



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

June 2012

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A LETTER FROM ST. LUKE WHAT WOULD HE SAY TO US TODAY?

By: Father George T. Montague, SM

"Well, let me think about it," I answered, when I was asked to write this article about St. Luke and the Holy Spirit. Years ago, I dedicated a large section of one of my books to Luke's presentation of the Spirit in his Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles.

But that writing was rather scholarly. This request was for something that would engage readers who are not necessarily biblical scholars. So I began to ask myself: What might Luke say to us today about the Holy Spirit? What would our world and the church look like through Luke's eyes? What kind of letter would he write us if he came and visited our parishes? Here is what I came up with as I prayed and reflected on these questions.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, it has been quite a shock for me but also a delight to move from writing on parchment or papyrus to a computer. I never expected that I would be able to fly from one city to another, and I certainly was amazed to discover the world of television, blogs, iPads, and iPods.

I can only imagine what Paul would have done with all these ways to evangelize! And here I am, writing a message about the Holy Spirit that hundreds of thousands of you will soon read online or in print.

You know how excited I was about the Holy Spirit when I wrote my Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. I told how Jesus was conceived by the Spirit and how that Spirit launched him on his mission. I described how the Spirit came on the disciples with wind and fire, and how these disciples turned the world upside down as they spread that fire over the whole earth. The Holy Spirit turned sinners into saints, wounded people into healers, and ordinary folks into courageous missionaries. That, of course, was what I expected to find when I came to you.

What did I find? Well, to my great joy I found a lot of Spirit-inspired activity. Your missionaries have gone out to the ends of the earth, and I was amazed at your numbers over a billion Catholic Christians worldwide! I was pleased that my Gospel together with Mark's, Matthew's, and John's is nourishing the faith of so many people every Sunday. And your work with the poor! I gave the poor lots of coverage in my writings (remember the Rich Man and Lazarus?), so your many works of mercy are dear to my heart.

I praise God for the incredible fruits that his word has borne in you. But with Paul, I want to urge you to make even greater progress (1 Thessalonians 4:1).

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OVERVIEW FOR THE MONTH

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The month of June is dedicated to The Sacred Heart of Jesus. The entire month falls within the liturgical season of Ordinary Time, which is represented by the liturgical color green. This symbol of hope is the color of the sprouting seed and arouses in the faithful the hope of reaping the eternal harvest of heaven, especially the hope of a glorious resurrection. It is used in the offices and Masses of Ordinary Time. The last portion of the liturgical year represents the time of our pilgrimage to heaven during which we hope for reward.

As we begin to feel the warmth of summer, we can reflect that we celebrate the feasts of Trinity Sunday (June 3), Corpus Christ (June 10), the Sacred Heart of Jesus (June 15) and the Immaculate Heart of Mary (June 16). God is Love and the Sacred Heart of Jesus — present on earth in the Blessed Sacrament — is the human manifestation of God's Love for men. Appropriately June is considered the month for weddings where human hearts join and cooperate with the Creator in bringing forth new life. The family they create is a human reflection of the Blessed Trinity. □

FEASTS FOR JUNE

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

- 1 Justin, Memorial
- 2 Marcellinus and Peter, Opt. Mem.
- 3 Trinity Sunday, Solemnity
- 5 Boniface, Memorial
- 6 Norbert, Opt. Mem.
- 9 Ephrem, Opt. Mem.
- 10 Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Solemnity
- 11 Barnabas, Memorial
- 13 Anthony of Padua, Memorial
- 15 Sacred Heart of Jesus, Solemnity
- 16 Immaculate Heart of Mary, Memorial
- 19 Romuald, Opt. Mem.
- 21 Aloysius Gonzaga, Memorial
- 22 Paulinus of Nola; John Fisher and Thomas More, Opt. Mem.
- 24 Nativity of John the Baptist, Solemnity
- 26 Josemaria Escrivá de Balaguer, Opt. Mem.
- 27 Cyril of Alexandria, Opt. Mem.
- 28 Irenaeus, Memorial
- 29 Peter and Paul, Solemnity
- 30 First Martyrs of the Church of Rome, Opt. Mem. □

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

TRINITY SUNDAY: UNDERSTANDING THE TRIUNE GOD

A Homily by Daniel Meynen, J.C.D.

"Jesus said to his disciples: 'I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth:' "

Each time we make the sign of the cross, as we did at the beginning of this celebration, we say: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." But do we truly understand what we are saying? I do not believe so... The reason for this is that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit we invoke constitute what we must call a Mystery: the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Now, a mystery is precisely something that one does not understand. This does not mean that we are unable to express anything at all concerning this reality; on the contrary, we are able, thanks to what Jesus told us, to describe this mystery a little and to grasp it through comparisons and images.

The Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, which we celebrate today, consists of this: the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three gods, but only one God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the Mystery of the Trinity of Persons in the one God. If one were to seek for a comparison in order to try to grasp a little of this mystery, the only one that is completely adequate is that which Jesus himself gave us, when he said: "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me." (Jn. 6:57) This is a comparison between the Most Holy Trinity and the union of the various persons who make up the Mystical Body of Christ.

