



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

February 2017

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IMITATING THE HOLY FAMILY FOUR TRAITS THAT MAKE IT POSSIBLE

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Like many parents, every day my wife and I face real and challenging issues in our family. We have two teenage sons and three younger children. Like many families, our children fight and bicker.

Sometimes they are loving and kind, but at other times they are disrespectful. Sometimes they resist doing chores and homework.

In addition to these very common problems with our children, my wife and I have to balance work and family life, make educational decisions for our kids, track our finances, and work through marital disagreements. This is our life! While we would never trade any of our kids (at least not most days!), each day presents its own set of dilemmas along with plenty of tension.

This reality stands in stark contrast to the perception of the Holy Family that I cherished as a child. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph seemed to have such a peaceful existence. After all, Mary and Jesus never sinned, and Joseph behaved like a saint! This makes it easy to dismiss the "Holy Family" as passé or irrelevant in today's world.

That's why it's so vital not to settle for a shallow understanding of the Holy Family! Even though they lived in a different age and culture, the family life of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph can bring us hope by showing us how we too can live as a "holy family."

Beset with Trials. Joseph and Mary faced real problems, even serious crises that families typically don't confront. Imagine how you would feel if armed soldiers were searching house to house for your son or daughter, intent on murdering your child! Fear, rage, and bitterness might grip you, not just for days but for years. This is just one of the trials that Mary and Joseph endured. Afraid for their son's life, they fled their home and the only country they had ever known. Later they had to forgive those who had threatened them lest they be bound by bitterness.

Even before Jesus' birth, Mary had already endured trial. Many in her town may well have known of her pregnancy outside of marriage. Rumors in a small town can be vicious, and Mary was likely the butt of various jokes and gossip from those with whom she had grown up. All of this before facing the normal struggles of raising a son!

Jesus' parents also faced financial pressures. Because Jesus had been born into relative poverty, there was barely enough money to pay for even the least expensive Jewish circumcision. Living modestly was the rule by which they lived. They had to be frugal and still tithe. Then, as their son turned twelve, they faced perhaps their greatest scare: a runaway child!

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OVERVIEW FOR THE MONTH

www.catholicculture.org

The month of February is traditionally dedicated to the Holy Family. Between the events which marked Christmas and the beginning of Christ's public life the Church has seen fit to recall the example of the Holy Family for the emulation of the Christian family.

Though the shortest month of the year, February is rich in Liturgical activity, for it typically begins in one Liturgical Season (Ordinary Time), ends in another (Lent), and contains a feast (Presentation of our Lord) that bridges two other seasons (Christmas and Easter)! In addition, the faithful may receive in February three of the four major public sacramentals that the Church confers during the liturgical year: blessed candles, the blessing of throats and blessed ashes.

Ideally, the members of the domestic church should try to have the candles for their home altar blessed on Candlemas Day (February 2); and the next morning, on the Feast of Saint Blaise, all might receive the blessing of the throats. Always a solicitous Mother, the Church offers this sacramental during the wintry month of February, and also sets aside the World Day of Prayer for the Sick on February 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. □

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.
- 6 Paul Miki and Companions, Memorial
- 8 Jerome Emiliani; Josephine Bakhita, Opt. Mem.
- 10 Scholastica, Memorial
- 11 Our Lady of Lourdes, Opt. Mem.
- 14 Cyril and Methodius, Memorial
- 17 Seven Founders of the Orders of Servites, Opt. Mem.

- 21 Peter Damian, Opt. Mem.
- 22 Chair of St. Peter, Feast
- 23 Polycarp of Smyrna, Memorial

The feast of Saint Agatha (February 5) will not be celebrated this year because it is superseded by the Sunday liturgy. □

OUR CENACLE CORNER

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

THE MOTHER OF MERCY AND THE FORGIVENESS OF THE ADULTERESS

HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

THE SEASON'S FINALE

Dr. Pius Parsch

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THE MEANING OF CANDLEMAS

Candlemas is the closing feast of the Christmas cycle, forming a beautiful transition to Easter. In this feast we see Christ still as a little Child in the arms of His mother, but we also see Mary already bringing her son to the temple to offer Him as a sacrifice to God. It is primarily a feast of our Lord and in the second place a feast of Mary.

