



# 1<sup>ST</sup> SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

January 2018

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## THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD (THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW YEAR AND DAY OF PRAYER FOR PEACE)

*By Rev. Joseph L. Narog, O.S.A.*

As we begin a new year today, resolutions are probably on our minds. Promises made to ourselves, promises made to others, maybe even promises made to God. So what are our resolutions? I will give up smoking. I will work harder at a relationship. I will spend more time in prayer.



We all know though that making promises can be a tricky thing. Sometimes they require the cooperation of another person; they very often demand perseverance and commitment. There's a couple that I knew who were married for fifty-four years. They experienced the highs and the lows, the certainty and doubts, the 'for better and for worse.' Sickness was there, especially as the wife struggled with cancer for fourteen years. Through it all, she refused to remove her wedding ring, even during surgeries. Once I walked into her hospital room and she was adamantly telling the doctor that she wouldn't take off her ring. It was a sign of a promise made, of love. That ring never left her finger for fifty-four years. That woman was my mother.

Today we remember another mother, the eminent mother - Mary, mother of God, mother of the Promise; Mary, patroness of our parish. In today's Gospel, we hear the familiar Christmas story of Mary with her baby at the manger. In fact, you may recall, this is the same Gospel proclaimed on Christmas morning. However, a significant final verse is added today. In it we are told that the child "was named Jesus," the name the angel Gabriel told Mary she should give her baby boy.

True to her word, true to her promise, Mary called her child Jesus. Her initial "Yes" to God's plan continued to evolve. Mary's promise was not for one day, nor was it an easy one. She pondered its meaning at the manger, as she surely pondered it at the Cross.

Mary knows how hard promises can be. She lived in a world of many broken promises, much as we do today. Broken relationships, broken treaties. Conflict in families, elusive peace among peoples. Yet, Mary placed her faith and hope in the God who saves - the very meaning of her son Jesus' name - "God saves." The Son of God, "born of a woman," as we heard in Galatians, born of Mary, sent to make her and all of us children of God.

*Continued on Page 10*

# OVERVIEW FOR THE MONTH

*www.catholicculture.org*

The month of January is dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus, which is celebrated on January 3. The first eight days of January fall during the liturgical season known as Christmas which is represented by the liturgical color white. The remaining days of January are the beginning of Ordinary Time. The liturgical color changes to green — a symbol of the hope of reaping the eternal harvest of heaven, especially the hope of a glorious resurrection.

In the first part of January we continue to rejoice and celebrate Christ's coming at Bethlehem and in our hearts. We have the wonderful feasts of Mary, Mother of

God, where we honor Mary's highest title, and then we follow the Magi to the crib as they bring their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh on Epiphany. Finally we reach the culmination of this season with the Baptism of Our Lord by St. John the Baptist. With a touch of sadness we take down our decorations and enter into the liturgical period known as Ordinary Time where we will devote ourselves to the mystery of Christ in its entirety. ☐

## FEASTS FOR JANUARY

The feasts on the General Roman Calendar celebrated during the month of January are:

- 1 Mary, Mother of God, Solemnity
- 2 Basil the Great; Gregory Nazianzen, Memorial
- 3 Most Holy Name of Jesus, Opt. Mem.
- 4 Elizabeth Ann Seton (USA and CAN), Memorial
- 5 John Neumann, Memorial
- 6 Andre Bessette, Opt. Mem.
- 7 Epiphany of the Lord, Solemnity
- 8 Baptism of the Lord, Feast
- 13 Hilary Kentigern (Scotland), Opt. Mem.
- 14 Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday
- 17 Anthony, Memorial
- 20 Fabian; Sebastian, Opt. Mem.
- 21 Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday
- 22 Day of Prayer for Unborn, Opt. Mem.

