

*To always bear in mind my call to be a saint—a great saint—and never cease aspiring to that call, even when things seem most bad. To see others in this same light and to encourage them always to strive higher, lending them whatever assistance they need. To rise promptly after a fall, humbly asking God's forgiveness and bravely moving forward. To give generously, especially in the form of smiles and words of thanks and praise. To work hard and conscientiously, avoiding distractions, aware that the time is short. To live fully in the present, never worrying about the future. To be patient with others' defects, giving them the benefit of the doubt and forgiving always. To be cheerful when my plans are dashed to pieces, not worrying but leaving it all in God's Hands. To be temperate and courageous in offering up mortifications. To keep my heart pure and the door to it wide open, that all may find refuge there. To always hope and be open to joy, abandoning myself with complete confidence into God's Hands.*

That's lofty, I know. It seems I asked for *everything*. But timidity is no friend to magnanimity.

Now this doesn't mean I *achieved* it all. Far from it. I still struggle every day

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\*<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/magnanimity>



with squandering time on the Internet and other distractions. I can't say that I like mortifying myself, and I still have to work on controlling my tongue.

That said, striving after this virtue worked a definite and tremendous change in my soul. I can feel that my heart is larger, and when I start to "shriveled up," it bothers me more. I know in a far deeper way what great things I'm capable of, and I see that potential in others more easily. When discouragement threatens, I overcome it more quickly. Instead of focusing on avoiding sins, I incline towards focusing on the virtuous things I can do.

The best part? Magnanimity, despite sounding like such a lofty, distant thing, is most definitely a virtue for ordinary people. In elevating your state of mind, it helps you see the greatness and holiness of everyday life and what a joyful adventure it is.

If you are weak and discouraged, or if you feel like being holy—much less becoming a great saint—is an impossible cause, pray for a magnanimous spirit and commit to living it out in at least one area where you're struggling. Bit by bit, your heart will expand. That grudge you hold against someone will fade. Ideas will come to you for conquering habitual sins. Crosses will grow light.

The road to holiness will smooth, and you will rejoice. ✚



# Beginning Every Day with God

BY VIR CHRISTI

## “From the rising of the sun to its setting...

...let the name of the Lord be praised!” This is a well-known verse from Sacred Scripture (Psalm 113:3), but how often do we pause to think about what it really means?

God is present in our lives in every detail of our days, even while we are asleep; yet in today’s society it is easy to fall into a pattern of complacency in our prayer lives. Upon waking, we are prompted to power up our cell phones and indulge our FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) by seeing how everyone else is starting the day.

Do we ever really stop and think about beginning our day by dedicating it to the Lord? Do we resolve to offer up our victories, within which God is glorified? Our setbacks, where God seeks to teach us?

It can be difficult to develop a habit of morning devotions to the Lord. Here are some lessons that I have learned as I have tried to get into this habit. I will share both what has worked and what has not.

## **Stillness is Key**

We live in a noisy world that demands people be constantly doing *something*. We pride ourselves on our efficiency: maybe you have heard fathers talking to each other about how they washed the car, mowed the lawn, raked leaves, and did a whole slew of chores before coming to their leisure activities? Or maybe you have heard anxious college students rattling off to their friends all of the homework assignments and little tasks they have completed, to make their days sound meaningful and full of purpose?

Regardless, all of us at some point have been exposed to this mindset where the busier someone is, the more accomplished they appear to be. In the book [Leisure: The Basis of Culture](#), Josef Pieper talks about how work once supported the pursuit of leisure, but now leisure supports work. In such an environment, forming the habit of starting each day by dedicating it to God is a huge challenge.

It begins by fostering the habit of stillness. That does not mean that you have to mimic the silence of the monks and nuns—although if you can get to that point, great! What it means is that when you wake up in the morning, you are likely confronted with the temptation to do something straightaway. Maybe that’s powering up your phone to check it for messages and notifications, maybe that’s getting up and getting into the activities of the day right away, or maybe that’s rolling over and going back to sleep (lucky you if you happen to fall into *that* category). Resist that temptation momentarily when it comes to you. It leaves almost as quickly as it arrives, and once it leaves you, a surprising stillness will follow.

## **Keep it Short**

Everyone can think of a point in their lives where they expected a short prayer from a group leader, and a long meandering one came instead. If you have never had the experience of a Thanksgiving dinner where a mistake

was made in choosing who would lead the prayer prior to everyone eating...but that is a story for another time.