THE MEETING OF MANKIND WITH GOD

In order to understand fully the liturgy of this feast, we must see it in relation to the other great celebrations of the Christmas cycle; Christmas, Epiphany and Candlemas are the high-points of the winter cycle. In these feasts we can see a beautiful progression in mankind's reception of God's revelation and in mankind's union with God. At Christmas the "light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not comprehend it." Only a few receive the light: the mother, the shepherds who stand beside the crib. At Epiphany the light shines forth over Jerusalem, the Church: "Arise, be enlightened O Jerusalem, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee," and the pagan world flows out of the darkness to enter Jerusalem the city of light. On Candlemas day the light is in our hands, we bear it both in the procession which is a special part of today's celebration, and in the Mass. The Church as a bride goes forth to meet the Lord her bridegroom, and full of longing she receives into her arms the Divine Mercy become man.

It is this very climax that makes the feast so beautiful. On Christmas the Church is completely in the background, the newborn divine King rules the liturgy. On Epiphany the Church appears "as a bride adorned with the garment of salvation, bedecked with her jewels" and the liturgy celebrates a wedding feast. Now we take still another step forward: the bride adorns her bridal chamber and goes forth to meet the bridegroom. Therefore we sing the wedding song: "O Daughter of Sion, adorn thy bridal chamber and welcome Christ the King; embrace Mary, for she who is the very gate of heaven, bringeth to thee the glorious King of the new light. Remaining ever Virgin, in her arms she bears her Son begotten before the day-star, whom Simeon receiving into his arms, declares unto all peoples to be the Lord of life and of death and the Saviour of the world."

It is precisely in the meeting of mankind with God that the main point of this feast lies. Indeed the Greeks call it Hypapante, the Meeting. Mankind officially meets the Lord in His temple, the Church. The invitatory of Matins, as a rule expresses the thought of a feast in the briefest form; on Candlemas we sing this invitatory: "Behold the Lord, the ruler, cometh in to His holy temple. Rejoice and be

glad O Sion. Go forth to meet thy God." In the Mass we stand with outstretched hands to meet the bridegroom. we pray Psalm forty-seven: "We have received Thy mercy, O Lord, in the midst of Thy temple." So the thought of the meeting, the sacred union of humanity with her bridegroom Christ, rules the feast; the mediator of this meeting is the venerable figure of Simeon upon whom the liturgy dwells with loving attention.

A FEAST OF LIGHT: CANDLEMAS

A second important motif of the feast is the light, that great symbol of Christ and the divine life of Christ in us. The Church takes the words of the old man Simeon, "A light to enlighten the Gentiles," as an occasion to celebrate a true feast of light. She blesses candles to be used in her liturgy, and in the homes of the faithful. We should take these candles home to be burned during family prayer, during storms in times of trial, and especially when the sick receive Communion or the last sacraments are administered.

On this feast, the Church also reminds us of the baptismal candle which is a sign of every child of God and a symbol of the apostolic task of the laity. Every year on Candlemas we receive anew, as it were, a baptismal candle with which we can go forth with burning lamps to meet the Bridegroom when He comes to the wedding feast.

How beautiful is the symbolism of light! We each receive a blessed candle from the hand of the Church. Once again, as she has done over and over again with unstinted liberality through the course of the year, the Church gives us Christ and the Christ life. After we have each received our candle, we go in procession bearing the burning light which signifies Christian life and our task as Christ bearers.

The Palm Sunday procession is a counterpart of this Candlemas procession. On Candlemas we are light bearers, on Palm Sunday we are "martyrs," witnesses. The procession ends by leading us back into the Church, into the house of God which is the image of heaven; so shall we follow Christ through this life into heaven.

