

a Daily Catholic **moment**

TEN MINUTES A DAY ALONE WITH GOD

COMPILED BY PETER CELANO

WITH DAILY INSPIRATIONS FROM THE SAINTS:

Athanasius, Catherine of Siena, Francis of Assisi,
John Chrysostom, John of the Cross, John Henry Cardinal Newman,
Teresa of Avila, and Thérèse of Lisieux,

**AS WELL AS GREAT WRITERS, POETS, AND THEOLOGIANS
PAST AND PRESENT:**

Br. Benet Tvedten osb, Enzo Bianchi, G. K. Chesterton, Dorothy
Day, Thomas Groome, Fr. Albert Haase of m, Sr. Bridget Haase osu,
Thomas Merton ocso, Henri J. M. Nouwen, Thomas J. Scirghi sj,
Bonnie Thurston, Br. Paul Quenon ocso, Timothy Verdon,
and the Desert Fathers and Mothers.



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“Since we have made up our minds to devote this
brief period of time to Him . . .
let us give it to Him freely with our minds
unoccupied by other things.
We should make up our minds not to take
back the time we have committed
to Him, no matter what kinds of trials
or annoyances we suffer.
Let me realize that this time is being lent to me,
and it is not my own.
I can rightly be called to account for this
time if I am not prepared to devote it
entirely to God.”

—St. Teresa of Avila

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January _____

== JANUARY 1 ==

Today is the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God

“Oh, beloved Mother, with what gratitude do I sing of the mercies of the Lord! Wasn’t I, according to these words of Wisdom, ‘taken away, lest wickedness should alter my understanding, or deceit beguile my soul’ [cf. Wis. 4:11]? The Blessed Virgin also was watching over [me] her little flower, and not wanting her to be faded by contact with the things of the earth, she withdrew her onto her mountain before she had fully opened.” —St. Thérèse of Lisieux

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed are thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

*Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

== JANUARY 2 ==

But above all bless your Maker,
who fills you with his good gifts.
—Sirach 32:13 (nrsv)

“Humble and continuous prayer, founded on knowledge of oneself and of God, is the best way for any creature to receive a taste of the truth. Following the footprints of Christ crucified, and through humble and unceasing prayer, the soul is united with God.” —St. Catherine of Siena

Bring me close to You today, Lord, my Creator, my Savior.

== JANUARY 3 ==

*Little children, let us love, not in word or speech,
but in truth and action.*

—1 John 3:18 (nrsv)



“[St. Francis of Assisi] was a Lover. He was a lover of God and he was really and truly a lover of men; possibly a much rarer mystical vocation. A lover of men is very nearly the opposite of a philanthropist; indeed the pedantry of the Greek word carries something like a satire on itself. A philanthropist may be said to love anthropoids. But as St. Francis did not love humanity but men, so he did not love Christianity but Christ.”

—G. K. Chesterton

**Show me who to love today, Lord. Remind me
to see You in the faces of people I meet.**

== JANUARY 4 ==

*If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels,
but do not have love, I am a noisy gong
or a clanging cymbal.*

—1 Corinthians 13:1 (nrsv)



“Can you see what point [St. Paul] is making when he begins by exalting the gift, and then to what extent afterward he lowers and casts it down? For he doesn’t simply say, ‘I am nothing,’ but instead he says, ‘I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal,’

a senseless and inanimate thing. What does he mean by a clanging cymbal? He emits a sound, but at random and in vain, and for no good purpose. Beautiful speech that profits nothing also counts you as one giving impertinent trouble, an annoying and even wearisome kind of person. Do you see how a person who is void of love is similar to things that are inanimate and senseless?” —St. John Chrysostom

Show me how to love with Your love, today, Lord.

== JANUARY 5 ==

[Jesus said,] “[I]f you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”

—Matthew 17:20b–21 (nrsv)

“You should believe everything you hear about Antony. He performed extraordinary works, and you have until now only heard about the least remarkable ones. For even I do not know everything about him, and I will not be able to tell you accurately everything about his exceptional character.” —St. Athanasius

God, make my life a blessing to people today.

== JANUARY 6 ==

[Jesus said,] “[W]henever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.”

