



# 1<sup>ST</sup> SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

August 2012

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### TO MAKE GOD THE FATHER KNOWN AND HONOURED

*From Testimony of H.E. Alexandre Caillot, Bishop of Grenoble, at the end of the Canonical Enquiry into the case of Mother Eugenia Elisabetta Ravasio*

[www.armatabianca.org](http://www.armatabianca.org)

(...) The object of the mission which would appear to have been entrusted to Mother Eugenia is precise and, from the doctrinal point of view, I see it as legitimate and timely. Its precise object is to make God the Father known and honoured, mainly by the institution of a special feast which has been requested of the Church. The enquiry established that a liturgical feast in honour of the Father would be quite in keeping with Catholic practice as a whole. It would accord with the traditional trust of Catholic prayer, which ascends to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, as shown by the prayers of the Mass and the liturgical oblation to the Father during the Holy Sacrifice.



However, ***it is strange that there is no special feast in honour of the Father.*** The Trinity is honoured as such, the Word and the Holy Spirit are honoured by the mission and external manifestations. Only the Father has no feast of His own which would draw the attention of the Christian people to his Person.

This is the reason why a fairly extensive survey of the faithful has shown that, in the various social classes and even among many priests and religious, "the Father is unknown, no one prays to Him, no one thinks of Him". The survey reveals, rather surprisingly, that a large number of Christians remain distant from the Father because they see Him as a terrifying judge. They prefer to turn to Christ's humanity. And how many ask Jesus to protect them from the Father's anger!

A special feast would thus have the effect firstly of re-establishing order in the spirituality of many Christians and, secondly, of leading them back to the Divine Saviour's instructions: "Everything you ask the Father in My name..." and again "You will pray like this: 'Our Father...'"

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## OVERVIEW FOR THE MONTH

[www.catholicculture.org](http://www.catholicculture.org)

The month of August is dedicated to The Immaculate Heart of Mary. The entire month falls within the liturgical season of Ordinary Time, which is represented by the liturgical color green.

### A Time to Persevere

The days of summer have provided a welcome change of pace. However, while vacations afford us the time to relax and refresh, the change of habits and routines can also have a negative impact on our spiritual lives. As if to re-ignite us, the Church offers us in the plethora of August feasts vivid examples of the virtue of perseverance: six martyrs — two who are named in Canon I of the Mass and two who were martyred during World War II; seven founders of religious congregations, as well as three popes and two kings; the apostle, St. Bartholomew; the great Doctor of the Church, St. Augustine and St. Monica, his mother; the humble patron saint of parish priests, St. John Vianney, and the patron of deacons, St. Lawrence, who joked with his executioners while being roasted alive.

It is never too late to begin — as the life of the reformed sinner, St. Augustine teaches us — nor too difficult to begin again, as demonstrated by the conversion of the martyr, St. Teresa Benedicta (Edith Stein). We present-day members of the Mystical Body are certain of the reward to which we are called, for Christ's Transfigured body (August 6) is a preview of that glory. Moreover, in the Assumption of his Mother (August 15), Our Lord has demonstrated his fidelity to his promise. Her privilege is "the highest fruit of the Redemption" and "our consoling assurance of the coming of our final hope — the glorification which is Christ's" (Enchiridion on Indulgences).

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the most perfect example of Christian perseverance, but she is also our advocate in heaven where she is crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth (August 22). Mary is the "Mother of Perpetual Help", the patroness of the Congregation founded by St. Alphonsus Ligouri (August 1). "No one who has fled to her protection is left unaided" is the claim of the Memorare of St. Bernard (August 20). Heretics have returned to the faith by the prayers of her Rosary, first preached by St. Dominic (August 8) in the twelfth Century, and hearts have been converted by the graces received while wearing her Miraculous Medal, promoted by St. Maximilian Kolbe (August 14) and adopted as the "badge" for the Pious Union he founded. Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope! □

## FEASTS FOR AUGUST

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

- 1 Alphonsus Liguori, Memorial
- 2 Eusebius of Vercelli; Peter Julian Eymard, Opt. Mem.
- 4 John Vianney, Memorial
- 6 Transfiguration, Feast
- 7 Sixtus II and companions; Cajetan, Opt. Mem.
- 8 Dominic, Memorial
- 9 Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Opt. Mem.
- 10 Lawrence, Feast
- 11 Clare, Memorial
- 13 Pontian and Hippolytus, Opt. Mem.
- 14 Maximilian Kolbe, Memorial
- 15 Assumption, Solemnity
- 16 Stephen of Hungary, Opt. Mem.
- 20 Bernard, Memorial
- 21 Pius X, Sunday
- 22 Queenship of Mary, Memorial
- 23 Rose of Lima, Opt. Mem.
- 24 Bartholomew, Feast
- 25 Louis of France; Joseph Calasanz, Opt. Mem.
- 27 Monica, Memorial
- 28 Augustine, Memorial
- 29 Martyrdom of John the Baptist, Memorial

The feasts of the Dedication of St. Mary Major (August 5), Jane Frances de Chantal (August 12) and St. John Eudes (August 19) fall on a Sunday so they are superseded by the Sunday Liturgy. □