It is an especially beautiful and meaningful custom that at the Eucharistic Sacrifice on Candlemas the faithful hold their burning candles during the singing of the Gospel and during the canon, from the Sanctus until the Communion.

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GOD TOUCHED ME

DEVELOPING FAITH TO RELEASE THE MIRACLES IN YOUR LIFE

Have faith in God....for with God all things are possible to him that believeth.

Mark 11:22 | Luke 1:37

By Debbie Lorenzo, a devotee

My mother, Rosalind, had been a regular devotee of The Spiritual Army of God the Father since 2005. Once in a while, I would go with her to the devotions. Sometimes, I would drop her off and then go back to pick her up. In January 13, 2015, she passed away while recuperating at the hospital due to a hip surgery. From then on, I would attend the devotions whenever my work schedule allows.

After our 2000 Hail Mary devotion on October 15, 2016 at our Las Vegas Cenacle House, I asked to take home some of the flowers offered during our prayers and offered them to Mother Mary at my altar at home.

The next day, Evelyn called me and said that we were told to pick a petal from one of the flowers, pray for healing, and then rub the said petal on any part of our body that we are asking for healing. It so happened that I had this ugly and bothersome wart on my neck, so after praying, I rubbed the petal on the wart. After a few minutes, I felt a throbbing pain on the said wart and felt something oozing out of it. I

cleaned it and then, put a bandage on it. The throbbing continued for a while. The next day, when I checked it, it was dry and the wart came off. Now it is healed and is flat with just a little scar that is disappearing.

I thank God for this great miracle, although this is not the only miracle that God has shown me. There are more, such as the temporary job I now have, the day to day events in my life, the impossible things made possible by God, and most of all, the financial aspects which I thought I would not be able to handle when my

mother passed away. I know that all my trials and tribulations are only temporary and that God and our Mother Mary will see me through, keeping my faith and trust in them ☐



If you have any personal articles on God's miracle in your life you want to share with the devotees, we may be reached at the following e-mail addresses and phone numbers:
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SPIRITUAL ARMY NEWS DISPATCH

INFANT JESUS CELEBRATION

The feast day of the Holy Infant Jesus was celebrated on January 21 at the Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master.



After a nine-day novena which started on the 12th, all devotees, garbed in red, converged at the Convent of Sister Disciples of the Divine Master with one purpose alone: to give glory to the infancy of God the Father's only begotten Son!

The Spiritual Army of God the Father planned a simple celebration amongst the Los Angeles devotees. The festivity started with a procession of the statue of the Holy Infant Jesus, followed by the Eucharistic celebration officiated by Rev. Fr. George Fernandez. The children offered flowers to our dearly beloved Holy Infant Jesus.

Following was a shared reception where the devotees brought homemade and tasty dishes for lunch. The

celebration culminated with thanksgiving/petition and Sinulog dances.

We will see this celebration again hopefully in Las Vegas in January 2018. Exact dates will be announced later.

P I T S E Ñ O R ! ! ! V I V A S E Ñ O R S T O . N I Ñ O ! ! ! □

WE PILGRIMS TO THE HOLY LAND AND JORDAN

A group of devotees and friends of The Spiritual Army of God the Father, 43 people total, went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Jordan on December 5 thru 15, 2016. This pilgrimage itinerary has been planned according to Divine Providence through Mother Mary. The pilgrims embarked on this 10-day journey in the hope of deepening their faith and their love of Jesus Christ and the Blessed Mother.

As the pilgrims traversed the path of the prophets and of Jesus, the Holy Scriptures vividly came to life.