"For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.' "



The Father is at the origin of the Most Holy Trinity: he is its principle. The Father gives life to his Son: from all eternity, the Father begets his Son. The Son continuously receives life from his Father: "I live because of the Father." (Jn. 6:57) The Son is begotten by the Father and thus he is God, like him. Now, to be God is to be perfect and to lack nothing: it is to have everything in perfection. So, when the Father begets his Son, he gives him all that he has, as God: "All that the Father has is mine." (Jn. 16:15) But the Son is not the Father, and the Father is not the Son; and yet both are but a single God.

The same applies to Eucharistic communion. Jesus gives us his life, under the form of food, and we become sons of God by participation: the Body of Christ which enters into us makes us into the (mystical) Body of Christ. But Jesus is not us, and we are not Jesus; and yet we are all but one Mystical Body.

When the Son receives everything from the Father, he becomes similar to the Father, sharing what is proper to his Father. This is why Saint Paul says of the Son that he is the Image of the Father (cf. Col. 1:15). But then, the Son can do nothing other than imitate his Father and render to him all that the Father gives him in begetting him. This is what we do in Eucharistic communion when we give thanks (render grace) to the Lord who enters into us: the graces that come from him, we render to him!

In rendering to the Father what comes from him, the Son should be able to imitate the Father by, he too, begetting a divine Person. If the Father begets the Son by giving him all that he has, then the Son, for his part, should also beget a divine Person by giving back to the Father all that he has received from him. As the Father exists, this divine Person begotten by the Son cannot be the Father: in all truth, it is the Father who begets the Son, and not the Son who begets the Father. Also, the divine Person that the Son would be able to beget is, in reality, begotten by the Father, through his Son. This divine Person is similar to the Father to some extent, and it is said to be spirited by the Father and the Son. This divine Person is called the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father" (Jn. 15:26). The Holy Spirit is not the Father and he is not the Son, but all three are a single God.

In Eucharistic communion, when we give thanks (render grace) to the Lord Jesus, we cannot beget Christ. But the Lord allows this grace to benefit the growth of his Mystical Body, and thus produce the birth of a new member of the Church. Here too, another person is born, another person who, with Christ and with us, forms the one Mystical Body of Christ.

Finally, if there is a spirit that presides over the whole of this Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, it is the spirit of love, for it is truly love that leads the Father to give to his Son all that he has, and similarly, it is love that leads the Son to give back to his Father what he had been given by him. This is why the Holy Spirit is nothing other than the Love of God personified. □

We, too, when we give thanks (render grace) to the Lord when it enters into us under the species of the bread and wine, we prove to him all of our love, and the grace of God becomes, for us, "charity"! All of us are then but one Body of Christ in the Love of God! As Saint Paul says in today's epistle: "Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us." (Rm. 5:5)

With the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God and the Mother of the Church, let us give thanks to the thrice holy God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! May we all, through Mary and with Her, have in our hearts some of the joy and love of God the Trinity!

YOU MUST FEEL GOOD TO BECOME GOOD

GOSPEL REFLECTIONS ON THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (CORPUS CHRISTI)

by Father Gerry Pierse, C.Ss.R.

Many years ago my schoolmate Paddy was engaged to marry Kay when she was discovered to have cancer and to have only about a one - year life expectancy. She told him that he could call it all off. He replied that if he had loved her in good health he would love her in bad, and the wedding went on as scheduled. Sixteen sickness filled years and four children later, I was visiting when Kay entered her last illness. During my visits to her I was struck by her lack of concern about herself. Her only thought was for the happiness and welfare of her husband and children when she was gone. One Thursday night I said Mass in her hospital room with her husband and children looking across at me from the other side of her bed. When I held up the bread of the Eucharist and said "This is my body which is given for you," it was her emaciated body that I saw in front of me. She died the next day but she left me with a new understanding of Corpus Christi, the body of Christ, the feast we celebrate.

The night before Jesus died he took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to his disciples. I began to understand more what happened to Jesus, and what he was doing for us and telling us, when I saw what happened to Kay. She had been taken and blessed. She had been taken into life by God and into marriage by Paddy. Then she was broken, but the more she was broken the more her nobility and beauty appeared. Eventually, she was given over to death. No, she gave herself over for her family, for others.

This too is what Jesus did. He himself was taken from among his people. He was called by God in his conception and blessed to be the Messiah, the son of God. But this blessing did not exempt him from what is human. Rather, it immersed him in it all the more. He enjoyed and suffered the whole gamut of human emotions. His joy was real at meeting his friends. His sorrow was equally real when he was betrayed. He was given over for us by Judas, by his apostles, by the people, and by the Father.

But he rose from it all and when asked to authenticate himself all he did was show his human wounds.

The Corpus Christi can never be seen as remote from human woundedness. When we bring our own woundedness, like the woundedness of Kay, into the presence of Christ we have Eucharist. Unfortunately many people see religion, and particularly prayer, as a way of escaping woundedness and pain. For Jesus pain was a reality to be faced and he faced it in his passion. He asked us to celebrate Eucharist, "Do this in memory of me." to remember him as the one who went through suffering to glory.

