



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

February 2018

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## THREE LESSONS FROM LOURDES

*Fr. Paul D. Scalia*

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*The Catholic Thing is a forum for intelligent Catholic commentary.*

*Opinions expressed by writers are solely their own.*

"Drink from the spring and wash in it," said the beautiful Lady. At her command Bernadette Soubirous, the little shepherdess of Lourdes, looked around for a spring. There wasn't one. So she scratched at the loose gravel. Then from the murky water that appeared she first drank and then washed her face. She must have looked ridiculous. But in the following days the puddle became running water and then a stream. Since that day in 1858 countless pilgrims have bathed in and been healed by the waters of that spring. These waters and their healing power (sixty-nine documented miracles) are some of the most immediate and enduring fruits of our Lady's appearance at Lourdes.

So it is somewhat ironic that we observe the World Day of the Sick today, on the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. After all, her apparitions are more renowned for healing than sickness! Likewise, there is an irony in the fact that Bernadette herself never benefitted from the healing waters she had uncovered. Always a sickly child, she was prevented from entering the Carmelites because of her weakness. Becoming a Sister of Charity instead, she died of tuberculosis at the young age of thirty-five. Nevertheless, the observation of the World Day of the Sick is well placed. Our Lady of Lourdes teaches – and Bernadette understood clearly – three lessons for the sick: presence, healing, and sacrifice.

First, presence. The first thing to note about our Lady's appearance at Lourdes is that she appeared. She was present to that ignorant, poor shepherd girl who considered herself so unworthy of the visitor that she dared not call her Mary but always "the beautiful lady." In the first apparition, nothing was said. Just Mary's presence – a loving smile, an approving look. Likewise in other apparitions, either little or nothing was said. Presence was enough. Our Lady's appearance in Lourdes is in the pattern of her Son's public ministry. The solicitude she shows by her presence reflects that of her Son. He always gravitated towards the suffering – the blind, the lame, the sick, and so on.

The sick suffer not only physically but also emotionally, in the thought that they have been forgotten, become useless or, worse, a burden. We all like visitors when we are sick. We welcome that reminder that we are not alone, forgotten, or a burden. Likewise, we visit the sick – yes, to do good things for them, as we are able – to assure them of our love by our presence. His simple presence gave expression of that divine solicitude and care. Our Lady's visit reminds us of that – and that we need to extend it.

*Continued on Page 11*

# OVERVIEW FOR THE MONTH

*www.catholicculture.org*

The month of February is dedicated to the Holy Family. The church has seen fit to recall the example of the Holy Family for the emulation of the Christian family. This year the first thirteen days of February fall during the liturgical season known as Ordinary Time which is represented by the liturgical color green. Green, the symbol of hope, is the color of the sprouting seed and arouses in the faithful the hope of reaping the eternal harvest of heaven, especially the hope of a glorious resurrection. The remaining days of February are the beginning of Lent. The liturgical color changes to purple — a symbol of penance, mortification and the sorrow of a contrite heart.

Though the shortest month of the year, February is rich in Liturgical activity. It contains a feast (Presentation of our Lord) that bridges two other seasons (Christmas and Easter)! In addition, the faithful may receive in February two of the four major public sacramentals that the Church confers during the liturgical year: blessed candles and the blessing of throats. Ideally, the members of the domestic church should try to have the candles for their home altar blessed on Candlemas Day (February 2<sup>nd</sup>); and the next morning, on the Feast of Saint Blaise, all might receive the blessing of the throats.

*Continued on Page 11*

## FEASTS FOR FEBRUARY

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

- 2 Presentation of the Lord, Feast
- 3 Blaise; Ansgar, Opt. Mem.
- 4 Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday
- 5 Agatha, Memorial
- 6 Paul Miki and Companions, Memorial
- 8 Jerome Emiliani; Josephine Bakhita, Opt. Mem.
- 10 Scholastica, Memorial
- 11 Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday
- 14 Ash Wednesday
- 17 Seven Founders of the Orders of Servites, Opt. Mem.
- 18 First Sunday of Lent, Sunday
- 21 Peter Damian, Opt. Mem.

