



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2012

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HAVE MERCY, LORD! EXAMINING DAVID'S PRAYER OF REPENTANCE

By: Craig E. Morrison, O.Carm.

Every year as we gather for Mass on Ash Wednesday, we hear the prophet Joel calling us to "rend our hearts." Then we pray Psalm 51. Five times we repeat the response: "Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned" as we utter this prayer of repentance -- a prayer that the church urges us to carry in our "rent" hearts right up to Good Friday.

As its opening indicates, Jewish tradition ascribes Psalm 51 to King David, seeing it as his prayer of deep repentance for two sins that could have been ripped from today's headlines. Our meditation on his words spurs us to confess our own sins, to rend our own hearts, and then to seek and celebrate God's mercy and pardon.

A Faithful Servant Falls. What had David done that he felt moved to ask forgiveness in such a heart-felt way? After all, he was God's own choice to sit on the throne of Israel. When the prophet Samuel sought a successor to King Saul, God sent him to the sons of Jesse. "Are these all the sons you have?" Samuel asked after meeting seven of the young men. "There is still the youngest, who is tending the sheep," Jesse answered. That son -- David -- was the one God wanted (1 Samuel 16:11-12). As the new king rose to power, God established a covenant with him, promising to establish his throne and house forever (2 Samuel 7:8-16).

For his part, David had become God's faithful servant. But one fateful day -- as chapters 11 and 12 of 2 Samuel recount -- something happened. As David walked on the rooftop terrace of his palace in the late afternoon, he spotted a beautiful woman bathing. Bathsheba was her name, his courtiers informed him. She was the wife of Uriah, a soldier in Israel's army. That didn't prevent David from summoning her to his bedchamber. Soon afterward, however, Bathsheba sent a message telling him that she was pregnant.

How to cover up this royal liaison? Since Uriah was deployed, he would eventually have discovered that the child was not his. To ward off the soldier's suspicion, King David called him back from combat and ordered him to go home to his wife. Surprised, Uriah refused, protesting that he could never enjoy himself while his comrades were out there on the battlefield. And so, David plotted to have him killed on the front line. Then he married Bathsheba -- a seemingly magnanimous gesture: How kind of the king to provide for the widow of one of his soldiers!

David had successfully concealed his sin from everyone. Everyone except God.

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OVERVIEW FOR THE MONTH

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The month of April is dedicated to The Holy Spirit. The first week of the month falls during the liturgical season of Lent which is represented by the liturgical color purple -- a symbol of penance, mortification and the sorrow of a contrite heart. The remainder of the month is the beginning of the Easter season . The liturgical color is white -- the color of light, a symbol of joy, purity and innocence (absolute or restored).

As our Lenten journey comes to a close we prepare to follow Christ all the way to the cross and to witness His glorious Resurrection. Hopefully we have sacrificed and prayed so that we are now able to more fully reap the fruits of a well spent Lent. After our solemn commemoration of the last days and death of Our Lord we will spend the remainder of the month of April celebrating. As Spring breaks forth even nature will join us as buds and blooms begin to surface and we spend this month basking in the joy of the Resurrection. We continue throughout the entire month our cry, "Christ is risen, Christ is truly risen." □

FEASTS FOR APRIL

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

- 1 Palm Sunday, Sunday
- 5 Holy Thursday, Triduum
- 6 Good Friday, Triduum
- 7 Holy Saturday, Triduum
- 8 Easter Sunday, Solemnity
- 15 Divine Mercy Sunday, Solemnity
- 21 Anselm, Opt. Mem.
- 22 Third Sunday of Easter, Sunday
- 23 George; Adalbert, Opt. Mem.
- 24 St. Fidelis, Opt. Mem.
- 25 St. Mark, Feast
- 28 Peter Chanel (NZ, Feast); Louis Mary de Montfort; Gianna Molla, mother (Italy), Opt. Mem.
- 30 Pius V; Bl. Marie de l'Incarnacion (Can), Memorial

The feasts of St. Francis of Paola (April 2), St. Isidore (April 4), St. Vincent Ferrer (April 5), St. John Baptist de la Salle (April 7), St. Stanislaus (April 11) and St. Martin I (April 13) fall during Holy Week and Easter Week and are superseded by the Holy Days. The feast of St. Catherine of Siena (April 29) is superseded by the Sunday liturgy. □

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

BLESSED PALMS IN THE HOME

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The procession at Mass with the palms was a public display of homage and loyalty to Christ our King and Redeemer. Christ is the King of our home, so we should incorporate the blessed palms and a family prayer service as part of this day.

Palm trees aren't readily available in some vicinity, there are other plants like olive branches, box, yew, spruce, willows and pussy-willows that are blessed and used the same way as palms for Passion Sunday.

Reverence for Blessed Palms. Because the palms are blessed, they are now sacramentals, which "are sacred signs instituted by the Church. They prepare [us] to receive the fruit of the sacraments and sanctify different circumstances of life" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1667). Sacramentals should be treated with respect and never be thrown away. Palms may only be burned or buried.



It is an old practice to burn blessed palm branches in times of forthcoming natural disasters, such as hurricanes or tornadoes, asking God to avert or lessen the impending disaster. This practice is not recommended, because of the instruction in the Directory on Popular Piety:

The faithful, however, should be instructed as to the meaning of this celebration so that they might grasp its significance. They should be opportunely reminded that the important thing is participation at the procession and not only the obtaining of palm or olive branches. Palms or olive branches should not be kept as amulets, or for therapeutic or magical reasons to dispel evil spirits or to prevent the damage these cause in the fields or in the homes, all of which can assume a certain superstitious guise.

Palms and olive branches are kept in the home as a witness to faith in Jesus Christ, the messianic king, and in his Paschal Victory."

SACRED TRIDUUM

From Directory on Popular Piety

The last three days of Holy Week are referred to as the Easter or Sacred Triduum (Triduum Sacrum), the three-part drama of Christ's redemption: Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

HOLY THURSDAY

Holy Thursday is also known as "Maundy Thursday." The word maundy comes from the Latin word *mandatum* (commandment) which is the first word of the Gospel acclamation:

Mandatum novum do vobis dicit Dominus, ut diligatis invicem, sicut dilexi vos. "I give you a new commandment: Love one another as I have loved you." (John 13:34)

These are the words spoken by our Lord to His apostles at the Last Supper, after he completed the washing of the feet. We should imitate Christ's humility in the washing of the feet.

By meditating on the Gospels (cf. Matt 26:1 ff.; Mark 14:1 ff.; Luke 22:1 ff.; John 13:1 ff.), we can recall to mind Jesus' actions of that day. Father Bernard Strasser summarizes all the events of that first Holy Thursday:

... They included: (1) the eating of the Easter lamb or the paschal meal; (2) the washing of the disciple's feet; (3) the institution of the Most Holy Eucharist (the first Mass at which Jesus Christ, the eternal high priest, is the celebrant; the first Communion of the apostles; the first conferring of Holy Orders); (4) the foretelling of Judas' betrayal and Peter's denials; (5) the farewell discourse and priestly prayer of Jesus; (6) the agony and capture of Jesus in the Garden of Olives. — ©1947, With Christ Through the Year.

In all the German speaking countries, Slavic nations and in Hungary this day is also known as "Green Thursday." The word is a corruption of the German word *grunen* (to mourn) to the German word for green (*grün*). Many people believe they must eat green at today's meal, which is probably derived from the Jewish Passover meal that included bitter herbs.

