

1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2023

WHY THE CROSS?

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18)

> BY GREG LAURIE EVERY DAY WITH JESUS FORTY YEARS OF FAVORITE DEVOTIONS

A TRUE STORY WAS REPORTED ABOUT A COUPLE VISITING A JEWELRY STORE. AS THE JEWELER SHOWED THEM VARIOUS CROSSES, THE WOMAN COMMENTED, "I LIKE THESE, BUT DO YOU HAVE ANY WITHOUT THIS LITTLE MAN ON THEM?"

THAT IS WHAT SO MANY PEOPLE WANT TODAY: A CROSS WITHOUT JESUS. THEY WANT A CROSS WITHOUT ANY OFFENSE – ONE THAT WILL LOOK COOL

WITH THEIR OUTFITS. BUT IF WE COULD TRAVEL BACK IN TIME AND SEE THE CROSS IN ITS ORIGINAL CONTEXT, WE WOULD REALIZE THAT IT WAS A BLOODY AND VILE SYMBOL. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE WORST PICTURE IMAGINABLE TO SEE SOMEONE HANGING ON A CROSS.

THE ROMANS CHOSE CRUCIFIXION BECAUSE IT WAS



MEANT TO BE A SLOW TORTUOUS WAY TO DIE. IT WAS DESIGNED TO HUMILIATE A PERSON. THE CRUCIFIXION OUTSIDE ROMAN CITIES SERVED AS WARNINGS TO ANYONE WHO WOULD DARE OPPOSE THE RULE OF ROME.

IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY OTHER WAY, DO YOU THINK GOD WOULD HAVE ALLOWED HIS SON TO SUFFER LIKE THIS? IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY OTHER WAY WE COULD HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, THEN GOD SURELY WOULD HAVE FOUND IT. IF LIVING A GOOD MORAL LIFE WOULD GET US TO HEAVEN, THEN JESUS NEVER WOULD HAVE DIED FOR US. BUT HE DID ---- BECAUSE THERE WAS AND THERE IS NO OTHER WAY. HE HAD TO PAY THE PRICE FOR OUR SIN. AT THE CROSS, JESUS PURCHASED THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD.

If you were ever tempted to doubt God's love for you, even for a moment, then take a long hard look at the cross. Nails did not hold Jesus to that cross; His love did. \Box

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THE EDITORS OF THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER'S 1ST SATURDAY NEWSLETTER ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING THE CONSISTENT QUALITY AND ACCURACY OF THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER'S 1ST SATURDAY NEWSLETTER AND AS SUCH RESERVE THE **RIGHT TO REJECT OR EDIT THE CONTENT OF** ALL SUBMISSIONS FOR PUBLICATION. EDITING MAY INCLUDE, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, CHANGES TO GRAMMAR, SYNTAX AND STYLES, REMOVAL OF OFFENSIVE CONTENT AND REMOVAL OF PERSONAL NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION. SUBMISSION OF YOUR ARTICLE SIGNIFIES YOUR AGREEMENT TO THE TERMS AFOREMENTIONED.

FEASTS FOR MARCH

THE FEASTS ON THE GENERAL ROMAN CALENDAR CELEBRATED DURING THE MONTH OF MARCH ARE:

- 3 KATHARINE DREXEL (USA), OPT. MEM.
- 4 CASIMIR OF POLAND, OPT. MEM.
- 5 SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT, SUNDAY
- 7 PERPETUA AND FELICITY, OPT. MEM.
- 8 JOHN OF GOD, OPT. MEM.
- 9 FRANCES OF ROME, OPT. MEM.
- 12 THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT, SUNDAY
- 17 PATRICK, OPT. MEM.
- 18 CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, OPT. MEM.
- 19 FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT, SUNDAY
- 20 JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF MARY, SOLEMNITY
- 23 TURIBIUS OF MOGROVEJO, OPT. MEM.

- 25 ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD, SOLEMNITY
- 26 FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT, SUNDAY

THE SOLEMNITY OF ST. JOSEPH (MARCH 20, NORMALLY ON MARCH 19) IS A SPECIAL LANDMARK THIS MONTH IN WHICH WE WILL CELEBRATE THE GREAT HONOR BESTOWED UPON THE FOSTER FATHER OF JESUS. ALSO THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION (MARCH 25) WHEN WE PONDER OUR LADY'S FIAT. AND IF YOU ARE IRISH (WHO ISN'T), ST. PATRICK'S FEAST IS ANOTHER CAUSE FOR A JOYFUL CELEBRATION.