- 23 Vincent of Saragossa, Opt. Mem.
- 24 Francis de Sales; Our Lady of Peace, Memorial
- 25 Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle, Feast
- 26 Timothy and Titus, Memorial
- 27 Angela Merici, Opt. Mem.
- 28 Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday
- 31 John Bosco, Memorial

The feasts of St. Raymond of Peñafort (January 7), St. Agnes (January 21) and St. Thomas Aquinas (January 28) are superseded by the Sunday liturgy. ☐

### OUR CENACLE CORNER

*Seeking a deeper relationship with God  
through meditation of passages from Holy Scriptures*

**THE BOOK OF DANIEL  
AND  
THE REVELATION**

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

## THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

by Alexander Vogt

Why did Jesus ask to be baptized by John? The Baptism of the Lord did not make a lot of sense to the early followers of Jesus who worried about the fact that it seemed to suggest that Jesus was somehow subordinate to John the Baptist. Two thousand years later, the Church has developed a very substantial theology of the sacrament of baptism, but that theology is not very helpful for the task of understanding the Baptism of the Lord either. Catholics believe that baptism imparts the grace of forgiveness of sins, and marks our initiation into the Church. But Jesus did not need to be forgiven nor can we really say that by his baptism Jesus became part of the church. The gospel itself does not give us very much to go on. The only explanation offered by Jesus regarding why he should be baptized by John is: "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." But that explanation does not get us very far.

The final line of this Sunday's reading from Matthew's gospel offers perhaps a better clue about the meaning of Jesus' baptism. That line reads: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." There we hear an unmistakable echo from the first reading: "Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased" (Isaiah 42:7). By making this connection, the author of Matthew is testifying to the fact that Christians had come to believe that the "Suffering Servant" in Isaiah ultimately refers to Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who will be the definitive "covenant of the people" and "light for all nations." He will "open the eyes of the blind" and "bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon those who live in darkness." I have always been moved by those images of the mercy of Christ. They can be taken quite literally of course – Jesus Christ as liberator, freeing those unjustly bound or confined in darkness. But they can also speak to Jesus rescuing those of us held in the bondage of sin or trapped in lives marked by an existential darkness. As another Christmas fades into the past and we prepare to move on next week to ordinary time, these readings help us to understand more fully the meaning of the incarnation – of why Christ has come. As Pope Francis noted in a recent general audience, the

good news of the incarnation is not merely that God has taken on human flesh, but that God has done so in a world "marked by so many things, good and bad, marked by divisions, wickedness, poverty, arrogance and wars." Jesus has come to bring God's mercy to the world.

What can these readings tell us about the meaning of our own baptism? The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that "Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons [and daughters] of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission" (CCC #1213). Just as Matthew's gospel makes a connection between the Baptism of the Lord and the mission of the suffering servant, we too should make a connection between our own baptism and that same mission. Having been baptized into the Body of Christ, we too are called to his ministry of mercy.

Finally, these readings also point to the importance of HUMILITY. Indeed it seems that humility plays a part in the "righteousness" that Jesus refers to when he asks John to baptize him. The reading from Acts also points to the importance of humility when Peter states that "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality." The meaning of Peter's discourse in the house of Cornelius can only be understood by reading what comes before the passage proclaimed for this Sunday. Peter had been an advocate of the view that Christianity was only for Jews (i.e., to become a Christian one must also become a Jew). He had come to change his mind and to recognize that Jesus Christ came for Gentiles too. We might conclude that we should not dwell on the fact that baptism makes us part of a holy people. Instead, our baptism might be understood primarily as a calling to embrace the mission of Christ and the suffering servant to go out into the world and "heal all those oppressed by the devil." □

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Christopher Vogt is Associate Professor of Theology and Religious Studies, and a Senior Fellow of the Vincentian Center for Church and Society at St. John's University in New York City. He received his PhD in Theological Ethics from Boston College in 2001. His most sustained area of research and publication has dealt with the Christian *Ars Moriendi* tradition, attempting to articulate what dying well might look like from a contemporary Christian point of view as well as how Christians should endeavor to accompany the dying and face death themselves. He is the author of *Patience, Compassion, Hope*, and *the Christian Art of Dying Well*.