CHRISM MASS

There are only two Masses allowed on Holy Thursday -- the Chrism Mass and the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. In each diocese there is a Chrism Mass or Mass of the Holy Oils, usually said in the morning at the cathedral of the diocese. Catholics should make an effort to participate at the Mass at least once in their lives, to experience the communion of priests with their bishop.

All the priests of the diocese are invited to concelebrate



with the bishop. The holy oils to be used throughout the diocese for the following year in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders and the Sacrament of the Sick are blessed by the bishop at this Mass. This Mass also celebrates the institution of the priesthood.

MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

During the evening of Holy Thursday, the Mass of the Lord's Supper is celebrated. It is celebrated in the evening because the Passover began at sundown. There is only one Mass, at which the whole community and priests of the parish participate. This is a very joyful Mass, as we recall the institution of the Holy Eucharist and the priesthood. The priests wear white vestments, the altar is filled with flowers, the Gloria is sung and the bells are rung. After the Gloria, we shall not hear organ music and the bells until the Easter Vigil. The Liturgy of the Mass recalls the Passover, the Last Supper, which includes the Washing of the Feet. The hymn *Ubi Caritas* or *Where Charity and Love Prevail* is usually sung at this time. After the Communion Prayer, there is no final blessing. The Holy Eucharist is carried in procession through Church and then transferred into a place of reposition, usually a side chapel. The hymn *Pange Lingua* is also usually sung at this time.



After the Mass, we recall the Agony in the Garden, and the arrest and imprisonment of Jesus. The altar is stripped bare, crosses are removed or covered. The Eucharist has been placed in an altar of repose, and most churches are open for silent adoration, to answer Christ's invitation "*Could you not, then, watch one hour with me?*" (Matt 26:40)

THE ALTAR OF REPOSE

When the Eucharist is processed to the altar of repose after the Mass of the Lord's Supper, we should remain in quiet prayer and adoration, keeping Christ company. There is a tradition, particularly in big cities with many parishes, to try and visit seven churches and their altar of repose during this evening.



Popular piety is particularly sensitive to the adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament in the wake of the Mass of the Lord's supper. Because of a long historical process, whose origins are not entirely clear, the place of repose has traditionally been referred to as "a holy sepulchre". The faithful go there to venerate Jesus

who was placed in a tomb following the crucifixion and in which he remained for some forty hours.

It is necessary to instruct the faithful on the meaning of the reposition: it is an austere solemn conservation of the Body of Christ for the community of the faithful which takes part in the liturgy of Good Friday and for the viaticum of the infirmed. It is an invitation to silent and prolonged adoration of the wondrous sacrament instituted by Jesus on this day.

In reference to the altar of repose, therefore, the term "sepulchre" should be avoided, and its decoration should not have any suggestion of a tomb. The tabernacle on this altar should not be in the form of a tomb or funerary urn. The Blessed Sacrament should be conserved in a closed tabernacle and should not be exposed in a monstrance.

After mid-night on Holy Thursday, the adoration should conclude without solemnity, since the day of the Lord's Passion has already begun.

GOOD FRIDAY

"It is accomplished; and bowing his head he gave up his spirit."

Today the whole Church mourns the death of our Savior. This is traditionally a day of sadness, spent in fasting and prayer. The title for this day varies in different parts of the world: "Holy Friday" for Latin nations, Slavs and Hungarians call it "Great Friday," in Germany it is "Friday of Mourning," and in Norway, it is "Long Friday." Some view the term "Good Friday" (used in English and Dutch) as a corruption of the term "God's Friday." This is another obligatory day of fasting and abstinence. In Ireland, they practice the "black fast," which is to consume nothing but black tea and water.

LITURGY

According to the Church's ancient tradition, the sacraments are not celebrated on Good Friday or Holy Saturday. "Celebration of the Lord's Passion," traditionally known as the "Mass of the Presanctified," (although it is not a mass) is usually celebrated around three o'clock in the afternoon, or later, depending on the needs of the parish.

The altar is completely bare, with no cloths, candles nor cross. The service is divided into three parts: Liturgy of

the Word, Veneration of the Cross and Holy Communion. The priest and deacons wear red or black vestments. The liturgy starts with the priests and deacons going to the altar in silence and prostrating themselves for a few moments in silent prayer, then an introductory prayer is prayed.

In part one, the Liturgy of the Word, we hear the most famous of the Suffering Servant passages from Isaiah (52:13-53:12), a pre-figurement of Christ on Good Friday. Psalm 30 is the Responsorial Psalm "Father, I put my life in your hands." The Second Reading, or Epistle, is from the letter to the Hebrews, 4:14-16; 5:7-9. The Gospel Reading is the Passion of St. John.



The General Intercessions conclude the Liturgy of the Word. The ten intercessions cover these areas: (1) For the Church, (2) For the Pope, (3) For the clergy and laity of the Church, (4) For those preparing for baptism, (5) For the unity of Christians, (6) For the Jewish people, (7) For those who do not believe in Christ, (8) For those who do not believe in God, (9) For all in public office, (10) For those in special need.

Part two is the Veneration of the Cross. A cross, either veiled or unveiled, is processed through the Church, and then venerated by the congregation. We joyfully venerate and kiss the wooden cross "on which hung the Savior of the world." During this time the "Reproaches" are usually sung or recited.

Part three, Holy Communion, concludes the Celebration of the Lord's Passion. The altar is covered with a cloth and the ciboriums containing the Blessed Sacrament are brought to the altar from the place of reposition. The Our Father and the *Ecce Agnus Dei* ("This is the Lamb of God") are recited. The congregation receives Holy Communion, there is a "Prayer After Communion," and then a "Prayer Over the People," and everyone departs in silence.

HOLY SATURDAY

Holy Saturday (from *Sabbatum Sanctum*, its official liturgical name) is sacred as the day of the Lord's rest; it has been called the "Second Sabbath" after creation. The day is and should be the most calm and quiet day of the entire Church year, a day broken by no liturgical function. Christ lies in the grave, the Church sits near and mourns. After the great battle He is resting in peace, but upon Him we see the scars of intense suffering . . . The mortal wounds on His Body remain visible . . . Jesus' enemies

are still furious, attempting to obliterate the very memory of the Lord by lies and slander.

Mary and the disciples are grief-stricken, while the Church must mournfully admit that too many of her children return home from Calvary cold and hard of heart. When Mother Church reflects upon all of this, it seems as if the wounds of her dearly Beloved were again beginning to bleed.

According to tradition, the entire body of the Church is represented in Mary: she is the "*credentium collectio universa*" (Congregation for Divine Worship, *Lettera circolare sulla preparazione e celebrazione delle feste pasquali*, 73). Thus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, as she waits near the Lord's tomb, as she is represented in Christian tradition, is an icon of the Virgin Church keeping vigil at the tomb of her Spouse while awaiting the celebration of his resurrection.



The pious exercise of the *Ora di Maria* is inspired by this intuition of the relationship between the Virgin Mary and the Church: while the body of her Son lays in the tomb and his soul has descended to the dead to announce liberation from the shadow of darkness to his ancestors, the Blessed Virgin Mary, foreshadowing and representing the Church, awaits, in faith, the victorious triumph of her Son over death. -- Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy

Although we are still in mourning, there is much preparation during this day to prepare for Easter. Out of the kitchen comes the smell of Easter pastries and bread, the lamb or hams and of course, the Easter eggs.

