



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

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EASTER: THROUGH THE OCTAVE AND BEYOND!

by Randy Sly
Catholic Online

I think Catholics enjoy Lent more than Easter. I think we are just more comfortable suffering than celebrating." When a speaker at a Lenten Mission I attended said that, I was taken back. He was trying to offer it as a bit of humor but also stated that there was some truth in it.

This particularly struck me as a convert from Protestantism where, in many denominations and independent churches, Lent is ignored, Good Friday minimized and Easter is a huge celebration often preceded by Cantata



season, when the choir presents a special dramatized account of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ.

Even the least liturgically oriented churches implement a time of response at the beginning of the Easter service, shouting "Alleluia! He is risen!" The congregation responds back enthusiastically "He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!"

For many Protestants, Easter is over after the Sunday service. On Monday, it is back to regular routine; one could say they have entered back into ordinary time.

As Catholics, however, we're not finished. We have the eight days - the Octave Easter. For example, in the Office of Morning Prayer the psalms for Easter Sunday are recited each day. We have eight Easters, ending with Divine Mercy Sunday.

While Easter is a Solemnity and an Octave Feast, it is also a 50-day journey until Pentecost. We continue to remember his resurrection with special devotion. But why focus on Easter as a season? Isn't every Sunday a "little Easter?" Don't we commemorate his passion, death and resurrection every day of the year?

Saint Augustine shares this perspective: "The season before Easter signifies the troubles in which we live here and now, while the time after Easter which we are celebrating at present signifies the happiness that will be ours in the future.

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OVERVIEW FOR THE MONTH

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The month of April is dedicated to The Holy Spirit. The entire month falls during 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 Easter Monday, Solemnity
- 2 Easter Tuesday, Solemnity
- 3 Easter Wednesday, Solemnity
- 4 Easter Thursday, Solemnity
- 5 Easter Friday, Solemnity
- 6 Easter Saturday, Solemnity
- 7 Divine Mercy Sunday, Sunday
- 8 Annunciation of the Lord, Solemnity
- 11 Stanislaus of Cracow, Opt. Mem.
- 14 Third Sunday of Easter, Sunday
- 21 Fourth Sunday of Easter, Sunday
- 23 George; Adalbert, Opt. Mem.
- 24 St. Fidelis, Opt. Mem.
- 25 St. Mark, Feast
- 28 Fifth Sunday of Easter, Sunday
- 29 Catherine of Siena, Memorial
- 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), fall during Easter Week and are superseded by the Holy Days. The feasts of St. John Baptist de la Salle (April 7) St. Anselm (April 21), and St. Louis Mary de Montfort and St. Peter Chanel (April 28) fall on Sunday so are superseded the Sunday liturgy. The Solemnity of the Annunciation falls on April 8 this year because of Holy Week. ☐

OUR CENACLE CORNER

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

PURSUING HOLINESS

- James 2:17-18
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- Romans 8:29

PRACTICING RIGHTEOUSNESS

- Isaiah 61:10
- Jeremiah 33:16
- John 17:25-26
- Matthew 25:37, 40



by Chris Pelicano in "The City Gates"

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

GOD'S TOUGH LOVE

St. Thomas Explains How Divine Mercy and Divine Justice Coincide

By Dr. Robert Stackpole, STD (January 27, 2013)

The following is the second in a two-part series on the saint who explained in the greatest depth why Divine Mercy is central to the faith of the Church. This series is extracted from the book by Robert Stackpole, STD, *Divine Mercy: A Guide from Genesis to Benedict XVI* (Marian Press)

Saint Thomas argues that in God's nature, Divine Mercy and Divine Justice coincide: They are one in the simplicity of God's essence. God is always and everywhere just and merciful, at one and the same time. When God acts mercifully, He does not act against justice but, in a sense, goes beyond it. In other words, God's justice always furthers His work of mercy, and never detracts from it. Aquinas writes: "The work of divine justice always presupposes the work of mercy and is based on it" (1.21.4). For example, if God chastised the people of Israel by letting them be taken captive to Babylon, it was only so that they might be brought to repentance and national conversion. In a sense, His justice permitted them to suffer because they deserved it, but His underlying plan was not merely to "get even" with His wayward people, but ultimately to restore them to a right relationship with Himself. In this case, His mercy took the form of "tough love."

In his essay "Disputed Questions on Truth," St. Thomas explains that God is more properly merciful than punitive. To articulate this truth, St. Thomas draws upon a distinction made by St. John Damascene: a distinction between God's "antecedent" and "consequent" will. Antecedently, that is, from all eternity, God's will "before the foundation of the world" is to make us all His adopted children and sharers of His divine life. His antecedent will is that "all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4).

