



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

April 2017

THE CONQUEST OF JESUS CHRIST

by Dr. Adrian Rogers

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All the great religious leaders of history have one thing in common: they are dead. Only one man has risen from a grave never again to taste death. Jesus Christ rose again! God validated His Kingship and accepted His payment for our sins with one incredible stroke: He raised Jesus from the dead!

Acts 4 reveals five things that are true right now because Jesus is alive...

His Persecution Continues

It is impossible to persecute a dead man — he's beyond your reach! But Jesus continues to be persecuted. The Bible makes it clear. When Saul had been persecuting early believers, Jesus Himself said on the road to Damascus, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"

In Acts 3, a miracle occurred right at the door of the Temple. The religious establishment was angry. Peter and John made sure everyone knew Jesus was responsible for it.

Peter . . . answered . . . why marvel ye at this . . . as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? (3:12)

Peter's words cut like saber as he told them, "through faith in His name" (v. 16), Jesus, who they had put to death, had healed the lame man and "God has raised [Him] from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (v. 15). The reaction was persecution.

. . . the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. Acts 4:1-2

Because Jesus Christ is alive, He is still being persecuted. The apostles received the brunt of it, but in the truest sense, it was the Lord Jesus being persecuted. When you persecute the church, you're persecuting Jesus.

If you're not being persecuted, don't boast about it, for the Bible says "all who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." If there's no persecution, it's not because the world has gotten more "churchy," but the church has gotten more worldly.

His Preaching Convinces

How many of them which heard the word believed . . . about five thousand. (4:4)

How were these unlettered fishermen able to preach and five thousand come to Christ? Because He lives. They were not dependent upon their power of oratory, winsomeness or logic. There was a living Christ inside them.

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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).

After our solemn commemoration of the last days and death of Our Lord we will spend the month of April celebrating -- basking in the joy of the Resurrection. We continue throughout the entire month with our cry, "Christ is risen, Christ is truly risen." The Feast of Divine Mercy offers us the opportunity to begin again as though we were newly baptized. The unfathomable mercy of

God is made manifest today if we but accept His most gracious offer. Easter is the feast of feasts, the unalloyed joy and gladness of all Christians. This truly is "the day that the Lord has made." From Sunday to Sunday, from year to year, the Easters of this earth will lead us to that blessed day on which Christ has promised that He will come again with glory to take us with Him into the kingdom of His Father. ☐

FEASTS FOR APRIL

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

- 4 Isidore of Seville, Opt. Mem.
- 5 Vincent Ferrer, Opt. Mem.
- 7 John Baptist de la Salle, Opt. Mem.
- 9 Palm Sunday
- 13 Holy Thursday, Triduum
- 14 Good Friday, Triduum
- 15 Holy Saturday, Triduum
- 16 Easter Sunday, Solemnity
- 23 Divine Mercy Sunday, Solemnity
- 24 St. Fidelis, Opt. Mem.
- 25 St. Mark, Feast
- 28 Peter Chanel (NZ, Feast); Louis Mary de Montfort; Gianna Molla, mother (Italy), Opt. Mem.

29 Catherine of Siena, Memorial

The feasts of St. Francis of Paola (April 2), St. Bernadette (April 16), St. George and St. Adalbert (April 23) and St. Pius V (April 30) fall on Sunday so are superseded the Sunday liturgy. The feasts of St. Stanislaus (April 11) and St. Martin I (April 13) are superseded by the Holy Week liturgies. The feast of St. Anselm (April 21) is superseded by the Easter Week liturgy. ☐

OUR CENACLE CORNER

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

THE MERCY OF GOD

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT'S
ACCOUNT OF GOD'S MERCIFUL HEART

JEREMIAH

ISAIAH

GENESIS

HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

YOUR FATHER WILL REWARD YOU

THE BLESSING THAT COME THROUGH FASTING, PRAYER, AND ALMSGIVING

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St. Augustine once said that fasting and almsgiving are the two “wings” that help our prayer fly up to heaven. An image like this gives us the idea that denying ourselves and caring for the poor are closely related and that together they can give a powerful thrust to our spiritual lives. By helping us put aside selfishness, they make it easier for us to focus on Jesus and the selfless love he wants to build up in us.

Lent is often reduced to a time when we “give something up,” a time when we take up practices that we don’t enjoy but that we sense are good for us. It’s the equivalent of

a child learning to eat his vegetables:

he knows they are good for him, but he doesn’t like how they taste. While such an approach may work with children, this is not

how God wants us — grown men and women — to look at the life he is calling us to. He wants us to look at Lent as a time of renewal and not just a set of chores we do grudgingly.

