



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

MAY 2023

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

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BIBLICAL WISDOM ON HOW TO AGE WITHOUT BECOMING "OLD"

Aliénor Strentz

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While the world claims that old age is an enemy to be fought, biblical wisdom honors the elderly.

IN THE WESTERN WORLD, THE CULTURE OF "DISPOSABILITY" AND "PROFITABILITY" LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT OLD AGE IS A PERIOD OF DEPENDENCE AND INCAPACITY. A PERSON'S VALUE IS DETERMINED BY HOW WELL THEY PERFORM IN SOCIETY. IN CONTRAST, BIBLICAL WISDOM HONORS THE ELDERLY. WHILE THE WORLD CLAIMS THAT OLD AGE IS AN ENEMY TO BE FOUGHT, THE BIBLE REVEALS THE OPPOSITE. PSALM 92:14 SAYS OF THE RIGHTEOUS: "IN OLD AGE THEY STILL PRODUCE FRUIT; THEY ARE ALWAYS GREEN AND FULL OF SAP."



THERE ARE STEREOTYPES OF OLDER PEOPLE, SOME POSITIVE AND OTHERS LESS SO: SOME DESCRIBE THE ELDERLY AS COMPLAINING, DOMINEERING, AND PRONE TO CRITICISM, MAKING EVERYONE WANT TO AVOID THEM. OTHERS, ON THE OTHER HAND, APPEAR AS BLESSINGS TO THEIR FAMILY, THEIR CIRCLE OF FRIENDS, AND THEIR PARISH. WHAT DO THEY HAVE THAT OTHERS DO NOT? HOW CAN WE GROW OLD GRACEFULLY, ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN? THE BIBLE INCLUDES TEXTS AND MODELS OF OLDER PEOPLE WHO ARE FLOURISHING IN THEIR FAITH THAT SHOW US SOME PATHS FOR FLOURISHING WITH GRACE.

BELIEVING FIRMLY THAT OUR FINAL DESTINATION IS TO BE IN HEAVEN WITH GOD

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT OUR FINAL DESTINATION SHAPES OUR CHARACTER AND OUR DAILY EXISTENCE. LUKE'S GOSPEL HIGHLIGHTS THE 84-YEAR-OLD PROPHETESS ANNA, WHO REMAINED STEADFAST IN HER FAITH AND DID NOT

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FEASTS FOR MAY

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

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| 1 JOSEPH THE WORKER, OPT. MEM. | 21 ASCENSION SUNDAY OR THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, SOLEMNITY |
| 2 ATHANASIUS, MEMORIAL | 22 RITA OF CASCIA, OPT. MEM. |
| 3 PHILIP AND JAMES, APOSTLES, FEAST | 25 BEDE; GREGORY VII; MARY MAGDALENE DE PAZZI, OPT. MEM. |
| 7 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, SUNDAY | 26 PHILIP NERI, MEMORIAL |
| 10 DAMIEN DE VEUSTER (USA); JOHN OF AVILA, OPT. MEM. | 27 AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY, OPT. MEM. |
| 12 NEREUS AND ACHILLEUS; PANCRAS, MARTYRS, OPT. MEM. | 28 PENTECOST, SUNDAY |
| 13 OUR LADY OF FATIMA, OPT. MEM. | 31 VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, FEAST |
| 14 SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, SUNDAY | |
| 15 ISIDORE THE FARMER (USA); MINOR ROGATION DAY, OPT. MEM. | THE FEAST OF ST. MATTHIAS, APOSTLE (MAY 14) IS SUPERSEDED BY THE SUNDAY LITURGY. THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION (MAY 18) IS CELEBRATED ON MAY 21 (SUNDAY) IN MOST DIOCESES IN THE UNITED STATES. □ |
| 18 JOHN I, OPT. MEM. | |
| 20 BERNARDINE OF SIENA, OPT. MEM. | |

OUR CENACLE CORNER

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

Levels of Purgation

GOD TOUCHED ME

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

RAISING FIRST-GENERATION AMERICAN

(AS REFLECTED BY AN ASIAN MOM – OF PHILIPPINE DESCENT)

*WHAT WE HAVE HEARD AND KNOW; THINGS OUR ANCESTORS HAVE RECOUNTED TO US. WE DO NOT KEEP THEM FROM OUR CHILDREN; WE RECOUNT THEM TO THE NEXT GENERATION, THE PRAISEWORTHY DEEDS OF THE LORD AND HIS STRENGTH, THE WONDERS THAT HE PERFORMED.
(PSALM 78:3-4)*

By Katekist, a devotee

WE ALL DREAM, WE DREAM THE AMERICAN DREAM. BUT AS WE ARE IN OUR GOLDEN AGE AND FINALLY REALIZED THIS DREAM, WE ASKED OURSELVES, "IS IT REALLY WORTH IT?"