- 22 Chair of St. Peter, Feast
- 23 Polycarp of Smyrna, Memorial
- 25 Second Sunday of Lent, Sunday

The feast of Our Lady of Lourdes (February 11) will not be celebrated this year because it is superseded by the Sunday liturgy. The feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius (February 14) is superseded by the Ash Wednesday liturgy. □

### OUR CENACLE CORNER

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

#### **OBEDIENCE OR SACRIFICE FOR OUR GOD?**

**1 SAMUEL 15:3**

**1 SAMUEL 3:1**

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

## SAINT BLAISE

WWW.CATHOLICEXCHANGE.COM

As a child, I remember having my throat blessed on the feast of Saint Blaise. I was never too sure who he was or why we did this. Also, it seems like the practice has been forgotten.



Unfortunately, what is known about the life of Saint Blaise derives from various traditions. His feast day is celebrated in the East on February 11 and in the West on February 3 (although it was observed on February 15 until the 11<sup>th</sup> century). All sources agree that Saint Blaise was the Bishop of Sebaste in Armenia who suffered martyrdom under Licinius about AD 316. (Remember that Emperor Constantine had legalized the practice of Christianity in 313, but

Licinius, his ally and co-emperor who had concurred in legalizing Christianity, betrayed him and began persecuting the Church. Constantine defeated Licinius in 324.) From here, we rely on the tradition which has been associated with our liturgical celebrations over the centuries, which does not necessarily demean their veracity or accuracy.

In accord with various traditions, Saint Blaise was born to rich and noble parents and received a Christian education. He was a physician before being consecrated a bishop at a young age. Although such a statement seems terse, keep in mind that at that time the local community usually nominated a man to be a bishop based on his outstanding holiness and leadership qualities; he in turn was then examined and consecrated by other bishops with the approval of the Holy Father. Therefore, Saint Blaise must have been a great witness of our faith to say the least.

During the persecution of Licinius, Saint Blaise, receiving a divine command, moved from the town and lived as a hermit in a cave. Wild animals visited him and he healed any that were sick and wounded. One day, a group of hunters gathering wild beasts for the games in the amphitheater discovered Saint Blaise and seized him. As he was being taken to the governor Agricolaus, the governor of Cappadocia and Lesser Armenia, Saint Blaise encountered a woman whose pig was being seized by a wolf; Saint Blaise commanded the wolf to release the pig and it was freed unhurt.

While in prison, he miraculously cured a small boy who was choking to death on a fishbone lodged in his throat. Also, the woman whose pig had been saved brought Saint Blaise candles so that his cell would have light and he could read the sacred Scriptures.

Eventually, Agricolaus condemned Saint Blaise for upholding his Christian faith rather than apostatizing. He was tortured with an iron comb (an instrument designed for combing wool but was used here for shredding the skin) and finally beheaded.

By the sixth century, Saint Blaise's intercession was invoked in the East for diseases of the throat. As early as the eighth century, records attest to the veneration of Saint Blaise in Europe, and he became one of the most popular saints in the spiritual life of the Middle Ages. Many altars were dedicated to his honor. The Abbey of Saint Blaise in southern Germany even claimed to have some of his relics.

Saint Blaise is also venerated as one of the "Fourteen Holy Helpers," a group of saints invoked as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century in Germany and who are honored on August 8: Saint Denis of Paris (headache and rabies); Saint Erasmus or Elmo (colic and cramp); Saint Blaise (throat ailments); Saint Barbara (lightning, fire, explosion, and sudden and unprepared death); Saint Margaret (possession and pregnancy); St. Catherine of Alexandria (philosophers and students, and wheelwrights); Saint George (protector of soldiers); Saints Achatius and Eustace (hunters); Saint Pantaleon (tuberculosis); Saint Giles (epilepsy, insanity and sterility); Saint Cyriac (demonic possession); Saint Vitus (epilepsy); and Saint Christopher (travelers). The German Dominicans promoted this veneration, particularly at the Church of Saint Blaise in Regensburg (c. 1320).