In the English-speaking world, the word “Lent” highlights this sense of renewal and spiritual growth. The word is derived from the Old English word *lencten*, which refers to the way the days lengthen as the season of spring unfolds. Springtime is a crucial season for farmers as they watch their crops closely and tend them carefully, hoping for a plentiful harvest. In a similar way, Lent is a time for us to pay extra attention to the seeds of faith and obedience God has sown in us, in the hope that by Easter we will harvest the fruit of His Holy Spirit.

So let’s make it a point this Lent to break away from our everyday routine so that we can ask the Holy Spirit to help us learn how to fly farther and faster.

When You Fast . . . Ash Wednesday is the beginning of a new season of expectation. It’s a season for tending

our spiritual gardens more closely so that we can reap the richness of God’s renewing grace. It’s not a burdensome season; it’s a time for hope and joy as we look forward to what God is prepared to do in our hearts.

When he taught about fasting and prayer and almsgiving, Jesus gave us three specific directions to follow. You can read about them in Matthew 6:1-18.

Looking at these verses, the first thing we can see is that Jesus didn’t say, “If you fast” or “If you give alms” or “If you pray.” No, he said when you do these things. These aren’t optional add-ons to our spiritual lives. They are

commands from the Son of God. They are vital practices that help us break away from our self-centered and our self-indulgent mind-sets.

Jesus told us to fast, to give alms, and to pray because he knows that they help us place

our possessions, our comforts, and our worth in the right perspective. He knows that self-denial multiplied by prayer and generous giving opens our eyes to God’s love. He knows, firsthand, how these practices help us to love and care for other people.

Second, Jesus told us to do our almsgiving, our prayer, and our fasting in private. He didn’t want us to put on a public display that will make people applaud us or call us holy. He disliked the way some of the religious leaders of his day sought glory and acclaim from the very people they were supposed to lead closer to God. It’s as if they were drawing the people closer to themselves rather than to the Lord! Far better, Jesus said, to stay quiet about our spiritual practices so that we can focus on God more than on other people’s respect.

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SWEPT AWAY BY MERCY

WHAT HAPPENED TO ZACCHAEUS CAN HAPPEN TO US

By Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap

Jesus encountered many people throughout Palestine. The Gospels have transmitted a record of some of these people and have given us their names for the most part. One prominent detail immediately leaps out: these women and men are almost always in difficult situations or are suffering from a sickness, from grief, or from some other painful situation.

Or worse, they are “sinners” — people living in moral situations in contradiction to the requirements of the Mosaic law and thus not according to God’s will.

Let us reflect on Jesus’ encounter with one such sinner: Zacchaeus, “a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man” (Luke 19:2). It takes place in Jericho, where Zacchaeus is in a large crowd waiting for Jesus. Because Zacchaeus is short, he climbs a tree along the route of the procession to see Jesus better. When Jesus reaches it, he looks up and says, “Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house” (19:5). Overjoyed, Zacchaeus hurries down and receives Jesus. But the crowd grumbles: “He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner” (19:7).

Just a Sinner? The citizens despised Zacchaeus because he was compromised by money and power; perhaps they scorned him because he was short. Zacchaeus was nothing but a “sinner” to them. Jesus, on the other hand, went to his house; he left the welcoming crowd of admirers and visited only Zacchaeus. He was acting like the good shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine sheep to go find the hundredth sheep that is lost. For Jesus, Zacchaeus was above all “a descendant of Abraham” (Luke 19:9).

Jesus welcomes those who are either outcasts of the political system (the poor and oppressed) or who are rejected by the religious system (pagans, tax collectors, and prostitutes). People who do not accept this kind of action by God exclude themselves from salvation.

Seen in this light, the Zacchaeus episode seems like the parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee actually coming to pass: God justified the repentant tax collector and sent the Pharisee away empty-handed. Now Jesus brings salvation to Zacchaeus’ house and leaves the arrogant, sanctimonious people murmuring outside.

Inside the house, Zacchaeus promises: “Half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over” (19:8). And Jesus declares that salvation has come to the household of Zacchaeus. “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost” (19:10).

Unconditional Mercy. Let us reflect a bit more deeply on this episode. Zacchaeus has heard Jesus talked about as a prophet who is different from the others, so he

wants to see him. There is certainly something more than sheer curiosity on Zacchaeus’ part. He has a real interest, though not yet a desire, to convert. Jesus looks up into the tree at him — from many hints in the Gospels, it seems that Jesus’ eyes had a miraculous power and spoke more than his words. He calls Zacchaeus by name.