There are no liturgies celebrated this day, unless the local parish priest blesses the food baskets. In Slavic countries there is a blessing of the traditional Easter foods, prepared in baskets: eggs, ham, lamb and sausages, butter and cheeses, horseradish and salt and the Easter breads. The Easter blessings of food owe their origin to the fact that these particular foods, namely, flesh meat and milk products, including eggs, were forbidden in the Middle Ages during the Lenten fast and abstinence. When the feast of Easter brought the rigorous fast to an end, and these foods were again allowed at table, the people showed their joy and gratitude by first taking the food to church for a blessing. Moreover, they hoped that the Church's blessing on such edibles would prove a remedy for whatever harmful effects the body might have suffered from the long period of self-denial. Today the Easter blessings of food are still held in many churches in the United States, especially in Slavic parishes.

If there is no blessing for the Easter foods in the parish, the father of the family can pray the Blessing over the Easter foods.

It is during the night between Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday that the Easter Vigil is celebrated. The service begins around ten o'clock, in order that the solemn vigil Mass may start at midnight.

EASTER: SOLEMNITY OF SOLEMNITIES

A Short Overview on this Solemnity of Easter

By Jennifer Gregory Miller
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We have reached our goal: today is Easter, the day we celebrate Christ's resurrection. This is the single most important feast day of the Church. In the words of the Eastern church calendar this is "the sacred and great Sunday of the Pasch, on which we celebrate the life-giving Resurrection of our Lord and God, the Savior Jesus Christ." (Francis X. Weiser, S.J., *The Easter Book*). With Christ's death and resurrection, Christ has conquered sin and death, the gates of heaven are now open to man. This is the "Feast of Feasts," the "Solemnity of Solemnities," the highest Feast of the Church, the holiest day of the year. Like the Churches, the household is decorated with numerous flowers, like lilies and hyacinths, and the table decorated with the finest linens and place settings. Francis Fernandez from his *In Conversation with God: Daily Meditations, Volume Two* explains why this feast is so pivotal:

The glorious resurrection of the Lord is the key to interpreting his whole life, and the ground of our faith. Without this victory over death, says St. Paul, all our preaching would be useless and our faith in vain. Furthermore, the guarantee of our future resurrection is secured upon the resurrection of Christ, because although we were dead through sin, God, full of mercy, moved by the infinite compassion with which he loved, gave us Christ...and He raised us with him. Easter is the celebration of our Redemption, and therefore the celebration of thanksgiving and joy.

The Resurrection of the Lord is a central reality of the Catholic faith, and has been preached as such since the beginning of Christianity. The importance of this miracle is so great that the Apostles are, above all else, witnesses of Jesus' resurrection (cf. Acts 1:22; 2:43; 3:15; etc.). They announce that Christ is alive, and this becomes the nucleus of all their preaching. After twenty centuries this is what we announce to the world: Christ lives! The fact of the resurrection is the supreme argument for the divinity of Our Lord....

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KNOWING OUR SAINTS

ST. FIDELIS OF SIGMARENEN, MARTYR FEAST- APRIL 24

By Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

Mark Rey was born in 1577 at Sigmaringen, Prussia. His father Johannes Rey was burgomaster of the city. He entered the University of Freiburg in Breisgau to study law and philosophy. After receiving his degree, he was chosen to be tutor to three young princes with whom he traveled in France and Italy.

The father of St. Fidelis was burgomaster of Sigmaringen, Prussia. In 1611, he returned to Freiburg to earn his doctorate in canon and civil law, and then began practice as a lawyer in Kolmar. Disappointed with the open fraud in the law courts and general corruption of society, he decided to abandon the world. He was ordained priest the following year, and immediately after was received into the Capuchin Order at Freiburg at age 35. He took the name of Fidelis.



St. Fidelis was, therefore, an audacious, strong, and vigorous missionary who willingly faced martyrdom. He presents to us an admirable example of fortitude. In notes that he left about his life during that period, he wrote: "From now on I want to live in complete poverty, chastity, and obedience amidst sufferings and persecutions and in austere penance and profound humility. I came from the womb of my mother with nothing, and with nothing I desire to return to the arms of my Savior."

St. Fidelis was a remarkable orator. He preached in numerous German, Austrian and Swiss cities. From the beginning of his apostolic career, he struggled tirelessly to convert heretics; he did not confine his efforts to the pulpit, but used his pen as well. He wrote many pamphlets against Calvinism and Zwinglianism.

He was named Superior first at the Monasteries of Rheinfelden and Freiburg, and afterwards at Feldkirch, where he exerted a strong influence. Because of this, he was also appointed by the Papal Nuncio to reform monasteries of other Orders.

Since Calvinism was spreading over Switzerland, especially in the region of the Grisons, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith appointed the Capuchins to combat it there. Fr. Fidelis was chosen to be head of the mission. "Shortly you will see me no longer," he

prophesied in a sermon in Feldkirch, "for I was called to shed my blood for the Faith."

St. Fidelis labored indefatigably and with such success in the region that the heretics became alarmed and set themselves to inflame the people against him. They spread rumors that his mission was political rather than religious, and that he was preparing the way for the subjugation of the country by Austria.

In January 1622 on returning to the region of the Grisons, he was met everywhere with the cry: "Death to the Capuchins!" On April 24, 1622, being then at Grusch, he made his confession and afterwards celebrated Mass and preached. Then he set out for Sevis. When he arrived, he entered the church and began to preach, but was interrupted by a sudden tumult both within and without the church. Several Austrian soldiers who were guarding the doors of the church were killed by the attackers and Fidelis himself was struck.

Outside the church he was surrounded by a crowd led by Calvinist preachers who offered to save his life if he would apostatize. A Calvinist discharged his musket at him in the church, and the Catholics entreated him to leave the place. He answered, that death was his gain and his joy, and that he was ready to lay down his life in God's cause. On his road back to Gruch, he met twenty Calvinist soldiers with a minister at their head. They called him false prophet, and urged him to embrace their sect. He answered: "I am sent to you to confute, not to embrace your heresy. The Catholic religion is the faith of all ages, I fear not death." One of them beat him down to the ground by a stroke on the head with his backword. The martyr rose again on his knees, and stretching out his arms in the form of a cross, said with a feeble voice "Pardon my enemies, O Lord: blinded by passion they know not what they do. Lord Jesus, have pity on me. Mary, mother of Jesus, assist me." Another stroke clove his skull, and he fell to the ground and lay in his pool of blood. The soldiers, not content with this, added many stabs in his body, and hacked his left leg, as they said, to punish him for his many journeys into those parts to preach to them. A Catholic woman lay concealed near the place during this butchery; and after the soldiers were gone, coming out to see the effects of it, found the martyr's eyes open, and fixed on the heavens. His choice of martyrdom was a virile act of will, an act dictated by reason: "To reach that supreme goal for which I was born, I will renounce all worldly pleasures and glories." He realized that this was the way he was called to imitate Our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is interesting to note the action of this great orator, St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen. He was so successful in his sermons that the Holy See chose him to head the group of Capuchin preachers sent to the region infested by Calvinism, a branch of the Protestant heresy. The intention of the Holy See was to convert those who had been fooled by the heretics, and also to prevent Catholics from falling into the same trap.

Through his sermons, he had an enormous influence in the city of Feldkirch, the capital of an Austrian province in the Alps. There he had already strongly attacked the Protestants. He was designated, then, to enter Switzerland to continue the assault against the heretics. Before he left, he had a premonition revealing that he would suffer martyrdom there. As a supernatural, indomitable, energetic man, he did not step back because of that threat; on the contrary, he went forward facing death with a kind of joy. It is the attitude of a warrior.