## FEAST OF STO. NIÑO

JANUARY 20, 2018

*Least yet the Greatest in the Kingdom*

*Posted by arnoldbiagosvd, a blogger*

Author and lecturer Leo Buscaglia once talked about a contest he was asked to judge. The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child. The winner was a four year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there. When his mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing, I just helped him cry." (Arnoldus Nota January 2008)

Such simple act of kindness and thoughtfulness of the child merited him not only the admiration and acclaim of many who have heard of his story but will also merit him a place in the Father's Kingdom. This child, truly exemplifies what our Gospel vividly declares today as the "greatest in the Kingdom of heaven," which is none other than an honest to goodness act of kindness. I truly believe that our devotion to the Holy Child Jesus (Sto. Niño) is an expression of our inner longing and constant desire to be great in the kingdom while we remain unnoticed, unrecognized, and simple as a child. Certainly, there is much that we can learn from a child.

Honesty and openness are true marks of a child. Learning is easy and fun for them because of their eagerness and readiness to learn. Children admit and knew that they knew little and it pushes them to gain more. No wonder,

children normally bombard us with questions. For us who are grown up we have become wise and complicated. Our actions will have always reasons and explanations. Here lies our problem and difficulty to such an extent that our acts of kindness and charity have to pass through our deliberative faculties.



Once, I was with my relatives going down the stairs of MRT station in Pasay, one of my younger nieces instantly drops a P5 coin in the cup of a child begging. When we got home, his Father strongly told him not to give because these kids were part of a syndicate. Hearing that, I came to realize that not only did we lose that personal attitude of honesty and openness, but the society itself had lost such atmosphere of openness and honesty. Hence, the message of a child remains very valid and relevant today. In our times when things are so complicated, the child's call for honesty and openness is very urgent and needed. I believe many of us are naturally kind and charitable, yet aware of the complex reality of life, that people are cheating on us, that there are many who would have no second thoughts of hurting us or even of killing us, it is not easy to be a child with openness and honesty. Today's feast of the Sto. Niño is an urgent call for all,

individuals and communities alike to bring back into our lives and communities the openness and honesty of a child.

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## LET "PRAYER OF THE DONKEY," WRITTEN FOR CHILDREN, SET THE TONE FOR THE NEW YEAR

By Anne O'Neill

Carmen Bernos De Gasztold's little book, *Prayers from the Ark* was first discovered tucked away in a convent kitchen, 45 years ago. In it, Noah and more than 50 animals ask their little favors of God—but the Prayer of the Donkey stands out. The beast's words, for better or worse, are more than relatable; they distill something about the human condition which a child understands just as well as an adult. More than that, the donkey's attitude is a simple but powerful example of how we ought to approach this New Year, looming before us.

O God, who made me  
to trudge along the road  
always,  
to carry heavy loads  
always,  
and to be beaten  
always!

The donkey's exhausted "always," his description of his lot in life – it's not exactly a complaint. After all, it's God who gave him the life he has. He doesn't ask for a break, for a soft bed or even a kind master. Instead, "Give me great courage and gentleness." He isn't asking for his circumstances to change, he's asking that he will be able to endure them.

It's the opposite of how we tend to feel, especially going into the New Year. This year, we reassure ourselves, things will be different. We'll leave behind our bad habits and vices, and besides, we say hopefully, this year has great surprises in store for us! And maybe it does, but there are some things that never change. Life never really leaves suffering behind for long. There is always some heavy load to carry, always something beating us down, as the donkey knows. There are joys too, but we are exiles from Eden, and this world is a vale of tears.

That's why the donkey's requests strike such a chord. Even if life doesn't change, maybe a little courage and gentleness could change everything.

One day let somebody understand me –  
That I may no longer want to weep  
Because I can never say what I mean.

Who hasn't felt this way? Parents know that the biggest frustration in a toddler's life is his inability to express what's in his mind. Children and teens face the same struggle. All of us do. No matter how eloquent we are, what is within us is too expansive and mysterious to ever be fully expressed to another. We can never totally bridge

that divide. The donkey, who is referring to the ridiculous sound he makes, is all of us, longing for unity and connection. It's a request that can never be completely satisfied in this world.