### *Least and Greatest*

*Mark 10:31*

[www.heartlight.org](http://www.heartlight.org)

*God evaluates people differently than most earthly judges, critics, and cultures do. Those who appear to be lowly, unimportant, backward, impoverished, broken, and meek will be valued as precious by God. Is it because he favors the poor and the weak over the strong and the rich? Not necessarily. However, God does cherish the person who serves others regardless of his or her station in life. He does care deeply for the person who recognized her or his need for God's love, mercy, and grace. God does recognize the genuine humility of a person who has suffered because he or she would not compromise on integrity issues. So those who have cheated their way to the top and thereby gained fame and recognition will not be the ones God honors. No, it will be the people they stepped on who refused to give up on faith, morality, integrity, honesty, and Christian values. It will be the people who served others -- even those who abused them -- in the name of Christ.*

*O Father, help me value others by your standards. Help me see the value of others through your eyes. Confound my intentions when I choose the wrong path and go the way of fame and fortune rather than faith and service. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

## THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

*"His mother treasured all these things  
in her heart."*

[Lk. 2:51]

[www.catholicdoors.com](http://www.catholicdoors.com)

The special Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary reminds us of the flawless nature of Mary, the Mother of God. As the New Eve, Mary was created flawless, remained flawless throughout her life and was elevated to Heaven in her flawless state at the end of her earthly life. Consequently, the Holy Catholic Church proclaimed the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary in support of these truths.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary is the precious Pearl of God the Father, the greatest of all His creations, far surpassing the greatness that is found in all of the angels and the saints.



As the Catechism of the Holy Catholic Church teaches us and as some of the Vicars of Rome have proclaimed over the years, the Blessed Virgin Mary is the new Eve. (C.C.C. # 411, 511, 726, 975, 2618, 2853)

Full of grace by the power of the Holy Spirit, preserved from sin as teaches the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and preserved from the corruption of death according to the dogma of the Assumption, (C.C.C. # 2853) the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary culminates all what has been progressively revealed to the Holy Catholic Church regarding her beauty, her honours and her glories. To no other creations has the Lord God given so great honours and glories as He has bestowed upon the Immaculate the Heart of Mary.

On the subject of the Heart of the Incarnate Word, the Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us, "Jesus knew and loved us each and all during his life, his agony and his Passion, and gave himself up for each one of us: 'The Son of God... loved me and gave himself for me.' He has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins and for our salvation, 'is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that... love with which the divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human beings' without exception." (C.C.C. # 478)

In defining the meaning of the word "heart," the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "The spiritual tradition of the Church also emphasizes the heart, in the biblical sense of the depths of one's being, where the person decides for or against God." (C.C.C. # 368)

In consideration of the aforementioned, while the heart of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is a symbol of human love that comes from the depth of her whole being, a love which cannot be classified as Divine love, it is the highest of the most pure love that can be found within a human being. Immaculate in nature, it is a self-giving love that humbly seeks to obey and serve in accordance with the righteousness of God.

Through her immeasurable self-giving love, the Immaculate Heart of Mary has never ceased to intercede for the children of God, seeking to direct every soul towards her beloved Son Jesus. What she could not do on earth as a mother of mankind whose love surpasses time and space, by the grace of the Heavenly Father, she has been granted the joy of doing it from Heaven.

Appearing to many blessed ones over the centuries, her motherly message of love has been to renounce Satan, to pray continuously, to do penance, and to go to Church. In return, she promised to intercede before her beloved Son Jesus on behalf of mankind for the grace of God to shine upon the world.

Next to Jesus, the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the Heavenly Father's greatest fountain of grace. From her heart flows countless physical and spiritual blessings and healings. Indeed there is truth to the word, "To Jesus, through Mary." To touch the heart of Jesus, you must first touch the heart of Mary. If the eyes of your heavenly mother favours you, how could the eyes of her Son not favour you? Surely, recognizing the Spirit filled wisdom of His Mother, the Lord will welcome you as a member of His family.

Let us be thankful to God for the priceless gift of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to the world, to the Catholic Church and to each and every one of us. To many, the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the only comfort in these needy days of the Church and in times of personal needs. □

## FEAST OF ST. PETER'S CHAIN – AUGUST 1

*Joan Carroll Cruz, Relics, ©1984*

St. Peter, the first pope, was imprisoned on two separate occasions during his 25 year reign as the Vicar of Christ.

The pious Eudocia, wife of Emperor Teodosio II, journeyed to Jerusalem and found the chain that had bound Peter during his second imprisonment. According to the Acts of the Apostles (12:6), an angel caused the chains to fall from Peter's hands and led him past slumbering guards to freedom.



The chain was eventually given as a gift to Pope St. Leo the Great (440-461). In Rome there was already a chain that was greatly prized which had bound the saint during his nine month imprisonment in the Mamertine Prison near the Forum. When the pope compared the two chains, they miraculously fused together into one unbreakable series of links. Because of this miracle,



Empress Eudocia built the Basilica of Saint Peter in Chains, and dedicated it to the apostle in the year 442. The relic is now kept in a golden

urn beneath the high altar, close to the famous statue of Michelangelo's Moses.