To this tenacity he added another proof of valor: he infuriated the Calvinists. No one aggravates the enemy unless he counts victories over them. To prevent more of his remarkable successes, the Calvinists decided to murder him. They plotted his death and carried it out. He became a martyr.

Now then, a Capuchin is the one who is oblivious to material goods, earthly prestige, and the kind of glory the world gives, which were probably attracting the young Mark Rey before he became a friar.

What were the sufferings and the persecutions he endured because of this choice? Since he strongly attacked the enemies of the Church and left them no exit, they killed him. Therefore, he suffered the persecutions and trials of an indomitable warrior. And foreseeing the battle ahead, he wrote "Woe to me if I should prove myself but a half-hearted soldier in the service of my thorn-crowned "Captain."

The text should arouse a salutary admiration that is completely subordinate to reason. These words came from a man filled with wisdom and should produce in us a love for wisdom.

Let us ask St. Fidelis, the Sigmaringen, who strongly attacked the Revolution of his time to give us the love for wisdom that oriented his life in order to make us zealous counter-revolutionaries – as he was – for the glory and exaltation of Holy Mother Church.

He died in 1622, the forty-fifth year of his age, and the tenth of his religious profession. He was buried by the Catholics the next day. The rebels were soon after defeated by the imperialists, an event which the martyr had foretold them. The minister was converted by this circumstance, and made a public abjuration of his heresy. After six months, the martyr's body was found incorrupt, but the head and left arm separate from the trunk. These being put into two cases, were translated from thence to the cathedral of Coire, at the earnest suit of the bishop, and laid under the high altar with great pomp; the remainder of the corpse was deposited in the Capuchin's church at Weltkirchen. Three miracles performed by his relics and intercession, out of three hundred and five produced, are inserted in the decree of his beatification, published by Pope Benedict XIII., in 1729. Other miracles were proved, and the decree of his canonization was published by Benedict XIV., in 1746. The 24th of April is

appointed the day of his festival, and his name is inserted in the Roman Martyrology. □

Easter: Solemnity of Solemnities

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And Jesus Christ lives. And this crowns us with happiness. This is the great truth which fills our faith with meaning. Jesus, who died on the cross, has risen. He has triumphed over death; he has overcome sorrow, anguish and the power of darkness . . . In him we find everything. Outside of him our life is empty (J. Escriva).

The Church celebrates this feast beginning at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday and through the Octave of Easter. From Easter Sunday to Easter Saturday, every day is another Easter, so high is this feast.

A beautiful devotion during the Octave of Easter is devotion to the Divine Mercy. During Easter we commemorate our redemption, when the gates of heaven were thrown wide open, and we were saved through the death and resurrection of Christ. Jesus is calling us, poor sinners, to immerse ourselves in his mercy, particularly on Divine Mercy Sunday, the second Sunday of Easter. On Good Friday the Divine Mercy Novena began in preparation for this Feast of Mercy. During this week we can continue praying this novena. We celebrate this "Mercy Sunday" by going to Confession (preferably before that Sunday) and by receiving Communion on that day. □

*" . . . do not give in to greed
but give in to love and choice for life
as I let you live and breathe on your
world of My creation."
Jesus of Nazareth Your Divine Master
01192004*

*". . . continue to offer, offer, offer
souls of babies who perish
before birth thinking of them as
without souls."
Mary. Your lady of Guadalupe
09042003*

HAVE MERCY, LORD!

A Sin Unmasked. God sends Nathan the prophet to confront the king. Cleverly, Nathan begins by telling a fictional story about a crime and pretending to solicit David's judgment on the perpetrator. It concerns a rich man who has herds of thousands of sheep, and a poor man who has but one single pet lamb. When a traveler arrives at the rich man's house, the stingy millionaire does not want to slaughter one of his own animals to feed him. Instead, he takes the poor man's lamb and has it cooked for the guest.

Angered at this obvious injustice, David declares the rich man deserving of death. But the outraged king has stepped into the prophet's trap. You are the rich man! Nathan informs him. You stole from the poor man and killed! Before departing, Nathan declares that the child born to Bathsheba will not live.

His pretense shattered, David confesses to Nathan: "I have sinned against the LORD" (2 Samuel 12:13). Falling to the ground, he begins to fast as he pleads with God for forgiveness. And this, according to tradition, is precisely the moment when David prays Psalm 51.

Lord, Have Mercy. "Have mercy on me, God," David begins. His plea is as short as his confession is simple: Because I know what I have done. No excuses, no evasions, no explanations, no attempts to reduce his culpability.

To his plea for mercy, he attaches the reason why God should hear his prayer: not because of who he is -- the greatest king of Israel -- but because of God's immense love: "In your abundant compassion blot out my offense" (Psalm 51:3). The great king now lies alone on the ground in prayer and fasting, his life in God's hands. All his royal power cannot obtain the forgive-ness he seeks, and so he asks God to act: "From my sin cleanse me" (51:4).

David's words open up the depths of meaning contained in the prayer of repentance that begins the celebration of the Eucharist. Less dramatically but no less profoundly, the Penitential Rite invites us to imitate David's contrition by recognizing our own sinfulness before God: Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy. Before we listen to God's Word or receive the Eucharist, we present ourselves before God as sinners, and we trust that God forgives us not because of who we are but because of who God is.

David goes on to admit that his crimes against Bathsheba and Uriah have harmed his relationship with God: "Against you, you alone have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your eyes" (Psalm 51:6). As he continues to pray, he recognizes that offerings to God without contrition and reconciliation are worthless: "For you do not desire sacrifice or I would give it; a burnt offering you

would not accept" (51:18). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus illustrated how to put David's words into action: "If you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23-24).

I Confess. David confesses that his crime cuts to the core of his existence, so he prays that God, who delights in the truth, will teach him wisdom (Psalm 51:7-8). He even wants God to shed light on his sin! No more denial for him, for he has been alerted to just how powerful a force it can be. Even when Nathan spun his tale about the rich man and the poor man, David failed to make the obvious connection: He never recognized himself as the culprit! He planned to live happily ever after with Bathsheba, hiding his sin even from himself. Only when Nathan charged him directly -- "You are the man!" -- did David's façade crumble.

The saints teach us that holiness begins when the image we create for ourselves begins to crumble. This is what happened to St. Peter, when he spoke to Jesus after the miraculous catch of fish: "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8). But Jesus did not abandon Peter. Instead, he recognized in him a man who was conscious of his own sinfulness -- the apostle to whom he could confer the keys of the kingdom.

St. Teresa of Avila quoted Peter's words in her Autobiography, writing that through her prayer of repentance, she learned more about her own failings: God "managed to help me to know myself by revealing to me things which I myself could not have imagined." For her too, this revelation was an important step on the way of holiness.

So David asks God to teach him true sincerity (Psalm 51:8) -- to reveal to him his own sin, beyond what he can see for himself. As he prays Psalm 51, his charade, excuses, and illusions disintegrate. He is left with only one possible response: "Have mercy on me, O Lord!"

Psalm 51 is full of appeals. But rather than asking for this or that, David is basically imploring God to help him make a sincere confession: "Cleanse me, wash me, purge me, restore to me, sustain in me." And then, having confessed the sin he had once denied and concealed, he lies empty on the ground, ready to receive a "clean heart" and a "new spirit." He is ready to be transformed by God: "The bones you have crushed will rejoice" (Psalm 51:10).

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GOD TOUCHED ME

HIS PERFECT TIMING

Though the Lord is on high, yet He regards the lowly . . .