His next favor, though, is laughably down-to-earth. "Let me find a juicy thistle – and make them give me time to pick it." Again, his humility is staggering. He's not asking

for a field of thistles, or to be the master of his own choices, but he also doesn't mind asking for his little treat. Isn't that what we're told to ask for too? "Give us this day our daily bread." We are creatures, and none of us are so holy as to transcend the needs of our bodies.

What keeps the donkey going? What accounts for his tremendous patience? He hasn't described an easy life. He's tired, burdened, and beaten, misunderstood, laughed at, and hungry. Why isn't he bitter? What's kept him from despairing? The answer becomes clear through his final request.

And Lord, one day, let me find again  
my little brother of the Christmas crib.

He's been searching, relentlessly, for that little baby whose mother he once carried to Bethlehem. In the memory of Christ's face, the drudgery, and humiliation he endures doesn't matter. He's been too focused on that goal. He doesn't ask for his hard work to end because he knows it will lead him back to the Christ child. He knows that all he needs is perseverance. His desire to be understood is part of his burning need to find Christ, the only one who can ever know us as well as we know ourselves. Christ can alleviate his loneliness, so that he will no longer want to weep. Even the thistle makes more sense now. He only needs a little sustenance to keep him going, till he can find the One who says, "Come to me all who labor and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest."

Let's keep the donkey's prayer in mind, through this new year. He's shown us everything we really need, and laid out the whole purpose of our lives. Let us spend the year searching to find again our little brother of the Christmas crib.

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Anna O'Neil is a graduate of Thomas More College of Liberal Arts. She likes cows, confession and the color yellow, not necessarily in that order. She lives on Rhode Island with her husband and son, where she tries to remember that, as Chesterton said, "Anything worth doing is worth doing badly."

# GOD TOUCHED ME

## HUMBLE YOURSELF IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD AND HE WILL LIFT YOU UP JAMES 4:10

*By Fed*

God will lift you up. He will crown you. He will reward you. He will exalt you if you have been willing to take the place of a servant, a good and faithful servant, a humble servant, faithfully serving Christ a notch above the majority, and without reservations. Giving his all to Christ, his TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE.

Everyone has been gifted in some way by the Lord to serve Him. The question is, are you faithfully and humbly doing it, without expecting anything back? Doing it for the glorification of God, and not for self-glorification? The Bible says we are "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:10). According to this verse, God brings opportunities into every one of our lives to serve Him. They are all different, but they are all important. If you want to hear Jesus say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," you must be faithful in doing something for His glory.

Do you have a servant's heart in all that you do for Christ? Matthew 20:25-28 states that Jesus called the disciples together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great, exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whosoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant; and whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave; just as the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Jesus is talking about how the world operates. In a world filled with pride and egos, you find displayed the attitude of "Kiss my foot! I'm above you!" That's the world's system. But among Christians, Jesus says, "It shall not be so among you. Instead, whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your SERVANT."

In The Spiritual Army of God the Father ministry, several devotees have been given Recognition awards for their exemplary service as deemed by the Lord, our God, revealed to His Son Helper. The recipients were announced on the three nights of the Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 9 to 13; while the Las Vegas recipients were announced at the Las Vegas

Christmas party on December 23. The recipients were as follows:

JJ Ramos, Dorie Cortes, Tessie Almero, Marilyn Batino, Frank and Lorma Batino, Ben Ong, Lucien and Mila Lumba, Guadalupe Eugenio, and Robert & Evelyn Pua.

Upon interviewing the above awardees, they were either feeling blessed and honored, pleasantly surprised, felt elated or never expected such an award, especially because the Son Helper said that he submitted several names to God and the names of the awardees were confirmed by our Lord. When asked how this award will affect their service to God and His ministry, they were all one in stating that they will continue serving God and glorifying Him with their respective time, talent and treasure. Because of the award, God has touched them as affirmation that He sees, hears and knows everything. He hears our voices as we sing, He reminds us that God gives us what we need not what we want, He sees our obedience and things we do to glorify Him. Everyone was grateful and thankful to God for His recognition. To inspire and motivate others, they advise our devotees to use whatever time, talent or treasure He has gifted us with; to pray, pray and pray for everything is in God's time; to love God more each day and pray for His guidance, protection, encouragement and enlightenment; and most of all, to follow our hearts and do what we feel is pleasing to God. Furthermore, participate actively in all of the Ministry's events and share whatever you can to make the events successful, all for the glory of God.