Inspired by these, the pilgrims aimed to experience a conversion of heart, a turning back to God and entering into a deeper relationship with Him. The ancient shrines, basilicas and sites on the itinerary are renowned for their spiritual and historical significance in the growth and development of the Church. The different holy sites visited include among others: Place of Ascension, Garden of Gethsemane, the Upper Room (site of the Last Supper), Dormition Abbey (site where Mother Mary was laid to rest), dungeon where our Lord was imprisoned, Basilica of the Nativity, Church of the Visitation, Mount of Temptation, Tower of Antonia (where Jesus was tried), Church of Flagellation, path of the Stations of the Cross, Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher (Jesus' crucifixion and burial sites), Yardenit (River Jordan on the Israel side,

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SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

HOW DOES JESUS TALK TO YOU?

by Cynthia Dagnal-Myron
www.patheos.com

You let God fill your mind with whatever He wants. And you may not even know that He's talking to you. You may not recognize a single thing from God in that moment. But throughout the day, He's going to have other people talk to you. And it is going to blow you away. You'll think, where did that come from? And you're going to know: it could only have come from God.

- Larry Smith

Of all the things I adore about Catholicism, Eucharistic Adoration is the one I love most. Sitting silently with my Jesus and just allowing Him to fill me up -- there is nothing else like it.

Even when I'm fidgety and distracted, I feel His loving touch. There's a reason I'm so antsy. And He's going to work me through it. Bring it to the surface, exorcise it; eventually, if not instantly. Sometimes He wants me to sweat a little bit first.

I used to come in praying like mad. I had books full of prayers, pamphlets I'd Google' d and downloaded to lead me through the "process" of a holy hour. But I eventually realized that it was the time I spent just gazing at Him "eye to eye" that made the magic.

Staring at my Lord Himself and emptying my head of all the words, all the "steps" allowed Him to take over. His voice, His magnetic presence, healed everything that ailed me. Answered every question that vexed me.

We've been in constant contact, my Jesus and I, since I was a child, in one way or another. Even as I rejected my mother's Baptist religion, I felt Him hovering over me, protecting and guiding me through all of the watershed moments of my life. And all the little ones, too.

I didn't tell other people about that. I didn't quite know how to explain it. And I was afraid that if I tried, friends and family would think I'd lost my mind.

I just knew that Someone Else was in charge. And that He was leading me far beyond the life that others had imagined for me. Far beyond the mean streets of South Side Chicago.

He had things to say, through me. Things that might make a difference to others. So I saw every challenge, every mystery, every triumph as preparation for something He wanted me to do.



He opened some doors, slammed others shut. I tried to honor His decisions, either way.

The near-fatal midlife illness that incinerated my earthly body also burned away all remaining spiritual barriers between us – His way of preparing me for the final journey directly into His arms, when it is done.

By all accounts, it should have killed or maimed me. Instead, He gave me strength and new life and His almost tangible presence right there beside me as I slid in and out of consciousness.

My doctors were astounded by the "insights" I offered, which allowed me to heal so completely. I am their favorite success story. But they don't know I had a "Consulting Physician" on the side with thousands of years of healing experience.

He brought me to His Church soon after, to give me even more powerful ways to communicate

with Him. Celebrate Him. I love having rituals and sacramentals I can reach for as if they were His hands. A rosary I can kiss and caress. Holy water to refresh my soul. Candles to light my way.

It is almost as though He decided that we didn't need words anymore. Mine, anyway. He does all the talking. All I have to do is touch the beads or sit down in that pew, and He takes it from there. He floods me with warmth and affection.

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THANK YOU

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

Psalm 106:2

800 OUR FATHER & 2000 HAIL MARY DEVOTIONS

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 and our Blessed Mother. The devotion continues to be a constant success.