Psalm 138:6

Gemma Andaya-Brookman

I came to the United States, became a teacher and made friends here. Most of my friends saw me as a positive, strong, go-getter and happy person who was in touch with her spiritual side. However, deep inside I was actually a very lonely person. I felt that my relationship with God was not as strong as it is now.

I seemed to have a strong faith with God because I always started my day by praying the rosary and reading scriptures. Whenever my friends would ask me for advice, I always told them to have faith in God no matter what. I went to church on Sundays, Wednesdays and First Fridays and most of the Holy days of obligation as what we Roman Catholics are supposed to do. Whenever I had problems or I felt lost I spent most of my time in church. I stayed in church even if there was no mass and just kept on talking to God.

I was always praying and even though my prayers were answered, I still worried a lot. My faith in God was not consistent, and I was impatient. I needed to learn how to wait quietly for God's answers. I was too afraid to let go and surrender to Him, I had too much trust in my own effort that I felt I could solve and conquer my problems all by myself and that God is only my last resort.

Despite the blessings and all my answered prayers, I still felt alone and that God was not listening to me. Sometimes I thought Christ was beyond my reach. And I had no family nor a support group to run to in times of need. The homesickness and all the stress that I had to face made me feel worst,

In June 2009, I was going through a break up from a bad relationship and I was grieving, feeling lost, confused and sorry for myself. I was praying inside St. Brendan Church, all by myself and in tears. I just sat there and enjoyed the peace and quiet when I saw a piece of dirty paper on the floor right next to my feet. I picked it up -- a flyer for a 2000 Hail Mary devotion. I can't understand why but I just felt compelled to go and see what it was all about. On that 2000 Hail Mary Saturday, I arrived at the Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master early without any clue of what to expect. I met a very friendly lady who later became a very dear friend, Judy, who told me to turn off my phone and stay until the very end. I did.

Then, I saw people lining up outside a small room. Judy suggested that I line up, too. Inside the room, was a man, who I will find out later had a gift of locution and as God's willing instrument, have assisted devotees with their physical and spiritual issues of all sorts -- through his prayers and cenacles.

Then, the first message for me from the Sacred Heart of Jesus came -- . He told me that He had heard every single one of my prayers and that I should stop my worries, complaints and anger.

My prayers have been heard after all! It was overwhelming. I thought I was praying to Him but what I did not realize then was some of my prayers to Him were actually complaints. I felt ashamed of myself yet reassured that God has been listening.

At the end of the 2000 Hail Mary devotional prayers, I felt so moved, I cried so hard and I could not understand the feeling. I felt renewed. It was as if the gloom that was weighing me down was gone and I became more alive in my prayers and rosary since then. My faith started to turn around and became stronger as I became more and more involved with The Spiritual Army of God the Father.

In the monthly devotions ahead, this group has become my other family -- helping me tremendously in my spirituality. Through their kindness and prayers, their own inspiring stories of struggles, joys, sorrows -- and still persevering in great hope and faith, I learned to be still and wait patiently, while allowing the Almighty God to work His glory in my life. I feel like this is a group of angels sent to me from God to represent Him and to be there to guide me on how to become closer with Him, to know him better and for me to understand more clearly how He works in us.

But as if on cue, as I feel closer to God, the clutches of Satan seem to grab me away from Him. I have been tried and tested many times. As I underwent those trials, my faith got shaken like a leaf and I worried again.

I consider it a miracle that I was led to this group during that very confusing time of my life -- to prepare me for a huge test of faith during the last part of my stay in Los Angeles -- as this group was the avenue that kept me on track.

Coming out of a bad relationship, I laid low for some time. Then, one day I joined a Christian online dating site -- this was before everything went awry at work. I thought to myself that if God would give me a lifetime partner, I am sure it will not be handed to me in a silver platter. I have to do my part -- that is to at least mingle with other people. So I thought meeting people through online sites will work best for me. I tried other dating sites, but somehow I could not complete the whole process of enlisting my profile in those sites. It was as though I was led to the site where I will find the one for me.

Soon enough, after a month on that site, I got to know a very smart and interesting man -- with the same religious affiliation and the same views on Christ as mine. He is an American, an architect based in Aspen, Colorado. We exchanged e-mails constantly and burned the phone lines nightly. Through all these, we found many more things in common. At spring break, he was in California. We had great chemistry but at the back of my mind, I doubted it

will last – what can you expect from a long distance relationship during the first months? So I took everything lightly.

More visits followed – each one allowing us to open our hearts to each other. But still I was skeptical as I didn't want him to jump into something just out of pity for me. I was so confused until that night when my prayer struck me like lightning -- I asked the Lord Jesus to close all the doors that is not intended for me and yielded to Him -- Lord let Your will be done!

Then I lost my job, I was hopeful that I will soon find another one. And I did, but then someone messed it up and I was again back out in the streets looking for another school. I could already feel that my work situation was about to turn into worst -- I was like a mouse that just got cornered. Not only was my time, money and options running out -- my self esteem was caving in, too! In these darkest



times, however, I have discerned the friends whom I can depend my life on and the ones who judge me and walk away. Most importantly, my faith in God was truly put to the test.

Now faced with the reality that I might not find a job in time and that I may have to leave the United States and never come back, I was scared and I tried to struggle with the truth. I was racing against time as my visa will soon expire. My former principal was breathing down my neck trying to disgrace me wherever school in our district I go to. I tried to apply at the nearby school districts in but it was futile.

I then realized how bleak my chances were and so one night I prayed with all my heart to God. With total humility I offered my thanksgiving for all my trials, the lessons learned and the good that I have gained and will gain from all the seemingly unfortunate situations. I also thanked Him for the talent He gave me and the opportunity to share these talents serving the students and their parents here in this country. I thank God that I have touched their lives.

At this very moment, I was willing to give up everything I have in the United States -- even the growing relationship

with my boyfriend because I trust His plan is better than mine.

I continued with my job hunting – this time in all school districts in the country. I even went to New Mexico and filed employment applications to different school districts. I applied in North and South Carolina, Missouri, Florida, Washington, and Maryland. I applied in every possible way I knew how – online, by US Postal Service, and in person -- but because of the economy and my visa status, all was a futile exercise. When I maxed out my credit

cards and bank account – I knew it was time to rest in God's mercy, love and divine providence. At the same time I kept my distance from my boyfriend and eventually tried to break up with him.

I ceased trying to solve problems on my own initiatives. I was literally ready and have packed my bags and bought my airline tickets to the Philippines. I felt so peaceful and all the worries

were lifted off my chest.

A week before my scheduled departure my boyfriend proposed to me. I spent sleepless nights praying about it. With God's grace of faith and peace in my heart, I accepted his proposal. Eight months later, I was Mrs. Brookman!

I now live in Colorado playing the role of a wife, an office worker, and sometimes a dog-sitter. I am eager to go back to teaching this incoming school year, hopefully, in Aspen School District.

God, through my dear husband, reclaimed my trust in love. In hindsight, I'm so amazed at how things just fell into place at the last minute. Now my husband is an aide memoir -- that God cares for His people in their moments of need, always at the right time. Nothing ever takes place too early or too late. I have no need to worry about tomorrow, for He is already there.

My marriage is a blessing. Trusting in God's loving guidance, we will keep our vow to make Him our Rock -- for without him we are nothing and with him we have everything.