St. Peter was crucified in the year 67. He requested to be nailed to the cross upside-down, because he did not feel worthy to die in the same manner as his Saviour, Jesus Christ. □

## FEAST OF TRANSFIGURATION – AUGUST 6

*"This is my beloved Son; listen to him"*

*Mark 9:2-13*

*By Don Schwager*  
[www.dailyscripture.net](http://www.dailyscripture.net)

Are you prepared to see God's glory? God is eager to share his glory with us! We get a glimpse of this when the disciples see Jesus transfigured in glory on the mountain. Mark's account tells us that Jesus' garments became glistening, intensely white. When Moses met with God on Mount Sinai the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God (see Exodus 34:29). Paul says that the Israelites could not look at Moses' face because of its brightness (2 Corinthians 3:7). In this incident Jesus appeared in glory with Moses, the great lawgiver of Israel, and with Elijah, the greatest of the prophets, in the presence of three of his beloved apostles. What is the significance of this mysterious appearance? Jesus went to the mountain knowing full well what awaited him in Jerusalem — his betrayal, rejection and crucifixion. Jesus very likely discussed this momentous decision to go to the cross with Moses and Elijah. God the Father also spoke with Jesus and gave his approval: This is my beloved Son; listen to him. The cloud which overshadowed Jesus and his apostles fulfilled the dream of the Jews that when the Messiah came the cloud of God's presence would fill the temple again (see Exodus 16:10, 19:9, 33:9; 1 Kings 8:10; 2 Maccabees 2:8). The Lord wants to reveal his glory to all who earnestly seek him with faith.

Origen, the great 3rd century bible scholar, shows us how the transfiguration can change our lives: "When he is transfigured, his face also shines as the sun that he may be manifested to the children of light who have put off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, and are no longer the children of darkness or night but have become the sons of day, and walk honestly as in the day. Being manifest, he will shine unto them not simply as the sun, but as demonstrated to be the sun of righteousness."

Luke's gospel tells us that while Jesus was transfigured, Peter, James, and John were asleep (Luke 9:32)! Upon awakening they discovered Jesus in glory along with Moses and Elijah. How much do we miss of God's glory and action because we are asleep spiritually? There are many things which can keep our minds asleep to the things of God: Mental lethargy and the "unexamined life" can keep us from thinking things through and facing our doubts and questions. The life of ease can also hinder us from considering the challenging or disturbing demands of Christ. Prejudice can make us blind to something new the Lord may have for us. Even sorrow can be a block until we can see past it to the glory of God. Are you spiritually awake? Peter, James, and John were privileged witnesses of the glory of Christ. We, too, as disciples of Christ are called to be witnesses of his glory. We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18). The Lord wants to reveal his glory to us, his beloved disciples. Do you seek his presence with faith and reverence?

*"Lord Jesus, keep me always alert and awake to you, to your word, your action, and your daily presence in my life. Let me see your glory." □*

# GOD TOUCHED ME

IN EACH ONE IS GIVEN THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT FOR THE COMMON GOOD

1 Corinthians 12:7

By Jim Wayda

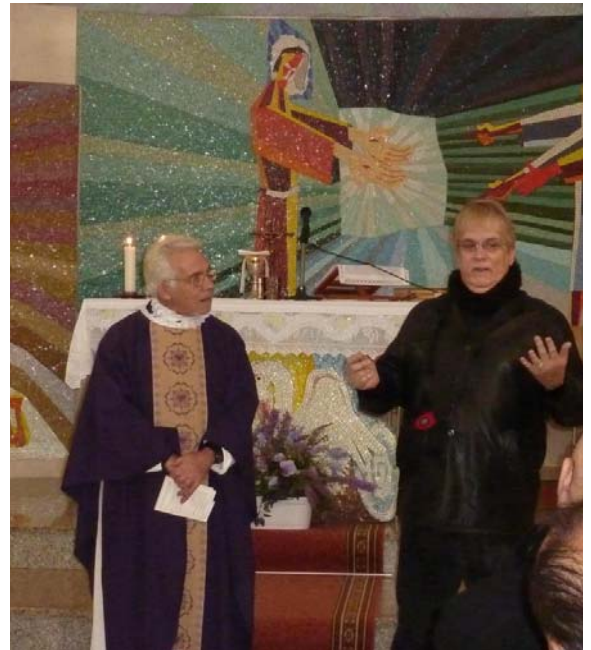
As one searches for the meaning of God's relationship with humankind, the need to pray becomes very important in order to establish that communication with our loving Creator. Prayers can achieve solitude spiritual bonding with God, while charisms and places of spirituality through pilgrimages among others, bring the true meaning of God's true essence and existence.

The pilgrimage my wife and I signed up for in December 2011 was a once in a lifetime experience for me. It was a pleasure and a blessing to be in the most holy sites on the itinerary -- Czech Republic, Poland, Bosnia, and Italy. It all started during the Mass at an orphanage in Medjugorje. I had a very profound spiritual encounter.