God desires our attention, but He is fully human as well as fully divine. He knows that first thing in the morning the gears in your brain are not oiled all the way. The fact that you are even turning in mind and heart to the Lord to open the day, before doing *anything* else, is pleasing to Him. God is always ready to pour out an enormous amount of grace on those who seek Him, so even spending a concentrated minute or two with Him to begin your day has great effects in your spiritual life!

Also, as a practical point, habits that are small time commitments can be built into larger time commitments. But if you start them out small, they become a habit more easily than if you try biting off more than you can chew. Particularly if you are a parent with small children, having more than three minutes to yourself in the course of a day either means a miracle transpired or they are plotting something. Jesus values concise, well-intentioned prayers just as much as He does the longer ones, I promise.

## **Be Patient with Yourself**

This last point is probably the most important. Whenever we try building up habits in the spiritual life, it is never all smooth sailing. Anyone who thinks otherwise is only kidding themselves. A relationship with Jesus does not require that you do everything correctly one hundred percent of the time in your personal prayer life, only that you desire to give Him your heart. You are going to make mistakes or struggle, and *He knows it*. He is not going to stop putting graces in your life, and He is not going to ignore you if you struggle.

No one becomes a saint overnight—not the apostles, not the martyrs, *none* of them reached sainthood in a single instant. Trust that Jesus is working with you in the middle of your trials, and that you are bearing far more fruit than you think you are. If you keep that mindset, then you will find the practice of dedicating each day to the Lord coming easier and easier the more you go on.

To fight is to win, my friends! Stay faithful, stay strong, and be blessed! ✚

# Looking for a Daily Read (or Listen)?

## 4 RESOURCES TO FOSTER YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE EVERY DAY

**Spiritual reading is a fruitful way to supplement your prayer life.**

At St. Joseph's Shelf, we like to recommend resources that are easily accessible for the layperson and offer practical advice for growing in holiness. Here are a few books (and one popular podcast that you've probably heard of!) that provide a daily dose of spiritual reading.

### 1 In Conversation with God

Do you ever wish there was a roadmap to show you how to pursue holiness in ordinary life? The *In Conversation with God* series might serve as one for you.

This series of seven books features rich, daily meditations based upon the Mass readings and the liturgical year. The meditations are short (5–7 pgs.) and permeated with practical tips along with quotes from the saints and other spiritual authors. No stone is left unturned as the author, Rev. Francis Fernández-Carvajal, touches upon every subject from prayer to work, relationships, leisure, and more.

The great strength of this series is the impression it leaves upon you that while holiness isn't easy to attain, it is well within your grasp. Additionally, the author lends his reader much help regarding spiritual basics. He offers friendly instruction regarding how to read the Bible, make a better Confession, or attend Mass more fruitfully.

The books are touch dated in some respects (e.g., there is no mention of the Internet, cell phones, or social media), yet their overall content is timeless. If you hesitate to buy the entire set of seven books at once, try picking up just one. Even that is a treasure trove that might sustain you for years.

The books are available from [Scepter Publishers](#). For more information, try reading [reviews of the series](#) on Amazon.com. Many people have left thoughtful reviews there detailing why they enjoy these books.

## 2 The Bible in a Year (with Fr. Mike Schmitz)

Do you have trouble reading the Bible? Fr. Mike Schmitz's popular podcast, which debuted in 2021 from Ascension Press, allows you to listen to the *whole* Catholic Bible in 365 days.

In each 20–25-minute episode, Fr. Schmitz reads the day's Bible passages, offers a reflection, and ends with a prayer. The podcast follows biblical scholar Jeff Cavins' "The Great Adventure Bible Timeline," a plan for reading the Bible that includes 2–3 readings from different books each day. Jeff Cavins also appears on several episodes of this podcast to discuss context about different biblical periods.

If you've been waiting for an invitation to explore Scripture, this is it. As Catholics, we hear portions of the Bible at Mass, but reading the whole Bible can give you a better picture of salvation history in its entirety. Listening to a short podcast episode every day is a manageable way to approach that goal.

However, this podcast is just a starting point in studying Scripture. For example, it doesn't have time to dive deeply into many of the difficult passages in the Bible. For a fuller understanding of the Bible, this podcast should ideally be supplemented with other resources, such as Scott Hahn's [\*A Father Who Keeps His Promises: God's Covenant Love in Scripture\*](#).

Learn more at [ascensionpress.com/bibleinayear](https://ascensionpress.com/bibleinayear), or look for episodes in your favorite podcast platform.

## 3 Magnificat

Are you trying to get in the habit of prayer and spiritual reading every day? *Magnificat* is a subscription-based publication that helps Catholics grow in the spiritual life and enter more prayerfully into the liturgy.