Meditation is a Eucharistic way of prayer in the sense that it is a way of sitting before God in thanksgiving and in acceptance. As one is present to the prayer word, one is present totally to God's will. One is present and available to be taken, blessed, broken and given by the Lord, at the time and in the manner that he alone decides. ☐

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THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS AN ABYSS OF LOVE TO MEET OUR EVERY NEED.

- St. Margaret Alacoque

www.wau.org

Have you ever wondered where some of our feast days come from? Many focus on the central events in the life of the Lord: Christmas, Easter, the Transfiguration, and Pentecost. Some focus on a particular doctrine of our faith - like Trinity Sunday and the Triumph of the Cross. And then there are days like today, which celebrate some aspect of Jesus and who he is. Like Divine Mercy Sunday, the feast of the Sacred Heart is God's way of reminding us that the way to him is always open. It's God's way of inviting us to come to Jesus and experience his love.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart goes back as early as the eleventh century. By the sixteenth century, the image of Jesus' heart, pierced by a lance and surrounded by a crown of thorns, was gaining in popularity, largely due to its promotion by the Franciscan and Jesuit orders. But the most dramatic source of the devotion came from a humble Visitation Sister in France - St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690). In a series of visions, Jesus asked Margaret Mary to help establish a special feast day devoted to his heart. In 1856, Pope Pius IX established this day - the Friday after the feast of Corpus Christi - as a feast for the universal church.

This feast is an invitation as much as it is a commemoration. Jesus is inviting us to enter into his heart. He is inviting us to lose ourselves in his love and discover the power of that love to heal our hurts, enliven our hopes, and protect us from fear. He is inviting us to discover all over again how strong his love is for us. Nothing can ever quench it - not even our sin or unworthiness! So take up the invitation today. Fix your

eyes on Jesus' heart. Let his love flow over you and lift you up to heaven. ☐

*"Jesus, meek and humble of heart,
make my heart like yours!"*

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES TO CELEBRATE FATHER'S DAY – JUNE 17

For many of us, our fathers are our heroes. We appreciate them for their love and guidance. A good father can set an example of strength, honor, sacrifice, and responsibility. On Father's Day, we honor dads for their love and the lessons they have taught us.

Here are quotes celebrating dads on Father's Day.

Every father should remember that one day his son will follow his example instead of his advice. - Unknown

It is not flesh and blood but the heart which makes us fathers and sons. - Johann Schiller

By profession I am a soldier and take pride in that fact. But I am prouder - infinitely prouder - to be a father. A soldier destroys in order to build; the father only builds, never destroys. - Douglas MacArthur

One night a father overheard his son pray: Dear God, Make me the kind of man my Daddy is. Later that night, the Father prayed, Dear God, Make me the kind of man my son wants me to be. - Unknown

My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person, he believed in me. - Jim Valvano

A truly rich man is one whose children run into his arms when his hands are empty. - Unknown

*It is a wise father that knows his own child.
- William Shakespeare*

*Father! - to God himself we cannot give a holier name.
- William Wordsworth*

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A Letter from St. Luke What would he say to us today?

Many of you are struggling; some of you have a heavy cross to bear, and you are not complaining. But I sometimes wonder if you have adequately embraced the power available in the Holy Spirit.

Beyond "I Believe." Do you remember when Paul found a dozen disciples in Ephesus and asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit? They replied, "We have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:2). I'm sure none of you would ever say that, because every Sunday in the creed, you profess, "I believe in the Holy Spirit." But do you realize what you are saying?

When I review the stories of the early church that I told in Acts, I see the excitement, the joy, the explosion of praise, and the passion to proclaim the good news that came out of the first Pentecost. When you read those stories, you feel like shouting: "Someone has risen from

the dead! His name is Jesus, and he's sent his Holy Spirit as the beginning of our own resurrection! Come join us! We're not perfect, but we've found the fountain of life - the Holy Spirit of Jesus!"

Saying "I believe in the Holy Spirit" is crucial, but God has so much more for us! It's not enough just to receive the Holy Spirit in baptism and confirmation. That got the Holy Spirit in. We need to let him out.

What does it look like when you let the Spirit out? Well, it looks like the church I described in Acts.

People Who Praise. First of all, it takes praise seriously - or better, joyously! I'm glad that many of you have discovered the Spirit's gift of praise. But I've also noticed that some Christians hold back, not even opening their song books at Mass.

Perhaps they can't sing, but they could at least make a joyful noise (Psalm 66:1). Maybe they think they are not worthy. Well, nobody is. The Holy Spirit makes the unworthy worthy. Paul said the Holy Spirit makes us cry out, "Abba, Father!" (Galatians 4:6). "Cry out" doesn't mean mumble. It's like a child shouting "Daddy!" when his father comes home from a long trip.