Las Vegas, Nevada

2000 Hail Mary Devotion

Guada Eugenio | Mila Lumba
Nicet Santos | Maria Sheets

Los Angeles, California

800 Our Father Devotion

Adriana Arguello | Edith Avanzado
Frank & Beth Lim | Alice Ng
Ben & Vincie Ong | Carolina Pineda

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 Eternal Father for giving us Your love and mercy during the presidential election and inauguration. I'm so thankful that President Trump is taking the steps to defund Planned Parenthood and I'm praying he will continue leading our country by your grace and guidance from the Holy Spirit, upholding the sanctity of life . . . ALL LIFE, at ALL STAGES. I pray for continued enlightenment and spiritual guidance for our country and especially discernment for those misguided people who, in their hearts, are trying to seek You.

- DG

Thank you All for your assistance in all forms that came from your hearts during the Infant



Jesus Celebration. Everyone was so helpful and had the heart to extend to our visitors their welcome and show their heartwarming affection for our Baby God throughout the festivity!

VIVA STO. NIÑO and blessings to all!

See you again next year -- hopefully in Las Vegas!

- Bro. Victor

IMITATING THE HOLY FAMILY

If one of your children were missing for several days, wouldn't fear and guilt consume you? For days, Mary and Joseph must have battled the condemning thoughts that any parents would face in a similar situation: Will we ever find our son again? Is he hurt? Why didn't I keep him with me? Did he run off intentionally?

Can We Become a Holy Family? So, if Mary and Joseph faced trials just like ours, then what exactly is a "holy family"? And how are we supposed to live like them? First of all, even though much of their lives involved mundane routine, Joseph and Mary had a sense of God's call and plan for their lives. They knew that in raising Jesus, they played a unique role in God's plan. Even during the worst times, they couldn't escape the fact that God's hand was on their lives in a special way.

Of course, while no mother or father will ever again raise the incarnate Son of God as their own child, every husband and wife should have a similar sense of God's plan for their family. God has called each family together uniquely; no one else has been given the opportunity to love and raise your children. We must find that sense of awe even during the "dog days" of sibling rivalry and financial stress. God has called you personally!

Mary and Joseph's relationship wasn't based on common interests or similar personalities. While they may have been very compatible, this wasn't the basis of their unity. Their relationship with God was the foundation of their marriage, and it was this strength that held them together during trials. Similarly, it is vital that in our homes, at least one parent -- if not both -- find their strength through a relationship with God.

Husbands and wives don't always approach their faith in the same way. Often (but not always!), wives have a deeper sense of the need for God's presence in the family. In these situations, perhaps only the wife will find her strength through prayer. Single parents especially need to turn to the Lord for the energy and wisdom to raise their children.

Whatever the circumstances, it is a blessing when one parent deepens in his or her faith walk with God. During trials, the faith of one parent will produce strength and peace for the whole family. Of course, it's best when both parents are seeking to wholeheartedly follow the Lord.

Set Apart for God. Another aspect of being a "holy family" is that we have an awareness that we have been set apart for God to live out his call and build his kingdom. When we possess such an awareness, our lives will naturally reflect a different set of priorities than those held by most other people in the world. We don't need to own the most possessions. We don't need our children to win every game or academic award. We won't find our security in the pursuits that many others desire.

Instead, being a holy family means that we try to obey God in all of our decisions. God is not simply our co-pilot, helping us out during those few times when we call upon him. Instead, we want each decision that we make -- whether it involves parental discipline or family dinners -- to be pleasing to him. We want to listen to God and live in the way that he wants us to live. This is what it means to be "set apart for God."

We want to trust God, especially in the midst of the most difficult situations. When our kids are behaving badly and we don't know how to respond, when the funds in our checkbooks are low and the fuses are short in our marriage, we want to find a way to obey God's will in our relationships. This is what it means to be a holy family.

Another important aspect of living as a holy family involves repentance and prayer. Many of us recall the movie that defined today's definition of repentance: "Love means never having to say you're sorry." Oh, if this were only the case! If you and I are to have a holy and loving family, then the exact opposite is true.