Each monthly volume is available as a printed book, in digital form, and as an app. For each day of the month, you will find the Mass readings, morning and evening prayers, and meditations by various authors. Each volume also includes other prayers, essays, and more.

This is a great resource if you are looking for a daily Mass companion but want more than the Mass readings. In addition, if you want to do more spiritual reading, the daily meditations in *Magnificat* are a great place to start. Each day features a short meditation by a saint or other spiritual writer, and there are also other reflections sprinkled throughout the volume.

I would especially recommend *Magnificat* to an adult who wants to go

deeper in the spiritual life but doesn't know where to start. You'll be introduced to a variety of spiritual writers, traditional prayers and hymns, and even commentary on religious art. New converts might find *Magnificat* a particularly good introduction to Catholic prayer and theology.

Subscription packages are reasonably priced, given the amount of resources that are included in each monthly volume. However, the amount of reflections and prayers might be more than some people have time for, or want to, pray daily. You can request a sample copy on the *Magnificat* website to see if this might be a useful resource for your prayer life.

Find more information at [us.magnificat.net](https://us.magnificat.net).

## 4 My Daily Bread

Do you not have much time to spend on spiritual reading? Do you struggle to enter into an intimate conversation with God? Does holiness seem like a complicated, nigh unattainable objective? This is a book you should check out!

*My Daily Bread* by Rev. Anthony J. Paone, S.J., is a collection of reflections designed to guide you right through the whole course of the spiritual life. These brief (2–3 pgs.) meditations are divided into three sections. In the first, the author, speaking in the character of Christ, addresses us on a particular subject. In the second section, we reflect on what Christ has said, and in the third part we pray and make resolutions to improve.

This book draws you in with its intimate tone and its deep spiritual insights conveyed in refreshingly simple language. Just one or two paragraphs from a reflection is enough to nourish your soul for the day.

The price of this book is low, and the small volume is perfect for reading while "on the go." Those just starting out in the spiritual life as well as more advanced souls might all benefit from this work. When you finish reading this book, try rereading it. You're sure to gain fresh insights. There's also a detailed table of contents in the back, so you can easily locate a topic of particular interest to you.

*My Daily Bread* is available from [TAN Books](#). Readers on Amazon.com have also left [many reviews](#) describing this book and how it has nurtured their spiritual life. ✚

# FREQUENT CONFESSION

## A SPRINGBOARD INTO THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

BY AMBER KINLOCH

January 2015 was a turning point in my spiritual life. At 18, after being spiritually lax for several years, I decided it was time to get back on track.

I was reluctant to commit to a daily devotion like the Rosary, so I “settled” for a Friday Holy Hour followed by Confession. I owe my mom credit for this idea. She took my brothers and me to weekly Confession when we were kids. She’d heard that Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II went to Confession weekly and thought, “If these saints did it, why not us?”



Also, as my mom’s observed, it’s easier when you only have to remember what’s gone on in your soul in the past week.

Even so, I found it strange and awkward recultivating this habit. I didn’t feel a need for Confession that often, and I just kept bringing the same sins. I couldn’t help wondering a bit, too, what the priest and other people might think. Still, I kept at it.

Over seven years later, weekly Confession (assuming I can get there) is a top priority for me. As the time for it draws near, I tend to become conscious of a grittiness in my soul. I long for the chance to be purified and to make a new beginning.

I am convinced that frequent Confession (at least monthly), devoutly practiced, is a sure means for growing in holiness. It isn’t always easy to stick with (nothing worthwhile is), but it is “simple” in that it just comes down to a matter of meeting Jesus in the confessional regularly. Through these meetings, I’ve learned so many lessons. I hope they’ll encourage you to make greater use of this sacrament.

## PREPARING FOR CONFESSION

An initial step in preparing for Confession is to make a short (~5-10 min) daily examination of conscience at night or first thing in the morning. This will make you aware of which sin(s) you’re most prone to committing and help you make a better Confession.

Some helpful resources for examining yourself include examinations of conscience based on the Ten Commandments or the Seven Deadly Sins.\* I also like the Litany of Humility<sup>†</sup> and the Litany of Trust<sup>‡</sup>. Remember, examining yourself isn’t about nitpicking your soul to pieces. It’s about studying yourself in the mirror of truth, honestly looking to see what holds you back from wholly loving and serving God.

Try to figure out the motives behind your sins (e.g., boredom, a fear of what people will think, a desire for praise or comfort) and combat those. Make definite, concrete resolutions to improve, *and* review whether you’re making an effort to keep them.