We might expect that before proclaiming forgiveness, Jesus would have required the five conditions that are normally demanded to obtain the remission of sin: examination of conscience, repentance, a firm resolve not to sin again, a confession of sin, and penance. But none of that happens! Jesus urgently wants to spend time with Zacchaeus — to enter his home, stay for a while, have a meal, and perhaps spend the night.

Jesus compromises himself openly and dangerously because he risks becoming ritually unclean and causing scandal. Yet he meets with a sinner at his home and does not impose any preliminary conditions. He does not ask Zacchaeus to purify himself in terms of the Mosaic law; he does not ask him to leave his disreputable profession or to do restitution or penance.

Swept Away. Zacchaeus, however, is able to read in Jesus’ gaze the same love that Jesus elsewhere directed to the rich young man (Mark 10:21). That gaze fills him with extraordinary joy. He welcomes this presence that lavishes him with love; he lets himself be swept away by this love. Because of this love, he feels himself come back to life and become a human being again. He no longer feels the cloud of disdain that had always hung over him, even when he was dealing with colleagues and subordinates.

Zacchaeus immediately understood that if he wanted this love to be alive and life-giving, he needed to let all of his life be inundated by it; he needed to let it influence all his relationships. And so, spontaneously, Zacchaeus announced he would give half of his goods to the poor and would restore fourfold to anyone he had cheated.

This is a reparation, but one that takes place on the level of human relationships, in the sphere of justice operating among human beings. And Zacchaeus does not do this because of a condition imposed on him by Jesus in order to receive his love. It is instead a consequence of that love. Having been loved first, and freely, Zacchaeus feels the urge to turn toward others, toward those he has defrauded, and he learns to respect and love them.

This is how God’s mercy operates. Let us never forget it! □

This article was adapted from *The Gaze of Mercy: A Commentary on Divine and Human Mercy*, by Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap, translated by Marsha Daigle-Williamson (softcover, 184 pp).

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR GOING TO CONFESSION

DRINK FROM THE WELL OF GOD'S MERCY

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Preparing for Confession

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God offers us limitless forgiveness and healing. He knows our sins long before we recognize or confess them, but he waits for us to come to him — just as Jesus waited for a woman by a well in Samaria (John 4:4-42).

In the story, the woman meets Jesus as he is sitting by a well. He asks for a drink, and begins to hint at who he is



and what he wants to do for her. Next, he offers her “living water” that will quench her thirst forever. He tells her that he knows that she has had

five husbands and is living in adultery with a sixth man. Even though she feels exposed, the woman isn't ashamed; she is in awe. She recognizes Jesus as the Messiah — the One who came to save her and not condemn her.

Like this woman, we too are thirsty for God. We too carry the burdens of sin. But Jesus knows our struggles, just as he knew hers, and he wants to set us free. He waits to meet us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation so that he can give us a drink of the living water of his mercy.

So how can we drink from this well of grace? We prepare, confess, and leave our sins behind.

Prepare. Sometimes we can't see our sin until we view our behavior through God's eyes. We need the Holy Spirit to help us recognize how we have sinned. Take a minute to pray, “Lord, help me to see what you see.” Some sins may immediately come to mind — others may be less obvious. Using the examination of conscience on the next column, ask the Spirit to help you search your heart. Where do you sense God calling you to repent? Remember, Jesus will never condemn you; he is always ready to forgive you.

Confess. Whether it's been a week or a decade since your last confession, you can still feel uncomfortable admitting your sins. But this is exactly where the healing begins. Just speak to the priest honestly, and answer any questions he asks. After offering you some encouragement, he will give you a penance to help you

continue turning toward God and away from sin. He will ask you to say an Act of Contrition, like the one on the following page. As you hear his words, “I absolve you. . . Go in peace,” know that God himself is speaking these words of mercy to you.

Leave your sins behind. Leaving Confession, you choose to accept God's forgiveness and to live differently. By God's grace, you can leave your sins behind and live in a new way that's a little more loving, a little more holy, and a little closer to Jesus. And you can rejoice, because God has made you new again!

Search Me, O God An Examination of Conscience

Love the Lord, your God, with your whole heart. (Deuteronomy 6:5)

Jesus helped the Samaritan woman to see what was missing in her relationship with God. What is he helping you to see?