THANK YOU

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

Psalm 106:2

THANK YOU, OUR DEAREST LORD ALMIGHTY, FOR THE GOOD RESULT OF MY MEDICAL PROCEDURE ON MY HEART. YOU HAVE ANSWERED MY PLEA, THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER, MY GUARDIAN ANGEL AND OF MY PATRON SAINTS.

- A DEVOTEE

OUR CENACLE CORNER

SEEKING A DEEPER RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH MEDITATION OF PASSAGES FROM HOLY SCRIPTURES

Establishing the Relationship of Jesus and God the Father

GOD TOUCHED ME

Publish his glorious deeds among the nations. Tell everyone about the amazing things he does. — 1 Chronicles 16:24

How God's Mercy Helped This Pilot Through Addiction

By David Loe, Guideposts

Lord, you are good and forgiving, most merciful to all who call on you. Lord, hear my prayer; listen to my cry for help. On the day of my distress I call to you, for you will answer me. Psalm 86:5-7

HIS SOBRIETY WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE POWER OF PRAYER AND GOD'S MERCIFUL FORGIVENESS.

Sometimes in church I glance over at my wife and still can't believe how fortunate I am. Then I look down at our twin girls, five years old, and their little sister, a year old. Every time I look at them, I'm overcome with gratitude, and I think, this is more than I prayed for — a beautiful wife, three darling daughters. But I never deserved them, never deserved any of what I have, not one bit. God, how merciful You are. That thought comes to me a lot, more so than with most people. For the truth is, if it had not been for God, and for the faithful prayers of my parents and sisters, I most likely would be dead, or at least in prison. That's what I really deserved.

TODAY, 11 YEARS AFTER MY OLD LIFE ENDED, I STILL GET FLASHBACKS AND FEELINGS OF REVULSION. AND REGRET. A LOT OF REGRET. EVEN THOUGH I'VE GIVEN MY LIFE TO THE LORD AND I KNOW I'M FORGIVEN, I CAN NEVER FORGET THAT NIGHT BACK IN OCTOBER 1981 WHEN IT ALL CAME TO A HEAD, I REMEMBER LOOKING AT MY WRISTWATCH... IT'S ALMOST 10:00 P.M. BY NOW I SHOULD BE DEAD DRUNK AND FAST ASLEEP. BUT AFTER 12 HOURS OF DRINKING, DOWN TO THE LAST BOTTLE OF JACK DANIEL'S IN MY FRIEND'S LIQUOR CABINET, I'M STILL WIDE-AWAKE AND ALERT. A SHIVER RUNS THROUGH ME - AND NOT JUST BECAUSE OF THE CHILLY AUTUMN AIR. I'M HOLED UP IN A CONDOMINIUM OUTSIDE OF ATLANTA, HIDING FROM THE LAW. THE FEDS HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR ME FOR EIGHT MONTHS. THEY ARRESTED THE GUY I WAS WORKING FOR. ON A TIP THEY'D COME TO THE AIRPORT IN MISSISSIPPI JUST AFTER I FLEW

US IN FROM COLOMBIA. I MANAGED TO GET AWAY, BUT THEY GOT MY NAME. NOW I'M TIRED AND I'M SCARED.

I THINK OF MY PARENTS AND MY TWO SISTERS DOWN IN FLORIDA. THEY MUST BE WORRIED SICK. IF ONLY I COULD CALL. BUT IT'S TOO RISKY. I KNOW THEY MUST BE PRAYING... I'M A PILOT. I'VE BEEN IN LOVE WITH AIRPLANES EVER SINCE JUNIOR HIGH, WHEN I HAD MODEL PLANES HANGING FROM THE CEILING, SITTING ON SHELVES, EVERYWHERE. I'D GOT MY PILOT'S LICENSE WHILE IN COLLEGE MAJORING IN AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY. THEN IN THE MID '70S I LANDED A JOB FLYING FOR A SMALL COMPANY OUT IN ARIZONA. BUT THE COMPANY WENT UNDER AND I WAS UNEMPLOYED. I KEPT HANGING AROUND AIRPORTS, BUT THERE JUST DIDN'T SEEM TO BE ANY JOBS FOR UNEMPLOYED PILOTS. MONEY GOT SCARCE AND THE BILLS WERE PILING UP.