One reason for Saint Blaise's popularity arose from the fact he was a physician who cured, even performing miraculous cures. Thereby, those who were sick, especially with throat ailments, invoked his intercession. Eventually the custom of the blessing of throats arose, whereby the priest held two crossed candles over the heads of the faithful or touched their throats with them while he invoked the prayer of the saint and imparted God's blessing. In our present Roman Ritual, the priest prays, "Through the intercession of Saint Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from every disease of the throat and from every other illness, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." This practice continues in many parishes on Saint Blaise's feast day.

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## WEEK OF ASH WEDNESDAY

[www.ewtn.com](http://www.ewtn.com)

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

"Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return." Gn. 3:19

Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God. (Joel 2:13)

#### REFLECTION

The liturgical use of ashes originated in the Old Testament times. Ashes symbolized mourning, mortality and penance. In the Book of Esther, Mordecai put on sackcloth and ashes when he heard of the decree of King Ahasuerus to kill all of the Jewish people in the Persian Empire (Esther 4:1). Job repented in sackcloth and ashes (Job 42:6). Prophesying the Babylonian captivity of Jerusalem, Daniel wrote, "I turned to the Lord God, pleading in earnest prayer, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes" (Daniel 9:3). Jesus made reference to ashes, "If the miracles worked in you had taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they would have reformed in sackcloth and ashes long ago" (Matthew 11:21).

In the Middle Ages, the priest would bless the dying person with holy water, saying, "Remember that thou art dust and to dust thou shalt return." The Church adapted the use of ashes to mark the beginning of the penitential season of Lent, when we remember our mortality and mourn for our sins. In our present liturgy for Ash Wednesday, we use ashes made from the burned palm branches distributed on the Palm Sunday of the previous year. The priest blesses the ashes and imposes them on the foreheads of the faithful, making the sign of the cross and saying, "Remember, man you are dust and to dust you shall return," or "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel." As we begin this holy season of Lent in preparation for Easter, we must remember the significance of the ashes we have received: We mourn and do penance for our sins. We again convert our hearts to the Lord, who suffered, died, and rose for our salvation. We renew the promises made at our baptism, when we died to an old life and rose to a new life with Christ. Finally, mindful that the kingdom of this world passes away, we strive to live the kingdom of God now and look forward to its fulfillment in heaven.

#### LENTEN QUESTION

##### Q: WHAT IS LENT?

A: Lent is the forty day period before Easter, excluding Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday (the day before Easter Sunday). [This traditional enumeration does not precisely coincide with the calendar according to the liturgical reform. In order to give special prominence to the Sacred Triduum (Mass of the Lord's Supper, Good Friday, Easter Vigil) the current calendar counts Lent as only from Ash Wednesday to Holy

Thursday, up to the Mass of the Lord's Supper. Even so, Lenten practices are properly maintained up to the Easter Vigil, excluding Sundays, as before.]

#### LENTEN ACTION

Invite a non-practicing friend to Mass with you.

Fasting and abstinence on Ash Wednesday

#### PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God, you despise nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our brokenness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15

"Whoever wishes to be my follower must deny his very self, take up his cross each day, and follow in my steps."  
(Luke 9:23)

#### REFLECTION

What to Give Up...

Give up complaining... focus on gratitude

Give up pessimism... become an optimist

Give up harsh judgments... think kindly thoughts

Give up worry... trust Divine Providence

Give up discouragement... be full of hope

Give up bitterness... turn to forgiveness

Give up hatred... return good for evil

Give up negativism... be positive

Give up anger... be more patient

Give up pettiness... become mature

Give up gloom... enjoy the beauty that is all around you

Give up jealousy... pray for trust

Give up gossiping... control your tongue

Give up sin... turn to virtue

Give up giving up... hang in there!

#### LENTEN QUESTION

##### Q: WHY ARE THE FORTY DAYS CALLED LENT?

A: They are called Lent because that is the Old English word for spring, the season of the year during which they fall. This is something unique to English. In almost all other languages its name is a derivative of the Latin term, or "the forty days."