- Do I honor God on the Sabbath by going to Mass and participating fully?
- Do I neglect my relationship with God by prioritizing my own pleasure over prayer or Scripture reading?
- Have I misused the name of God by swearing or cursing?

Love your neighbor as yourself. (Mark 12:31)

Jesus helped the woman recognize sin in her relationships. What is he showing you?

- Do I honor and love my parents as God commands?
- Do I love and care for my spouse and children as I should?
- Am I faithful to my marriage or religious vows?
- Do I view pornography or give in to lust in other ways?
- Have I acted impurely, either alone or with someone else?
- Have I spoken hurtful or untruthful words?
- Do I need to forgive someone who has hurt me or apologize to someone whom I have hurt?
- Am I jealous of someone else's success or possessions?

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GOD TOUCHED ME

MOTHERS' WOES – GROWING A STRONGER FAITH

The God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory through Christ [Jesus] will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you after you have suffered a little.

- 1 Peter 5:10

By Alice A., a devotee

Today is the 1st Good Friday that I am doing the Stations of the Cross all by myself -- just me and the Lord – in the Sacred Room. In contemplating the Passion of our Lord, thoughts, stories of heartaches and disappointments vented to me by three of the devotees of The Spiritual Army of God the Father (the "Army") played so vividly in my mind and heart.

"Both my parents tell me I am not a good mother!"-- this mother confided to me, her voice choked with emotion. I didn't only see the pain in her eyes, I too felt a lump in my throat. What has she done or what is she doing to receive such a comment from her parents?

I do not understand. This mother has the most behaved and sweetest children! She must be doing a great job on them. And from my observation of the children's reactions around her, her husband and their dad, around most, if not all of us -- you can safely conclude that the kids are raised with a lot of love, discipline, lessons, rewards and reprimands of good and bad behavior.

Just like most mothers in the Army, this Mother holds an eight-to-five 40 hours per week job. Both her parents agree that the time she spends with her children is not enough. That she prays too much and too long! Her mother cannot understand why she has to leave the house to pray. They think that her 1st Friday, 1st Saturday and 1st Sunday devotions are taking much of her time to the detriment of her role as a mother. Her husband thinks otherwise though. He believes that there is some deeply rooted reasons behind her parents' concerns for what they see as negligence on her part. Thank God for the husband He gave her!

Another mother has the same "struggles" with her husband and daughter. Both of them criticize her many hours of prayers and the number of devotional groups she belongs to. They turn down her invitation to go to church with her on Sundays or holy days. Her daughter tells her that she is young and has all the right to enjoy her youth – going to the beach, partying and other fun stuff are hers to enjoy. Spiritual activities are reserved for older people!

Her husband has had and continue to have personal issues that landed him into problems, which she honestly and sincerely believes would not have been resolved if it were not for God's grace and mercy. He tells her that her busy-ness and therefore her lack of time to complete her responsibilities at work and at

home is because she spends too much time praying, attending Bible study sessions and involving herself in projects of her devotional groups.

Another mother, likewise gainfully employed, stated that she's the only one who prays – the designated one to ask God's mercy and healing for the sick members of her family and everyone else going through some health issues and challenges of all sorts. She finds peace in praying with the Army and trusts God with all her heart. She's thankful and grateful that her prayers are heard and her petitions for those near and dear to her have been granted and is trustingly waiting on those still have to be granted in God's perfect time.

And my family, too is not spared. Just like the three mothers, we are thought of as "fanatics" by very close friends and family for praying the 2000 Hail Mary and 800 Our Father devotions alternately each month. We have a sister who would rather ride with other relatives on out of town trips to celebrate birthdays and weddings with family. She tells friends and relatives how we "make our car like a church" – where worship songs keep playing as we complete the Four Mysteries of the Holy Rosary and the 80 Our Father. We also have a brother who complained that he felt cooped up at the convent at one of our 1st Saturday devotions. He was suffering from anxiety attacks during that time and we thought that being with a group seeking God in prayers will offer him some comfort and respite. But his idea of relaxation and peace is that of a picnic and sun-bathing at Santa Monica Beach during the day and a round of drinks at a bar after a sumptuous dinner during the night.

What about you? I wonder if you, too, have also been scoffed at for spending too much time in prayer or for always spending quiet time with God. How do we respond to all these? Is this one of the repulsive realities of talking to God about anything and everything (Philippians 4:6-7)? It is indeed sad – that too many among our relatives and friends become satisfied with worldly blessings and have very little desire for spiritual ones.