Just as at Pentecost, praise is the grand entryway to other spiritual gifts. Even if you don't pray in tongues the way I describe in Acts (2:11; 10:46), or as Paul does in his letters, people who let the Spirit praise God through them find that they begin to get what you might call the gift of ears: They start to hear the word of God in a new "here and now for me" way. When they share this word of God with others, it's called the gift of prophecy. But prophecy begins with hearing the now word of God, which is available to anyone who yields to the gift of praise.

Equipped to Witness. Another way we early Christians let the Holy Spirit out was by placing our hands on the sick and asking God to heal them. In fact, it was through healing prayer that we introduced many people to Jesus. Most Christians I meet today, however, don't seem to believe that God will heal people through their prayer and laying on of hands. That's for the saints, they think. Rubbish! Jesus said if we had faith the size of a mustard seed, we could move mountains. That's as true now as it was in the first century.

Of course, healing is more than physical miracles. The biggest healing of all is just meeting Jesus. So let me take this opportunity to ask: Have you met Jesus in a personal way? Or is he someone you just know about? The Holy Spirit can introduce him to you in person.

Another way the Holy Spirit showed Jesus to the world was by empowering the early Christians to witness and evangelize. When I met them, I was astounded at how boldly they spoke about Jesus. Some of them even went joyfully to martyrdom.

I see this is happening today as well, especially in certain parts of the world. And I know, too, that among you there

are many who suffer in other ways and who carry your daily crosses with patience and even joy. Take heart, and call often on the Holy Spirit! The power that sustains the martyrs can sustain you as well.

Building the Body. Yours is a very individualistic world. I am surprised that so many people live a "Jesus and me" spirituality and see no need to relate or meet regularly with other Christians. This is not what Jesus had in mind. Nor is it what happened in those early years when I wrote my Gospel and Acts.

What we experienced was the Holy Spirit building community (see Acts 2:42-47). The Spirit inspired and equipped each of us to serve as spiritual bricklayers and carpenters to create the magnificent temple that the church is meant to be. We loved to be together, because the Spirit helped us to see the church as our primary community. We had our own version of social networking, but we used it to build the church first of all.

And our first job was within our own families. You might remember that I described what Pentecostal life looked like in an extended family - that of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1-2). Reread those chapters, and notice how often the Holy Spirit appears. Here, it's not only Jesus who has the Holy Spirit but his whole family - and they foreshadow what will happen to the church at Pentecost! I wanted my readers, especially families, to see that you don't have to preach the gospel in foreign lands to be sent by the Holy Spirit. You can have a domestic Pentecost right in your home.

There's only one Holy Family, it's true. But by the power of the Holy Spirit, there could be multitudes of holy families. So let the Spirit fill you and your family.

But how, you ask. Ask! That's how. Remember Jesus' words: "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Luke 11:9). And remember that when you ask, you aren't just asking the Father to get the Holy Spirit in. You are also asking for the grace to let the Spirit out. And as Paul said, that means to "strive eagerly for the spiritual gifts" (1 Corinthians 14:1).

Go for the Gift! So open your mouth and begin praising the Lord. When you run out of words, just let syllables tumble out of your mouth (that's the gift of tongues). Then, after saturating yourself with praise, be still and listen for the voice of God. It might come to you in an image or a word, or when you open the Bible and read a passage. And when people ask you to pray for them, do it right then and there. Hold their hands or place your hands on their shoulder, and pray in your own words.

Expect God to Act. He will. Jesus guaranteed it: "If you ... know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" (Luke 11:13).

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MARRIAGE DUEL OR DUET?

By Dr. Adrian Rogers

Some couples behave as if they were married by the Secretary of War rather than the Justice of the Peace. James gives us God's formula for handling marital confrontations: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19). Truer words cannot be spoken in a single sentence than James's admonition. Let's think about his words in detail.

Tune In. When James says "be swift to hear," he's telling us to tune in. All good communication, whether in marriage or in any other relationship, begins with listening. Psychologists say we catch only about 20 percent of what we hear, which is why good listening consists of more than hearing.

Watching your spouse's nonverbal communication is an important part of "hearing" what he or she is saying. And tuning in to your spouse's thoughts and feelings is loving him or her with your ears and your eyes.

Tone Down. James 3:5-6 says, "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."

Some people shred and claw with their mouths. As the above Scripture so plainly states, the tongue can be like a vicious beast. James also says, "The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:8).

Seven Deadly Games Of The Tongue

The Judge. Judges blame and condemn their partners. This is wrong! We should never condemn our mates. In fact, it's probably a bad idea to start any sentence in an argument with the word "you". Try beginning this way if you feel tempted to be the judge: "I feel this way" or "I think this" or "It seems to me" or "I need."

The Professor. Professors like to talk down to their spouses. They like to pretend that they are superior. Their marriages are full of put downs and belittling. "Hey, that's stupid," professors say. "If you had an ounce of brains, you'd know that's not right." Or, "You can't understand - you're not a woman." Constant belittling attacks your partner's sense of self worth.

The Psychologist. Spouses who constantly analyze their mate's motives play the game of the psychologist. The problem with this game is that nobody knows all the motives of other people. Paul said, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord" (1 Corinthians 4:3-4).