WE COME FROM A VERY CATHOLIC COUNTRY, WITH VERY CLOSELY KNIT FAMILY STRUCTURE, AND AN ABUNDANCE OF RESPECT/OBEDIENCE TO OUR ELDERS. WE VALUE THE WISDOM OF OUR ELDERS, WE LISTEN TO THEIR COUNSEL, AND THE LEAST WE WANT WAS TO HURT THEIR FEELINGS. AS WE WERE RAISED IN THIS KIND OF ATMOSPHERE, WE IMBUED THE SAME UPBRINGING WE HAVE TO OUR CHILDREN WHO ARE BORN HERE IN THE UNITED STATES, OUR VERY OWN FIRST-GENERATION AMERICANS. WE GIVE TO OUR CHILDREN WHAT WAS PASSED ON TO US. THE DISCONNECT, THE WAY I SEE IT, IF WE WERE ON OUR NATIVE LAND, ALL OUR VALUES, CULTURE, RELIGIONS, RESPECT FOR ELDERS ARE PASSED ON TO OUR CHILDREN WITH EASE AS THIS WAS THE NORM. OUR GENEROUS AND HOSPITABLE SPIRIT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A KIND OF DNA IN OUR PHILIPPINE NATURE. BUT OUR CHILDREN ARE BORN IN A DIFFERENT CULTURE, A VERY DIVERSE CULTURE. WE STRUGGLE TO MAINTAIN THE VALUES WE UPHOLD BUT THERE ARE JUST TOO MANY FACTORS THAT MAY HINDER THIS DESIRE OF US TO MAINTAIN WHAT WE VALUE AS FILIPINOS. THE SCHOOL, OUR CHILDREN'S FRIENDS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND THE CONSUMERISM OF AMERICAN CULTURE MAKE GREAT IMPACT ON OUR GROWING CHILDREN. IT'S TRULY A CHALLENGING ROLE WE HAVE AS PARENTS AS WE WANT TO MAINTAIN THAT SINGULAR NORM OF RAISING CHILDREN IN THE PHILIPPINES. SAD TO SAY, IF WE PARENTS ARE NOT CONSCIOUS OF ALL THESE FACTORS, THEN OUR CHILDREN WILL EASILY ASSIMILATE THE AMERICAN CULTURE. I AM NOT SAYING THAT THE AMERICAN CULTURE IS NOT GOOD, BUT I THINK AS PARENTS WE NEED TO PRESERVE OUR VERY OWN IN

THE MIDST OF THIS PRESENT CULTURE, CHOOSE WHAT IS GOOD AND DE-EMPHASIZE WHAT IS NOT TOO GOOD.

I LOVE THE AMERICAN SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE, THEIR ASSERTIVE/PROACTIVE STATURE, THEIR ADVENTUROUS NATURE, AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO TAKE RISKS IN LIFE. IT IS EMBEDDED IN THEIR NATURE, WHICH IS UNDENIABLY ENVIABLE. THE SAME QUALITIES THAT I WANT FOR MY FIRST-GENERATION CHILDREN BUT TEMPERED BY MY VERY OWN FILIPINO VALUES. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE TYPICAL AMERICAN CULTURE IS ALSO MATERIALISTIC, CONSUMER-ORIENTED, AND SUCCESS DRIVEN SOMETIMES WITHOUT REGARD TO ETHICAL NORMS. SO, HOW DO WE BALANCE THESE OPPOSING FORCES OF CULTURE? WELL, IN MY OPINION, AS PARENTS WE GUARD OURSELVES IN ASSIMILATING THE LATTER – THE CONSUMERISM, MATERIALISM, ETC. WE PASSED ON TO OUR CHILDREN WHAT THEY WITNESS IN OUR LIVES. YES, OUR CHILDREN WILL GROW UP LIVING WHAT THEY WITNESS IN US.