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The Conquest of Jesus Christ

His Power Confronts

The religious hierarchy thought they were done with Jesus. At the Crucifixion they had said, "If you're the Son of God, come down from the cross." They should have gone to the tomb and said, "If you're the Son of God, come out." With this miracle they were confronted by the power of the living Christ.

The living Christ is still doing miracles. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (v. 12) — not in Abraham, Moses, Buddha or Mohammed. Jesus is not a good way to heaven. Jesus is the only way to heaven.

His Presence Compels

"And when they saw the boldness of Peter and John . . . they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." (v. 13)

When you're in the presence of Jesus Christ, something happens to you. His presence will compel you. Shortly before this, Peter cursed, swore, and denied the Lord Jesus. But now he had seen the risen Lord, and he was compelled.

In our churches today we need an epidemic of holy boldness — people unashamed of the Lord Jesus Christ — from spending time in His presence.

His People Confess

The leaders had said, "You can't preach a risen Lord." (" . . . Let us straightly threaten them . . ." v. 14.) Why? Because of the power of that message. You might as well have told the sun not to shine.

"But Peter and John answered . . . we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (v. 20). Why? Because they'd seen Him. A witness tells what he's seen and heard. You could not shut them up.

"And daily . . . and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (5:42). Here's the way the early church worked:

Leaders: "You can't do it."

Disciples: "We're going to do it."

Leaders: "We forbid you."

Disciples: "We're still going to do it."

Think about what that early church did — with no printing presses, radio, television, or sound system. No church buildings, email, internet, or DVD's of services. Yet they turned that early world upside down and inside out for Jesus Christ. They did so much with so little. We do so little with so much.

Because He is alive, His persecution continues. Wear that persecution like a badge of honor. Because He is

alive, His preaching convinces, His power confronts, and His presence compels.

New Testament Christianity is supernatural . . . it cannot be explained or denied . . . it should not be intimidated . . . it must not be ignored, for Jesus Christ is alive! ☐

Your Father Will Reward You

Heavenly and Earthly Rewards. The third point that Jesus made is the most significant. He said that if we give alms and pray and fast in secret, our heavenly Father will reward us (Matthew 6:3-4, 6, 17-18).

Jesus is not speaking about material rewards. We don't take up these Lenten practices in the hope that God will shower us with worldly prosperity. No, he was speaking both about the rewards of glory that await us in heaven and about the more immediate rewards that we will reap here on earth. According to St. Leo the Great, some of these immediate rewards include a deeper relationship with God, greater freedom from sin, and a renewed concern for the needs of the poor in our midst.

Leo also spoke about how our Lenten observance can help build harmony in our homes. Our fasting, prayer, and almsgiving can make us into better spouses, better parents, and better children. They open us to God's grace, which helps us become less selfish, more generous, and more kind. They help us to love each other in ways we thought were not possible. They teach us to repent and to try to reconcile wounded relationships. In other words, when we come to the Lord with fasting, with generous almsgiving, and with prayer, God rewards us by changing us into his image one step at a time.

If you take Leo's words to heart by observing these three Lenten practices, you can be sure that your heavenly Father will reward your efforts with a harvest of abundant grace. That's a promise from Jesus.

Motivation. Clearly, the quality of our fast is more critical than the quantity of our fast. Likewise, the intention behind our almsgiving is more important than the amount of money we give away. And the focus of our prayer means more than the amount of time we spend praying.

To paraphrase St. Paul, we could give away one million dollars, eat nothing for the next forty days, and spend hours in prayer each day, but if there is not an increase of love or a deeper sense of solidarity with God's people, then we have missed the point (1 Corinthians 13:3). At the same time, giving away just a small amount, but in a way that is truly sacrificial, can have a huge effect on us and on the people we are giving to. The whole point of fasting, almsgiving, and prayer is to draw us closer to

God so that we can be changed by his Spirit “from glory to glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Money and possessions are not the heart of the issue. On their own, they don't lift us up to heaven or drag us down to hell. The heart of the issue is the way they can control us. It's hard to be wealthy and not let our wealth influence the way we think or act. It's hard not to find our value or security in how much we own or how much we are worth. That's why prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are so important. They show us how to place what we own — however much or little that is — in a broader, heavenly perspective. They show us that our relationship with God and his people is far more important than our status and our possessions.

Method. So if you can fast every day during Lent, you will be blessed. If all you can do is give up meat on Fridays, you will be blessed as well. If you can give a lot of your clothing and money to the poor, you will be blessed. If you can give just a little, you too will be blessed. This is what really matters: that you do these things out of humility and love, that you sacrifice in order to receive God's grace and share it with the people around you.