The Historian. Historians correct all the details of their partners' speech. My family and I were having supper one night. We began discussing our son building a house in Florida. Our daughter, Janice, said, "How far is Steve's house from his old house?"

"About a block," said Joyce, my wife.

"About two blocks," I said.

"Well...I don't think so," Joyce said.

"Well, about a block and a half, then," I said.

"Who cares?" Janice said.

Exactly right - who cares? Yet here I was, doing exactly what I knew was wrong. Another way some people play historian is to resurrect something that happened long ago if we feel we're losing the argument.

The Dictator. Dictators use force in their marriages. Perhaps it's verbal force: "I will not allow that in my house!" or "I demand that you ..." Some use physical force. Men who strike their wives are the lowest of the low. And sometimes women are physically stronger and beat their husbands. Others may be a dictator by being passive and withholding affection, acting as a martyr, or pouting.

The Critic. Critics condemn and criticize their partners. But perhaps even worse, they compare. Likewise, don't compare your spouse with your mother or father. The critic's game is a destructive game. Don't get into it. And especially, never criticize factors over which your spouse has no control - like his or her parents or physical traits.

The Preacher. This is perhaps the most insidious game of all. Preachers take a holier than thou attitude. They assume that they are their spouse's conscience. They try to be the Holy Spirit to their spouse. They use the Bible as a club, beating on their spouse's conscience with the Word of God. You'll find that encouraging someone is different from pontificating. □

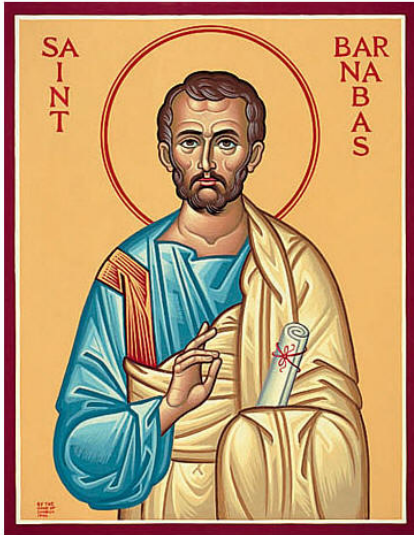
Dr. Adrian Rogers, preacher/teacher of Love Worth Finding Ministries, had a zeal and love for Jesus that resonated in every message. His legacy continues to reach around this world, sharing the good news that Jesus Christ is the greatest Love worth finding. Although Dr. Adrian Rogers passed away on November 15, 2005, tributes continue to pour in testifying of his worldwide impact.

KNOWING OUR SAINTS

ST. BARNABAS, THE APOSTLE FEAST DAY – JUNE 11

www.americancatholic.org

Barnabas, a Jew of Cyprus, comes as close as anyone outside the Twelve to being a full-fledged apostle. He was closely associated with St. Paul (he introduced Paul to



Peter and the other apostles) and served as a kind of mediator between the former persecutor and the still suspicious Jewish Christians.

When a Christian community developed at Antioch, Barnabas was sent as the official representative of the Church of Jerusalem to incorporate them into the fold. He and Paul instructed in

Antioch for a year, after which they took relief contributions to Jerusalem.

Later, Paul and Barnabas, now clearly seen as charismatic leaders, were sent by Antioch officials to preach to the Gentiles. Enormous success crowned their efforts. After a miracle at Lystra, the people wanted to offer sacrifice to them as gods - Barnabas being Zeus, and Paul, Hermes - but the two said, "We are of the same nature as you, human beings. We proclaim to you good news that you should turn from these idols to the living God" (see Acts 14:8-18).

But all was not peaceful. They were expelled from one town, they had to go to Jerusalem to clear up the ever-recurring controversy about circumcision and even the best of friends can have differences. When Paul wanted to revisit the places they had evangelized, Barnabas wanted to take along John Mark, his cousin, author of the Gospel (April 25), but Paul insisted that, since Mark had deserted them once, he was not fit to take along now. The disagreement that followed was so sharp that Barnabas and Paul separated, Barnabas taking Mark to Cyprus, Paul taking Silas to Syria. Later, they were reconciled - Paul, Barnabas and Mark.

When Paul stood up to Peter for not eating with Gentiles for fear of his Jewish friends, we learn that "even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy" (see Galatians 2:1-13).

Barnabas is spoken of simply as one who dedicated his life to the Lord. He was a man "filled with the Holy Spirit and faith. Thereby large numbers were added to the Lord." Even when he and Paul were expelled from Antioch in Pisidia (modern-day Turkey), they were "filled with joy and the Holy Spirit." □

... I am your Mother Mary. When you offer yourself to God, you must disregard the trials and tribulations and offer pain to my son Jesus' Sacred Heart. Listen to your heart and feel that God is always with you. As you offer the mantle of love, touch with your heart and raise before God for anointing and glorification.

Thank you for listening to me my children".