## **LENTEN ACTION**

Think of a person with whom you have a strained relationship and make some gesture toward improving that relationship.

## **PRAYER**

Direct our actions, Lord, by your holy inspiration and carry them forward by your gracious help, that all our works may begin in you and by you be happily ended. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

### **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16**

This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed. (Isaiah 58:6)

## **REFLECTION**

We must always remember what God tells us in Scripture: "Even if a mother could forget the child in her womb" - something impossible, but even if she could forget - "I will never forget you." And so here I am talking with you. I want you to find the poor here, right in your own home first. And begin love there. Be that good news to your own people first. And find out about your next-door neighbors. Do you know who they are? I had the most extraordinary experience of love of neighbor with a Hindu family. A gentleman came to our house and said: "Mother Teresa, there is a family who has not eaten for so long. Do something." So I took some rice and went there immediately. And I saw the children - their eyes shining with hunger. I don't know if you have ever seen hunger. But I have seen it very often. And the mother of the family took the rice I gave her and went out. When she came back, I asked her: "Where did you go? What did you do?" And she gave me a very simple answer: "They are hungry also." What struck me was that she knew - and who are they? A Muslim family - and she knew. I didn't bring any more rice that evening because I wanted them, Hindus and Muslims, to enjoy the joy of sharing.

- Mother Teresa

## **LENTEN QUESTION**

### **Q: WHAT IS A DAY OF FAST AND ABSTINENCE?**

A: Under current canon law in the Western Rite of the Church, a day of fast is one on which Catholics who are eighteen to sixty years old are required to keep a limited fast. In this country, one may eat a single, normal meal and have two snacks, so long as these snacks do not add up to a second meal. Children are not required to fast, but their parents must ensure they are properly educated in the spiritual practice of fasting. Those with medical conditions requiring a greater or more regular food intake can easily be dispensed from the requirement of fasting by their pastor. A day of abstinence is a day on which

Catholics fourteen years or older are required to abstain from eating meat (under the current discipline in America, fish, eggs, milk products, and condiments or foods made using animal fat are permitted in the Western Rite of the Church, though not in the Eastern Rites.) Again, persons with special dietary needs can easily be dispensed by their pastor.

## **LENTEN ACTION**

Schedule a fifteen minute period of silence today to listen to your heart and to the Lord speaking to you.

Abstinence from meat on all the Fridays of Lent.

## **PRAYER**

Lord, with your loving care guide the penance we have begun. Help us to persevere with love and sincerity. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

### **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17**

If you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; Then light shall rise for you in the darkness. (Isaiah 58:10)

## **REFLECTION**

"Repent, and believe in the gospel," Jesus told the crowds (Mark 1:15).

Perhaps at times we listen to sermons or read the gospels and apply the message to others. Often we can think of many people who need to repent. However we must be careful not to apply the gospel only to others. This call to repentance applies first of all to you and me. Recall that Jesus often preached in the synagogues and at the temple. He was preaching to the church goers and church workers. The call to repentance was not just to those sinners out there. The message of repentance is for Church leaders and workers. It is for you and me.

## **LENTEN QUESTION**

### **Q: WHEN DOES LENT BEGIN?**

A: Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which is the day on which the faithful have their foreheads signed with ashes in the form of a Cross. It is also a day of fast and abstinence.

## **LENTEN ACTION**

Make a note on your calendar to participate in the Sacrament of Penance.

## **PRAYER**

Father, look upon our weakness and reach out to help us with your loving power. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. ☐

# GOD TOUCHED ME

## A LETTER TO GOD – ON MY 65<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY

*By a devotee*

Thank you, God the Father, for giving me another year of life. Today is my 65th! It came rather too soon. I still feel like I'm in my 40s! Then -- I look in the mirror, feel the aching joints and sciatic pain and dismayed at my stomach overhang! I ponder on the day I married the man of my life, the day I gave birth to our daughter 27 years ago. Both are not anything perfect but they still are the great gifts from You I behold!