Take time, too, to note the good progress you’ve made. Maybe you don’t see much of a change in the past week, but how about the past month or the

\* <https://mycatholic.life/catholic-prayers/examination-of-conscience/>

† <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/devotions/litany-of-humility-245>

‡ <https://sistersoflife.org/litany-of-trust/>



past six months? Embrace these successes, especially when you're feeling discouraged, and thank God for them.

At the same time, resist the temptation to think you're "good enough." *Never* settle, and never put off Confession just because everything seems fine and dandy. There is always a battle to be fought, and it can't be won without God's help.

When discerning which sins to confess, try to keep your list *short* (3–4 things if you've only committed venial sins; all mortal sins must be confessed [see [Catechism of the Catholic Church 1456](#)]), *focused* (no long-winded explanations or excuses), and *accurate* ("I wasted time on \_\_\_\_" vs. "I wasted time"). If the priest requires clarification, he'll ask.

## INSIDE THE CONFESSIONAL

Is something bothering you? Ask the priest! I've received so many great tidbits of advice this way. One example: Regarding a scruple, a priest told me, "Go with your gut instinct." Those few words were filled with an ocean of grace. In an instant, my confidence was restored, and the majority of my problem was resolved.

Feeling ashamed about something? Don't let that stop you. There are times I've felt like I'll die of embarrassment if I confess something. But the sense of peace and relief afterwards is indescribable. *If something mortifies you, confess it anyway.* Forget about what the priest might think of you and focus on Jesus. Also, try writing down what you plan to say on a sheet of paper. Then there's no fear of forgetting something, no grasping for words and freezing up. You just say whatever's written down.

Stuck in a spiritual rut? Tell the priest. I've found that simply admitting the problem aloud is akin to winning half the battle.

A caution: Do filter what a priest says. Remember that he is God's minister *and* a flawed human being; he is not God Himself, and his advice can be off the mark, even when it's well intended. Similarly,



sometimes I've found that a particular priest just isn't up to answering a question of mine. In that case, I've turned to other priests until I've received an answer. Also, if you have a regular confessor, it can be helpful to go to another priest occasionally for a fresh perspective.

Take care not to get attached to a priest. Yes, we all tend to have our favorites. Some of us like the priest who is quiet and listens. Others prefer a priest who asks questions and offers advice without our asking. But Confession isn't about the priest. He is only Jesus' representative. It is Jesus Himself who forgives us, and He makes use of grumpy and indifferent priests, as well as ones that radiate holiness.

On screen vs. face-to-face Confession: Personally, I like the screen. It makes it easier for me to "forget" about the priest and to recall Jesus' Presence. But that's just my personal preference.

## MOVING FORWARD

Have you forgotten to confess\* a sin? Don't be alarmed. If it was a venial sin, it has been absolved. Furthermore, you were not required to mention it in the first place. We are obliged to confess only our mortal sins. If it was a mortal sin, it also has been absolved, provided you *implicitly* intended to confess it had you remembered it. That said, should you recall a mortal sin, you should mention it in your next Confession as a sign that you are truly contrite.

Don't rely on your emotions as a guide for how "effective" a particular Confession was. Sometimes I walk out bursting with joy. Other times, I feel rushed, distracted, and not at all different inside. As always, it's a matter of trusting that as long as we do our part, God will do His.

Lastly, keep Jesus at the center of Confession. Don't ever get caught up in your sins so as to forget about Him. Bear in mind all the graces He's showered upon you, what He's expected of you, and the indifference you've shown in return. Recall His unfathomable mercy. Think of how each Confession is a unique, unrepeatable meeting with Him, and how this particular Confession could be your last one.

Ask Him for the grace to love this sacrament and never take it for granted. He will not deny it to you. ✚

\* <https://www.catholic.com/qa/what-if-i-forgot-to-confess-a-sin-and-remembered-it-later-was-it-absolved>

# An Examination of Conscience

BASED ON THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS



There are many examinations of conscience available online, in books, and in the little pamphlets in the church vestibule or at your local Catholic bookstore. Sometimes these examinations of conscience highlight the big sins (murder, theft, etc.) but not the little venial sins that are more common for the average person to commit.

Here is an examination based on the seven deadly sins. The goal of this examination is to examine in greater detail the small, everyday ways in which we might habitually commit a certain sin.

After confessing our sins, we pledge to turn from our former ways and to avoid near occasions of sin. The right hand column provides some questions to help you think about concrete ways to do so.



How have I fallen into this sin?

How can I avoid this sin and grow in virtue?

ENVY



Have I wished for someone else's failure or tried to destroy their goodness or excellence?

Have I spoken poorly of others and their talents or success?

Have I failed to offer others sincere praise when they do well?