That's when I was offered a quick \$5,000 to FLY down to Mexico in a rented plane to pick up a 600pound load of marijuana. Since I'd smoked a little pot myself, I said okay. The job turned out to be easy — until I went to collect my pay. "Here's five hundred," the boss said. "You'll get more as we move the product."

The Next day he gave me \$1,000. Then later another \$1,000. When he asked me to go on another trip, he still owed me. I told him so. "Yeah, I know," he said, "but as soon as we get some more product, I'll pay you in full. In fact, I'll give you another thousand as a bonus next trip, 'cause you've been so patient waiting for your money. What do you say?" That was how it all started. From then on, despite the risks, I was hooked on the adventure and the cash. Although the boss always held a little bit back, I got paid regularly, enough for me to begin living it up. Wanting to get out of the business before I got busted, I moved back to Florida, where I had grown up. But Florida had become the country's main port of entry for marijuana, and soon I was back into running drugs. I began to live In the fast lane: All-Night parties, expensive clothes, antique cars, a waterfront house, a sailboat. My family was not impressed. I recall the time I bragged to my older sister, Marcia, "This is the life."

"YOU MEAN ALL THE PARTIES?" SHE RESPONDED. "ALL THE DRINKING? IS THAT WHAT LIFE IS ABOUT?" I CAN STILL SEE THE FEAR IN HER EYES. "DAVID, YOU NEED TO GET YOUR LIFE RIGHT WITH JESUS."

HERE IN THE CONDO I CHECK MY WATCH AGAIN: 10:30. I LIE DOWN AND GULP SOME QUAALUDES. THEY USUALLY KNOCK ME RIGHT OUT. BUT 10 MINUTES PASS, THEN 20...THIS IS CRAZY, SCARY. I'VE DOWNED ENOUGH ALCOHOL AND DRUGS TO KNOCK OUT AN ELEPHANT, BUT I'M STILL AWAKE. AND I KEEP THINKING OF MOM AND MY SISTERS, AND THOSE PRAYERS...

The GUY I worked for made bail and was already putting together new drug deals. On a prearranged day I called him periodically from a pay phone in Fort Lauderdale. "Don't worry," he said. "I got the best lawyer. He thinks he can get the whole thing thrown out on a technicality."

"WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO TILL THEN?" I ASKED.

"LOOK, DAVE, I'LL SEND YOU ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE HUNDRED. DON'T LOSE YOUR COOL, OKAY?"

TWENTY-FIVE HUNDRED...NEVER THE FULL AMOUNT. IT'S JUST LIKE ALWAYS. AND IF HE GETS CONVICTED, I'LL GET NOTHING. I LIE HERE WONDERING, IS THIS THE WAY IT ENDS? I CAN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF MY FAMILY'S HAVING TO VISIT ME IN PRISON. MOM, DAD, MARCIA, ELLEN...IF EVER I NEEDED YOUR PRAYERS, I NEED THEM NOW.

I USED TO MAKE JOKES ABOUT THOSE PRAYERS, ESPECIALLY AFTER A CLOSE CALL. FOR INSTANCE, THERE WAS THE TIME MY PLANE, OVERLOADED WITH GASOLINE, HAD AN ENGINE FAILURE AND CRASHED ON THE RUNWAY. THE PLANE DIDN'T EXPLODE AND I WALKED AWAY WITHOUT A SCRATCH. AND THE TIME IN THE MOUNTAINS WHEN I GOT LOST IN THE FOG WITHOUT ANY RADIOS: I COULD HAVE SLAMMED INTO A MOUNTAIN BUT FLEW OUT OF THE SOUP IN ONE PIECE. "I THINK IT'S ALL THOSE PRAYERS MY FAMILY IS SAYING FOR ME," I'D SAID. WE ALL LAUGHED.

EVEN THIS LAST TIME, WHEN OUR PLANE WAS SO OVERLOADED WITH QUAALUDES THAT I COULDN'T GET THE NOSE UP—I'D FINALLY JAMMED THE THROTTLES SO FAR FORWARD I THOUGHT THE ENGINES WERE GOING TO COME APART. YET WE MADE IT. WAS IT THEIR PRAYERS? WHY WOULD GOD PROTECT ME? I'M NOT LAUGHING NOW. WHY DOESN'T HE JUST WIPE ME OUT LIKE A COCKROACH?

I PONDER THAT FOR A MOMENT. DESPITE THE ALCOHOL AND THE DRUGS, I'M STILL THINKING PRETTY CLEARLY. I JUST CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT. MY LIFE, THAT IS. ALL THOSE TIMES I COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED...BUT WASN'T.