God's consequent will, however, is what He wills as a response to the choices made by His human creatures. He gave human beings the freedom to reject His love and spurn His mercy. If we choose to do so, then God's consequent will is to forgive the penitent and punish the hard-hearted: temporal punishment in this life, and for the stubbornly impenitent, eternal punishment in the life to come. Hence, God's antecedent will is grace and mercy for all, while His consequent will is punishment for the wicked. However, even divine punishment, St. Thomas claims, is a work of mercy as well as of justice, because God rewards the righteous and penitent far beyond their

merits, and punishes the impenitent far less than they deserve.

Thus, even in His consequent will, Divine Mercy at least tempers Divine Justice. In his essay "Disputed Questions on Evil," St. Thomas writes: "The tradition of Faith holds that rational creatures would not be able to incur any evil in the soul or in the body unless sin had taken place" (1.4). Saint Thomas here refers to the effects of original sin on the human race. God did not want His people to suffer, so He created Adam and Eve incapable of suffering, along with the gift of bodily immortality. But when Adam and Eve fell from grace, they lost those gifts for themselves and for their posterity by their disobedience to God. As C.S. Lewis once wrote, a new kind of human existence, a kind God had never intended, thereby sinned itself into existence. As a result, Adam and Eve and all of their descendants became subject to suffering and death. All of this was certainly not God's antecedent will for His people! Nevertheless, God permitted the fall of man, with all its tragic effects, because it made possible the most amazing display of His merciful love for us, when He sent us Jesus the Savior to die for our sins on the Cross.

Humanity was certainly in a dire predicament after the fall of Adam and Eve. It is possible for sinners to have a right relationship with God restored only if they make a proper "satisfaction" to God for sin. The problem is that making satisfaction to God for sin is precisely what man, by his own power, could not do. He could not make up for sin (for the past cannot be undone, and a man has nothing "extra" in the present or future to offer to God for his past sins, since a life of perfect obedience was owed by each of us to God our Creator anyway). Besides, man owes to God an infinite compensation for sin, since by sin he has betrayed and offended Infinite Love. Yet we have nothing infinite to offer God to make up for our sins. Moreover, human nature, corrupted by sin, needs to be regenerated and renewed, for only a renewed, regenerated soul could possibly offer any pleasing satisfaction to God: but again, the regeneration of the soul is beyond human power.

Given that both the satisfaction for our sins and the regeneration of our sinful souls is entirely beyond our power, the human race is desperately in need of a Savior. Of course, St. Thomas argues that God Himself is our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Robert Stackpole, STD, is director of the John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy, an apostolate of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. His latest book is *Divine Mercy: A Guide from Genesis to Benedict XVI* (Marian Press). Got a question? E-mail him at questions@thedivinemercy.org.

INSPIRE: WELCOME THE ANGELS OF ANNUNCIATION

By Anne Bender

Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God". Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. (Luke 1: 26-38)

We all have annunciation moments, but unfortunately, we are often unaware of exactly what is happening to us. Sometimes in our busyness we become so preoccupied with ourselves and our own needs that we fail to recognize those angels when they come to us.

In my job as a WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Nutritionist serving low-income women and their families, I have found that the angels of annunciation come to me nearly constantly, but sometimes I can be so focused on myself and my own worries that I can let those angels in and out of my office all day long without realizing who they are. What a shame!

But when I open my heart and open my eyes, I see that angels of annunciation are plentiful. God is trying to speak to me through them all day, every day, and when I recognize them, I can't help but be changed by their message.

I recently met an angel who was a drug addict suffering from the horrific pains of withdrawal. Instead of sitting in my usual seat of judgment, I opened my heart to recognize that the message she was telling me was, "Do not be afraid, God is calling you to see through my addiction, to find Jesus inside me. Jesus suffered just like I am suffering. Are you open to helping me? It is you that God is calling. You are the favored one."

So I listened to her story, with tears in my eyes and I was able to offer her comfort and assistance. I became the handmaid of the Lord.

I also met an angel who was a student working through her internship requirements for graduation. Instead of rushing through my usual day trying to get my job done, I opened my heart to recognize the message that she was

telling me was, "Do not be afraid, God is calling you to see that you were once in my shoes. Are you open to helping me? It is you that God is calling. You are the favored one."

So I slowed down from my busy agenda and found the patience to teach her the steps required to give nutrition counseling to young mothers in need. I became the handmaid of the Lord.

One of my favorite angels was a two-year-old girl going through the negative stages through which every two-year-old must pass. Instead of becoming irritated by her temper tantrums and constant use of the word "NO", I opened my heart to recognize the message that she was

telling me was, "Do not be afraid, God is calling you to offer me kindness, to remember that it is the little ones such as these to whom Jesus offered the Kingdom of God. Are you open to helping me? It is you that God is calling. You are the favored one."

So I turned to her with a smile. I offered her a book, a compliment and a pat on the head. She walked out of my office with a smile on her face, calling out "I love you!" "I love you, too!" I called back. I became the handmaid of the Lord.