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MEDITATION AND COMMENTARY

DIVINE MERCY AND WORLD PEACE

© Fr. Roger Landry

We celebrated last week the most important event in the history of the world, the most crucial event in the history of our personal life: the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In today's Gospel, we see what Jesus did the first time he met with his apostles on Easter Sunday evening. Jesus shows us very clearly what he believed his mission to be, what the point of his coming down from heaven was, and what was the first thing he asked of his apostles and therefore of his Church.

The ten apostles were huddled together out of fear in the Upper Room where just three days earlier Jesus had given them His Body and Blood for the first time in Holy Communion. Jesus walked through the closed doors and his first words to them — words that he had died to say to them, words he had risen to say to them — were "Peace be with you!" They didn't get it. Just like they didn't want to believe Mary Magdalene when she said that she had seen Jesus earlier that morning, just like they were reluctant to believe the disciples from Emmaus earlier that evening, the apostles thought Jesus was a ghost. So he repeated himself, "Peace be with you!" Jesus had come down from heaven and had given his life to give them — to give us — PEACE, a peace the world cannot give and a peace the world cannot take away. He had said before his death, "Not as the world gives peace do I give it." Peace for Jesus was not the absence of war and international conflict, but peace with God through the forgiveness of sins. Without this peace, no other type of peace is possible, because sin destroys peace.

Jesus said to the apostles, "Just as the Father sent me, so I send you!" Why had the Father sent Jesus? He sent him ultimately to save us from our sins — and the consequence of our sins, death — by his life, passion, death and resurrection. "Just as the Father sent me [to forgive sins], so I send you!" In the first thing he did on the day he rose from the dead, Jesus was going to send out the apostles to forgive sins in his name. But no one can forgive sins but God alone (Mk 2:7), so Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." He gave them God the Holy Spirit so that they might forgive sins, just as we hear every time the priest pronounces those beautiful words in confession, "God, the Father of Mercies... has sent His Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins." And then he said words that point clearly to the sacrament of confession: "Those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; those whose sins you retain, they are retained." Jesus was making them his ministers, his ambassadors. Just as through them, Jesus himself says, "this is my body, this is the cup of my blood" in the Mass, so through them Jesus was going to say, "Your sins are forgiven; go in peace!" This was going to

be the apostles' most important mission, the mission in which he involved them intimately as his first action upon rising from the dead. The only way that they would know which sins to forgive and which to retain would be if penitents told them their sins in confession.

Jesus is saying something very startling to us today, just like he did to the 10 in the Upper Room on the evening of the Resurrection. If we want peace — and each of our hearts cries out for it! — then Jesus gives us the means and wants us to take Him and those means seriously. Jesus says that the most important factor in peace is not the number of diplomats. It's not the strength of the United Nations. It's not the capture of Osama bin Laden or the elimination of weapons of Mass destruction. Jesus says that real peace is based on THE SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION. I'll repeat it so that no one will miss it: Jesus says that real peace is based on the sacrament of confession he instituted and whether we use it. In other words, the most important person in the world if we want real peace is not President Bush, or Kofi Annan, or Paul Bremer, but a PRIEST, who is God's instrument to give his mercy to the world.

Why is there such a lack of peace in the world? Because the world has not been taking God seriously and going to him to receive his mercy. That's a startling statement — and it's meant to be — and one you won't read in the editorial pages of the Cape Cod Times or the Boston Globe. There's a lack of peace in the world because people have been trying to make themselves God in determining what's right or wrong, committing all types of sins, and refusing to turn back to him to beg his forgiveness and receive it. The longer we refuse to acknowledge our need for God's mercy, seek it and share it, the worse it gets.

Just ask yourself whether you think the world would be any different if we and others repented and stopped breaking the ten commandments. There would be no murder, no hatred, no broken families, no stealing, no lying, no envy, intergenerational respect, and people would make time to put God first in their lives. There can be no real peace when modern Cain's are killing Abels. There can be no peace when there is no peace at the home because of lack of respect or infidelity. There can be no real peace if people cannot trust each other.

There's a bumper sticker that you still see in certain circles that became very popular when I was a young boy. It was taken out of context from a quotation from Pope Paul VI: "If you want peace, work for justice." But the justice he was talking about primarily was our becoming just with God through the forgiveness of our sins, and our sharing that justice with others. A better motto would be, "If you want peace, go to confession!" "If you want peace, bring others to Christ in confession!" "If you want peace, and you're a young boy or man, have the guts to ask yourself whether the Lord might be calling you to be a priest," so that he can send you out, just like he sent the apostles out on Easter Sunday Evening,

empowered by the Holy Spirit, to forgive and retain sins in his name. For peace, we have to recognize our need for God's mercy, ask for and receive that mercy, and then share that mercy with others. There are three steps:

a) to recognize our need for God's mercy — like the Prodigal Son (Lk 15), we have to realize that we have sinned, and that without God's forgiveness, we will die in our sins. But God does not desire the death of the sinner, but that the sinner return to him and live, which leads us to the second step:

b) to trust in, ask for and receive God's mercy — Here in this world, Jesus established only one ordinary way for us to receive this mercy for all the sins we've committed after our baptism: the sacrament of reconciliation, confessing our sins to Christ through the priest. There are

a lot of people today, including Catholics, who say, "I can confess my sins directly to the Lord!" Out of real love for you, please let be very clear: you can confess your sins to whomever you want — to your best friends, husbands or wives, parents and children, coworkers, social workers, shrinks, bartenders, Oprah Winfrey, Jerry Springer — to anyone you want. But you can't receive forgiveness there, which is the point. The only means in this world in which we can be SURE that the Lord forgives us is when we confess our sins to a priest, whom Jesus has ordained, and sent out from the Upper Room for this purpose. To believe in the Lord Jesus means to believe that he knew what he was doing, and he established this sacrament on the night he rose from the dead.

c) to share it with others — We're called to be merciful with others. Jesus said, "Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful... The measure with which you measure will be measured back to you." In another place, the Lord says, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy." The Lord's point is that the prerequisite for our receiving mercy is our showing mercy to others. After having taught us the Our Father in which we pray, "forgive us our trespasses as we have forgiven those who have trespassed against us," the Lord warned us, "If you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their sins, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your sins."

Over the history of the Church, because so many didn't get this message of God's mercy (and our need for repentance) from the Gospel — because so many were not doing any of these three things — Jesus himself came down to us to repeat it. He came down to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in the 1500's with the revelation of His Sacred Heart, which involved all three parts of what he

said in the Gospel. The Church listened for a while, but then forgot. Eventually the Lord came down again.