*Mary, your Lady of the Rosary
05122012*

... My son helper of God My Father. Look at My Heart bleeding and sorrowing for the presence of My children. Many times My presence is ignored in the Blessed Sacrament. I hunger and thirst for souls who come to Me even for a moment, (like I Am stealing the time they should have spent in building up their material possessions, their leisure, and their time to relax in front of those inventions that affect their imagination). But then, they shout with pride "how they love Me" from their lips that only untruthful words of insincerity emanate. I AM here My children, speaking to you with My Heart bleeding as it calls for your attention even for a minute of your time. I AM continuously ignored. I AM waiting . . .

*- Jesus of Nazareth, Your loving God
05192012*

GOD TOUCHED ME

THE MARRIAGE I ALWAYS WANTED

By Julie Baxter

There I sat, with our two-month old daughter strapped in the baby carrier, discussing my rights and options with a divorce attorney, while my parents watched our two-year-old son at their home.

I was on the brink of divorce, fed up with our marriage of seven years. I was through. I was in misery.

And I wondered: Where was the marriage that had started out so well? How had things gone so wrong?

I was nineteen when I met my future husband in college. Dave was the life of the party - handsome, entertaining, smart, witty, and very confident. I was taken aback that someone so charming would choose me, but as we grew to love one another, we seemed the perfect pair.

After five years of dating, we were married and living a wonderful life. Dave and I had both attended graduate school, were involved in successful careers, and had purchased our first home. We lived in a fashionable neighborhood and enjoyed traveling. We credited our good fortune to hard work and dedication.

God was Somewhere in the Background. I went to weekly Mass, and although Dave wasn't Catholic, he would sometimes accompany me. I prayed at night occasionally, always by myself. There was no real sense of God's presence in our life together. Yes, we had been married in a Catholic church, but did we believe that God was a present and active partner in our marriage? Not really.

A Terrible Mistake? As the years passed, Dave maintained the party image I had once loved. That image, however, was becoming increasingly unattractive. We argued a lot, especially about how to spend our weekends. I preferred to stay home and watch a movie, whereas Dave preferred to go to a bar with friends.

At first, I figured that the late nights and heavy drinking were just a bad habit. Yet although Dave seemed remorseful at times, his behavior not only continued but increased. I responded by slowly withholding my love and trust. Gradually, we became more and more detached as a couple. With our individual choices moving us in opposite directions, we were living two separate lives under one roof.

In 2003, our first child was born. Certainly, this will change things, I thought. The only change was that Dave's drinking became even more frequent.

Five years into our marriage, I was fearful that I had made a terrible mistake. I was disgusted with myself for not having seen the drinking for what it was: alcoholism. I felt cheated out of the marriage I always wanted. My

parents had set a positive example of a healthy marriage. Why couldn't I have that, too?

Separately Seeking. Two years later, feeling hopeless and alone after the birth of our second child, I started to consider my options. That's when I visited the divorce lawyer. Dave and I sought help from a marriage counselor, too; we both realized that our marriage was falling apart and that neither of us knew how to fix it.

I also began reading about alcoholism and talking to people who had experienced its ravaging effects in their own families. I came to see that our marriage, too, had become a casualty of this terrible illness. Finally, after speaking with my parish priest, a counselor, and friends, I made the decision to remove myself and the children from our home and to separate from Dave for an indefinite period.

It was a fruitful, though difficult, time. While separated, each of us sought understanding and healing through various community resources, family, and friends. All of this was instrumental in our individual recoveries from alcoholism and its consequences; it allowed us to gain perspective and acknowledge the roles we each had played in the decline of our relationship.

Still, our marriage was in disarray. How could we put it back together?

An Unexpected Message. Just then, a couple from church offered to meet with us. They too had experienced the painful consequences of alcoholism in their own marriage. But there they sat, smiling and joyful as they shared.

They directed us to the program that had helped them: Retrouvaille, a French word meaning rediscovery. From its Web site, I learned that Retrouvaille provides couples in crisis with the tools for rediscovering a loving relationship and putting their marriage in order again. The program, which consists of a weekend and follow-up sessions, emphasizes "communication between husband and wife." It provides the opportunity to "examine your lives together in a new and positive way."

Though it sounded too good to be true, Dave and I took the couple's advice and signed up for a Retrouvaille weekend. We were both anxious as we arrived. If this didn't help us, where would we turn?

As the weekend began, the leaders - three couples and a priest - encouraged everyone to "put the past behind and start rediscovering each other." To be honest, I was determined to remember the past. I wasn't going to forget or forgive so easily.

Then, during one of the communication exercises, I found myself sitting alone in a room composing a letter to Dave. Suddenly my pen wrote, "I forgive you." I was stunned. I had never made a conscious decision to write these words. In fact, I supposed it would be years before I would even consider forgiving my husband.

MEDITATION AND COMMENTARY

THE FORGIVING FATHER

LUKE 15:11-32

By: Jacqueline Syrup Bergan and Marie Schwan, CSJ

As I finished writing this unexpected declaration, my body began to tremble. Tears flowed from my eyes, and I experienced an indescribable sense of calm. Examining the words I had just written, I was amazed to realize that I truly did believe them. In that moment, I knew I had been touched by the Holy Spirit.