FAMILY TENSIONS IS NORMAL, THERE IS NO SUCH A THING AS A PERFECT FAMILY, AND IN SOME CASES THESE TENSIONS STEM FROM THE OPPOSING CULTURE THAT I HAVE MENTIONED. TAKE FOR EXAMPLE A CHILD THAT WE HAVE RAISED IN A NURTURING ENVIRONMENT, WITH A NOTICEABLE INFLUENCE OF OUR PHILIPPINE VIRTUES. BUT WHEN THEY BECOME INDEPENDENT, THEY MOVED TO THEIR OWN PLACE AND BECOME REALLY INDEPENDENT (ADMIRABLE) BUT THEN WE CAN'T VISIT THEM UNLESS WE GIVE THEM AMPLE NOTICE. AND IF EVER WE VISIT THEM, THEY HAVE TOO MANY RESTRICTIONS TO FOLLOW IN THEIR ABODE. THIS IS EMOTIONALLY PAINFUL FOR US, PARENTS. I HOPE THEY ARE READING THIS ARTICLE. WE LOVE AND RAISE THEM WITHOUT BOUNDS AND NOW IN OUR GOLDEN AGE, THEY SET

BOUNDARIES. OR RAISING THEM TO BE CATHOLIC – GOING TO CHURCH, TAKING THEM TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES, GETTING THEM BAPTIZED AND CONFIRMED AND SOMETIMES SACRIFICED MONETARY SAVINGS TO SEND THEM TO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS. BUT AS THEY BECOME ADULTS, THEY ABANDON OUR CATHOLIC FAITH. OR WE ADVISED THEM TO WAIT AFTER MARRIAGE BEFORE LIVING WITH SOMEONE, BUT TO NO AVAIL. AND SO MANY OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH ARE NOT WORTH MENTIONING AS THEY BECOME TRULY PAINFUL TO US AS PARENTS. WHERE DID WE GO WRONG AS PARENTS? WAS IT WORTH RAISING THEM IN THIS CULTURE? WAS IT WORTH CHASING AND EVENTUALLY LIVING THIS AMERICAN DREAM OF CONVENIENCE AND COMFORTABILITY? IS THIS THE PRICE WE PAY FOR IN LIVING IN THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY?

TAKE A BIG BREATH MY FELLOW PARENTS OF FIRST-GENERATION AMERICANS. IN THE END, IT IS STILL WORTH IT – THE AMERICAN DREAM. THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE FOR OUR CHILDREN AND THERE IS ALWAYS OUR CONTINUOUS PRAYERS FOR THEM. PRAYERS BRING MIRACLES, LITTLE MIRACLES IN OUR DAILY LIVES. IN THEIR OWN TIME, THEY WILL BE TOUCHED BY OUR LOVING GOD. REMEMBER, WE GIVE TO THEM WHAT WAS PASSED ON TO US. AND IF WHAT WAS PASSED ON TO US HAS THE BALANCE OF THE PHILIPPINE AND AMERICAN CULTURE THEN OUR CHILDREN WILL BE ON THE ROAD TO SOME SORT OF PERFECTION, A PERFECTION THAT MIRRORS GOD’S LOVE. LET US CELEBRATE OUR CHILDREN, AFTER ALL, THEY ARE GOD’S GIFT TO US. ☐

BIBLICAL WISDOM ON HOW TO AGE

LEAVE THE TEMPLE, “BUT WORSHIPED THERE WITH FASTING AND PRAYER NIGHT AND DAY.” (LK 2:37). ONE CAN IMAGINE THAT SHE PRAYED FOR HERSELF, FOR OTHERS, FOR THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH, AND FOR THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL. SHE WAS SUSTAINED BY THIS HOPE IN THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE (THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH) AND BY HER CONFIDENCE THAT SHE WOULD BE WELCOMED BY GOD AT THE HOUR OF HER DEATH.