Today we celebrate throughout the whole Church "Divine Mercy Sunday." This feast was instituted by Pope John Paul II in the year 2000, in response to a direct request by the Lord Jesus to a Polish nun, St. Faustina Kowalska, whom Pope John Paul II canonized that year. Beginning in 1931, Jesus began to appear to St. Faustina in her convent in Krakow and asked her to become his "secretary," and take down what he revealed to her for the good of the Church and the world. He revealed to her the message of his divine, merciful love. She wrote down what the Lord said and it filled in her diary — what turned out to be 689 pages in the English translation. The Lord talked about how he wanted to pour out on the world his

mercy, how he wanted people to trust in his mercy and ask for it, and how he wanted them to share his merciful love with others. Jesus didn't teach us anything new about his merciful love; he just reiterated it. What was new was that the Lord Jesus asked the Church, and that means each one of us, to grow in his Divine Mercy by five practices:

a) Divine Mercy Sunday, which we're celebrating today for the fourth time — The Lord said, "I want... the first Sunday after Easter ... to be the Feast of Mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and a shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day,

the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day are open all the divine floodgates through which graces flow." The Holy Father, four years ago, said, "It is important that we accept in its entirety the message that comes to us from God's Word on this second Sunday of Easter. From now on, throughout the whole Church, this day will take the name of 'Divine Mercy Sunday.'" But we have to live it, seek confession within eight days of the feast and properly receive Holy Communion.

b) To pray to the image of Divine Mercy — The Lord revealed to St. Faustina an image that he desired to be made: "One night when I was in my cell, I perceived the presence of the Lord Jesus dressed in a white tunic. One hand was raised in blessing, the other rested on his chest. From an opening in the tunic in the chest, two great rays were coming out, one red and the other clear... After some time, Jesus said to me, "Paint an image in accordance with what you see, with the inscription, "Jesus, I trust in you." A little later, Our Lord explained to her the meaning of the two rays: "The two rays represent the Blood and the Water. The white ray represents the Water [baptism], that justifies souls; the red ray

*... when you pray the prayer of
Mercy (Divine Mercy),
your heart must mean every word
of prayer. Merciful I will for
words coming from your heart."
Jesus of Nazareth,
Your Merciful God
05240223*

represents the Blood that is the life of souls [the Eucharist]. Both rays flow from the depths of my Mercy when, on the Cross, my Heart in agony was opened by the lance."

c) To pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy — This is something that people can pray on Rosary beads. It is a devotion that is happily becoming more and more popular today. St. Faustina heard an interior voice that taught her this prayer. On the larger beads of the Rosary, one says, "Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and for those of the whole world." On the ten smaller beads, we pray, "For the sake of his sorrowful passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world." You pray five "decades" in this way, after which, one prays three times the "Holy, Holy, Holy" from the Good Friday reproaches, "Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One," "have mercy on us and on the whole world." What we're doing in this beautiful prayer is offering Christ's own sacrifice during the Triduum, to the Father. We're lifting up the Eucharist — Christ's body, blood, soul and divinity — and making Christ's prayer our own. There is no more powerful prayer! Jesus promised, "It pleases me to grant everything they ask of Me by saying the chaplet... if it be compatible with my Will." This is especially true of the moment of death. Jesus specifically asked priests — and I'm obeying him right now — to "recommend it to sinners as their last hope of salvation. Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this chaplet only once [with an attitude of trust, humility and sorrow for sin], he would receive grace from my infinite mercy."

d) To pray particularly at three in the afternoon, the time in which Jesus died on the Cross, invoking the Mercy of the Lord — Jesus said to St. Faustina, "At three in the afternoon, implore my Mercy, especially for sinners, or at least briefly reflect on my Passion, especially on the abandonment I felt at the moment of agony. This is the hour of great Mercy for the whole world. I will allow you to penetrate my mortal sadness. In that hour, I will deny nothing to the soul that asks me in the name of my Passion. Jesus gave three indispensable conditions to hear prayers made at the hour of Mercy: the prayer has to be directed to Jesus, take place at three, and invoke the value and merits of his passion.

e) To make a novena between Good Friday and Divine Mercy Sunday to implore divine mercy. He gave St. Faustina an intention for each day of the novena. He said, "I desire that during these nine days you bring souls to the fount of My mercy, that they may draw from there strength and refreshment and whatever graces they need in the hardships of life and, especially, at the hour of death. On each day you will bring to my Heart a different group of souls, and you will immerse them in this ocean of My mercy, and I will bring all these souls into the house of My Father. The groups, for each of the days, are all humanity, especially sinners; priests and religious; the

pious and faithful; those who do not believe in Jesus and who don't yet know him; our separated Christian brothers and sisters; the meek and humble and children; those who venerate the mercy of Jesus; those in Purgatory; and the lukewarm.

We obviously don't have the time to describe in greater detail these practices. But there are booklets now available everywhere describing these practices. There are many websites devoted to Divine Mercy. The Lord wishes for each of us to start more deeply to trust in his mercy, to invoke it, receive it and share it. As Jesus said to St. Faustina, "Humanity will not find peace until it turns trustfully to divine mercy." We need to turn to him now for the peace our hearts desire, for the peace our world needs.

As we, in this Mass, offer the Eternal Father in heaven Jesus' body, blood, soul and divinity, we ask the Father, who is Rich in Mercy, to grant us this tremendous gift, so that we might become merciful as he is merciful. In response to Jesus' merciful love shown to us on the Cross, here in the Eucharist, and on Easter Sunday evening when he established the sacrament of his mercy to help us get to heaven, we say, "JESUS, WE TRUST IN YOU." "Your mercy endures forever!" □

... I am your Mother Mary. When you offer your prayer and petition before the Lord our God, remember that the best way that your offering is closest to God's heart is a heart that is forgiving and contrite. As one prays, the heart is the one that should speak not the lips that only mumble words which often bring sound of insincerity.

My children, I ask you to stay and pray before the Eucharist. A quality time before the presence of my son Jesus. When you pray before Him, invite His Heart to be with your heart. His Heart of pure, sacred and always pleasing to the Father. The Heart that will always give you hope and sincere love.

I am with you always."

- Mary. Your lady of the Blessed Sacrament

God Touched Me

Lastly, let me take this opportunity to thank everyone for the generous help given to my family back home in the Philippines. Despite the tragic storm that took away not only our properties but also some of our loved ones, my family still had a lot to be thankful for -- the kindhearted strangers, friends and family who came to our help; for my mom, dad and sister for their second chance in life; my younger sister who lost her baby in 2009 just gave birth last year to a bouncing healthy baby boy; my eldest sister who also had a miscarriage is expecting her first baby soon!

May God continue to bless all of you my Spiritual Army of God the Father friends. Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart. God bless you all. ☐

*If you have any personal articles
or 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:
eablp@aol.com and/or ladipatsee@gmail.com
(702) 274-4315 and/or (213) 364-8235*

Have Mercy, Lord!

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We Are the Ones. David's prayer doesn't end with his confession. He also vows to tell his story to others, "that sinners may return to you" (Psalm 51:15). He looks ahead and sees the future generations who will learn of his sin and will pray his psalm. We are those future sinners! And by praying this psalm, we join David on the journey from denial, to recognition of the sin in our own lives, to confession. Then -- at Easter and at the Gloria that follows the Penitential Rite of the Mass -- we too can sing of "the joy of salvation," as the Lord opens our own lips to proclaim his praise (51:14,17).

As the psalm concludes, David recognizes that the sincere confession emerging from his "contrite, humble heart" is better than any other kind of sacrifice he might offer (Psalm 51:19). When he was still in denial, he might have participated in the sacrifices offered to God in Jerusalem. Now he sees that religious observance is no substitute for conversion.

As he rises from the ground, for-given by God, "Lord, have mercy" has taken on a new and deeper meaning in his life. When we pray Psalm 51 as David prayed it, allowing God to break through our walls of deception and denial and to rend our hearts, those words can have new meaning in our lives as well. ☐

Craig Morrison, a Carmelite priest, is a biblical scholar, writer, and lecturer working at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.

REMINDERS

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Good Friday is a day of mourning. Try to take time off from work and/or school to participate in the devotions and liturgy of the day as much as possible.
- Restrict yourself from any TV, music or computer - these are all types of technology that can distract us from the spirit of the day.
- Refrain from extraneous conversation. Leave the curtains drawn, and maintain silence during the 3 hours (Noon to 3:00 p.m.), and keep from loud conversation or activities throughout the remainder of the day.
- During the three hours, pray different devotions like the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, and meditative reading and prayers on the passion of Christ.
- Meditate on the Seven Last Words Christ spoke during His three hours on a cross.
- Although throughout Lent you have tried to mortify yourself, it is appropriate to try some practicing extra mortifications. These can be very simple, such as eating less at the small meals of fasting, or eating standing up. Some people just eat bread and soup, or just bread and water while standing at the table.
- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. In addition to silent prayer and reflection, read the Scriptures during your periods of adoration, since they afford an unrivaled source of prayer.