As W. Clarkson wrote in his article, "This Reward of Faithful Service": THERE IS ONE SERVICE IN WHICH THERE IS NO DISAPPOINTMENT. We are the servants of Christ. We delight to call him Master (John 13:13). We owe him everything, and we offer him the subjection of our will, the trust of our hearts, the service of our lives. He will not disappoint us. He will not forget our work of faith and our labor of love. The slightest service shall "in no wise lose its reward." He will generously regard what we do for his humble disciples as something rendered to himself. Here we shall possess his loving favor, and there his bountiful recompense. ◻

# SPIRITUAL ARMY NEWS DISPATCH

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ARMY'S 2017

We welcome 2018 with a spirit-filled motivation and inspiration to serve God more; and we bid farewell to 2017 with great hope as we highlight the past year's events and projects.

In The Spiritual Army of God the Father, we can say that we have had a fulfilling and satisfying 2017 as, once again, we came true to our mission statement through various devotional prayers, events, celebrations and projects.

Various feast days and religious activities were celebrated, as we gave honor to God on the different celebrations: Infant Jesus Celebration, Feast of the Divine Mercy, May Crowning, Mother of Perpetual Help Feast day and Feast Day of God the Father. Most of these celebrations were simultaneously celebrated at the Monastery of the Angels or Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master in Los Angeles, CA; St. Francis de Sales Roman Catholic Church or St. Bridget Roman Catholic Church, or The Cenacle House in Las Vegas, NV; and Chapel of the Eternal Father in Canjulao, Lapulapu City, Cebu, Philippines.

First Friday devotion, First Saturday devotion, First Sunday Eternal Father devotion, and 800 Our Father devotion which alternated with the 2000 Hail Mary devotion were simultaneously observed every month in Los Angeles, CA and Las Vegas, NV, and Cebu, Philippines. The Mother of Perpetual Help novena every Wednesday has been a part of the Las Vegas' regular devotions since 2015 at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church.

With the different activities and celebrations ongoing, the ministry has announced that the celebration photos have been uploaded to You Tube. Worthy to note, too, are the changes made to the newsletter distribution process wherein devotees will get a copy via email upon request. Otherwise, they can access it from the Army's website.

2017 saw The Army being involved in the Confirmation project of La Brea Cathedral Chapel where the Ministry supported their outreach excursion of bonding on the final leg of the teens' confirmation program.

The highlight of the year is when The Spiritual Army of God the Father pilgrims went on Our Lady of Guadalupe Pilgrimage in Mexico City on December 9 thru 13, bringing back with them wonderful and spiritually exhilarating experiences as they joined the highly devoted locals in celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master and the Monastery of Angels are the two places where our devotionals and celebrations in Los Angeles, CA are held. They are direct recipients of financial contributions for 2017 from the Ministry.

The Spiritual Army of God the Father also has a lineup of various projects, which are continuations of the annual projects plus more, focusing on discipleship and evangelization through faith, prayers and deeds:

- a. Continuing efforts for our toy drive, recipient of which remains to be Children's Hospital of Los Angeles.
- b. Financial support for individuals desiring to enter the religious life/priesthood. We currently have Michael Ray Palma, a seminarian at Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) College Formation Center.
- c. "Kitchen of Mary" feeding program in some provinces in the Philippines. The target recipients will be disclosed in the months ahead.
- d. Ongoing distribution of our instant Care Pack to panhandlers/hungry and homeless during winter.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **TOY DRIVE FOR THE LOS ANGELES CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL**

PLEASE DROP OFF  
YOUR NEW UNWRAPPED TOYS  
EVERY 1<sup>ST</sup> AND 3<sup>RD</sup> SATURDAYS  
AT THE CONVENT OF THE SISTER  
DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE MASTER