Gone were the despair and hopelessness that had consumed me for so many years. In an instant, God removed the pain of the past. And though I remembered the disappointments, I now saw them as stepping-stones to the deep joy that swept over me. Surprisingly, I actually felt grateful for every one of those distressing events, for they had brought me to this point. Without them, I would never have experienced the healing grace of gratitude.

It's a Loving Plan. God's healing grace has brought many beautiful things into our marriage since that weekend more than five years ago. We now pray together every day. Dave has decided to become a Catholic and is enrolled in RCIA classes. We work with couples in our parish who are preparing for marriage, and we have counseled married couples who are in crisis. In 2007, we welcomed a third child into our family. And this year, we are celebrating six years of sobriety and thirteen years of marriage.

Since that amazing Retrouvaille weekend experience, I have often reflected on the words that turned our marriage around. And I came to understand that the message - "I forgive you" - was not only for Dave: I had been forgiven, too. I had doubted God and written him off. I couldn't trust that he had a loving plan for my life and marriage.

God was with us, even when Dave and I were not especially present to him. In his mercy, he took what I considered a curse and made it the greatest of blessings. And the despair and hopelessness that once threatened our marriage? It laid the foundation for greater trust and deeper love.

Does God have a loving plan for us all? I don't doubt it anymore; I only try to follow. I'm so grateful, for it is through God's plan that I found - and keep finding - the marriage I always wanted.

Julie and Dave Baxter reside in Northeast Ohio.
To learn more about Retrouvaille: visit www.retrouvaille.org;
or (in the US) call 1-800-470-2230. □

*If you have any personal articles
or God's miracle in your life
you want to share with the devotees,
we may be reached at
the following e-mail addresses
and phone numbers:
eablp@aol.com and/or ladipatsee@gmail.com
(702) 274-4315 and/or (213) 364-8235*

Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living.

"When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no



one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."' So he set off and went to his father."

"But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe - the best one - and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

"Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never

disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!

"Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

Commentary:

This is surely one of the most beautiful stories ever written! It has been celebrated on stage, in art and music, and most significantly, it has been relived in countless lives and families. Luke has so exquisitely rendered the feelings of the father and his sons that we are immediately drawn into the drama of this very human situation.

This is the story of a father who had two sons. He "lost them both, one in a foreign country, the other behind a barricade of self righteousness". Popularly known as the "Parable of the Prodigal Son," a more appropriate title might be the "Parable of the Forgiving Father," since the focus of the story is primarily on the Father's love and mercy toward his sons.

One can imagine the father's feelings when the younger son requested his inheritance - what would belong to him when his father died. Although it was not uncommon to see an estate divided among heirs before death, it seemed as if the younger son could not wait for his father to die.

As he watched his son go down the road, carrying "all he had," the father must have been filled with apprehension for him. Then his worst fears were realized! The son lavishly spent and wasted his father's gift until he was reduced to abject poverty. He was hungry; he was homeless; he was alone.

He had sunk to what, for a Jew, was the lowest possible level, for he was reduced to caring for the pigs of a Gentile landowner. For the Jews, the pig was considered to be the most "unclean" of all animals, and to be in employed by a Gentile was to be under the influence and control of one who worshipped foreign gods. Finally at the point of death - "I am dying of hunger" - he came to his senses and was filled with the desire to return home.

Even in the moment of deepest despair, his father's love was active in his memories. The father's deep longing for his son was present within the son's burning desire to return home. Though distant, father and son were united in love and yearning for each other - one calling, one responding.

The father received his son; he kissed him tenderly. The son began his carefully-rehearsed admission of guilt. He said, "I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son."

He was interrupted by his father's uncontained joy. In the embrace of his father, the son was welcomed, forgiven, and restored to full sonship. His father honored him with a fine robe to cover his nakedness. He received from his father a ring which signified the reinstatement of his authority as a son in his father's house. The sandals that were placed on his feet were further indication that he was not a slave, since only free people wore shoes. The son had been lost and found. Now he knew what it meant to be his father's son. He was home! The father was overjoyed: "My son has come to life; let the celebration begin!"

No sooner had the music and dancing begun than the father was angrily encountered by the other, older son. However disappointed the father may have been by the older son's resentment and ill will, he had the wisdom not to take sides. He may have sensed that the older son was suffering an alienation of his own. The older son's attitudes had distanced him from his brother to such an extent that he referred to him not as "my brother" but as "this son of yours." His self-righteous attitudes had prevented him from entering into a loving relationship, not only with his brother but also with his father. The elder son, too, was lost; he was lost in a foreign land of his own making.

The father responded as he had with his younger son. He was compassionate. He did not ridicule his son, but rebuked him gently. "You are always with me, and all that is mine is yours." All the father was able to do was invite the son to confront his negativity, accept his own position, and enter into the joy of his brother's return.