Thank you for all the people you have sent my way – making each of the 65 years really full of character! The dearest and closest to me continue to give me challenges every day – but in every challenge, come the assurance of how I am so much loved and cared for!

Thank you for all the experience; the times of success which will always be happy memories and learning chapters of my life; for times of failure which will always remind me of my many weaknesses and my need for You; for times of joy when everything was faultless and rosy; for times of sadness and fear which drove me to you.

Forgive me for the hours I wasted [and continue to waste as indolence is still very much a part of me]; for the chances I failed to take and for the opportunities I missed – because I

doubted you were with me. Forgive me for all those times I asked You, “why me?”

Thank you for letting me live long enough to see my own child [and to those I have been blessed to “mother”] launch their own lives with great hope and faith in You.

Thank you for health – despite the aches and pain here and there; and at least no mental deficiency that I can see as yet [except for the typical senior moments]!

Father, as I journey from hereon, I'd like to ask for physical health and strength to continue to serve you – no matter how long or short you have planned that service to be. I'd also like to ask for the mental faculty to be able to help, listen to and encourage others. I beg for the humility to age gracefully. Help me to continue to be of service to others and to focus on what I can contribute, not what I can no longer do.

Help me to talk to You more and listen to You more. Make Your Words in Scripture my priority – so I can continue to hear You more, know You more, honor You more, and love You more – so that I do not fear my approaching end.

Father, you have loved and cared for me my whole life – more than I could ever know!!! Thank you my Father – my loving, eternal Father! Please keep me faithful to You! □

Addendum to “God Touched Me” in January 2018 issue entitled:

### **“HUMBLE YOURSELF IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD AND HE WILL LIFT YOU UP.”**

Worthy to note are additional responses of some awardees which did not make it to printing time.

These awardees were surprised, excited, overwhelmed and were humbled by the appreciation awards because they felt it was not necessary and that they humbly thought their contribution was not a big thing since they gave it wholeheartedly. Receiving this award was akin to “adding a feather in one’s cap.” And just like the other awardees, they will continue to serve the Lord, whether in close proximity or far from the main domicile of The Spiritual Army of God the Father. They also stated that the service they have rendered was not short term but long term because they felt it is on a very personal level between themselves and the Lord. Because of the award, God has touched them through their parents who have

inculcated in them as young children, the value of giving rather than receiving, of helping the indigents and those in need in whatever way they can; and to give whatever, time, talent or treasure they have. In addition, the advice they can give to their fellow devotees is to be true to themselves. Let their love and devotion for our Lord and Mother Mary be the guiding star in giving service to our Almighty God.

All the awardees did not expect to be awarded for their services rendered, but our dear God has accorded this award to them when everyone least expected it.

St. Paul has stated, the reward for our faithful and consistent service to God is MORE SERVICE, MORE SERVICE, MORE SERVICE. □

# SPIRITUAL ARMY NEWS DISPATCH

## THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER CELEBRATES THE FEAST OF THE HOLY INFANT JESUS

The Spiritual Army of God the Father celebrated the Feast of the Holy Infant Jesus on January 20, 2018 at the St. Francis de Sales Roman Catholic Church in Las Vegas, NV. Prior to its celebration, a nine day novena that commenced on January 11 was privately prayed by the devotees.

The Liturgical celebration started with the entrance of the Holy Infant Jesus on a carousel decked with fresh red roses. As the Holy Infant Jesus was carried down the aisle, all the devotees stood up, raised their own Infant Jesus statues and swayed them up high to the Sto. Niño petition song. This was followed by floral offering and prayers to the Holy Infant Jesus. Liturgy of the Mass was celebrated, then the individual blessing of the Holy Infant Jesus statues and the children. Children were lectors, offerors and prayer leaders. Procession of the Infant Jesus from the church to the Monsignor Lavoy Hall followed where lunch was served. Dance petition and Sinulog were repeatedly danced. Children from Chino Hills and La Brea



performed for the Holy Infant Jesus.