Having been a Baptist for the past 28 years, I was taught and convinced that those repetitious prayers and Hail Mary's of the Catholic faith were unnecessary and simply redundant. My personal goal of the pilgrimage was to experience enlightenment regarding my faith. Even though I am a Baptist, I have always had an open-mind regarding other Christian-based faiths, but I really had no intention of converting to the Catholic faith.

During that time when the visionary, Vicka, was standing still for a good 20 minutes praying for the Blessed Virgin Mary's intercessions for the pilgrims' petitions, I was also praying -- yearning for my enlightenment.

Mother Mary overloaded my mind with images and answers regarding my faith during this period of time. It was a very emotional experience that left me simultaneously very sad and very joyful. I understood that the reason for the repetitious prayers was to reach a spiritual state of establishing a connection with Mother Mary, the Lord, and the Father. During that time when Vicka was praying, I experienced that connection like never before. I realized that my criticism over the years of the Catholic faith had been unjustified and judgmental, primarily derived from hearsay rather than actual experience. This revelation brought a mixed emotion of sorrow and delight, realizing that the Catholic faith is the way for me to connect with my God.



Also during the pilgrimage, I witnessed amazing attestations of faith from other members of our group, at times when my very own was lacking.

As a result of this experience and the other wonderful spiritual value of this pilgrimage, my conviction to convert to the Catholic faith becomes even stronger with the support of my fellow pilgrims. My gratitude to all of them becomes even more meaningful as I carry on this journey of faith in Catholicism -- where my heart calls it, home! □

*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](mailto:eablp@aol.com) and/or [ladipatsee@gmail.com](mailto:ladipatsee@gmail.com)  
(702) 274-4315 and/or (213) 364-8235*



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## To Make God the Father Known and Honoured

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A liturgical feast dedicated to God the Father would also have the effect of raising our eyes towards the One Whom the apostle St. James called "the Father of Light, from Whom every gift comes..." It would accustom souls to consider God's goodness and His fatherly providence. They would realize that this providence is truly that of God the Holy Trinity, and that it is because of his divine nature, common to all three Persons, that God spreads through the world the ineffable treasures of his infinite mercy.

It would seem, at first sight, as if there were no special reason to honour the Father in particular. But was it not the Father who sent His Son into the world? If it is supremely right to show devotion to the Son and the Holy Spirit because of their external manifestations, would it not be right and proper to give thanks to God the Father, as the Prefaces of the Mass require, for the gift He sent us, His Son?

The real object of this special feast thus becomes plain: to honour the Father, to thank Him, to praise Him for having giving us His Son; in a word, as the message states, as the Author of our Redemption; to thank Him Who loved the world so much that He gave His only-begotten Son, so that all men might be brought together in the Mystical Body of Christ and, together with His Son, become His children.

At a time when the world is troubled by secular doctrines, atheism and modern philosophies and no longer recognizes God, the true God, would not this feast make known to many the living Father, the Father of mercy and goodness, Whom Jesus has revealed to us? Would it not contribute to an increase in the number of those who worship the Father "in spirit and in truth", to Whom Jesus referred? Now, when the world is being torn apart by deadly wars, when it feels the need to seek a solid principle of union to bring the peoples closer together, this feast would bring a great light. It would teach men that they all have the same Father in Heaven: the One Who gave them Jesus, towards Whom He draws them as members of His Mystical Body in the unity of the same Spirit of Love! When so many souls are weary and tired of the tribulations of war, they may be hungering for a deep spiritual life.

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*I am your Mother Mary. On this day of my Rosary (First Saturday), offer all your prayers for the sick, those whose lack of faith become hopeless and distraught. Many seek physical advice but most of their ailment is their spirituality. Seek first the relationship you must have with God and you will find the calmness of the spirit and the physical well being will likewise come.*

*Nothing in all aspects of your life is detached from God. My children, the need to do penance for your transgressions and for others is more important now as the world becomes so attached with worldly desires and values of the evil one.*

*My rosary I ask you to pray every day and meditate on each bead that it represents.*

*Thank you my children for heeding this call.*

*I love you my children.*

*Mary, Your Lady of the Rosary*

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*I am your Mother Mary. When you light the candles, offer your prayers to souls whose lives have been cut off because of disaster and works others do to make their lives easy; and the killing of unborn babies. My children, think of others and remove the feelings of selfishness and personal glory. These acts of pride are reflection of the fallen ones and the father of all deceits.*

*Pray for more souls who are contemplating to be priests and those entering the religious lives. They are few and their numbers are being snatched away.*

*Offer them my children. Feel my presence, all the guardian angels, the trials of today and the angels of prayers.*

*I love you my children.*

*Mary, Your Lady of the Rosary*

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# KNOWING OUR SAINTS

## THE APOSTLE BARTHOLOMEW FEAST DAY – AUGUST 24

[www.biblepath.com](http://www.biblepath.com)

The latter ministry of the apostle Bartholomew belongs more to the eastern churches than it does to the western churches.