God's angels of annunciation are coming to you as well.

They are in every person that crosses your path. Will you be open to their messages? Will you hear them say "Do not be afraid, you have found favor with God?"

Will you feel God's Spirit coming to you and allow yourself to be open to it? Say yes! Become the handmaid of the Lord and watch the world transform into a beautiful place! ☐

Anne Bender writes from Milwaukee, WI where she shares the jumble of her life with a loving husband and five children, while working part-time as a WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) Nutritionist, and volunteering and participating in prayer and activities at her Catholic Parish and within the Archdiocese. It's a blessed life!



KNOWING OUR SAINTS

ST. FRANCIS OF PAOLA

Catholic Encyclopedia

Founder of the Order of Minims; b. in 1416, at Paula, in Calabria, Italy; d. 2 April, 1507, at Plessis, France.

His parents were remarkable for the holiness of their lives. Remaining childless for some years after their marriage they had recourse to prayer, especially commending themselves to the intercession of St. Francis of Assisi. Three children were eventually born to them, eldest of whom was Francis.



When still in the cradle he suffered from a swelling which endangered the sight of one of his eyes. His parents again had recourse to Francis of Assisi, and made a vow that their son

should pass an entire year in the "little habit" of St Francis in one of the convents of his order, a not uncommon practice in the Middle Ages. The child was immediately cured.

From his early years Francis showed signs of extraordinary sanctity, and at the age of thirteen, being admonished by a vision of a Franciscan friar, he entered a convent of the Franciscan Order in order to fulfill the vow made by his parents. Here he gave great edification by his love of prayer and mortification, his profound humility, and his prompt obedience. At the completion of the year he went with his parents on a pilgrimage to Assisi, Rome, and other places of devotion. Returning to Paula he selected a retired spot on his father's estate, and there lived in solitude; but later on he found a more retired dwelling in a cave on the sea coast. Here he remained alone for about six years giving himself to prayer and mortification.

In 1435 two companions joined him in his retreat, and to accommodate them, Francis caused three cells and a chapel to be built: in this way the new order was begun. The number of his disciples gradually increased, and about 1454, with the permission of Pyrrhus, Archbishop of Cosenza, Francis built a large monastery and church. The building of this monastery was the occasion of a great outburst of enthusiasm and devotion on the part of the people towards Francis: even the nobles carried stones and joined in the work. Their devotion was increased by the many miracles which the saint wrought in answer to their prayers. The rule of life adopted by Francis and his religious was one of extraordinary severity. They

observed perpetual abstinence and lived in great poverty, but the distinguishing mark of the order was humility. They were to seek to live unknown and hidden from the world. To express this character which he would have his disciples cultivate, Francis eventually obtained from the Holy See that they should be styled Minims, the least of all religious. In 1474 Sixtus IV gave him permission to write a rule for his community, and to assume the title of Hermits of St. Francis: this rule was formally approved by Alexander VI, who, however, changed their title into that of Minims. After the approbation of the order, Francis founded several new monasteries in Calabria and Sicily. He also established convents of nuns, and a third order for people living in the world, after the example of St. Francis of Assisi.

He had an extraordinary gift of prophecy: thus he foretold the capture of Otranto by the Turks in 1480, and its subsequent recovery by the King of Naples. Also he was gifted with discernment of consciences. He was no respecter of persons of whatever rank or position. He rebuked the King of Naples for his ill-doing and in consequence suffered much persecution.

When Louis XI was in his last illness he sent an embassy to Calabria to beg the saint to visit him. Francis refused to come nor could he be prevailed upon until the pope ordered him to go. He then went to the king at Plessis-Tours and was with him at his death. Charles VIII, Louis's successor, much admired the saint and during his reign kept him near the court and frequently consulted him. This king built a monastery for Minims at Plessis and another at Rome on the Pincian Hill. The regard in which Charles VIII held the saint was shared by Louis XII, who succeeded to the throne in 1498. Francis was now anxious to return to Italy, but the king would not permit him, not wishing to lose his counsels and direction. The last three months of his life he spent in entire solitude, preparing for death.

On Maundy Thursday he gathered his community around him and exhorted them especially to have mutual charity amongst themselves and to maintain the rigour of their life and in particular perpetual abstinence. The next day, Good Friday, he again called them together and gave them his last instructions and appointed a vicar-general. He then received the last sacraments and asked to have the Passion according to St. John read out to him, and whilst this was being read, his soul passed away.

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MEDITATION AND COMMENTARY

GOD IS LOVE AND MERCY -- A MEDITATION WITH SAINT FAUSTINA

AN EXCERPT FROM PRAYING WITH FAUSTINA

By Eileen Dunn Bertanzetti

Theme: Jesus told Sister Faustina that he is "Love and Mercy."¹

At the core of Faustina's spirituality was her awareness of Christ's invitation to dwell in his merciful love.