Love means seeking and offering forgiveness on a regular basis. Love means not holding grudges and angers. Love means recognizing when I have wronged my spouse and making sure that our relationship hasn't been damaged. Repentance in a marriage is one of the most beautiful gifts from heaven. It softens the heart of the offended, and it heals the hurt in a relationship. We would all do well to practice repentance and forgiveness and to teach our children to do the same.

Being a holy family also means that we will find ways to pray together as a family. We find this difficult with our kids, especially our teenagers. But in the long run, short times of family prayer combined with family attendance and participation at Mass will have a positive impact on our children. As Mother Teresa used to say, "The family that prays together stays together."

Each Family Is Unique. I know some families who really are holy. One couple has raised six children, one of whom is disabled. During these last twenty-five years, they have encouraged each of their children, including their disabled daughter, to follow the Lord and to develop their unique gifts. Most importantly, their life and love witness to a vibrant faith.

I am a close friend of another couple who don't see eye to eye on a host of issues, but they too are holy. Both had been widowed, and combining two separate families into one was a real trial for them. They brought together different parenting philosophies and strategies for discipline, and sometimes their views conflicted severely. But because of their willingness to repent and forgive each other and because they sought God's way over their own, their children have experienced a beautiful home life.

A third couple is struggling with a strong-willed child. Even though they don't have any magic answers, they are trying to learn how to help their daughter. Her angry

outbursts and moods can negatively affect the atmosphere of the whole family. However, this couple has told me that their daughter has taught them how much they need God as the foundation of their family. They too are a holy family.

The strengths and weaknesses of each family differ greatly. But in every case, they are holy because they are trying to put Jesus first in their lives as best they can. One or both parents are seeking God in prayer. They are trying to make love and encouragement flow in their homes more than criticism and negativity. They are doing their best to teach their children how to repent to one another. And in every case, as a family, they attend weekly Mass.

Of course there will be moments when we fall short. At those times, we may even begin to wonder whether it's worth trying to imitate the Holy Family. Remember, however, that God is pleased with our faithfulness. While we tend to focus on our failures, he sees the intentions of our heart. When things aren't going well, it's tempting to throw up our hands in despair. Instead, we can call upon God in each moment of the day, asking him to bless our efforts to be a family that witnesses to his life and love. ☐

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THE SEASON'S FINALE

This has a profound meaning: in the Gospel and in the canon, Christ is present among us. That is why at every solemn High Mass lights and incense are brought in at these two times. On Candlemas the Church says to us: actually in every Mass you should bear lights in your hands, but the acolytes perform this action in your place. Now you yourselves are given the privilege of performing this function of the universal priesthood. So the Mass of this feast is a true Mass of light, almost the only one of the year.

THE PRESENTATION

On this feast the prophecy is fulfilled in which Malachy proclaimed the signal honor which the temple at Jerusalem would receive: that the Redeemer of the world would one day appear within its portals and be openly revealed to the people. For the first time Jesus enters His Father's house, the temple where He was to manifest Himself so often as the Messiah and the Son of God. The Introit, Gradual and Epistle are full of this thought, and the temple in Jerusalem to which they refer is a type of the true temple, the Church.

We commemorate and relive on Candlemas day the presentation of Christ, when He was offered in the temple to God the Father. According to the law every first born male child was dedicated to God in a particular way and must be presented in the temple to be redeemed. But for our Lord this presentation had a deeper meaning: God did not release His Son without a price; the presentation of Christ through the hand of Mary can be called the offertory of His whole life.

If we compare the redemptive life of Jesus with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the presentation in the temple corresponds to the offertory; the death on the Cross is the transubstantiation and elevation. At His presentation we can say that the divine sacrificial Lamb lays upon the paten. When the appointed time has come He will be offered to the Father; thirty-three years later upon the cross He will complete the sacrifice. Christ's presentation in the temple was indeed the offertory of the entire redemptive work, including the self-sacrifice of all the faithful.

THE PURIFICATION

Candlemas is also a feast of our Lady who brings to God the sacrifice of her purification. By ordinance of the Levitical law, every mother was obliged to be purified after the child birth for the word of the psalmist holds true of every child: "In sins was I begotten and in sins did my mother conceive me."