LIKE THE TIME A YEAR AGO. I WAS PILOTING A TWIN-ENGINE 10-PASSENGER AERO COMMANDER OUT OF HAITI. WE'D HAD THE FUEL SYSTEM FIXED SEVERAL TIMES. THEN SECRETLY WE TOOK OUT ALL THE PASSENGER SEATS AND PUT IN AN EXTRA FUEL TANK—ACTUALLY A HUGE RUBBER BLADDER FILLED WITH 100 GALLONS OF AVIATION GASOLINE. TAKING OFF FROM PORT-AU-PRINCE, WE ARRIVED AT COLOMBIA'S GUAJIRA PENINSULA AT DUSK TO PICK UP 2,500 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA.

The shipment wasn't there. So we waited. And waited. Finally, as darkness fell, our contact ran over. "The army intercepted the truck! Get out of here—now!"

WE TOOK OFF IN THE DARK WITHOUT THE DRUGS. AN HOUR LATER, CRUISING AT 13,000 FEET OVER THE CARIBBEAN, HEADING FOR FLORIDA, WE BEGAN TO LOSE POWER IN ONE OF THE ENGINES. I KNEW IMMEDIATELY WHAT IT WAS: THE FUEL SYSTEM. "I'M GOING TO HAVE TO LEAVE ON THE AUXILIARY FUEL PUMP," I TOLD MY COPILOT.

BUT BY 11:00 P.M. THE PUMP HAD BURNED OUT AND THE OTHER ENGINE WAS ACTING UP. FAR BELOW US WERE 20-FOOT SWELLS; IF WE WERE FORCED TO DITCH, THE PLANE WOULD BREAK UP. WE WOULD DIE. I FLIPPED THE RADIO TO THE INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY FREQUENCY.

"NO ONE'S ANSWERING," I SAID TO THE COPILOT. "I'M HEADING BACK TO HAITI. BUT WE'LL HAVE TO BLOW THE PLANE. CAN'T LET 'EM SEE IT'S BEEN OUTFITTED TO HAUL POT."

We were steadily losing, altitude. We were down to 5,000 feet and losing the radio navigation signal. In the dark we could miss Haiti completely. Then, up ahead, we saw lightning flashing. A thunderstorm. "That's Haiti!" I cried.

"YOU SURE?" THE COPILOT ASKED.

"Yes. This time of year, thunderstorms form over Land."

AFTER LANDING ON THE RUNWAY, THE COPILOT UNHOOKED THE EXTRA FUEL TANK AND SPRAYED GASOLINE INSIDE THE CABIN. "JUMP!" I YELLED AS I TOSSED A BURNING MATCH IN. THERE WAS A TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION. I FOUND MYSELF LYING AT THE EDGE OF THE AIRSTRIP, HALF MY HAIR BURNED OFF, MY FLIGHT JACKET MELTED. A GROUP OF SOLDIERS WAS RUNNING AT US, SHOOTING. THEY MUST HAVE THOUGHT WE WERE AN INVASION PARTY.

THE NEXT MORNING WE WERE SET FREE BY AN OFFICIAL WE'D PAID OFF EARLIER. BUT I KEPT THINKING, WE OUGHT TO BE DEAD. IT MUST BE THOSE PRAYERS...

IN THE ATLANTA CONDO I TRY TO FIT IT ALL TOGETHER. IT'S AS IF SOMETHING IS HOLDING ON TO ME, AND THE ONLY THING THAT ADDS UP...

MARCIA'S WORDS KEEP POUNDING IN MY HEAD: "YOU'VE GOT TO GET RIGHT WITH JESUS." HOW CAN I, AFTER ALL THE THINGS I'VE DONE? I'VE RUN FROM GOD FOR SO LONG, BUT NOW...NOW...IS IT TOO LATE? CAN EVEN A DRUG RUNNER BE FORGIVEN? I FEEL AS IF I'M COMING APART INSIDE. I CAN'T STOP THE TEARS. "GOD!" I CRY ALOUD, "GOD, DO WHAT YOU WANT WITH ME! DO SOMETHING!"