Bartholomew is said to have had black curly hair, white skin, large eyes, a straight nose, hair that covered his ears and a long grizzled middle height beard. He is, also, said to have worn a white robe with a purple stripe and a white cloak with four purple gems at the corners. For twenty-six years he wore these and it is said that they never grew old. In fact, It was also reported, that his shoes lasted the same as his clothing.



Of Bartholomew, it is said that he prayed a hundred times a day and a hundred times a night. It is also said that his voice was like a trumpet, angels waited upon him, and that he was always cheerful and knew all languages.

In the company of the apostle Philip, the apostle Bartholomew went to Asia Minor and labored in Hierapolis, near Laodicea and Colosse, in what is modern day Turkey.

While in Hierapolis, it is said that the wife of the Roman proconsul was healed by the apostles Philip and Bartholomew, that she became a Christian and that her husband ordered Philip and Bartholomew to be put to death by crucifixion. Philip was crucified, however, Bartholomew escaped martyrdom, when for some special reason, the magistrates caused him to be taken down from the cross and dismissed. From there, Bartholomew went eastward to India and then to greater Armenia. He labored in the area around the south end of the Caspian Sea.

A popular tradition among the Armenians is that the apostle Jude (Thaddaeus) was the first to evangelize their region throughout the years of 43 to 66 AD and that the apostle Bartholomew joined him in 60 AD.

It is also said that Bartholomew carried with him a copy of the apostle Matthew's Gospel. This copy was reported to have been found at a later time and a converted stoic philosopher by the name of Pantaenus is said to have brought it to Alexandria.

The modern name of the district where Bartholomew died is Azerbaijan and the place of his death, called in New Testament times Albanopolis, is now Derbend which is on the west coast of the Caspian Sea.

The apostle Bartholomew is said to have been martyred in the year 68 AD.

Different traditions describe different methods of Bartholomew's execution. He is said either to have been beheaded or to have had his skin removed and been crucified upside down, like Saint Peter. He is depicted in Christian iconography with a tanner's knife, used to separate an animal's hide from its carcass. Some depictions include a cross in the background; others (most famously Michelangelo's Last Judgment) show Bartholomew with his own skin draped over his arm.

According to tradition, the relics of Saint Bartholomew made their way from Armenia to the Isle of Lipari (near Sicily) in the seventh century. From there, they were moved to Benevento, in Campania, northeast of Naples, in 809, and finally came to rest in 983 in the Church of Saint Bartholomew-in-the-Island, on the Isle of Tiber in Rome. □

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### To Make God the Father Known and Honoured

*Continued from Page 6*

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Might not such a feast call them, then, "from within", to worship the Father who hides Himself, and to offer themselves in a filial and generous oblation to the Father, the only source of the life of the Holy Trinity in them? Would it not preserve that fine movement of supernatural life which naturally draws souls towards spiritual childhood and through confidence and towards filial life with the Father, towards abandonment to the divine will, towards the spirit of faith?

On the other hand, a problem of doctrine arises, quite apart from the question of a special feast and regardless of what the Church may decide on this matter. Some eminent theologians believe that the doctrine of the Soul's relationship with the Trinity needs to be examined more deeply, and that it could be for souls a source of enlightenment on the life of union with the Father and the Son, about which St. John speaks, and on the sharing in the life of Jesus, Son of the Father, especially in His filial love for the Father. (...) □



# MEDITATION AND COMMENTARY

## ABBA! FATHER!

### HOW DOES SCRIPTURE DESCRIBE OUR FATHER?

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[www.wau.org](http://www.wau.org)

It is a common misconception that the portrayal of God is very different in the New Testament from the picture we see in the Old Testament. According to this view, the Hebrew Scriptures depict God as the transcendent Creator or stern Lawgiver, punishing the sins of his recalcitrant people. He is the God who allowed hordes of Babylonians to invade Jerusalem, pillage and murder, and drag the remaining Israelites off to exile. Even in scenes that show God's care for his people, he is depicted as delivering them from bondage in Egypt by drowning all the Egyptian forces in the Red Sea. Then, he gives them the Promised Land by allowing Joshua and his men to kill most of the Canaanites, its previous pagan inhabitants, beginning with Jericho.



All this is contrasted with the New Testament God, who is the God of mercy and love. This "other" God allowed his only Son to die for us so that we might accept him in faith and love and inherit the gift of eternal life.

**God the Father in the Old Testament.** While these interpretations have some truth to them, they are also very shortsighted. The God of the Hebrew Scriptures is much more than an aloof creator, invincible warrior, or stern lawgiver. He is also the Father of his people, whom he cherishes as beloved children. For example, even when Moses rebukes the people for their infidelity, he appeals to Israel's special place in God's heart: "Do you thus repay the Lord, O foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you?" (Deuteronomy 32:6).

Similarly, in Jeremiah 3:4-5, God upbraids his people as a Father would speak to his children: "Have you not just now called to me, 'My Father' ... but you have done all the evil that you could." Later, in an oracle prophesying Israel's return from exile, Jeremiah pronounces another word from God: "With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back ... for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn" (31:9). Finally, Psalm 68:5 speaks of God as the "Father of orphans and protector of widows."