Have I bullied or persecuted people I see as my rivals?

How can I be grateful for the gifts God has given me? The gifts God has given others?

How can I place my trust in God that He will give me what I need?

What are concrete ways in which I can practice love toward my neighbors and see Christ in them, especially those I am tempted to envy?

Click the ♦ symbol to read a longer reflection on each sin, or find our full series of articles on the seven deadly sins at: [stjosephshelf.com/deadly-sins/](http://stjosephshelf.com/deadly-sins/)

How have I fallen into this sin?	How can I avoid this sin and grow in virtue?
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PRIDE <span style="float: right;">✦</span>	
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Am I overbearing and arrogant, insisting on my own way?	How can I make an effort to be more considerate of others' needs and wishes? (e.g., saying thank you more often, random acts of kindness or sacrifice)
Do I have a habit of making everything about me (in conversations, in my thoughts, etc.)? Do I have a habit of complaining?	Which people in my life might benefit from receiving a little praise and encouragement today?
Do I boast about my accomplishments and qualities?	How can I accept criticism more patiently?
Do I minimize my failings?	Do I maintain a sense of humor about life's ups and downs to avoid taking myself too seriously?
Do I have a habit of criticizing others and not recognizing any of their good qualities?	Do I listen more than I talk?
Do I place too much importance on my social standing? Have I committed further sins in pursuit of honors or awards?	Do I avoid taking offense? Do I readily forgive those who hurt me?
Have I neglected to do the right thing because I'm afraid of others' opinions of me?	Do I keep my emotions (especially negative ones like anger, impatience, etc.) in check, instead of letting them rule me?
Am I unnecessarily curious about things that aren't my business?	What are concrete ways I can practice humility?*

WRATH <span style="float: right;">✦</span>	
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Have I let my annoyance or anger at not getting my own way lead me to act uncharitably?	How can I form a habit of giving others the benefit of the doubt?
Am I holding a grudge or feeding angry thoughts?	In which areas of my life do I need to practice patience (e.g., while driving, with a certain person)?
Do I speak uncharitably of people who I am angry with?	Do I keep an open mind to others' ideas and input, instead of shutting them down?
Have I sought to 'punish' those I am angry with?	How can I let go of bitterness and forgive people who have wronged me?

\*Turn to page 21 for the Litany of Humility for specific ideas in cultivating this virtue.

How have I fallen into this sin?	How can I avoid this sin and grow in virtue?
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GLUTTONY <span style="float: right;">✦</span>	
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Am I overindulgent in food and drink? Too picky?	Can I replace my habits of bingeing, snacking, or overindulgence with healthier or simpler foods?
Do I eat too soon or too quickly?	Can I set times for my meals to avoid grazing and eating too soon?
Do I partake of alcohol or drugs in an unlawful or unhealthy way?	How can I take care to enjoy food with a proper sense of gratitude? Could I eat more slowly, taking time to savor it? Could I enjoy meals more for the company of others rather than the food?
Do I take excessive pleasure in eating or drinking?	How can I moderate my drinking? Do I have a set limit for the number of drinks I consume? Am I accountable to someone?
Do I have a healthy appreciation for food and drink, or do I simply gulp it down?	If I'm struggling with an addiction, how can I seek help for it?
Do I enjoy the company of others at the table? Or is my attention riveted on the food?	

LUST <span style="float: right;">✦</span>	
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Have I dwelled on impure thoughts? Have I failed to flee from near occasions of sin such as vulgar music or TV shows, or crude conversation?	In what ways can I practice charity to my neighbor, who is a human being with dignity and who is made in the image and likeness of God?
Have I committed sexual sins (fornication, pornography, masturbation, inappropriate touching and kissing, etc.)?	How can I protect and promote the sanctity of marriage and the dignity of life?
Have I participated in or promoted sins against the dignity of life and marriage (abortion, contraception, IVF, adultery, divorce and remarriage, etc.)?	What elements of my environment or which friends keep leading me toward sin? How can I change this situation?
	What is a prayer I can say when tempted to sexual sin?