—Matthew 6:6a (nrsv)



During a time of intense persecution of Christians, “St. Paul the First Hermit fled to the mountainous regions of the desert . . . making a virtue of necessity. He came at last to a rocky mountain, at the foot of which was a small cave. Removing the stone that blocked the cave’s entrance, he began to explore more eagerly. Inside, he found a large room, open to the sky and covered by the spreading branches of a palm tree. . . . Paul fell in love with the dwelling as if God had offered it to him. He spent the rest of his life there in prayer and solitude. The palm tree provided him with food and clothing. In case anyone should think this impossible, I call Jesus and the holy angels to witness that in some parts of the desert I have seen monks, one enclosed for thirty years, living on barley bread and muddy water. Another monk survived in an old well, living on five dried figs a day. These things will appear incredible only to those who do not believe that everything is possible for those who believe.”

—St. Jerome

**I will find my own “mountain” or “cave” this year,
as I recommit myself to a life of prayer.**

== JANUARY 7 ==

[Jesus said,] “[W]hoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.”

—Luke 18:17 (nrsv)

“I understood that Our Lord’s love is revealed as well in the simplest soul who doesn’t resist His grace in anything, as in the most sublime of souls. In fact, since the essence of love is to bring oneself low, if every soul were like the souls of the holy Doctors who have shed light on the Church through the clarity of their doctrine, it seems that God wouldn’t come down low enough by coming only as far as their great hearts. But He created the child who doesn’t know anything and only cries weakly.”

—St. Thérèse of Lisieux

**Some days I feel like a theologian, Lord. Other days,
I’m a little child. Thanks for loving me either way.**

== JANUARY 8 ==

[Jesus said,] “[D]o not worry about your life. . . . [C]an any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?”

—Matthew 6:25a, 27 (nrsv)

“I have the fewest worries when I possess least, and the Lord knows that I am more afflicted when I have an excess of anything than when I have a lack of anything. I am not sure if

it's the Lord's doing, but I have noticed that He provides for us immediately." —St. Teresa of Avila

**I don't want to worry about money, Lord.
I am renewing my trust in You.**

== JANUARY 9 ==

And the Word became flesh and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's
only son, full of grace and truth.

—John 1:14 (nrsv)

St. Catherine of Siena eagerly looked forward "to the morning's arrival in order to hear Mass." She once reflected: "In such communion, the soul binds itself firmly to God, and knows better His truth, since the soul is then in God and God in the soul."

I rush to meet You today, Lord.

== JANUARY 10 ==

Little children, you are from God . . . [and] the one who is
in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

—1 John 4:4 (nrsv)



St. Catherine of Siena continues her reflection on preparing for the Mass, talking about herself in the third person: "When

the hour of Mass arrived in the morning—it was the feast day of Mary—she anxiously sought her usual place. From a deep knowledge of herself and with a feeling of holy justice, she was ashamed of her own imperfection, for it seemed to be the cause of all the world's evils. In this knowledge, she cleansed the stains covering her guilty soul, saying, 'Eternal Father, I accuse myself before You, so that You may punish me for my sins in this life. Since my sins cause my neighbor to suffer, I beg You, in Your mercy, to punish me for them.'"

You alone are the source of my strength, my joy, my justice.

== JANUARY 11 ==

*Give ear to my prayer, O God; do not hide
yourself from my supplication.*

—Psalm 55:1 (nrsv)



"I need far greater knowledge and experience than I have to describe this dark night through which the soul passes in order to reach the divine light of the perfect union of God's love. This darkness and these spiritual and temporal trials through which happy souls pass in order to be able to reach this high state of perfection are so numerous and so profound that human knowledge is not fully capable of describing them. The only persons who can describe this dark night are the ones who experience it, and even they cannot describe it accurately."
—St. John of the Cross

There are some things I can say only to You, God.

== JANUARY 12 ==

We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute.

—1 Corinthians 4:10 (nrsv)



“Some might call him a madman, but he was the very reverse of a dreamer. Nobody would be likely to call him a man of business; but he was very emphatically a man of action. In some of his early experiments he was rather too much of a man of action; he acted too soon and was too practical to be prudent. But at every turn of his extraordinary career we shall find him flitting himself around corners in the most unexpected fashion, as when he flew through the streets after the beggar.” —G. K. Chesterton, writing about St. Francis of Assisi

**Make me impetuous today, Lord. Let's call it courage.
Take me out of my comfort zone to serve You.**

== JANUARY 13 ==

*I*ndeed the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

—Hebrews 4:12 (nrsv)



“When [St. Antony] and his little sister were left completely on their own after their parents died (Antony was around eighteen years old), he took good care of his house and his sister. Before six months had passed, though, he was on his way to church one day when he thought about how the apostles had rejected everything to follow the Savior. He thought about how the early Christians had sold their possessions and laid the proceeds at the apostles’ feet to distribute to the needy. What great hope was stored up for those people in heaven! As he was thinking about these things, Antony entered the church [and] he heard this Gospel being read: “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me” (Matt. 19:21). When he heard this, Antony applied the Lord’s commandment to himself, believing that because of divine inspiration he had first remembered the incident and that this Scripture was being read aloud for his sake. He immediately went home and sold the possessions he owned.” —St. Athanasius