The veneration and celebration of the Feast of the Holy Infant Jesus is a spiritual extension of Christmas and signals our journey to the approaching Lenten season. This devotion links its genesis to Infant Jesus from the Carmelite sisters dating back during the time of St. Teresa de Avila. The promise of the Infant Jesus in His apparition and locution states "the more you honor me the more I will bless you." The rest is history.

The image of Infant Jesus of Prague became an instrument to drive away evil spirits by other subjects during the reign of King Humabon and Queen Juana who used the image solely for her dance. This CELEBRATION became known as Sinulog to the Cebuanos and remains the theme of the celebration.

The Infant Jesus celebration of The Spiritual Army puts a little more faith-based tone by introducing a petition and thanksgiving song that focuses on honoring our Infant Jesus rather than an instrument of driving unsolicited spirits around. Every devotee of the Spiritual Army from Las Vegas and Los Angeles has in mind the impact of Sto. Niño in their lives as the song STO. NIÑO renders everyone in faithful awe. The music is the song of petition and a thanksgiving to Infant Jesus which at that very moment is already an answered petition and THANKSGIVING that only a devotee can blurt into dance and song praising Him with PIT SENIOR and VIVA SR. STO. NIÑO!!!

## THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER CELEBRATES THE FEAST OF THE BLACK NAZARENE IN CANJULAO, CEBU, PHILIPPINES

In the Philippines, the descendants of Serapio and Cresencia Berdin spearheaded the celebration of the Feast of the Black Nazarene on January 28, 2018 under the sponsorship of Dorie Cortes, who is a devotee of The Spiritual Army of God the Father in Los Angeles, CA and has now retired in Cebu. She was assisted by her niece, Crista Baguio. The celebration was attended by Canjulaos parishioners and devotees of The Sacred Heart of Jesus and Divine Mercy ministries. The Liturgy of the Mass was celebrated by Fr. Sherwin Nunez at the Chapel of the Eternal Father [Altar of the Black Nazarene].



The image of the Black Nazarene together with the images of the Holy Infant Jesus and the Blessed Mother were in procession atop a fully decorated pick-up truck, after which a sumptuous feast awaited the attendees. This celebration has been observed in Canjulaos for several years now.

## 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

### DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY APRIL 8, 2018

STARTING AT 2:30 PM  
ST. FRANCIS DE SALES  
1111 MICHAEL WAY  
LAS VEGAS, NV 89108

DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED  
IN LOS ANGELES

### MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP FEAST DAY CELEBRATION

JUNE 30, 2018  
5:30 TO 8:30 PM  
SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES  
1111 MICHAEL WAY  
LAS VEGAS, NV 89108

### THE ARK ENCOUNTER IN LOUISVILLE, KY

SEPTEMBER 28 TO  
OCTOBER 1, 2018

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

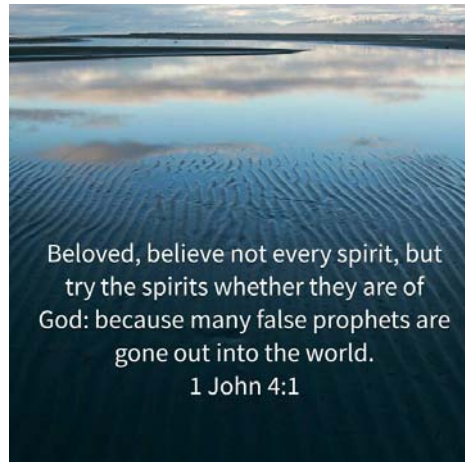
# SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

SEEKING INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS THROUGH THE BIBLE

## TESTING THE SPIRIT OF WHAT WE HEAR AND FEEL

*By Son Helper*

**W**hen I hear Your words, my Lord, let me feel Your Spirit that these words are in accord with the passages in Your Holy Scriptures. Give me, Lord, the discernment to distinguish the tactics of the evil one to distort God's words that will lead to deception, destruction, and rebellion against You. Lord, I ask you for a wise and discerning spirit. ☐