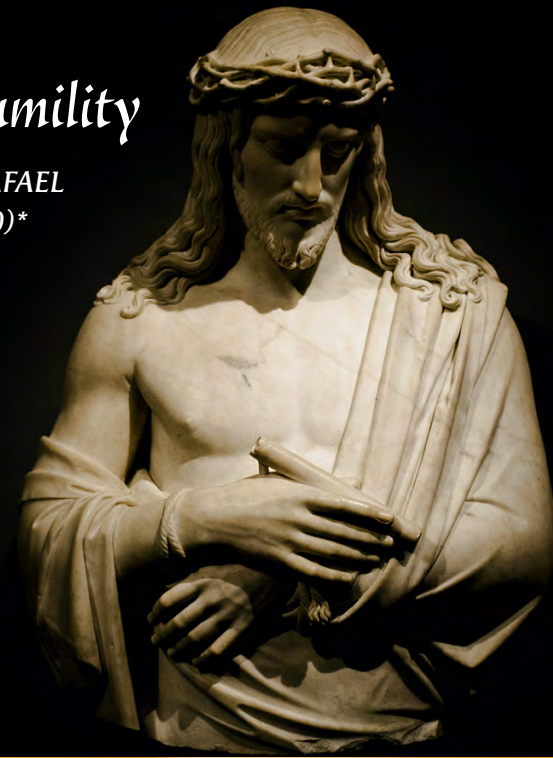
How have I fallen into this sin?	How can I avoid this sin and grow in virtue?
<b>GREED</b> ◆	
<p>Do I spend beyond my means?</p> <p>Do I hoard or buy too many unnecessary things?</p> <p>Have I invented imaginary needs for myself?</p> <p>Am I neglecting my neighbor's needs out of self-interest or stinginess?</p> <p>Are there earthly goods keeping me from following God's call?</p>	<p>Who would benefit from a gift of more of my time, treasure, or talent?</p> <p>Is there something I could sacrifice so that I could afford to give a little more?</p> <p>What tempts me to want more than I really need (e.g., a love of comfort, a desire for security, concern about my social status)?</p> <p>How can I cultivate a habit of gratitude for what I have?</p>
<b>SLOTH</b> ◆	
<p>Do I neglect to prioritize my prayer time, work, relationships, personal responsibilities, and leisure in the correct order?</p> <p>Do I occupy my time with unnecessary work?</p> <p>Do I spend too much time on idle entertainment, games, social media, etc.?</p> <p>Do I have a reluctant attitude toward my responsibilities or complain about having to do them?</p> <p>Am I sluggish and inattentive when I pray? Do I take an active concern in the eternal salvation of myself and others or am I indifferent?</p> <p>Do I frequent the sacraments regularly with proper attention and devotion?</p>	<p>What concrete steps can I take to make prayer and other important duties a priority in my daily routine?</p> <p>Which duties have I been neglecting? How can I make amends or avoid sloth in the future?</p> <p>Do I have a daily schedule or "To Do" list in place? Would using a timer help me?</p> <p>How can I cultivate the virtues of diligence, zeal, and magnanimity?</p> <p>What practical steps can I take to strengthen my prayer life? Should I pray more? Take more care with my posture? Establish specific times for daily prayer? ✚</p>

# The Litany of Humility

WRITTEN BY CARDINAL RAFAEL MERRY DE VAL (1865–1930)\*

**To grow in humility,** try meditating on even just a few lines in this litany every day. Do I rely on the opinions of others and my own preferences and desires? How can I decrease my focus on myself and make room for Christ in my heart?

—ROSE LEIGH



O Jesus, meek and humble of heart,  
**Hear me.**  
 From the desire of being esteemed,  
**Deliver me, O Jesus.**  
 From the desire of being loved,  
**Deliver me, O Jesus.**  
 From the desire of being extolled,  
**Deliver me, O Jesus.**  
 From the desire of being honored,  
**Deliver me, O Jesus.**  
 From the desire of being praised,  
**Deliver me, O Jesus.**  
 From the desire of being preferred to others,  
**Deliver me, O Jesus.**

\* <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/devotions/litany-of-humility-245>