As sons and daughters of our Father, we are also invited to claim the reality of our inheritance as sons and daughters of a loving and merciful God. The banquet is prepared. Will you enter into the joy of your Father? □

Jacqueline Syrup Bergan, is a wife, mother, and grandmother who has always had a keen interest in spirituality. She and her husband Leonard live in Minnesota for part of the year and spend the remainder of their time in Arizona. Jacqueline continues to offer spiritual direction and has recently completed a book on step-mothering.

Marie Schwan is a Sister of St. Joseph of Medaille. A teacher by profession, she has served in administration and formation in her congregation, and has just completed fourteen years as associate director of Jesuit Retreat House in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. She is currently formation directress for her community in New Orleans.

REMINDERS | SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- 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.
- On Ascension Day [June 5] begin the nine days of waiting and preparing, together with the Apostles and Mary, the coming of the Holy Spirit. These are the days when families should discuss the "Gifts of the Holy Spirit" and the "Fruits of the Holy Spirit" evening after evening.
- On **Father's Day, June 17**, remember that expensive or typical gifts are not necessary, but the time and effort you put in to create a personalized tribute, will be deeply appreciated. Instead, let your own creative abilities shine and make Dad something special.
- 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**.
- If you have any personal articles or God's miracle in your life you want to share with the devotees, we will gladly add it on those months when the article is relevant. Please submit your article by the second week of the present month so that it can be included in the next month's release. Write what's in your mind and heart and not worry about grammar, syntax, spelling or style. Our guardian angels in heaven and on earth will help us edit the article. ☐

THANK YOU

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

Psalm 106:2

FOR PRAYERS HEARD AND PETITIONS GRANTED

Thank you, Eternal Father, for Your Will that transformed our sorrow into joy, our tears of anguish into tears of thanksgiving. Our physical and spiritual recreation, through Your Healing Hands, kept us enclosed and revived in our hope for renewed lives as we look up to the heavens praising You, in Jesus' most Holy Name, through the intercession of Mary, our Blessed Mother, and of the angels and saints.

From Christine and Ziegfred

Christine's father, Terry, is doing well and his heart bypass was successful. As for Ziegfred, his surgery wound has healed but he is still having a hard time walking. He is currently being checked for cancer cells and please pray that the cancer cells have not metastasized. Thank you very much for the prayers you offered and we are positive that after the pain and suffering everything will be fine in God's perfect time!

Bernadette landed a part-time job!

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

2000 HAIL MARY DEVOTION

The Spiritual Army of God the Father and the 2000 Hail Mary Group of Northern California acknowledge with thanks our generous June 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

Isabelita M. Adina

Los Angeles, California

Frank & Lorma Batino | Dorothy Ikeri

Mercedes Holzinger | Loreto Melo

Dads, Estela & Paul Morales | Alice T. Ng

DEVOTION SCHEDULE



THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER

cordially invites you to the following devotions:

In Los Angeles:

1st Saturday Devotion

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

Devotion to God the Father

Every 1st Sunday of the Month

The Monastery of the Angels | 1977 Carmen Avenue on Gower | Los Angeles, California | (323) 466-2186
11:20 A.M. - Rosary to the Father | 11:50 A.M. - Holy Mass
1:00 P.M. - Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
Confession ongoing from 11:20 A.M. to 11:45 P.M.

2000 Hail Mary Devotion – June 16, 2012

at the Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master | starting at 8:30 a.m.
Please call Mrs. Nory Jose at (310) 367-6557 if you wish to become a Sponsor of the 2000 Hail Mary Devotion.

In Las Vegas:

1st Saturday Devotion

1st Saturday Devotional Prayers start at 1:00 P.M. | a Cenacle follows.

Devotion to God the Father

2:00 to 3:30 P.M.

at The Cenacle House in The Enclave | 8455 West Sahara Avenue #172, | Las Vegas, NV 89117.
Please call Evelyn at (702)274-4315 for entry to The Enclave or for more information.

2000 Hail Mary Devotion – June 30, 2012

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

In Laughlin, Nevada:

1st Saturday Devotion

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church | 3055 El Mirage Way
Holy Mass starts at 8:00 A.M. Devotional prayers follow.

In Northern California:

1st Saturday Devotion

2000 Hail Mary Devotion

Please call (650) 766-2071 for dates and venues for the coming months or for more information.

For Sacramento:

2000 Hail Mary Devotion – June 23, 2012

Please call Precy Rieta (916) 564-3733 | Caring Sturgill (916) 897-3194 | Maria Rosario (916) 230-7756 for dates and venues for the coming months, for more information, or if you wish to Sponsor the Devotion..

In San Diego

Rosary to the Father

Monday – Saturday after the 8:00 A.M. Mass [Look for Iris Haj]
St. Mary's Church | 1160 S. Broadway | Escondido, CA 92025

In the Philippines

2000 Hail Mary Devotion - Metro Manila Area

Letty Rollan has organized the 2000 Hail Mary Devotion in various areas of Metro Manila through the members of the "Mother Butler."

Please text Mobile @ **(011 +63 +2)** 916- 384-9300 and/or | Landline 939-4677 to find the venue closest to you.