In return, she was to love him with all her strength and to demonstrate love and mercy to all God's people.

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, penetrate my heart, mind, and soul with an abiding awareness of your unconditional, merciful love for me. Help me to love you in return, in every circumstance of my life, knowing that my only true joy will be found in loving you and in loving every person because of you.

About Faustina

In 1921, at age sixteen, Helena Kowalska was convinced that God wanted her to lead a "more perfect life,"² but she wasn't sure how to do so. In the meantime, she decided to follow in her two older sisters' footsteps and leave home to get a job as a maid. After almost a year living and working in the home of Mrs. Helen Goryszewska, who lived near the large city of Lodz, Helena finally knew what God wanted of her: to enter religious life as a nun. When she mentioned this to her parents, they refused to grant their permission. Out of her great love for God and for them, Helena did not press the issue. Instead, she obtained another job as a live-in maid, this time in the city of Lodz itself.

When autumn 1922 arrived, seventeen-year-old Helena once again asked her parents' permission to enter a convent. And again, they refused. Discouraged, the slender and lovely Helena decided to give up her dream. For almost a year, she worked as a maid for three women. By 1923 she decided that since she was not allowed to enter religious life, she would need a better-paying job that would enable her to buy fashionable clothes and attend dances with her sisters. Ignoring God's gentle, loving promptings in her soul to enter religious life, Helena obtained a job as maid and babysitter for the Sadowska family in Lodz.

One night at a dance, despite the lively music and the loud mix of voices, Helena suddenly saw Jesus. Stripped of his clothes, he stood next to her, his flesh covered with wounds. Though his eyes spoke to her of love, they also revealed his agonizing pain. When he then asked her why she kept delaying her entrance into a convent, the tone of his voice and the look on his divine face told her how much her delay grieved him. Not knowing how to reply, Helena left the dance by herself and headed to a nearby cathedral, where she begged God to tell her exactly what to do. Jesus advised her to go to Warsaw and enter a convent.

Helena returned home, told her sister what had happened, and asked her to relate her decision to their parents, Stanislaus and Marianna. Although knowing how much her parents would grieve over losing her tore at Helena's heart, she could wait no longer for their permission to enter religious life. She would have to trust Jesus, her merciful Lord and Master, to comfort and console her beloved parents. God wanted her to act -- now.

With nothing except the dress she wore and a small bag of essentials, eighteen-year-old Helena set off for Warsaw to find a convent that would accept her. Upon her arrival in that city, not knowing anyone, she asked Mary, the mother of God, what she should do. Mary told her to go to a nearby village, where she would find a safe place to spend the night. Helena did so, and the next morning she traveled back to Warsaw, found a Catholic church, and entered. During Mass she asked God what she should do next. He told her to talk to the priest. After Mass she explained her situation to the priest, and he told her to go to the Warsaw home of a woman named Mrs. Aldona Lipszyc, who needed a housemaid. The woman hired her, and during her free time, Helena searched for a convent. She trusted that in his great love and mercy, Jesus would help her find the convent he had intended for her.

Pause: Recall a time in your life when God, in his merciful love for you, seemed to be leading you in a specific direction. How did you respond?

Faustina's Words

This evening, when I heard the hymn, "Good night, Holy Head of my Jesus," on the radio, my spirit was suddenly swept away to God's mysterious bosom, and I knew in what the greatness of a soul consists and what matters to God: love, love, and once again, love. And I understood how all that exists is saturated with God, and such a love of God inundated my soul that I am at a loss to describe it. Happy the soul that knows how to love unreservedly, for in this lies its greatness.³

Eternal Love, Depth of Mercy, O Triune Holiness, yet One God, whose bosom is full of love for all, as a good Father You scorn no one. O Love of God, Living Fountain, pour Yourself out upon us, Your unworthy creatures. May our misery not hold back the torrents of Your love, for indeed, there is no limit to Your mercy.⁴

Reflection

How can we become more aware of dwelling in God's merciful love? Since "God is love" (1 John 4:8), and God is infinite mercy, we can count on the fact that we already dwell in that merciful love, because he is everywhere present, within and around each of us. As the merciful, loving parent that he is, God loves each of us unconditionally. All we have to do is "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you" (James 4:8). Each of us can "draw near" to God in countless ways and thus experience his unfathomable, merciful love enfolding us. Drawing near to God and getting to know him also help us to grow in our love for him.

Prayer is one of the foundational ways of getting to know, love, and experience God, but not just by our speaking to him. Getting to know God is like getting to know a fellow human being: we have to do a lot of listening to the other person in order to learn more about him or her. Faustina listened to God as he led her to religious life. Along each step of the way, through prayer, she relied on him to show her what to do.