From the desire of being consulted,

**Deliver me, O Jesus.**

From the desire of being approved,

**Deliver me, O Jesus.**

From the fear of being humiliated,

**Deliver me, O Jesus.**

From the fear of being despised,

**Deliver me, O Jesus.**

From the fear of suffering rebukes,

**Deliver me, O Jesus.**

From the fear of being calumniated,

**Deliver me, O Jesus.**

From the fear of being forgotten,

**Deliver me, O Jesus.**

From the fear of being ridiculed,

**Deliver me, O Jesus.**

From the fear of being wronged,

**Deliver me, O Jesus.**

From the fear of being suspected,

**Deliver me, O Jesus.**

That others may be loved more than I,

**Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.**

That others may be esteemed more than I,

**Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.**

That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease,

**Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.**

That others may be chosen and I set aside,

**Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.**

That others may be praised and I go unnoticed,

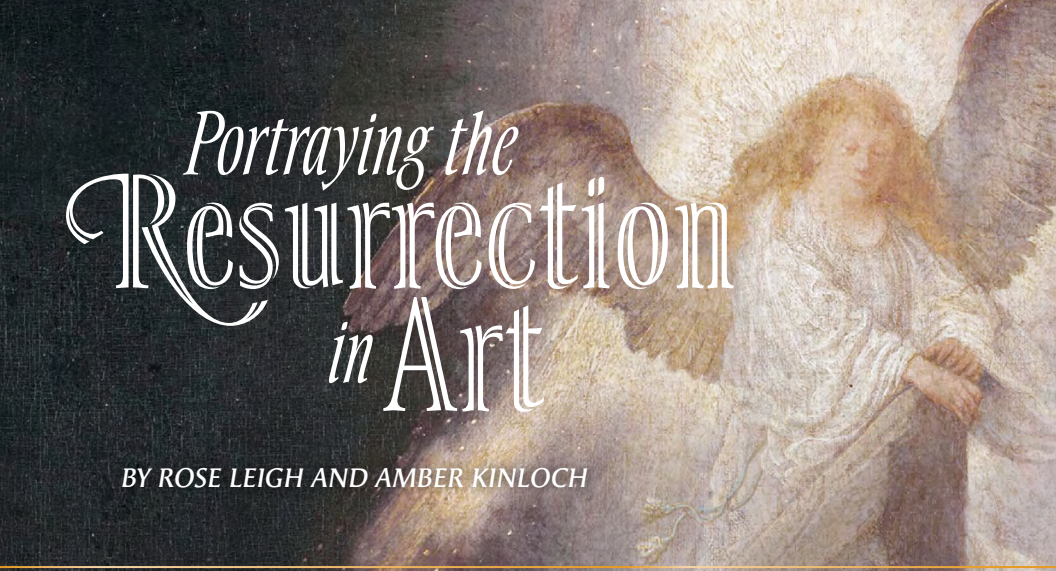
**Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.**

That others may be preferred to me in everything,

**Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.**

That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as  
holy as I should,

**Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it. +**



# Portraying the Resurrection in Art

BY ROSE LEIGH AND AMBER KINLOCH

**Why do Catholics produce so much sacred art? We are very fond** of decorating our churches, prayer books, and homes with art portraying holy people. We honor saints in stained glass windows and prize the medieval illuminated manuscripts made by monks. We light candles in front of statues of saints and create paintings of every major biblical scene.

There are many purposes for sacred art. First, it can be a useful aid in teaching the Faith and helping us to remember it. We can learn from pictures before we know how to read, and symbolism helps us remember details about saints and Bible stories more easily (such as St. Joseph holding a lily for chastity).

Sacred art can also touch our emotions and our imaginations in a unique way. It helps us imagine what it must have been like to witness a famous moment in the life of a saint or to listen to Jesus preach. It helps us remember that the saints were real people, and the events in the Gospels really happened. And it turns our minds to God and ultimately to prayer.

As we publish this volume of *Our Lady's Basket*, we're in the season of Easter. The Resurrection is a common subject in sacred art, and there are many paintings of Christ standing in front of an empty tomb. In the following pages, we'll look at four works of art that depict other moments from the events surrounding the Resurrection. We invite you to reflect on and pray with these images, considering what each is conveying about this central reality of our Faith.



## *The Resurrection*

BY REMBRANDT VAN RIJN

**Matthew 28:2–4:** *And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow. The guards were shaken with fear of him and became like dead men.*

There's always something unconventional in Rembrandt's paintings. While another artist might represent the joy of the Resurrection with sunlight, Rembrandt has painted a very dark scene of the world just before dawn on Easter morning. The Light of the World has been killed, and the Roman soldiers have been left to guard His tomb. The world indeed seems dark and hopeless to Christ's followers, who don't know what to make of this apparent tragedy. Is God going to do anything?

In this moment, lightning crackles, and the radiance of heaven shines behind the angel as he pulls away the stone covering Christ's tomb. The soldiers are thrown back, falling haphazardly into the darkness even as one brandishes a shield and another tries to draw his sword.

What of Christ? Here we notice another unusual element of this painting. Many paintings of the Resurrection depict Jesus after He has risen. But here, Jesus still rests in the tomb, partly shrouded in burial cloths.

On Earth, we can see glimpses of God working in our lives. Sometimes it's dramatic; other times, we can only see the darkness. Sometimes a miracle happens, but we don't see it, or it's not fully visible yet. We may have to wait a long time—perhaps our whole lives—for it to make sense.

In the meantime, do we keep trusting in God? Are we willing to have patience for the good He promises to bring out of our pain? Do we keep going through the darkness?