*“The days are common when everyone  
must open their hearts  
and praise God for  
His works of wonders and healing.  
My children prepare yourselves  
to face God's works unfolding before your eyes.  
Changes in society will be unraveled  
and true relationship with God  
will be revealed by people of prominence.”*

*Jesus of Nazareth, Your Loving God*  
01062018



# THANK YOU

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

*Psalm 106:2*

## THE 800 OUR FATHER DEVOTION | 2000 HAIL MARY DEVOTION

The Spiritual Army of God the Father acknowledges with thanks our generous February sponsors of the 800 Our Father and 2000 Hail Mary Devotions. 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

#### 2000 Hail Mary Devotion

Ines Carrington | Guada Eugenio | Robert & Evelyn Pua

### Los Angeles California

#### The 800 Our Father Devotion

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

#### 2000 Hail Mary Devotion

Norma & Marco Gamboa  
Frank & Beth Lim | Ben & Vincie Ong  
Marie Nguyen | Carolina Pineda  
Lilia Tuazon

## 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, Lord, for giving me the friends I have. I wish them and all their loved ones, the choicest and most abundant blessings from Our Almighty God and Father in heaven, today and all the days of their lives!*

*- Evelyn*

*Thank you Father for the grace to endure my physical pain with hope and trust in your healing love – each and every day!*

*- Alice*

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENT  
FOR THE HOLY INFANT JESUS FEAST DAY CELEBRATION**

We acknowledge the following who have generously shared their time, talent and/or treasure in making the Holy Infant Jesus celebration on January 20, 2018 possible.

**Thank you, Almighty God for sending your Angels named below:**

**LOS ANGELES**

Nonie Alapag  
Tess Almero  
Vic, Alice & April Araneta  
Adriana Arguello  
Frank & Lorma Batino  
Marilyn Batino  
Eli Matthew Caro  
Felix & Carmelita Caro  
Germy Consebido  
Norma Fuentes  
Gerrard, Denise, Makoa & Kayla Gier  
Carlos & Raina Gonzalez

Frank & Beth Lim  
Ruth, Bon, Brooklyn, Bella, & Noah Mercado  
Alice Ng  
Carolina Pineda  
Cora Pablico  
Connie Poblete  
JJ, Alexa & Reese Ramos  
Glecy Rosario  
Aida Terashima  
Rya, Jonah & Hannah Train  
The Spiritual Army of God the Father Choir

**LAS VEGAS**

Perla Abcede  
Isabelita Adina  
Cora Agudo  
Angelo Miguel, Princess Isabella and  
Matthew Albano  
Basco Family and Jaylene Basco  
Frank & Rosario Brown  
Lupe Bustamante  
Vi Carlos  
Ines Carrington  
Ashley Cota  
Alex & Gloria Dilan  
Dolly & Jean  
Ma. Julieta Enriquez  
Mr. & Mrs. Estrada and Amy Mary Estrada  
Guada Eugenio  
Mike Lim - DJ  
Gil & Mila Lumba  
Lupita  
Rod & Yonne Mijares  
Naty Montero

Ed & Eva Morales  
Fe, Angeline, Mark & Ma. Theresa Muego  
Leonila Olano  
Mila T. Parker  
Gerry Rivera  
Saguaro Home Health Care  
Fr. Ricardito Salditos  
Abelardo & Nicet Santos  
Gary & Maria Sheets  
Josie & Megan Soriano  
Sophia Tabangcura  
Jun Torres  
Joyce Ulmer  
Rolly & Norma Valeroso  
Paul & Isabel Vega  
Tony & Vangie Velasco  
Dan Villanueva  
Staff of St. Francis de Sales Paris

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### THREE LESSONS FROM LOURDES

Second, healing. In Lourdes' miraculous spring, our Lady reminds us of her Son's healing power. Saint Luke wrote of Him: "Everyone in the crowd sought to touch him because power came forth from him and healed them all." (Lk 6:19) That healing power continues to break into the world. Not every instance of healing is catalogued as a miracle or announced to the world. But every one of us can point to some recovery or healing that requires more than man's medicine to explain. Jesus continues to work little miracles of healing still. And He does so for the same reason as back then: not to entertain, not merely to astound, but to show that the kingdom of God has come upon the world.