Most of us will never experience the visions that Sr. Faustina had of Jesus, but we can learn to listen to God by mulling over a particular Scripture and allowing the Holy Spirit to help its truth sink deep into our souls. One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is love (Galatians 5:22-23), and when we meditate on God's word in Scripture, we can count on the Holy Spirit to touch our hearts and convince our minds of his truth, which is love (1 John 4:8).

We can also get to know, love, and experience the God of love and mercy by keeping his commandments. As Faustina grew in her awareness of God's unconditional, merciful love for her, her desire to love and please him increased. When she realized that he still desired her to enter religious life, she persevered until she was accepted into a convent.

Do you sometimes think of God as a harsh judge, waiting to punish you? That type of negative thinking can cause you to fear him. It can also prevent you from growing in your awareness of his unconditional, merciful love for you.

Find a quiet spot where you can be alone with God. Sit or lie down, whichever is practical in your situation, and close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths, and then ask the Holy Spirit to help you recall recent times when God acted on your behalf to make difficult situations work out for your good, as well as for the good of those you love. You could repeat this spiritual exercise each evening before you sleep and thereby grow daily in your awareness of God's abiding, merciful love.

On New Year's Day 1937, Sr. Faustina made a resolution: "to see the image of God in every sister; all love of neighbor must flow from this motive."⁵ Tomorrow during all your waking hours, practice visualizing God in each individual you encounter. Before going to sleep, examine

your conscience to see if this practice helped you see Jesus in every person with whom you came in contact. Did your love for them, as well as for God, increase as a result?

Meditate on the phrase "God is love." Since God is omnipresent and since he is love itself, visualize yourself nestled against his loving heart. Do this in times of stress, anxiety, depression, fatigue, or in any difficult situation. Allow yourself to totally relax in God's loving embrace, and let him fill you with his calming presence, which is merciful love.

God asks us to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:31). This implies that we must love ourselves first. Do you truly love yourself as God desires? Do you take care of your body, soul, and mind to the best of your ability? When the responsibilities of daily life become too demanding, it might be tempting to deprive yourself of adequate rest, nutrition, exercise, and even prayer. What if each day, in addition to giving your body adequate rest, exercise, and nutrition, you also rest, exercise, and feed your soul? To give "rest" to your soul, you could spiritually place yourself in the tender heart of the Lord, as Sr. Faustina recommended. To "exercise" your soul, you could pray a silent "Jesus, I love you" or a Hail Mary every hour. And to "feed" your soul, you could read and meditate on Scripture.

Jesus calls us to have mercy on and love even our enemies (Matthew 5:44). Do you have any "enemies" to whom you hesitate to show love and mercy because they've treated you unfairly or unkindly? If so, remember that mercy is a gift. It is not something anyone deserves. If God shows us merciful love, which we've certainly done nothing to deserve, doesn't he expect us to treat even our enemies in the same way? When it seems almost impossible to love and show mercy to your "enemies," ask Jesus to give you his merciful love for them and to love them through you. He will do it!

God's Word

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, fill me with your everlasting merciful love. Fill me to overflowing, so that your love and mercy spill out to everyone in my life. Always help me to love you with all the force of my soul and to know in my heart that you love me even more in return. ■

¹ Diary of Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul (Stockbridge, MA: Marians of the Immaculate Conception, 1987), 1074.

² Diary, 7.

³ Diary, 997.

⁴ Diary, 1307.

⁵ Diary, 861.

GOD TOUCHED ME

WORLD'S RULER IN OUR MIDST

[PORTIONS LIFTED FROM NEW LIFE TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES]

By MB, a devotee

The condition of resistance to the devil is to know the truth.

You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free

- John 8:32

The temporary rulers of the world are identified through the verses in the Bible. The scriptures clearly show that an intelligent, unseen person has been controlling both men and nations. It says: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." And the Bible identifies him, saying: "The one called Devil and Satan . . . is misleading the entire inhabited earth." (1 John 5:19; Rev 12:9) To resist this misleading acts is to put our hearts with God's truth, His revelations and His deeds through the image of His son Jesus. This truth was reflected in one occasion when Jesus was "tempted by the devil", Jesus did not question Satan's role as the ruler of this world. The Bible explains what happened: The Devil took Him along to an unusually high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to Him: "All these things I will give you if you fall down and do an act of worship to me." Then Jesus said to him: "Go away Satan!" – (Matthew 4:1. 8-10)

Think about this, Satan "tempted" Jesus by offering him "all the kingdoms of the world." Yet, would Satan's offer have been a real temptation if Satan was not actually the ruler of these kingdoms? No, it would not. And note, Jesus did not deny that all these worldly governments were Satan's, which He would have done if Satan did not have power over them. So, then, Satan the Devil really is the unseen ruler of the worlds. The Bible, in fact, calls him "the god of this system of things." (2 Cor 4:4) Yet, how did such wicked person ever come into this position?