OFFERING OUR WEAKNESS TO GOD AND BELIEVING IN HIS PLAN FOR OUR PEACE

THE BIBLE PRESENTS US WITH SEVERAL MODELS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE WHO ARE TESTED AND SUFFER WEAKNESS. IN THE BOOK OF RUTH, NAOMI, WHOSE NAME MEANS “THE SWEET RONE,” HAS LOST HER HUSBAND AND THEN HER TWO SONS, AND ASKS TO BE CALLED BY A NEW NAME: “MARA,” THAT IS TO SAY “THE BITTER ONE, THE AFFLICTED ONE.” THIS SHOWS HOW MUCH SHE FEELS ABANDONED BY GOD, AND EVEN CONDEMNED BY HIM. “I WENT AWAY FULL, BUT THE LORD BROUGHT ME BACK EMPTY; WHY CALL ME NAOMI WHEN THE LORD HAS DEALT HARSHLY WITH ME, AND THE ALMIGHTY HAS BROUGHT CALAMITY UPON ME?” (RT 1:21)

NAOMI’S JOURNEY LEADS US TO REFLECT ON THE MEANING OF OLD AGE. YOUTH BRINGS US HEALTH, FRIENDS, POSSESSIONS, OFFSPRING, AND HOPE; OLD AGE, ON THE OTHER HAND, GRADUALLY TAKES AWAY MANY OF THESE THINGS. WE MAY FEEL EMPTY, ALONE, AND DESTITUTE, AND WE GO THROUGH A THOUSAND LITTLE DEATHS.

HOWEVER, NAOMI WILL MAKE A CHOICE OF FAITH BY TAKING THE RISK OF A DANGEROUS JOURNEY TO HER HOMELAND. GOD WILL FILL HER AGAIN THROUGH RUTH, HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, WHO WILL MARRY BOAZ, HER “REDEEMER,” A PREFIGURING OF CHRIST THE REDEEMER.

NAOMI WILL TRIUMPH IN HER INNER STRUGGLE. LIKE HER, WE ARE CALLED DURING THE TIME OF OLD AGE NOT TO GIVE IN TO A NARROW VISION OF LIFE BUT TO BELIEVE THAT GOD HAS “PLANS FOR YOUR WELFARE AND NOT FOR HARM, TO GIVE YOU A FUTURE WITH HOPE” (JEREMIAH 29:11).

BY CHOOSING DAY BY DAY TO RENOUNCE OURSELVES AND ALL BITTERNESS AND REGRET, WE SURRENDER TO GOD AND PLACE OUR TRUST IN HIM. HE THEN MAKES FULFILLMENT POSSIBLE, FOR AS THE ELDERLY AND BARREN COUPLE OF ELIZABETH AND ZECHARIAH EXPERIENCED WHEN THEY GAVE BIRTH TO THE PROPHET JOHN THE BAPTIST, “NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD” (LK 1:37).

PROVIDING SUPPORT, CONSOLATION, AND WISDOM TO YOUNGER GENERATIONS

THE OLD TESTAMENT REPEATEDLY CALLS ON THE OLDER GENERATION TO INSTRUCT THE YOUNGER. PSALM 145:4 ENCOURAGES EACH GENERATION TO TELL THE NEXT HOW BEAUTIFUL GOD'S WORKS ARE. AS SHARON W. BETTERS AND SUSAN HUNT, AUTHORS OF AGING WITH GRACE, POINT OUT, "GOD NEVER WASTES A TRIAL, A BEREAVEMENT, OR A JOURNEY IN THE WILDERNESS. SHARING WITH OTHERS THE LESSONS HE TEACHES US PERSONALLY IS FULFILLING."

OLD AGE LIVED WITH DISCERNMENT AND FAITH QUALIFIES US TO HELP YOUNGER GENERATIONS DISCERN THE BEAUTY AND MEANING OF EACH CHAPTER OF THEIR OWN STORY, EVEN IF IT SOMETIMES SEEMS DISJOINTED.

THUS ANNA THE PROPHETESS, AT THE TIME OF THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE, HAD TO CONSOLE THE VIRGIN MARY, WHO WAS UPSET BY THE PROPHECY OF SIMEON (LK 2:35). SIMEON TELLS HER THAT A SWORD WILL PIERCE HER HEART. ONE CAN IMAGINE ANNA'S COMPASSION FOR MARY, AND HER WORDS INTENDED TO STRENGTHEN THE YOUNG VIRGIN'S HOPE: SHE MUST CERTAINLY HAVE REMINDED HER THAT THE LORD NEVER ABANDONED THE HOLY WOMEN OF ISRAEL, AND THAT MUCH LESS WOULD HE ABANDON THE MOTHER OF HIS SON.