Certainly Mary was not bound by this law for she was the all pure one and her child was the spotless Lamb of God. Still, in humility and in a spirit of complete sacrifice with ready obedience she brought the offering of the poor, a pair of turtle doves. In imitation of our Lady and in memory of her purification, we Christians have a beautiful custom. As soon as a mother is able to leave her home after the birth of her child, her first visit is to the house of God; there she gives thanks for the safe delivery and offers her beloved child to the Lord, while the priest blesses mother and child. This is the liturgical blessing of the mother after childbirth. But this ceremony does not consist in a purification of the mother as under the Old Law; for us Christians no purification is necessary after the birth of a child. However we do commemorate Mary's act of humility in our present blessing: The mother stands at the door of the Church until she is conducted to the altar by the priest.

THE CANTICLE OF SIMEON

Our hearts are touched by the venerable Simeon with his ardent longing for redemption, the beautiful figure who had waited a whole lifetime for the Redeemer. With childlike faith, he prayed to the Son of God in the little child of the poor work-man; with glowing love, his heart grew young, for he held the infant Jesus in his aged arms. Now he demanded nothing more from this earthly life; he had seen his Redeemer and full of thankfulness he sang the night prayer of his life: "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, in peace according to Thy word."

This beautiful canticle has been adopted by the Church as her night prayer and thanksgiving for the blessings and graces of salvation. We find the song of Simeon at the end of Compline, the official night prayer of the Church. Each evening we remember Simeon, holding the child Jesus in his arms, and with thanksgiving retiring from the service of God. When we pray the canticle of Simeon we are in a similar position; we also h are in the service of God; every day we too receive the Lord spiritually into our

arms in faith and in grace and in the Eucharist: every evening we give thanks inwardly for all the mercies of God and we are ready whenever it is God's will to depart from this earth. "Now dismiss Thy servant, O Lord because my spiritual eyes have seen the redeemer Jesus Christ; He is my salvation; He is my light, dispelling the darkness of my mind and heart; He is my glory and my eternal reward!" May we always end the day with these thoughts, full of peace and surrender, which the Church gives us for our evening prayer.

CONCLUSION

Candlemas is the close of the Christmas cycle. On this feast the Church gives each of her children a candle as a souvenir of the gift of the whole Christmas season we have just celebrated. The candle will remind us all year that God is with us, that He is Emmanuel.

This is the day when we carry our lighted candle during the Gospel and during the canon and into our homes and everyday life. We are reminded that Christ is with us in a threefold way: in the word of God, especially in the Gospel; in the Eucharist; and throughout our lives in grace. Emmanuel, Christ with us: that is our Christmas gift for life.

Christ is with us in the word of God: Let us realize that the word of God is more than instruction, edification, consolation and warning; let us be aware that it has sacramental power. God comes with His grace in the sacraments, but also in the word of God. The word of God is a seed filled with life. Of course this seed does not bear fruit automatically, but only when the heart of man provides a receptive soil. Then the word of God indeed does bring forth Christ in us.

Christ is with us in the Eucharist: We are familiar with this great reality, that when we receive the Eucharist, we receive Christ. Perhaps we are less conscious of the reality that through receiving the Eucharist, we ourselves are gradually transformed and become more Christ like. The body of Christ is our manna through the earthly desert. It is a seed of glorification and a pledge of the resurrection.

Christ is with us through grace, especially the grace of our baptism. The candle which we receive on this feast is another baptismal candle. Since the Church supposes that we light and use up our baptismal candle during the course of the year, each year she gives us a new one. Each time she reminds us of the words of our baptism, "Receive this burning light and guard the grace of your baptism without blame, keep the commandments of God,

so that when the Lord shall come to call you to the nuptials, you may meet Him with all the saints in the heavenly courts, there to live for ever and ever." The candle we receive on this feast reminds us of baptismal grace. That grace is Christ in us, the real Emmanuel. May we bear in our hearts the burning light of baptism during the whole coming year.