The one who became Satan had been an angel created by God, but he became envious of God's position . He challenged God's rightful rulership and was thrown to this world out of the kingdom of God. To this end he used a serpent as a mouthpiece to deceive the first woman, Eve, and was thus able to get her and her husband, Adam, to do his bidding rather than obey God. He also claimed he could turn all of Adam and Eve's yet unborn offspring away from God. So, God allowed time for Satan to try to prove his claim by retaining Satan's powers, but he has not succeeded. (Job 1: 6-12; 2:1-10)

Significantly, Satan is not alone in his rulership of the world. He was successful in persuading some of the other angels to join him in rebellion against God. These became demons, his spirit accomplices. The scriptures speak of them when it urges Christians: "Stand firm against the machinations of the Devil: because we have a wrestling, not against flesh and blood, but against the

world rulers of this darkness, against the wicked spirit of forces in the heavenly places." (Eph 6:11-12)

Resist the Wicked Spirits through God's Touch of Truth

These unseen, wicked world rulers are determined to mislead all mankind, turning them away from the worship of God and His reach. One way wicked spirits do this is by promoting the idea of survival after death, even though God's Word clearly shows that the dead are not conscious. (Gen 2:17; Eze 18:4) Thus, a wicked spirit, imitating the voice of one who has died, may talk with that one's living relative(s) or friends, either through a spirit medium or be a "voice" from the invisible realm. The "voice" pretends to be the departed one, yet is actually a demon!

So, if you ever hear such a "voice" do not be deceived. Reject whatever it says, and echo Jesus' words: "Go away, Satan." (Mat 4:10) Do not allow curiosity about the spirit realm to cause you to become involved with wicked spirits. Such involvement is called spiritism, and God warns His worshipers against it in all its forms. The Bible "condemns anyone who employs divination . . . or anyone who consults a spirit medium or a professional foreteller of events or anyone who inquires of the dead." (Deut 18-12; Rev 21:8)

Since spiritism brings a person under the influence of the demons, resist all its practices regardless of how much fun, or how exciting, they may seem to be. These practices include crystal ball gazing, use of Ouija boards, ESP, examining the lines of one's hand (palmistry), and astrology. Demons have also caused noises and other physical phenomena in houses that they make their territory.

In addition , wicked spirits capitalize on the sinful event of humans by promoting literature, movies and television programs that feature immoral or unnatural sexual behavior. The demons know that wrong thoughts if not expelled from the mind will come indelible impressions and lead humans to behave immorally - like, the demon themselves. (Gen 6:1; Jude 6)

True, many may scoff at the idea that this world is ruled by wicked spirits. But their disbelief is not surprising, since the Bible says: "Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light." (2 Cor 11:14) His most clever deception has been in blinding many to the fact the he and his demons really exist. But DO NOT be deceived.

The Devil and his demons are real, and you need to resist them continually through God's words and His Son Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. (1 Pet 5:8-9)

The words of God's through His son Jesus Christ is a touch of protection. The faith that is translated to loving our brothers and sisters become a close door for Satan to penetrate. This world (including its demon rulers) will be passing away, the one who does the will of God through Jesus remains forever. (John 2:17)

The strong teachings of the church that enjoins everyone to submission especially constant adoration in the presence of the Eucharist, forgiveness not only to others but to ourselves would provide the perfect wall of resistance and continuing destruction of the evil one. Let us, therefore, be among those who do God's will and enjoy life forever in God's righteous new world. (Rev. 21:3-4)

As we look at things around us and if the only way we can believe in God is when we see and feel God's heavenly presence through so called "signs", this

becomes a sure opening and opportunity for the evil one to come in. The evil spirit will see this as an "invitation" to make his presence felt and before we know it we are deeply being engulfed not by our works from divine origin but by the evil thoughts and workings from the enemy like lust, vengeance, anger, frustration and depression to name a few. In a situation where deliverance from spiritual imprisonment was experienced, we need to let God touch our lives and fill the void that the enemy once occupied that portion of our soul. When we invite our Lord to fill this gap, we must prepare ourselves to experience continuing communication with Him, not just for a moment but long meditational prayers that will fill up everything that wrought our relationship with God, plastering every detail in our soul with prayers, good deeds and profound praises on every word raising up to God's heavenly throne. After the conversion or deliverance, the evil one will let pass your soul as he sees the indelible mark of God's divine touch in your mind and in spirit. ☐

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

- You are enjoined to practice Eucharistic Adoration at least an hour a week. Let us render God adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and petition. Kindly check with your respective parishes for schedules. Some churches are open 24-hours for Eucharistic Adoration.
- Pray at least one rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary daily.
- Pray the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy at 3:00 PM and at 9:00 PM daily.
- Pray the Angelus at 6:00 PM daily.
- Pray the Pro-Life Scriptural Rosary [www.rosaryoftheunborn.com] to make reparation for the crime of abortion.
- Think of ways to make reparation to Mary for the sins committed against Jesus and Mary. A very good one is to join the **First Saturday devotion**; another is the **2000 Hail Mary devotion**.
- This Easter season, let us make Easter about 'The Lamb' and not 'The Bunny'. It is important that our children's activities will encourage them in keeping Jesus from getting lost in the Easter bunny shuffle! ☐

... I am your Mother Mary.