LIKE THE PROPHETESS ANNA, LIKE THE GOOD OLD MAN SIMEON OR ZECHARIAH AND ELIZABETH WHO HOPED BEYOND HOPE, WE CAN CHOOSE TO LIVE A FULFILLING OLD AGE IN GRACE AND LOVE OF GOD AND NEIGHBOR.

IN THE END, REFLECTING ON THE LAST STAGE OF OUR EXISTENCE BEFORE THE GREAT ENCOUNTER OF OUR LIFE (FINDING OURSELVES FACE TO FACE WITH CHRIST) MEANS ASKING OURSELVES, "HOW DO I WANT TO LIVE MY JOURNEY TO HEAVEN?" THIS ALSO MEANS LIVING EACH MOMENT OF OUR BRIEF EXISTENCE MORE INTENSELY. □



"I am your Blessed Mother Mary. Be vigilant and prepare for the changes that will come. The Almighty God will bring blessings back to America. In the meantime, prepare for the worst attack the evil one will inflict on society - his last blow before his defeat. God's anointed to lead America and the world will pass all these evil trials. He will triumph, my children, and America will be the envy of the other countries and she will be back to the blessings of Almighty God and my Son Jesus will be over this man. Continue and unceasingly pray, pray, pray for prosperity and prayerful America that will soon happen.

*Mary, Your Lady of the Americas
04222023*

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

PRAYING FOR THE HOLY SOULS

BY VICTOR ARANETA

THE PEOPLE WHO DIED WERE GIVEN TIME FOR OFFERING
OF SOULS FOR PRAYERS – 2 MACCABEES 12:38-46

ONE OF THE IMPORTANT FACETS OF CATHOLIC RELIGION IS PRAYING FOR OUR DEPARTED ONES.

MANY WOULD SAY THAT ONCE WE LEAVE THIS WORLD, WE FACE OUR JUDGEMENT AND EITHER WE GO TO ETERNAL DAMNATION OR ETERNAL BLISS. OUR GOD IS MUCH MORE FORGIVING THAN THAT. HE PRESENTS A PLACE OF PURGATION WHERE OUR SOULS ARE CLEANSED FROM IMPURITIES BROUGHT ABOUT BY THIS IMPERFECT WORLD. THE DESTRUCTION IS JUST TOO NUMEROUS THAT OUR FOCUS ON SERVING GOD BECOMES LESS AND OUR FLESH IS MORE DISTINGUISHED TO SERVE THE INNERMOST FEELINGS THE UNDERWORLD AND THE SATANIC PROVISIONS PRESENT TO US DURING OUR LIFETIME HERE ON EARTH. AS WE PASS ON THE REMNANTS OF THIS FLESH, OUR WORLDLY DESIRES GET ATTACHED TO OUR SOULS. THE ONLY WAY TO SCRAPE THESE RUSTS OF REMNANTS, IS TO PUT OUR SOULS INTO A CLEANSING PLACE OF PURIFICATION CALLED PURGATORY. THIS PLACE IS WHERE SOULS STAY FOR A DEFINITE PERIOD OF TIME AND THOSE LEFT BEHIND CAN PRAY FOR THEM (MACCABEES 2:1). THIS PLACE CONSISTS OF LEVELS WHERE THE SOULS CAN INCH THEIR WAY INTO THE FINAL DESTINATION OF GLORIFICATION.

ONE CAN ONLY SURMISE THAT THE HOLY ONES LEFT BEHIND WILL PRAY AND SAY: OH GOD, AS THE SOUL OF MY RELATIVE/FRIEND PASSES ON FROM THIS WORLD, LET YOUR GUIDING SPIRIT BE ALWAYS WITH HIS/HER SOUL AND MAY THE CLEANSING BE SHORT AND THE ARBITRATION OF COMPLETE GLORIFICATION BE ATTAINED SOON IN JESUS' MIGHTY NAME , AMEN. ☐



Upcoming Events

1ST FRIDAY DEVOTION

MAY 5, 2023

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

IN LOS ANGELES: VIA ZOOM
AT 9:30 PM

1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION

MARIAN CORONATION CELEBRATION

MAY 6, 2023

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

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

1ST SUNDAY DEVOTION

MAY 7, 2023

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

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

800 OUR FATHER DEVOTION

MAY 20, 2023

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

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