Christ is with us in the Gospel, in the Eucharist, and in grace. We cannot come closer to Him while we are on earth. We must wait until we reach heaven and there we will possess Him forever in a glorified manner. □

Pius Parsch, born John Bruno Parsch (May 18, 1884 – March 11, 1954), was a priest of the Roman Catholic Church. Parsch was born in Neustift near Olmutz, Moravia, in what is now the Czech Republic. He was given the name Pius when he entered the community of Canons Regular in Klosterneuburg Abbey. He was a leading figure in the Liturgical Movement, publishing the results of recent liturgical scholarship in popularly accessible books in German. Some of these were translated into English, including *The Liturgy of the Mass* (Herder, 1940), *The Breviary Explained* (id., 1952), and *The Church's Year of Grace* (Liturgical Press, 1953).

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HOW DOES JESUS TALK TO YOU?

And sends me messages, as Smith said, on the lips of others or in magical ways, only I, recognize as gifts from my dearest Friend. Most recently, He hid one in a fortune cookie. My friend was puzzled when I burst out laughing as I read the words.

"Inside joke," I told her. But it was more like a pat on the back.

That is how we spend our days. He talks, I listen. He teases me, gently, when I "disobey." Little things go wrong -- or right. Just to guilt trip me, I'm sure, by giving me something I know full well I don't deserve. Reverse psychology, to get me back on track.

He amazes me. And I am consistently amazed that so few other people I know realize that Jesus is hovering over them, too. That they prefer to attribute their encounters with the Divine to almost anything except Him. I'm working on that. With His help, of course.

How does Jesus talk to you, fellow Faithful? I'm serious, beloveds. How do you reach out to Him? Or do you have to? Testify! Celebrate! This one's for us, so speak your truth loud and proud. □

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*I am your Mother Mary.
Prepare my children to put
together your efforts in
making the plan of God be
realized in the days to come.
The days ahead will be full
of struggles, lies and
mockery for all of you; but
will not be long that the
blessings of God will be felt
in each corner of society.
Prepare to do battle between
good and evil, my children.
This is the time when your
faith will be tested and your
armor of faith will be worn.
Be on this armor always. I
will be with you, my
children.*

*- Mary,
Your Lady of Peace
01072017*

UPCOMING EVENTS

THE ARMY'S PROJECT 2017

The Spiritual Army of God the Father has a lineup of various projects, which are continuations of the 2016 annual projects plus more, focusing on discipleship and evangelization through faith, prayers and deeds:

1. Continuing efforts for our toy drive, recipient of which remains to be children's hospital of Los Angeles.
2. Financial support for individual desiring to enter the religious life/priesthood. We currently have Ronald Panizares Roco, Jr. And another seminarian (name purposely withheld at this time) whose application is still under review.
3. Revival of the "Kitchen of Mary" feeding program by providing financial assistance and service hours to soup kitchen entities in the Los Angeles and Las Vegas areas.
4. Ongoing distribution of our Instant Care Pack to panhandlers/hungry and homeless. In the Care Pack are a blanket, a pair of socks, toothbrush, toothpaste, a \$5 bill and a Consecration Card to God the Father.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Confirmation Project: Cathedral Chapel of St Vibiana. Sponsoring the outreach program of the church regarding the newly confirmed individuals for 2017. •◻

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. | 1st 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 25, 2017

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 2000 Hail Mary Devotion.

IN CHINO HILLS:

Sacred Heart Devotional Group for Departed Souls

Every 1st 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.

1st Saturday Devotion

at Saint Frances de Sales Parish | 1111 Michael Way | Las Vegas, NV 80108 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 1st 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 11, 2017

*Please call (702) 255-9616 or (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 after the 7:30 AM Mass
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.