### **INFANT JESUS CELEBRATION JANUARY 19-21, 2018 SAINT FRANCIS DESALES LAS VEGAS, NV**

### **PILGRIMAGE TO NOAH'S ARK LOUISVILLE, KY**

DAILY ACTIVITIES AND OTHER  
INFORMATION TO BE  
AVAILABLE SOON AT  
[WWW.SPIRITUALARMYOFGOD.ORG](http://WWW.SPIRITUALARMYOFGOD.ORG)

# SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

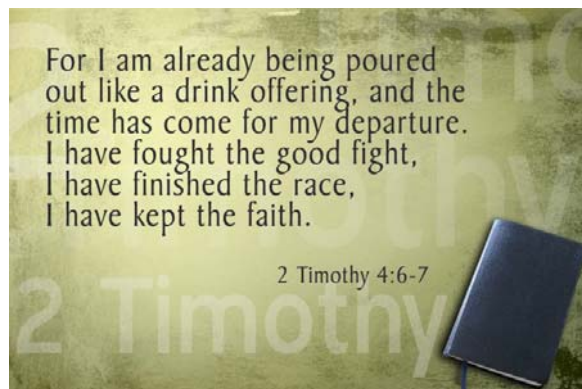
## SEEKING INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS THROUGH THE BIBLE

### WHEN GIVING UP IS NOT AN OPTION

*By Son Helper*

If anyone had occasion to quit the course God had planned for him, it was Paul. Persecutions, trials, misunderstanding, emotional and physical stress plagued the apostle for most of his adult life. How did he arrive at the terminus of his life with such a winning spirit? How can we?

Paul did not focus on the past! His actions before he was saved were atrocious! They would have been an albatross had he fixated on them. Christ forgives your foolish acts of the past. Do not carry around a mental ballast of guilt that will only weigh you down and steal your joy. Receive God's forgiveness and forgive yourself! Perhaps, we have an emotional greenhouse to nourish past hurts. It is pain we can live without. Paul was betrayed and reviled at almost every stop, but his spirit remained free of bitterness or self-pity. We must not give up when our spirits are faint. Count on the sufficiency of God's grace, and the adequacy of His help and Mercy!



We pray: Father, I harbor the hurt and hopelessness of my past and do not look forward to Your plan that will envelope me to the path of the future You have prepared for me. Unlike Paul, I look at every instance of life as a tragedy and not as an opportunity. My Lord and my God, cleanse my heart to only focus on life's blessings through you, not on the past that inhibit my future with You in Your kingdom. I ask this, through Your beloved Son, Jesus. Amen. ☐

*There are more individuals who will risk losing their souls  
for love of material possessions.*

*Some will lie on their motives, but I see through your hearts.*

**PRIDE AND LOVE OF MONEY.**

*Look at others as God looks at you as my children.*

*Pure and offer your hearts of sincerity,*

**THAT IS ALL I WANT**

*my children".*

*Jesus of Nazareth, Your Loving God*

12162017



# THANK YOU

... a small and simple phrase that comes from a grateful heart!

Psalm 106:2

## THE 800 OUR FATHER DEVOTION

The Spiritual Army of God the Father acknowledges with thanks our generous January sponsors of the 800 Our Father Devotion. We are grateful that we have merited their partnership and support in providing a venue of spirituality and fellowship for the devotees of God the Father.

### Las Vegas, Nevada

Guada Eugenio | Mila Lumba  
Evelyn Pua | Nicet Santos  
Maria Sheets

### Los Angeles, California

Nona Alapag | Norma Fuentes  
Raina Gonzalez | Marlou Mara  
Alice Ng | Connie Poblete

## FOR PRAYERS HEARD AND PETITIONS GRANTED

Thank you, Eternal Father, for Your Will that transformed our sorrow into joy, our tears of anguish into tears of thanksgiving. Our physical and spiritual re-creation, through Your Healing Hands, kept us enclosed and revived in our hope for renewed lives as we look up to the heavens praising You, in Jesus' most Holy Name, through the intercession of Mary, our Blessed Mother, and of the angels and saints.