A SHORT TIME LATER I TURNED MYSELF IN TO THE FEDERAL MARSHALS. THAT WAS 11 YEARS AGO. TEARS STILL COME TO MY EYES WHEN I RECALL ALL THAT HAPPENED. A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK I GOT OFF EASY: FIVE YEARS' PROBATION AND A \$10,000 FINE. FROM A HUMAN PERSPECTIVE THEY'RE RIGHT. BUT GOD IS MERCIFUL. WHEN I REPENTED, WHEN I GOT RIGHT WITH JESUS, I DIDN'T GET THE PUNISHMENT I DESERVED. INSTEAD, I RECEIVED TOTAL FORGIVENESS.

BUT I CAN NEVER FORGET THE HARM I DID, AND I KNOW I HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY, ESPECIALLY TO KIDS. THESE DAYS I OFTEN SPEAK IN CHURCHES, AND I COUNSEL AND PRAY WITH THOSE WHO WANT TO GET OFF DRUGS. I DO IT OUT OF GRATITUDE. AND I KEEP TELLING MYSELF I'M HERE BECAUSE OF ONLY THREE REASONS: GOD LOVES ME, JESUS DIED FOR ME, AND MY FAMILY KEPT PRAYING FOR ME.

This story first appeared in the September 1992 issue of Guideposts magazine.



"I am your Mother Mary.

Continue to pray, pray, pray for peace and harmony amongst people and to respect each other's right to worship and existence. There will be continued movement of earth and water of enormous proportion as God's way of correcting mistakes and errors of humankind.

Pray my children for conversion and transformation of beliefs."

Mary your Lady of the Rosary 02172023

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

GOD'S TIMING BY VICTOR ARANETA

When Jesus Raised Lazarus from the dead this was one of His most memorable miracles. It powerfully demonstrates God's power over death . It also teaches us a great lesson regarding

When Mary Reached The Place Where Jesus Was And Saw Him, She Fell At His Feet And Said, "Lord, If You Had Been Here, My Brother Would Not Have Died." John 11-32 HIS TIMING IN DOING THE THINGS HE DOES.

WHEN LAZARUS' SISTER, MARY, FIRST MET JESUS AFTER THE DEATH OF HER BROTHER, SHE VOICED A MEASURE OF FAITH WHILE PROTESTING THAT HAD HE SOONER, COME LAZARUS WOULD HAVE STILL BEEN ALIVE. WHEN WE READ THIS ACCOUNT,

YOU CAN ALMOST FEEL HER GRIEF AT THE LOSS OF HER BROTHER. WE CAN IMAGINE HER DISAPPOINTMENT THAT JESUS WAITED SO LONG BEFORE COMING.

IN THE END, MARY AND HER SISTER MARTHA SAW GOD GLORIFIED WHEN JESUS BROUGHT THEIR BROTHER BACK TO LIFE. NOT ONLY THAT, BUT MANY OTHERS HAD WITNESSED THIS MIRACLE AND CAME TO FAITH IN HIM.

A LOT OF TIMES WE FACE A SITUATION WHERE WE NEED A MIRACLE, BUT THINK, HAS GOD FAILED US? IF SO, HOLD ON TO OUR FAITH AND WAIT. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT GOD OUR LORD HAS PLANNED AN EVEN GREATER MIRACLE, ONE THAT BENEFITS YOU, GLORIFIES GOD AND BRINGS OTHERS TO FAITH.

PRAYER: Sovereign God, I know that your timing is not always my timing. Please sustain my faith as I wait for you to intervene on my behalf in a way only you can. In Jesus' mighty name, Amen. \Box

Upcoming Events

1ST FRIDAY DEVOTION

MARCH 3, 2023

IN LAS VEGAS: THE CENACLE HOUSE AT 2:30 PM

IN LOS ANGELES: VIA ZOOM AT 9:30 PM

1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION

MARCH 4, 2023

IN LAS VEGAS: THE CENACLE HOUSE AT 1:00 PM

IN LOS ANGELES: THE MONASTERY OF THE ANGELS DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS AT 8:30 AM MASS AT 9:45 AM CENACLE AT 10:15 AM

1ST SUNDAY DEVOTION

MARCH 5, 2023

IN LAS VEGAS: ST. SHARBEL CATHOLIC CHURCH MASS AT 9:30 AM FOLLOWED BY DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS AT THE CHAPEL

IN LOS ANGELES: THE MONASTERY OF THE ANGELS DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS AT 10:30 AM MASS & BENEDICTION AT 11:30 AM

800 OUR FATHER DEVOTION

MARCH 18, 2023

IN LAS VEGAS: THE CENACLE HOUSE AT 8:00 AM

> IN LOS ANGELES: VIA ZOOM MASS AT 9:00 AM