There were also times when the people addressed God as Father in their prayer: "O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand" (Isaiah 64:8). "O Lord, hold not back, for you are our father" (63:16). "Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us?" (Malachi 2:10).

The Old Testament also shows God training Israel as a father raises his child: "Know then in your heart that as a father disciplines a child so the Lord your God disciplines you" (Deuteronomy 8:5). "As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him" (Psalm 103:13).

**The New Testament: Our Father.** Though there are beautiful texts in the Old Testament about God as Father, they are not many compared with the New Testament -- and especially the gospels. For Jesus, the image of God as Father was paramount. Jesus understood God to be a loving Father who is eager to forgive sins. He once told his disciples: "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25). Forgiveness is also the essential quality that Jesus called for when he taught us how to pray: "Our Father in heaven ... forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:9,12). And in the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus highlights the father's mercy toward his wayward boy, as well as his urging that his older son show the same forgiveness and love (Luke 15:11-32).

Besides signaling God's readiness to forgive, the title "Father" in the New Testament also signifies God's providential love. In Matthew 10:29-30, Jesus says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs on your head are all counted." Jesus also promises that prayers made in his Father's name are sure to be answered: "If two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven" (18:19). He even assures us, "Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things" (6:32). Clearly, Jesus showed us a God who loves us deeply and wants to make us his special people, children after his own heart.

**"The Father and I Are One."** It isn't just Jesus' followers who should feel free to call God their Father. Jesus himself prayed to God as "Father." On one occasion he said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants" (Luke 10:21). Then, as if that prayer were not clear enough, he continued by talking about the intimate

*Continued on Page 11*



**SAN PIETRO DELLA GENCA IN ASSERGI (AQ),  
THE FIRST CHURCH IN THE WORLD DEDICATED TO  
THE ETERNAL FATHER**

[www.armatabianca.org](http://www.armatabianca.org)

We came across these ruins while taking a walk in the mountains with our children and their families: the little church was used as a stable, the roof was caving in and the rectory was totally destroyed.



Fascinated by the beauty of the place, we decided to do something to restore the building to its dignity of the House of God.

We talked about it to Father Ruggero Gallo, the pastor of Camarda, the jurisdiction of the church of San Pietro della Genca. He told us that he wasn't interested in the matter and that he was already too busy looking after his parish church.

In the diocesan administration they told us that there weren't any pastoral interests in that totally uninhabited area and that we had to ask the Monuments and Fine Arts Department.

The person in charge of this Department told us there weren't any funds for that construction, which was considered as lacking any artistic interest.

We then decided to contract the work ourselves because it wasn't right to leave the house of God in those conditions and, equipped with wheelbarrows and picks, we started the restoration.

It was the summer job of 1984: the master builder was Giovanni Antonucci, the labourers were Father Andrea D'Ascanio and the group of children with their parents. Everybody worked, from the oldest to the youngest, with their best efforts and, at the end of a day's work, prayer gave meaning to every effort. Very precious assistance was given by the brothers Vincenzo and Massimo Pulsoni from Camarda; the contribution made by Edmondo and Livio Ruggeri from Rome was decisive for the reconstruction of the roof. When the church was re-consecrated on 24 October 1984, on its background we placed a big oval



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portraying the Father who welcomes the Son after His victorious earthly life. We brought to this church all those who came to visit us in Aquila: one of the main goals of the Armata Bianca is to make known to children and adults the true Face of God, the Father of tenderness and mercy.

Our intention was to consecrate a place to the Father where He could encounter His children in the beautiful setting of the massif of the Abruzzi.



At the end of the restoration the church was handed over. On 20 July 1995 Dr. Giulio Di Nardo, as secretary of the Movement, wrote the following letter to Msgr. Peressin:

*Your Excellency,*

*We ask you to renew our permission to use the church of San Pietro della Genca, which was restored in due time by our association "Armata Bianca", for another five years.*

*We will take care of completing the work of restoration of the small rectory.*

*May you bless us.*

*Giulio Di Nardo*

*On behalf of the Armata Bianca*

On 24 July 1995, Msgr. Peressin wrote at the bottom of the letter: "The Archbishop agrees" and the Vicar, Father Demetrio Gianfrancesco, added, "The pastor of Camarda, whom I talked to on the phone on the evening of 24 July, agrees".

Therefore, we continued the restoration of the small rectory, which was then completed by the Monuments and Fine Arts Department, following our pressure.

**John Paul II and the Little Church of San Pietro della Genca**

Knowing the love that His Holiness John Paul II had for the mountains of the Gran Sasso and for children, we sent him – through Card. Andrea Deskur, who always kept him informed of the initiatives of the Armata Bianca – a formal invitation to visit this church during one of his excursions to the Gran Sasso.