Remember, too, that while fasting is typically linked to food, it doesn't have to be exclusively about eating or drinking. We can fast from television or the Internet. We can give up sarcasm, cynicism, or negative speech and try to speak only uplifting and encouraging words. We can fast from divisive thoughts and try to live in unity. We can fast from excessive worrying and focus on putting our trust in the Lord. What matters is that we fast, not how we fast.

Proclaim a Fast. So go ahead and proclaim a fast in your home this Lent. Give generously to those in need. Set aside time to pray. If you already have an established prayer time, try to spend a little more time with the Lord each day.

Whatever you choose to do, let it help you draw closer to the Lord. And remember: your heavenly Father is going to reward you with a wave of blessings — more than you can possibly imagine. May God bless all of us with his grace this Lent! ☐

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Search Me O God

- Have I taken something that doesn't belong to me or withheld money from the poor and needy?
- Have I harmed my body or anyone else's through violence, substance abuse, or neglect?

Act of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things.

I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. ☐

- Rite of Penance, No. 45.

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Mothers' Woes

These mothers have not given up! For they have witnessed how these criticisms have led them to share in a unique relationship with the Lord. They have learned slowly (but a little bit more each Cenacle session, each 2000 Hail Mary and 800 Our Father devotions), to surrender their concerns to Him completely. Our faithful God, has in so many instances revealed His presence and His guiding hand – in their lives and those of the ones they love.

In all truth they realize that these woes are good for them who believe – for trials coming forth from those closest to their hearts, are not only the strength of their faith, they also cause them to develop their maturity (spiritual and otherwise) like gold tempered in a furnace!

Let us remember that as more insults are hurled at us, let us not retaliate, but rather entrust ourselves to our Father who judges justly. Let us continue to pray for those who would accuse, misuse or abuse us. (Luke 6:28) ☐

"PEARLS AND PIGS"

www.heartlight.org

"Don't give holy things to dogs. They will only turn and hurt you. And don't throw your pearls to pigs. They will only step on them." — Matthew 7:6

KEY THOUGHT:

Wow! Jesus uses really strong language here. At first, he seems to be breaking the very command that he just gave about being non-judgmental. But instead, Jesus is reminding us that being non-judgmental does not mean we are undiscerning, wasteful, and silly. We are to recognize that there are some people so hardened to receiving the message that they will not listen; we are to quit wasting our time in trying to convince them. He chooses the powerful imagery of a well-known proverb to make his point. He says similar things in a softer way elsewhere. The bottom line, however, is that there comes a time when we realize that people will not hear the Gospel message. Their repeated determination not to hear and their unwillingness to respond don't mean we are to try harder, but simply to try elsewhere! Being a nonjudgmental person does not mean we refuse to "see the handwriting on the wall" and keep wasting our efforts on those who refuse to hear.

PRAYER:

Father of all mercy, give me wisdom to know when you have opened a door for me to reach out to my friends, family and neighbors, and when to move on to others. I don't want to give up too quickly on those who might respond, but neither do I want to simply try to be more hardheaded than those refusing to hear and further annoy them by continuing to try. Please lead me to those who are ready to hear of your grace. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

... I am your Mother Mary.

Offer yourselves today and bring your hearts before the altar of God.

Many revelations both in the spiritual and physical realms will unravel before your eyes in the days to come. These revelations will be signs of the battle of good and evil which is about to happen and the need to prepare your hearts is important to defeat the forces of darkness.

Prepare my children, prepare and fast not just on food but in spirit and in deeds.

I love you my children and be the strong instruments of God's army."

*- Mary, Your Lady of
the Rosary and Peace
03182017*

SPIRITUAL ARMY NEWS DISPATCH

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE EXTENDS INVITE TO ALL FOR DECEMBER 9-13, 2017

Our next pilgrimage will be to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. This religious trip will be from December 9 - 13, 2017. For the first time the devotees will celebrate the feast of our Lady in Mexico, where it all began.

The Lady asked to be called "the ever-virgin Holy Mary of Guadalupe". Why should the Virgin Mary, when appearing to an Indian in recently-conquered Mexico, and speaking to him in Nahuatl, call Herself "of Guadalupe", a Spanish name? Did she want to be called de Guadalupe because of the statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Estremadura, Spain?