## *The Holy Women at the Tomb*

BY WILLIAM-ADOLPHE BOUGUEREAU

**Luke 24:1–7:** *But at daybreak on the first day of the week they [the women] took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb; but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were puzzling over this, behold, two men in dazzling garments appeared to them. They were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground. They said to them, “Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners and be crucified, and rise on the third day.”*

It was impossible to anoint Jesus’ body on Good Friday because of the sabbath. So some of the female disciples return on Sunday with spices to perform this last service for Christ. In Bouguereau’s painting, they are all dressed in somber clothes, thinking they are only here to mourn. But instead, they find an empty tomb.

Angels remind the women that Jesus foretold His Passion and Resurrection; have His followers forgotten? Do they not have faith that He was telling the truth? During His ministry, Jesus even raised others from the dead—Jairus’ daughter, the widow of Nain’s son, and Lazarus. Did His followers not expect the One with power over sin and death would Himself rise?

The prefigurement of the Resurrection seems obvious to us in hindsight. But this wasn’t how the Israelites expected the messianic mission to be fulfilled. Many Jews hoped for a military leader who would save them from suffering under the Roman Empire’s rule. When Jesus was arrested, humiliated, scourged, and finally crucified, it was the ultimate blow. Jesus would not be setting up an earthly kingdom. How could He possibly be the Messiah?

But God tends to fulfill His promises in ways that we don’t expect—ways that are better than we could have anticipated. Earthly kingdoms rise and fall, but Christ opened the gates of heaven for us, and His kingdom will never end. We wouldn’t trade that for any worldly consolation. Which of our own seemingly unanswered prayers do we need to surrender to God?



## The Disciples Peter and John Running to the Tomb on the Morning of the Resurrection

BY EUGÈNE BURNAND

**John 20:3–5:** So Peter and the other disciple [whom Jesus loved] went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in.

This painting by Eugène Burnand captures St. Peter and the beloved disciple (often assumed to be St. John the Evangelist) as they run through the dawning countryside to the tomb.

Peter looks wild-eyed, anxious to see the tomb but perhaps uneasy as well. After all, a few days ago, the apostles abandoned Jesus, and Peter personally denied that he even knew Him. They believed Jesus was the Messiah and were ready to follow Him—and now, all of their expectations and plans have collapsed into a seemingly unredeemable mess. But John clasps his hands fervently in prayer, still trusting that God will bring forth some good from the tragic events of Good Friday.

The apostles were imperfect people, just like we are. When we have fallen into sin or when life becomes difficult, how do we react? Do we only look at our faults and the obstacles before us with despair? Or do we trust that God will forgive us? Do we ask for grace and the virtue of hope? ✚



## The Magdalene Runs to the Cenacle to Tell the Apostles that the Body of Jesus is No Longer in the Tomb

BY JAMES TISSOT

**Mark 16:9–11:** When he had risen, early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. She went and told his companions who were mourning and weeping. When they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

Mary Magdalene was once brought from death to new life when Jesus drove out the demons that possessed her. On Easter morning, she is the first to see the resurrected Christ and rushes to tell His followers the joyous news.

But in James Tissot's painting, she finds a disheartening scene. Jesus' followers have gathered together to mourn and despair that the one they believed to be the Messiah has been killed. They sit on the floor, paralyzed by fear and grief. "Why are you making up wild stories, Mary?" they might have said. "Weren't you there when Jesus was crucified?"

It's just as difficult sometimes to spread the Gospel to a friend who may not want to hear it, or to change our own ways when we're attached to a particular sin. It often seems easier to remain in our old ways, instead of taking a chance with the truth and letting it reawaken us to spiritual life in Christ. Will we allow the Lord to revive us, like He did Mary Magdalene, and in turn bring that joy to others who need awakening?

James Tissot (French, 1836-1902). The Magdalene Runs to the Cenacle to Tell the Apostles that the Body of Jesus is No Longer in the Tomb (Magdalène court au cenacle et avertit les apôtres que le corps de Jésus n'est plus dans le tombeau), 1886-1894. Opaque watercolor over graphite on gray wove paper, image: 7 1/4 x 11 5/16 in. (18.4 x 28.7 cm). Brooklyn Museum, Purchased by public subscription, 00.159.331 (Photo: Brooklyn Museum, 00.159.331\_152.jpg)

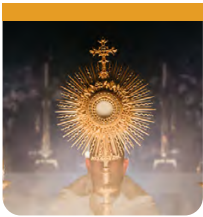


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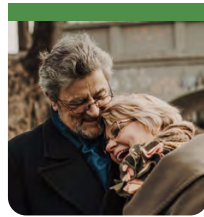
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