Third, sacrifice. Our Lord did not heal everyone. Not everyone who prays for healing receives it. Not every visitor to Lourdes departs cured. This brings us to what are in many ways our Lord's greater gift and more profound miracle: the ability to suffer with Him – that is, to sacrifice.

Suffering is not optional in a fallen world. In our fallen human nature, the body tends inevitably toward death and the sufferings that announce it. Everyone suffers. How we respond to our suffering makes all the difference. We can and should use the natural, medical means at our disposal to bring about some cure and relieve our suffering. But we know that those are limited and cannot grant perfect or permanent relief.

Everyone suffers. But not everyone sacrifices. Suffering is the simple experience of physical illness, injury, disease, and so on. We all encounter that. Sacrifice, on the other hand, is the offering of this suffering in union with Christ. Saint Paul was the first to articulate this theology of suffering: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church." (Col 1:24)

What has come to be called "redemptive suffering" begins with the awareness that Christ suffered first and most of all, that all our suffering must be seen in light of His. Then we recall that He is present to us in our suffering such that He shares our suffering and we share His. He is not a mere observer but has drawn close, taken our suffering upon Himself, and remains with us in the midst of it. Finally, our suffering becomes a sacrifice when, conscious of this union with Him, we offer it to Him.

As Saint Paul told the Colossians that he offered his sufferings "for your sake," so also we should offer ours for specific intentions. As He hung upon the Cross, enduring the extreme of suffering, our Lord saw each and every one of us . . . every struggle. . . every wound. . . every hurt. . . every need. . . and He offered His sufferings for us. Attaching to our offering a particular person, group, or

situation helps to give meaning to our suffering and to unite it more perfectly to His. When we do so our suffering ceases to be merely that and becomes through, with, and in Christ an offering to the Father. ❑

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Fr. Paul Scalia is a priest of the Diocese of Arlington, VA, where he serves as Episcopal Vicar for Clergy. His new book is "That Nothing May Be Lost: Reflections on Catholic Doctrine and Devotion."

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### OVERVIEW OF THE MONTH

The Solemnity of the Presentation of the Lord on February 2<sup>nd</sup> harkens back to the Christmas mystery of Light except that now, Christ, the helpless babe, is "the Light of Revelation to the Gentiles who will save his people from their sins." Candles, symbolizing Christ our Light, will be carried in procession this day, as will be the Paschal candle during the Easter Vigil Liturgy.

"The Light of Revelation" shines more brightly with each successive Sunday of Ordinary Time, until its magnificence – exposing our sinfulness and need for conversion – propels us into the penitential Season of Lent. We prepare to accept the cross of blessed ashes on Ash Wednesday (February 14) and plunge ourselves into anticipating the major exercises of Lent – fasting, prayer, almsgiving – laying our thoughts and prayers on the heart of our Mother Mary. She, who offered her Son in the temple and on the Cross, will teach us how to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow after her Son. ❑

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### SAINT BLAISE

While we invoke Saint Blaise for his protection against any physical ailment of the throat, we should also ask his protection against any spiritual ailment – profanity, cursing, unkind remarks, detraction or gossip. St. James reminds us, "If a man who does not control his tongue imagines that he is devout, he is self-deceived; his worship is pointless" (1:26); and later, "We use [the tongue] to say, 'Praise be the Lord and Father'; then we use it to curse men, though they are made in the likeness of God. Blessing and curse come out of the same mouth. This ought not to be, my brothers!" (3:9-10). Therefore, may Saint Blaise protect us from all evil, physical and spiritual, which may attack the throat. ❑

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From Johnnette Benkovic's *Graceful Living: Meditations to Help You Grow Closer to God Day by Day*

# 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 – February 17, 2018

#### 2000 Hail Mary Devotion – February 24, 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

#### 2000 Hail Mary Devotion – February 17, 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.