▪ ***THE DIVINE MERCY NOVENA STARTS ON GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 6, AND ENDS ON SATURDAY, APRIL 14. YOU MAY DOWNLOAD A PDF COPY OF THE DIVINE MERCY NOVENA AT WWW.HOLYSPIRITINTERACTIVE.NET/FEATURES/DIVINEMERCY/DIVINEMERCYNOVENA.PDF ☐***

THANK YOU

... A SMALL AND SIMPLE PHRASE THAT COMES FROM A GRATEFUL HEART!

PSALM 106:2

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 recreation, 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.

FROM PASTOR CHUCK SMITH

"THE LORD HAS BEEN SO GRACIOUS AND SO GOOD. I REALLY WOULDN'T KNOW THAT I HAD [CANCER] UNLESS THEY TOLD ME I DID," HE SHARED WITH LISTENERS. HE SAYS HE FEELS NO PAIN AND HAS ENDURED THE TREATMENTS WITHOUT EXPERIENCING NAUSEA OR HAVING TO DEAL WITH ANY "HORROR STORIES." HE ATTRIBUTES THAT "TO THE LORD AND TO THE PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE FOR ME."

FROM CARMEN ON HER SON, ROBERT

THANKS TO THE GOOD LORD, MY SON IS NOW TRANSFERRED TO THE REGULAR ROOM AND IS DOING WELL. THE DOCTORS AND THE HOSPITAL STAFF WERE REALLY AMAZED AT HIS RECOVERY. I MYSELF AM REALLY OVERJOYED.

ROBERT'S BIKE HIT A TREE AND HE WAS THROWN 50 FEET AWAY. HE TOLD ME THAT WHILE LYING DOWN HE FELT VERY PEACEFUL AND SAW A GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN!

THE HEAD OF THE TRAUMA UNIT TOLD ME THAT THE SURVIVAL RATE OF HIS CASE IS ONLY 10% AND USUALLY END UP PARALYZED BUT HE SURVIVED WITH NO PHYSICAL WOUND!

THE DOCTORS ARE NOW WORKING ON HEALING HIS LUNGS AND AORTA. WE ARE JUST UNSURE OF THE LONG TERM EFFECT BUT WITH CONTINUED PRAYERS I AM HOPING THAT HE WILL NOT HAVE ANY COMPLICATIONS.

DADETTE HAS FOUND EMPLOYMENT!

NONA NOW HAS A NEW LIVER!

PLEASE PRAY FOR A TWO-HOUR REMOVAL OPERATION OF BLOOD CLOT AROUND HER NEW LIVER. DOCTORS SAY, "A COMMON PROCEDURE" FOR TRANSPLANTED ORGANS.

Let us continue to thank God for their healing and for giving them the strength of faith to go through this spiritual process; and may their hearts be ever closer to Jesus' Sacred Heart through the intercession of the Blessed Mother in the Glory of Eternal Father. Amen.

2000 HAIL MARY DEVOTION

The Spiritual Army of God the Father and the 2000 Hail Mary Group of Northern California acknowledge with thanks our generous April sponsors of the 2000 Hail Mary Devotion. We are grateful that we have merited their partnership and support in providing a venue of spirituality and fellowship for the devotees of our Blessed Mother. The devotion continues to be a constant success.

Las Vegas, Nevada

Ronald & Fe Muego

Los Angeles, California

Adriana Arguello | Romeo Bautista
Myrna & Leo Fajardo | Helen Lapitan | Vicky Lopez
Necy & Rene Pablico | Daisy Quidulit

Our Coordinator in the Philippines

Letty Rollan – Metro Manila

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 | LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA | (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 | LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA | (323) 466-2186

11:20 A.M. - ROSARY TO THE FATHER | 11:50 A.M. - HOLY MASS

1:00 P.M. - EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

CONFESSION ONGOING FROM 11:20 A.M. TO 11:45 P.M.

2000 HAIL MARY DEVOTION – APRIL 28, 2012

AT THE CONVENT OF THE SISTER DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE MASTER | STARTING AT 8:30 A.M.

PLEASE CALL MRS. NORY JOSE AT (310) 367-6557 IF YOU WISH TO BECOME A SPONSOR OF THE 2000 HAIL MARY DEVOTION.

In Las Vegas:

1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION

1ST SATURDAY DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS START AT 1:00 P.M. | A CENACLE FOLLOWS.

DEVOTION TO GOD THE FATHER

2:30 TO 3:30 P.M.

AT THE CENACLE HOUSE IN THE ENCLAVE | 8455 WEST SAHARA AVENUE #172, | LAS VEGAS, NV 89117.

PLEASE CALL EVELYN AT (702) 274-4315 FOR ENTRY TO THE ENCLAVE OR FOR MORE INFORMATION.

2000 HAIL MARY DEVOTION – APRIL 28, 2012

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.

In Laughlin, Nevada:

1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC CHURCH | 3055 EL MIRAGE WAY

HOLY MASS STARTS AT 8:00 A.M. DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS FOLLOW.

In Northern California:

1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION

2000 HAIL MARY DEVOTION

PLEASE CALL (650) 766-2071 FOR DATES AND VENUES FOR THE COMING MONTHS OR FOR MORE INFORMATION.

FOR SACRAMENTO:

PLEASE CALL PRECY RIETA (916) 564-3733 | CARING STURGILL (916) 897-3194 | MARIA ROSARIO (916) 230-7756.

In San Diego

ROSARY TO THE FATHER

MONDAY – SATURDAY AFTER THE 8:00 A.M. MASS [LOOK FOR IRIS HAJ]

ST. MARY'S CHURCH | 1160 S. BROADWAY | ESCONDIDO, CA 92025

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 TEXT MOBILE @ (011 +63 +2) 916- 384-9300 AND/OR | LANDLINE 939-4677 TO FIND THE VENUE CLOSEST TO YOU.

DIVINE MERCY CELEBRATION



***Our Lord's Mercy grants forgiveness of all sins on the Feast of Divine Mercy,
Mercy Sunday, mercy for even the most hardened sinners!
It is the Sunday of Divine Mercy, the Feast of Mercy!***

APRIL 15, 2012

AT THE CONVENT OF THE SISTER DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE MASTER
501 BEAUDRY AVENUE | LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

1:30 PM DIVINE MERCY PROCESSION
FLORAL OFFERING

2:00 PM DIVINE MERCY PRAYERS
LITANY OF DIVINE MERCY
CHAPLET OF DIVINE MERCY

3:00 PM LITURGY OF THE MASS

AND

AT ST. BRIDGET CATHOLIC CHURCH
220 N. 14TH STREET, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

11:15 AM INTRODUCTION AND PROCESSION
FLORAL OFFERING
LITANY OF DIVINE MERCY

11:30 AM LITURGY OF THE MASS

2:30 - 5:30 PM EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
ROSARY

3:00 PM HYMN OF THE CHAPLET OF THE DIVINE
MERCY

5:30 PM LITURGY OF THE MASS (FILIPINO)

*For more information on the Las Vegas celebration
please call (702) 274-4315*