On this 1st Saturday, open your hearts to God, who reads them and whose heart is forgiving and merciful. As the passion of my son Jesus you will feel and see again. His passion repeats itself when people are not open to change their lives for God and evil that destroys the lives of others.

My children the best way to change one's life is to be honest to yourself and your works will be a reflection of God's works for others. Holiness is not impossible. You must use all your energy to be holy as God is Holy.

My rosary I ask you to pray every day for peace and continued changes that will happen to the Church that my son Jesus established. Many changes will happen that will start confusion and conflict. Pray my children that the will of God prevails and not the works of some evil men.

I will be with you interceding for your prayers.

I thank you for heeding to my call.

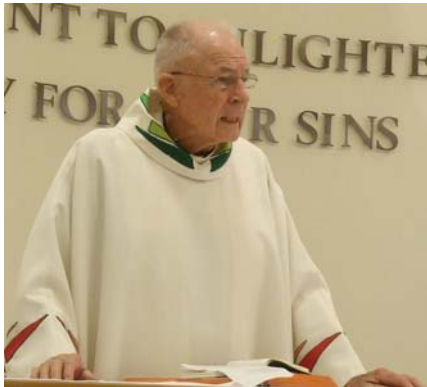
I love you my children."

*- Mary, Your Lady of the Rosary
03032013*

SPIRITUAL ARMY NEWS DISPATCH

PARTING IS SUCH SWEET MEMORY!

As the Ministry of God the Father celebrated the milestone for initiating its website, we also reached another milestone for the Ministry's Liturgical Leader in the person of Fr. Larry Murphy S.J. Fr. Murphy, as we fondly call him, has officiated our liturgical services for the past ten years. He has recently announced his retirement and during our First Saturday liturgical celebration, we bade him adieu. He is going to the Jesuits Retirement Home in Los Gatos, Northern California.



Fr. Murphy is seen here in the picture, moments before being dropped off at the airport for his departure to Los Gatos. He has served the Spiritual Army with spiritual dedication and compassion especially for those devotees who have had him as their Father Confessor.

As our ever dedicated priest, he courageously said that he will come back, and jestingly added "don't bury me yet." We know there will be no "burial" for Fr. Murphy in the near future, but in the meantime we wish you Father a well-deserved respite and a peaceful and enjoyable long term hiatus. We will miss you dearly! ☐



IRS GRANTS THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER TAX EXEMPTION STATUS

On February 27, 2013, IRS approved The Spiritual Army of God the Father's application for recognition of exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The exemption is retroactive from the date of filing of the application, September 27, 2012.

This status will give the Ministry enough leverage in performing its mission in terms of its actual fund generation through donation solicitation, income projects like auction, social/medical missions and other outreach corporal works aligned with the Ministry's mission statement.

In turn our benefactors, donors and friends can likewise declare their donations tax deductible. We are also awaiting the same recognition of exemption from the State of California.

So, let us start our mission for God rolling full blast and see the graces coming into our midst.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEAST OF THE DIVINE MERCY

APRIL 7, 2013

THE MONASTERY OF THE ANGELS
1977 CARMEN AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90068

AND

ST. BRIDGET CATHOLIC CHURCH
220 N. 14TH STREET
LAS VEGAS, NV 89101

CORONATION OF MARY

SATURDAY, MAY 4, 2013

CONVENT OF THE SISTER
DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE MASTER
501 N. BEAUDRY AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
START SAVING UP FOR

PILGRIMAGE TO

MOTHER MARY'S

APPARITION SHRINES

PORTUGAL | SPAIN | FRANCE

DECEMBER 2014

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 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.



On behalf of The Spiritual Army of God the Father, Mila and Evelyn thank God for sending us angels, namely: Fe, Angeline and Maria Theresa Muego who spent their whole Saturday assisting us with our spring cleaning and organizing all the cabinets of the Cenacle House. We also thank Ron Muego for putting shelves all around the storage area. They have touched our hearts and our gratitude is overflowing.



*From Marilyn on the Mom of her Sister's Friend
Nemia Alonzo was released from the hospital on March 6. Her heart is doing well, the stents are working and she is progressively recovering at home. Nemia's family thanks everyone for their prayers and devotion.*



*On Edda Susara from her son, Mike Susara
GOD IS GREAT!!! She has been cleared of any tumors!!! We received the great news last week!!! She will now go to weekly checkups and CT scans to make sure tumors don't come back!!!!*



Fr. Tom Z has declared in front of his parishioners when he said mass recently. "I was dead but now I am back. Thank you very much for all your prayers."