In the invitation we enclosed a photo album and the key to the little church. We wanted him to be welcomed by

many children, just as when he came to Aquila in August of 1980 and like the audience at the Sala Nervi on 27 May 1989. Here is a copy of the invitation:

*ARMATA BIANCA*

*Aquila, 23 September 1996*

*Dear Father,*

*We are sending you an album with the photos of the work we have done to restore a church at the foot of the Gran Sasso, where you come once in a while. It is called San Pietro, just like where you live, and it is the spiritual heart of the Armata Bianca.*

*This little church was reduced to ruins, and it became a stable where shepherds kept their animals. The interior was all covered in awful writings and it was blackened by smoke because the shepherds used to light a fire to cook roasts. However, the statue of St. Peter was left because, since it was made of concrete and was very heavy, nobody had taken it.*



*We went to that area in the summer of 1984 to make an excursion and we were so sorry to see in what*

*conditions the church was reduced. We children promised to work the whole summer and the following day, with Father Andrea as our leader, we started with a shovel and an old wheelbarrow. Then our parents came, and the Church started to take on a new aspect.*

*Every day we recited the Rosary and we offered our work so that from the ruins of the old Church a new and more marvelous one would emerge, which would mark the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary: not only for the renewal of a little Church in the mountains, but of the whole holy Church of God.*

*Some of us met you when you came to Aquila on 30 August 1980. On that occasion, together with more than 4,000 children gathered in the stadium, we awaited you by reciting the entire Rosary so that in Poland there would be an agreement between the Government and Solidarnosc: for your coming we wanted to give you the gift of Peace in your land. Our Lady heard us: the agreement, after several months of fighting, was signed that very afternoon.*

*Then 400 of us from Aquila came to visit you in Rome. We returned to the Sala Nervi in 1989, this time we numbered 10,000, from many parts of Italy.*

*Our beloved Father, you are always among "grown-ups", in your "big" St. Peter's. Why don't you come to pray and play with us "little ones" in our "little" St. Peter's?*

*We children of the Armata Bianca – today there are so many of us in the world – recite the Rosary for you every day and we offer our lives for you, "ready to accept everything the Lord wishes to send us" so that you may win the great battle of Mary.*

*Will you come? We look forward to your coming with so much love and we are sending you the key.*

*Bless us always and embrace us with all your Love.*

*The children of the Armata Bianca of yesterday and today*

Upon agreement by telephone a Monsignor came on the spot to examine the situation and celebrate Holy Mass; he told us that His Holiness accepted the invitation and that he would come to see "the little St. Peter's church of Aquila" but that he didn't want any publicity for what would be a strictly private visit. We respected His wishes.

However, when the news of his visit got out, there was a lot of hype and – as often happens – political and parochial representatives of the small community of Camarda remembered the church of St. Peter until then forgotten and reduced to a stable and claimed responsibility for its reconstruction and the right to its exclusive management.

Perhaps it was in the name of that "right" that the locks were arbitrarily changed and suddenly from the church disappeared the images of the Trinity and St. Michael and the memorial stone which recalled the restoration work done by the Armata Bianca. On 7 May 1997 a report was made to the police for this desecration, however there followed only silence and the laying of a "commemorative stone" of the restoration work done by the citizens of Camarda and the Monuments and Fine Arts Department, completely forgetting the work of the Armata Bianca.



Once again, nothing new under the sun....

The story continues....

18 May 2005, the "Wojtyla Path" was officially inaugurated, a mule track which from the church of San Pietro della Genca (1166 m asl.) climbs up to the rocky tower which local alpinists called the "Gendarme," along the crest which connects the peak of Malecoste with Cefalone Peak. The peak was renamed "John Paul II Peak" (2424m), the name of another "rock", the one of the Vicar of Christ who led the world to "turn his eyes to the heavens, toward the summit of grace and glory".

At the top there is an iron cross with the image of Pope Wojtyla, in the middle, and on the arms those of the four



patron saints of the city of Aquila: St. Massimo, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Equizio and St. Peter the hermit, better known as Pope Celestine V.

We are happy that other initiatives have followed ours, but we wonder why the image of the Father was torn up, since it gave the little church of St. Peter a prophetic dimension: it was the first church in the world dedicated to God the Father. □

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Editor's Note: In Canjulao, Lapu-Lapu City, Phillippines is a Chapel dedicated to the Eternal Father on May 6, 2012 by the Descendants of Serapio and Cresencia Berdin. The Community in Canjulao begins the Holy Octave of Consecration to God Our Father on July 29, celebrating its solemn eighth day on August 5, with a feast for the Father of All Mankind.

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## Abba! Father!

*Continued from Page 8*

relationship he has with the Father: "All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal him" (10:22). One of the most powerful signs of Jesus' relationship with his Father came at his baptism in the Jordan River and at his transfiguration on Mount Tabor. On both occasions, the Father himself announces Jesus to be his beloved Son, the chosen one (Matthew 3:17; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35).

The Gospels were written in Greek, though Jesus had spoken in Aramaic and Hebrew. We do not know how often the word underlying the Greek word for "father," *patêr*, was not just the Hebrew word *Av*, "father," but the very special Aramaic title, *Abba* or "Papá." We do know that Mark 14:36 goes out of its way to give us the Aramaic of Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." By using this very special word in a setting in which he surrendered so completely to God's will, Jesus revealed how intimate he was with his Father. Later, by taking up this new and daring way of addressing God in Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6, St. Paul revealed the level of intimacy with God that we all can experience through divine grace.