**Show me, Holy Spirit, in some small way, how to
apply your Holy Scriptures to my life.**

== JANUARY 14 ==

*Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my
soul takes refuge . . . until the destroying storms pass by.*

—Psalm 57:1 (nrsv)



As he concludes the short *Life* of St. Paul the First Hermit, St. Jerome writes: “I would like to ask the wealthy, ‘What did this old man ever lack, naked as he was? You drink from jeweled cups, but he was satisfied with the cupped hands that nature had given him. . . . He was clothed with Christ despite his nakedness. You who are dressed in silks have lost the garment of Christ. Paul, who lies covered in the vilest dust, will rise again in glory. . . . I beg you, whoever you are, to remember the sinner Jerome. If the Lord would grant him his wish, he would rather choose Paul’s tunic, and his rewards, than the purple robes of kings, and their punishments.”

Dear God, guide me today as I try to live only for what matters in eternity.

== JANUARY 15 ==

*F*or your immortal spirit is in all things. Therefore you correct little by little those who trespass, and you remind and warn them of the things through which they sin, so that they may . . . put their trust in you, O Lord.

—Wisdom 12:1–2 (nrsv)

“You will probably laugh at me and say how obvious such things are. But, until I closed my eyes to the vanities of this world, I did not see or understand who lived within my soul or what my soul deserved. If I had understood then, as I now do, how this great King lives within this palace of my soul, I would not have left

Him alone so much. I would have stayed with Him and not let His house get so dirty. It is wonderful that He whose greatness could fill a thousand worlds should confine Himself to so small a space, just as He was pleased to inhabit His most holy Mother's womb. As our Lord, He has perfect freedom, and because He loves us, He fashions Himself to our measure." —St. Teresa of Avila

**I will not neglect You, today, Lord. Help me be mindful
of Your presence in my life.**

== JANUARY 16 ==

The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

—Zephaniah 3:17 (nrsv)

“By bringing Himself low in this way, God shows His infinite greatness. Just as the sun shines at the same time on the tall cedars and on each little flower as if it were the only one on earth, in the same way our Lord is concerned particularly for every soul as if there were none other like it.” —St. Thérèse of Lisieux

I love how You love me!

== JANUARY 17 ==

Today is the Feast Day of St. Antony the Great

St. Antony taught: “Let Christians care for nothing that they cannot take away with them. We ought rather to seek after that which will lead us to heaven, namely wisdom, chastity, justice, virtue, an ever-watchful mind, care of the poor, firm faith in Christ, a mind that can control anger, and hospitality. Striving after these things, we shall prepare for ourselves a dwelling in the land of the peaceful, as it says in the Gospel.” —As recorded by St. Athanasius

What in the world am I clinging to, God?

== JANUARY 18 ==

“Be still, and know that I am God.”
—Psalm 46:10a (niv)

“[I]n practice . . . there is only one vocation. Whether you teach or live in the cloister or nurse the sick, whether you are in religion or out of it, married or single, no matter who you are or what you are, you are called to the summit of perfection: you are called to a deep interior life perhaps even to mystical prayer, and to pass the fruits of your contemplation on to others. And if you cannot do so by word, then by example.” —Thomas Merton ocsa

I want to know You today.

== JANUARY 19 ==

If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

—1 John 1:6–7 (nrsv)



St. Catherine of Siena recalled the words of Christ: “Forgiveness comes, then, through the soul’s desire to be united to Me, the infinite Good, according to the measure of love attained by the recipient’s desire and prayer. A person receives as much of My goodness as he gives to Me.”

I want to walk in Your light today.

== JANUARY 20 ==

*C*ry to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me.