God's gift of a new liver to Nona turns a year old on March 22, 2013!

2000 HAIL MARY DEVOTION

The Spiritual Army of God the Father acknowledges 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

Evelyn Pua in memory of her deceased parents,
Domingo and Concepcion Lopez

Isabelita Adina in honor of her mother who is
celebrating her birthday in April.

Los Angeles, California

Lolita Estrada | Linda Fajardo
Loreto Melo | Concepcion Poblete
Lilia Tuazon | Thelma Zamora

Continued from Page 1

Easter: Through the Octave and Beyond!

"What we commemorate before Easter is what we experience in this life; what we celebrate after Easter points to something we do not yet possess."

The Season of Easter is not just about His resurrection but ours. St. Maximus of Turin wrote in the 5th Century, "Christ is risen! He has burst open the gates of hell and let the dead go free; he has renewed the earth through the members of his Church now born again in baptism, and has made it blossom afresh with men brought back to life."

"His Holy Spirit has unlocked the doors of heaven, which stand wide open to receive those who rise up from the earth."

How much time do we really spend meditating on or contemplating heaven? Have we read much on the subject? How about the resurrection of the body?

I know that now, as I get older, heaven is taking on a more important aspect in my life. With my "second half of life" growing shorter, I think more about eternity and heaven. Every time my knees creak and my back hurts, I'm thankful that there can come a day when I will have a resurrected body. This is our Easter hope!

Heaven is not just a place where our souls will float around in some kind of nirvana. The Catechism states, "God will definitely grant incorruptible life to our bodies by reuniting them with our souls. All will rise: 'Those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment' (Jn 5:29)."

During the season of Easter our particular focus is on a hope beyond this world - a hope that is a great equalizer for those who are infirm or healthy, rich or poor. It is a hope that transcends our current situation with the hope of something better. and eternal!

Anthony DeStefano, in his book "Travel Guide to Heaven" says that any discussion of heaven needs to include fun. "It's a place of unlimited pleasure, unlimited happiness and unlimited joy!"

Now, that's worth thinking about, worth celebrating and worth telling others.

In the year's Easter Vigil, Pope Benedict declared, "At Easter, on the morning of the first day of the week, God said once again: 'Let there be light.'"

"The night on the Mount of Olives, the solar eclipse of Jesus' passion and death, the night of the grave had all passed. Now it is the first day once again - creation is beginning anew. 'Let there be light,' says God, 'and there was light:' Jesus rises from the grave. Life is stronger than death. Good is stronger than evil. Love is stronger than hate. Truth is stronger than lies.

"The darkness of the previous days is driven away the moment Jesus rises from the grave and himself becomes God's pure light. But this applies not only to him, not only to the darkness of those days. With the resurrection of Jesus, light itself is created anew. He draws all of us after him into the new light of the resurrection and he conquers all darkness. He is God's new day, new for all of us."

As we now journey the 50 days to Pentecost, we are walking in the new light - the light of new creation which we each experience through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We don't have to live out as those who have no hope. Our hope is fixed, our pathway is lit and our voyage is refreshed by resurrection's sun and again underway. □

Randy Sly is the Associate Editor of Catholic Online and the CEO/Associate Publisher for the Northern Virginia Local Edition of Catholic Online (<http://virginia.catholic.org>). He is a former Archbishop of the Charismatic Episcopal Church who laid aside that ministry to enter into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

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St. Francis of Paola

Leo X canonized him in 1519. In 1562 the Huguenots broke open his tomb and found his body incorrupt. They dragged it forth and burnt it, but some of the bones were preserved by the Catholics and enshrined in various churches of his order. The Order of Minims does not seem at any time to have been very extensive, but they had houses in many countries. The definitive rule was approved in 1506 by Julius II, who also approved a rule for the nuns of the order. The feast of St. Francis of Paola is kept by the universal Church on 2 April, the day on which he died. □

DEVOTION SCHEDULE



THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER

WWW.SPIRITUALARMYOFGOD.ORG

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
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 20, 2013

at the Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master | starting at 8:30 a.m.
Please see Victor if you wish to become a Sponsor of the 2000 Hail Mary Devotion.

In Las Vegas:

1st Saturday Devotion

at The Cenacle House in The Enclave, 8455 West Sahara Avenue #172, Las Vegas, NV 89117 at 1:00 P.M.
Cenacle will be at 10:00 A.M. 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 at 2:00-3:30 P.M.

at The Cenacle House in The Enclave, 8455 West Sahara Avenue #172, Las Vegas, NV 89117

2000 Hail Mary Devotion –April 20, 2013

*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 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 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.