The transcendent greatness of Jesus is probably given its greatest expression in the Gospel of John. Not only does

Jesus repeat Yahweh's "I Am" of Exodus 3:14 in John 8:58 (and earlier in John 8:24,27), but he also answers a group of Jews who want to know who he really is by saying, "The Father and I are one" (10:30). No wonder John begins his Gospel by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (1:1). In like manner Thomas, after being asked by the risen Lord to put his finger in the marks of the nails and of the lance, humbly says to Jesus, "my Lord and my God" (20:28).

**That We May Be One.** Clearly, Jesus is the divine Son of his heavenly Father. He is the Son of a God who has revealed himself throughout Scripture as our Father, the one who takes the place of an orphan's dad, who leads his "firstborn" Israel out of bondage in Egypt and later rescues his "sons and daughters" from exile in Babylon.

It is as a good Father that God allows Israel to be chastised and disciplined when necessary, but he also "has compassion on his children," on all those who love him with reverential fear. If the Old Testament emphasizes his closeness to the people -- "What other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us whenever we call to him?" (Deuteronomy 4:7) -- how much more does the New! As Father, God runs to meet us as we turn to him in repentance. He has lovingly counted all the hairs on our head, and he knows what we need before we ask. By sending his eternal Son to carry out the work of revelation and salvation, God promises, as Jesus prays, "that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me" (John 17:22-23).

For all these reasons and more, we can indeed pray with Jesus: "Our Father, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." □



## 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](http://www.rosaryoftheunborn.com)] to make reparation for the crime of abortion.
- Think of ways to make reparation to Mary for the sins committed against Jesus and Mary. A very good one is to join the **First Saturday devotion**; another is the **2000 Hail Mary devotion**.
- In the month of August we celebrate two martyrs of Auschwitz, St. Maximilian Kolbe and St. Teresa

Benedicta. We need to pray, hard and often that our world does not return to the inhumanity to man. The acceptance of euthanasia and abortion, stem cell research, IVF, are the first steps to deciding who can live or who can die. Offer a Mass, say a rosary, offer sacrifices, etc. to end abortion and other sins against mankind. Read about Auschwitz and ponder the modern gas chambers in every state of our Union and resolve to do all that you can to end the killing.

- 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 re-creation, through Your Healing Hands, kept us enclosed and revived in our hope for renewed lives as we look up to the heavens praising You, in Jesus' most Holy Name, through the intercession of Mary, our Blessed Mother, and of the angels and saints.

*Maria Lourdes Zamora and family thank God for his divine mercy and you for your prayers. She was diagnosed with cancer of the uterus, stage 4 and her last examination showed she is now cancer free. Hallelujah!!!*

*Catherine Fernando is now healed from skin tumor, which was not cancerous!*

*Joanna Pollard's last check-up showed cancer-free results!*

*Robert Pua is on road to recovery from hip replacement surgery!*

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 August 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

Lucien & Mila Lumba

#### Los Angeles, California

Marlen Cardona | Carmi Caro |  
Key Ebarle | Clara Velasquez-Negoescu  
Alice Ng | Susan Villamil

#### Sacramento, California

Lorenzo & Imelda Durana

# 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. | 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday Devotional Prayers follow.

#### Devotion to God the Father

Every 1st Sunday of the Month

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

#### 2000 Hail Mary Devotion – August 18, 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

at The Cenacle House in The Enclave, 8455 West Sahara Avenue #172, Las Vegas, NV 89117 at 1:00 PM.  
Cenacle follows. Please call Evelyn at (702)274-4315 for entry to The Enclave or for more information.

#### Devotion to God the Father

Every 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month at 2:00-3:30 P.M.

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

#### 2000 Hail Mary Devotion – August 18, 2012

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

### In Laughlin, Nevada:

#### 1st Saturday Devotion

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church | 3055 El Mirage Way  
Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Chaplet of the Divine Mercy at 7:30 A.M.  
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 or for more information.*

#### Sacramento – August 11, 2012

*For dates and venues for the coming months or for more information,  
please call Precy Rieta (916) 564-3733 | Caring Sturgill (916) 897-3194 | Maria Rosario (916) 230-7756.*

### In San Diego

#### Rosary to the Father

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

### In the Philippines

#### 2000 Hail Mary Devotion - Metro Manila Area

Letty Rollan has organized the 2000 Hail Mary Devotion in various areas of Metro Manila through the members of the "Mother Butler." Please text Mobile @ **(011 +63 +2)** 916- 384-9300 and/or | Landline 939-4677 to find the venue closest to you.



## ***Feast Day of God the Father***

*August 5, 2012*

*The Monastery of the Angels*

*1977 Carmen Avenue on Gower | Los Angeles, CA  
starting at 11:15 A.M.*

*St. Bridget Catholic Church*

*220 N. 14th Street, Las Vegas, NV*

*The celebration starts at 11:00 A.M. followed  
by the Liturgy of the Mass at 11:30 A.M.*

***The Holy Octave of Consecration  
to God Our Father started on Sunday, July 29.***