—Psalm 57:2 (nrsv)



“[St. Antony] obeyed [all of the holy men of the desert] whom he visited. Eager to learn, he assimilated their various individual gifts. He imitated the self-restraint of one; the cheerfulness of another. He emulated the gentleness of one; the nocturnal devotions of another; and the dedication in reading of yet another. He admired one who fasted and another who slept on the bare

ground; praising the endurance of the former and the compassion of the latter. He kept in mind the love they all showed one another, and he returned to his own place refreshed by every aspect of their virtues.” —St. Athanasius

**Focus me, Lord, on imitating the Christian virtue
of someone whom I know and respect.**

== JANUARY 21 ==

Be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

—1 Corinthians 15:58 (na b)

“When the holy father Antony lived in the desert, he was overcome with many sinful thoughts. He said to God, ‘Lord, I want to be saved, but these thoughts will not leave me alone. What can I do in my sickness? How can I be saved?’ A short while later, when he got up to go out, Antony saw a man like himself sitting at his work, getting up from his work to pray, then sitting down to work again, and getting up again to pray. It was an angel of the Lord sent to correct and reassure him. He heard the angel saying to him: ‘Do this, and you will be saved.’ When he heard these words, Antony was filled with joy and courage. He did this, and he was saved.” —*The Wisdom of the Desert Fathers and Mothers*

I will stop and pray today whenever temptations come my way.

== JANUARY 22 ==

[Jesus said,] “Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father.”

—Matthew 6:1 (na b)



“A poor person is seldom honored by the world, no matter how worthy of honor he might be. The world will more likely despise this person than honor him. A different kind of honor, to which no one can object, comes with true poverty. If one embraces poverty solely for God’s sake, only God has to be pleased. A person who does not need anyone has many friends; I have found this to be true from my own experience.” —St. Teresa of Avila

**You are the friend I want, Lord. You are the
only one I hope to impress.**

== JANUARY 23 ==

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name’s sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff
they comfort me.

—Psalm 23:1–4 (nrsv)

“I find myself at a point in my life when I can take a look back at the past. My soul has matured in the crucible of outward and inward trials. Now, like a flower strengthened by the storm, I lift my head, and I see that the words of the twenty-third psalm are coming true in me.” —St. Thérèse of Lisieux

You are my Shepherd, Lord. Thanks for caring for me.

== JANUARY 24 ==

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

—Micah 6:8 (niv)

“Let our houses be small and poor in every way. Let us be like our King, who had no house except the porch in Bethlehem where He was born and the cross on which He died. These were houses where little comfort could be found. Those who build large houses no doubt have good reasons for doing so; they are moved by various holy intentions. But any corner is sufficient. . . . God preserve us from building a large ornate

convent with a lot of buildings. Always remember that these things will fall down on the Day of Judgment, and who knows how soon that will be?” —St. Teresa of Avila

Help me focus on what matters, and to put aside what doesn't.

== JANUARY 25 ==

And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he is revealed we may have confidence and not be put to shame before him at his coming.

—1 John 2:28 (nrsv)



“Some work hard, yet make no progress. Others seek profit in what is not profitable. Still others are disturbed and make no progress precisely because of the favors that God grants so that they may make progress. Yet there are others who make great progress by remaining at rest and in quietness. There are many other things on this road that come to those who follow it—joys and afflictions and hopes and grief. Some come from the spirit of perfection and others from imperfection.”

—St. John of the Cross

Show me, Christ, how to make progress in the spiritual life, today.

== JANUARY 26 ==

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

—Colossians 3:12–14 (esv)



Christ spoke to St. Catherine of Siena: “You achieve every virtue and every defect by means of your neighbor. Those who hate Me, therefore, injure their neighbor and therefore themselves, who are their own chief neighbors. Th s injury is both general and particular. It is general, because you are obliged to love your neighbor as yourself. Because you love your neighbor, you should help him spiritually, through prayer and by counseling him with words. Assist him spiritually and temporally with your good will, according to his needs.”

I am part of Your great, compassionate Church.

== JANUARY 27 ==

Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.

—Romans 1:20a (nrsv)



“[T]he whole philosophy of St. Francis revolved around the idea of a new supernatural light on natural things, which meant the ultimate recovery not the ultimate refusal of natural things.”

—G. K. Chesterton, writing about St. Francis of Assisi

Help me discern when and how to show disdain for “the things of the world,” and when to praise what is truly You.

== JANUARY 28 ==

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.
—1 Corinthians 10:13 (esv)

“While Antony was busy with doing all these things that caused so many to love him, the devil, who could not bear to see a young man with such outstanding virtues, began to attack him. First, he tried to drag Antony away from the life to which he had committed himself. He made Antony remember his wealth . . . and his family’s social status. The devil tried to stimulate in Antony a desire for material things, the short-lived honors of this world, the pleasures of different kinds of food, and many other attractions that belong to an indulgent life. He reminded Antony of the great difficulty in obtaining the life of virtue. He also reminded him of the body’s weakness. He created great confusion in Antony’s thoughts, hoping to call him back from his intentions.” —St. Athanasius

Give me the courage and patience of saints today, O Lord!