*Thank you, God! When life's trials seem too much to bear, You gently assure me that You are always there; the voice of Your Spirit, telling me, "Be still and know that I am God!" I cried out to You concerning my employment, you rewarded me with a temporary promotion; and a brand new roof with new interior amenities very soon to come. Oh my God, all Glory and Praise be to You and Your Son, Jesus! Now I know that when you trust and believe, miracles you will receive!*

- Debbie Lorenzo

*I thank God for the miracle of healing He has given me after being hospitalized and stayed in rehab for almost two months. I thank him that I am with my family now, and all my children are here with me this Christmas season, including the one who lives far. I know that with God's grace, I will fully recover and will be able to continue the work He has commanded me to do. Hallelujah!!!*

Mila Lumba

*Blessed be God! I feel so blessed that He has allowed me to spend my birthday at the place where Our Lady of Guadalupe (whom I was named after) appeared to San Juan Diego. And even more blessed that I was a lector at the liturgical celebration at the old basilica. All praise and glory be to You, O Lord, our God; now and forever. Amen!*

- Guadalupe Eugenio

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*Continued from Page 1*

## **THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD**

Mary is mother of the Promise, mother of us all. It is interesting that the root of the word 'promise' comes from the Latin for 'sending forth.' For God, in unconditional love, sent forth the Word, made flesh, through Mary. It is from her womb that Mary sent Jesus, God's promise, into the world. She gives us Jesus the Christ, so that, through his death and resurrection, we may be saved - that we might live as daughters and sons of the unbroken promise. And as children of God, we are called to make known the Promise, to send forth this message of hope to our world. As St. Augustine once said, "Christ is truth and peace and justice, conceive him in faith, give birth to him in works, so that what Mary's womb did for the flesh of Christ, your hearts may do for Christ's law."

Through our words and actions, we can participate with God, as did Mary, in bringing truth and peace and justice to our world. As the Church, the Body of Christ, we model Mary's motherhood. And how do we do this? Often it is in the simple, ordinary things of life. The Promise is born every time we volunteer at the soup kitchen in Overbrook, when we visit a cancer patient at Bryn Mawr Hospital, or when we tutor a teenager from a broken family at Lower Merion High School. Christ comes to the world each time we speak out against violence in all its forms.

We can resolve this New Year's to make known the promise, to make known the message, as the shepherds did in today's Gospel. And in this Eucharist, we can join them in "glorifying and praising God" for all we have heard and seen. For a mother named Mary and her son named Jesus. For the God who provided my mother and who provides us with the grace and strength to keep promises. For the God who saves and blesses - 'The Lord bless us and keep us! The Lord let his face shine upon us, and be gracious to us! The Lord look upon us kindly and give us peace!'

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Rev. Joseph L. Narog, O.S.A., Pastor of St. Thomas of Villanova Parish, was elected Secretary of the Board of Trustees. Narog was ordained an Augustinian priest in 2005. Before that, Fr. Narog worked with the Federal government as an Intelligence Analyst and as the manager of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Training Program.

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## **FEAST OF THE STO. NIÑO**

One thing that I like about our devotion to the Sto. Niño is the various and different renditions of the Holy Child. I enjoy seeing the Sto. Niño dressed up as a fisherman, basketball player, doctor or nurse, fireman and a policeman. (Once when I came across this, I have to check if its hand is outstretched to receive a "tong".) With these, I came to realize that our various renditions of Sto.

Niño is an outward manifestation of a very deep religious thought. It expresses that religious vision of saturating every aspect of life with Christ. It is a symbol of our faith and hope to make God present in every moment of our lives, in all our relationships and in all dimensions of our communal living. This is exactly the inauguration and fulfillment of the same Kingdom preached by Jesus, "the Kingdom of God is at hand." In other words, by dressing the Sto. Niño as a nurse, we are telling others that I see Jesus, I see God in the care of the sick, I see Jesus in my work to provide health care services to others. Or when we dress the Sto. Niño as a policeman, it expresses our hope that our law enforcers will be honest, that they will defend the weak, that they protect our rights, while at the same time we declare that God is our source of security as we find ourselves secure with our policemen. The applications and insights can continue on. All of them express our hope and faith to find and experience God in different people that cross our lives.