It is believed that the name "Guadalupe" came about because of the translation from Nahuatl to Spanish of the words used by the Virgin during the Apparition to Juan Bernardino, the ailing uncle of Juan Diego. It is believed that Our Lady used the Aztec Nahuatl word of *coatlxopeuh* which is pronounced "*quatlasupe*" and which sounds remarkably like the Spanish word Guadalupe. *Coa* meaning serpent, *tla* being the noun ending which can be interpreted as "the", while *xopeuh* means to crush or stamp out. So Our Lady must have called Herself the one "who crushes the serpent."

We must remember that the Aztecs offered annually at least 20,000 men, women, and children in human sacrifice to their gods. The early Mexican historian Ixtlilxochitl estimated that one out of every five children in Mexico was sacrificed. The climax of these ritual killings came in 1487 for the dedication of the new, and richly decorated with serpents, temple of Huitzilopochtli, in Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City), when in a single ceremony that lasted for four days and four nights, with the constant beating of giant drums made of snakeskin, the Aztec ruler and demon worshiper Tlacaellé presided over the sacrifice of more than 80,000 men.

Certainly, in this case, the Virgin Mary crushed the serpent (as it is written in the Book of Genesis, "a woman shall crush your head") by putting an end to these barbaric human sacrifices, and a few years later, millions of the natives were converted to Christianity.

Today, the ancient serpent is certainly achieving big hits in its attack upon human life. Millions of unborn children are killed every year around the globe, in procedures that in some countries are not only legal but are also officially supported and financed.

This is why Our Lady of Guadalupe has been chosen by the Church as the Protectress of the Unborn, to put an end to abortions. (Source: <http://www.michaeljournal.org/articles/roman-catholic-church/item/the-apparition-of-our-lady-of-guadalupe-in-1531?guadalupe.htm>).

Our pilgrimage is under the travel coordination of Proximo Travel. All those who would like to go must **register by April 15, 2017** so they can be assured of the tour price of \$1599 per person. Registration per person is \$500 and the balance of \$1099 must be paid in full 90 days before departure or by September 9, 2017. Daily activities and other information are available in our website at www.spiritualarmyofgod.org.

Let us all be one as devotees of our blessed Mother now that THE LADY OF THE AMERICAS EXTENDS HER INVITATION TO ALL TO JOIN HER ON HER GUADALUPE FEAST DAY!

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of America, protect us, and protect the unborn! ☐

UPCOMING EVENTS

TOY DRIVE FOR THE LOS ANGELES CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

PLEASE DROP OFF
YOUR NEW UNWRAPPED TOYS
EVERY 1ST AND 3RD SATURDAYS AT
THE CONVENT OF
THE SISTER DISCIPLES OF
THE DIVINE MASTER

Divine Mercy Sunday

Sunday, April 23, 2017
1:00 PM
Monastery of the Angels
Los Angeles, CA
AND
2:30 PM
St. Francis de Sales Church
1111 Michael Way
Las Vegas, NV 89108

MAY CROWNING OF MARY

SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2017
CONVENT OF THE
SISTER DISCIPLES
OF THE DIVINE MASTER
AND
CENACLE HOUSE
8455 SAHARA AVE., #172
LAS VEGAS, NV 89117

PILGRIMAGE TO OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE, MEXICO

DECEMBER 9-13, 2017
DAILY ACTIVITIES AND OTHER
INFORMATION ARE AVAILABLE AT
WWW.SPIRITUALARMYOFGOD.ORG

INFANT JESUS CELEBRATION

JANUARY 19-21, 2018
LAS VEGAS, NV

THANK YOU

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

Psalm 106:2

THE 800 OUR FATHER DEVOTION

The Spiritual Army of God the Father acknowledges with thanks our generous April sponsors of the 800 Our Father Devotion. We are grateful that we have merited their partnership and support in providing a venue of spirituality and fellowship for the devotees of God the Father.

Las Vegas, Nevada

Ines Carrington | Guada Eugenio
Mila Lumba | Evelyn Pua
Nicet Santos | Maria Sheets

Los Angeles, California

April Araneta | Victor & Alice Araneta
Adriana Arguello | Miles & Edith Avanzado
Marinella deLeon | Marie Nguyen

FOR PRAYERS HEARD AND PETITIONS GRANTED

HOW DO WE RESPOND WHEN OUR CRY FOR MERCY RECEIVES ITS LOVING ANSWER FROM OUR MASTER?

WE NEED TO PRAISE AND THANK JESUS FOR HIS HEALING POWER, MERCY, AND GRACE.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU FELL FACE DOWN AND PRAISED JESUS?