From these we can say that it is in finding God in the people we meet that we can regain the honesty and openness of a child. But this is not an overnight job. It may take our whole generation before we see it happen. Nevertheless, it provides us with the direction and proper outlook of life. It gives us the opportunity to contribute in making our communities a better place where God reigns and children are the greatest of them all. •□

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## **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ARMY'S 2017**

- e. Granting scholarship to students of indigent or poor families with good scholastic standing in the Philippines, specifically to a student named Patrick Salmasan at Jose Rizal University, Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines. One of the students was canceled from the scholarship program because the minimum grade requirement was not achieved. This scholarship will continue hopefully as our devotees become more generous in supporting this Project.
- f. Health Mission to be initiated in April 2018 in Cebu as a Spiritual pilot project. This initiative will be a concerted effort of devotees in Los Angeles and Cebu City, Philippines.
- g. Confirmation project with La Brea Cathedral Chapel where the Ministry supports its outreach excursion of bonding on the final leg of the teens' confirmation program.
- h. Seeking God through pilgrimages to holy places. The Ministry will scour all possible means to make future pilgrimages affordable to all. Please check our website for pilgrimage announcements. •□

# DEVOTION SCHEDULE



## THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER

cordially invites you to the following devotions:

### IN LOS ANGELES:

#### 1st Saturday Devotion

The Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master | 501 N. Beaudry Avenue | (213) 250-7962  
Holy Mass starts at 8:30 A.M. | 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday Devotional Prayers follow.

#### Devotion to God the Father

Every 1st Sunday of the Month | The Monastery of the Angels | 1977 Carmen Avenue on Gower | (323) 466-2186  
12:30 P.M. - Rosary to the Father | 1:15 P.M. - Holy Mass  
2:00 P.M. - Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

#### 800 Our Father Devotion – January 26, 2018

at the Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master | starting at 8:30 a.m.  
*Please call Victor at (213) 385-7798 if you wish to become a Sponsor of the Devotion.*

### IN CHINO HILLS:

#### Sacred Heart Devotional Group for Departed Souls

Every 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the Month | 16657 Tourmaline Street | Chino Hills, CA 91709  
Devotional Prayers start at 8:30 P.M.

### IN LAS VEGAS:

#### Sacred Heart and Precious Blood of Jesus Devotion for Departed Souls

Every 1st Friday of the Month  
at The Cenacle House in The Enclave 8455 W. Sahara Avenue #172 | Las Vegas, NV 89117  
Devotional Prayers start at 2:30 P.M. Fall and winter schedule starting November will start at 2:00 P.M.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday Devotion

at Saint Frances de Sales Parish | 1111 Michael Way | Las Vegas, NV 89108 at 8:00 AM  
Devotional Prayers follow.

and

at The Cenacle House in The Enclave | 8455 West Sahara Avenue #172, | Las Vegas, NV 89117 at 1:00 PM  
Cenacle will be at 10:00 AM before the devotional prayers.

*Please call Evelyn at (702) 274-4315 for entry to The Enclave or for more information.*

#### Devotion to God the Father

Every 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month from 2:00 to 3:30 P.M.  
at The Cenacle House in The Enclave | 8455 West Sahara Avenue #172, | Las Vegas, NV 89117

#### 800 Our Father Devotion – January 13, 2018

*Please call (702) 274-4315 for  
dates and venues for the coming months or for more information or if you wish to Sponsor the Devotion.*

#### Mother of Perpetual Help Novena & Rosary Prayers

Every Wednesday of the month after the 7:30 AM Mass (*except during the Holy Week*)  
St. Francis de Sales Parish | 1111 Michael Way | Las Vegas, NV 89108

### IN THE PHILIPPINES

#### 2000 Hail Mary Devotion - Metro Manila Area

Letty Rollan has organized the 2000 Hail Mary Devotion in various areas of Metro Manila through the members of the "Mother Butler." Please call her U.S. Vonage phone (510) 779-6652, text her at Manila #916-384-9300, and/or call her Manila landline 939-4677. Mention Mila Lumba's name to be recognized.