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU PRAISED AND THANKED THE LORD

FOR ALL THAT HE HAS DONE FOR YOU

WITH A GENUINE HEART AND A PROSTRATE POSTURE?

O God Almighty Father, thank you for Thy strong presence in our lives. Thou art so loving, merciful, kind, generous, and forgiving.

Thank you for our truly awesome birthday months!!! We feel Your love each moment and we are grateful for Thou art hearing and granting our hearts' desires!!! Father, everything is possible to you! Thank you, Father!

- Maria Sheets

Thank you Father God for a wonderful weekend at the Sacred Heart Jesuit Center bonding with our dear Fr. Larry Murphy and the other Jesuit Priests, who for reasons of age and infirmity are no longer able to be active and has moved out of the presbytery to begin a new phase of ministry.

Yes, it was a visit with a sting in the tail – but witnessing how You provide for Your faithful servants is a blessing to behold and to keep in our hearts when our time comes -- to grow old and feeble!

- Victor, Alice & April

Our dear Spiritual Army family, our dear co-devotees,

With a grateful heart, we thank you so much for all your prayers and thoughts while our sister, Susan, was undergoing her pains and struggles. We thank you all for your sincerity and generosity with your many love offerings. Thank you so much for coming to Susan's final services. We sincerely appreciate that you were there with us giving comfort in our moment of sorrow. Thank you for the continuous prayers and thoughts for Susan during that Saturday's 2000 Hail Mary's. You are all dear to us.

Please continue with your fervent prayers for Susan's eternal rest with our God, all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the intercession of our Mother Mary.

God bless always.

*Love you all,
Ninang – Babes*

DEVOTION SCHEDULE



THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER

cordially invites you to the following devotions:

IN LOS ANGELES:

1st Saturday Devotion

The Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master | 501 N. Beaudry Avenue | (213) 250-7962
Holy Mass starts at 8:30 A.M. | 1st Saturday Devotional Prayers follow.

Devotion to God the Father

Every 1st Sunday of the Month | The Monastery of the Angels | 1977 Carmen Avenue on Gower | (323) 466-2186
12:30 P.M. - Rosary to the Father | 1:15 P.M. - Holy Mass
2:00 P.M. - Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

800 Our Father Devotion – April 22, 2017

at the Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master | starting at 8:30 a.m.
Please call Victor at (213) 385-7798 if you wish to become a Sponsor of the 2000 Hail Mary Devotion.

IN CHINO HILLS:

Sacred Heart Devotional Group for Departed Souls

Every 1st Friday of the Month | 16657 Tourmaline Street | Chino Hills, CA 91709
Devotional Prayers start at 8:30 P.M.

IN LAS VEGAS:

Sacred Heart and Precious Blood of Jesus Devotion for Departed Souls

Every 1st Friday of the Month
at The Cenacle House in The Enclave 8455 W. Sahara Avenue #172 | Las Vegas, NV 89117
Devotional Prayers start at 2:30 P.M.

1st Saturday Devotion

at Saint Frances de Sales Parish | 1111 Michael Way | Las Vegas, NV 89108 at 8:00 AM
Devotional Prayers follow.

and

at The Cenacle House in The Enclave | 8455 West Sahara Avenue #172, | Las Vegas, NV 89117 at 1:00 PM
Cenacle will be at 10:00 AM before the devotional prayers.

Please call Evelyn at (702)274-4315 for entry to The Enclave or for more information.

Devotion to God the Father

Every 1st Sunday of the month from 2:00 to 3:30 P.M.
at The Cenacle House in The Enclave | 8455 West Sahara Avenue #172, | Las Vegas, NV 89117

800 Our Father Devotion – April 29, 2017

*Please call (702) 255-9616 or (702) 274-4315 for
dates and venues for the coming months or for more information or if you wish to Sponsor the Devotion.*

Mother of Perpetual Help Novena & Rosary Prayers

Every Wednesday of the month after the 7:30 AM Mass *(except during the Holy Week)*
St. Francis de Sales Parish | 1111 Michael Way | Las Vegas, NV 89108

IN THE PHILIPPINES

2000 Hail Mary Devotion - Metro Manila Area

Letty Rollan has organized the 2000 Hail Mary Devotion in various areas of Metro Manila through the members of the "Mother Butler." Please call her U.S. Vonage phone (510) 779-6652, text her at Manila #916-384-9300, and/or call her Manila landline 939-4677. Mention Mila Lumba's name to be recognized.