



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

October 2013

## In this Issue

The Apostolate of the Holy Rosary	1
Overview for the Month	
Feasts for October	
Our Cenacle Corner	2
Highlight of the Month	3
Knowing Our Saints	5
God Touched Me	6
Meditation and Commentary	7
Spiritual Enrichment Recommended	
Thank You	11
Spiritual Army News Dispatch	12
Devotion Schedule	
The Key to Understanding Pope Francis: the 99 Lost Sheep	

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

## THE APOSTOLATE OF THE HOLY ROSARY

*By Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.*

What do we mean by the apostolate? The apostolate is the work of an apostle, not only of the first followers of Christ but of all the faithful who carry on the original mission entrusted by the Savior to "make disciples of all nations." A good description of the apostolate is to be a channel of grace to others.

So we ask, "How is the Rosary a channel of grace?" By now we have the testimony of at least forty Popes who over the centuries have recommended, even urged, the people to propagate the recitation of the Rosary as a powerful channel of grace to the world. Our Baptism and Confirmation give us both the right and the duty to engage in what we are calling the apostolate of the Rosary.

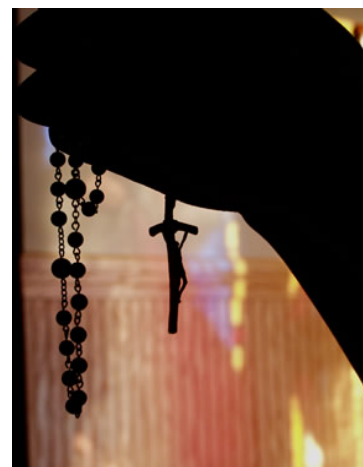
**Conversion of Sinners.** Ours is an age of massive apostasy. Whole nations once Christian have abandoned, not only their union with the Vicar of Christ but their faith in Christ as the Incarnate God. In fact, not a few have abandoned even their faith in a personal God. Thus the underlying theme of Pope John Paul's encyclical "Splendor of the Truth" is a plea to return in humble obedience and acknowledge our dependence on the Lord. Entire nations have lapsed into secularism, godless individualism, and practical atheism.

Only a flood of miraculous graces can restore Christianity and, within Christianity sound Catholicism. How are these miracles of moral conversion to be performed? How to obtain the graces that millions need to return to God? The verdict of history is, through the Rosary of the Mother of God.

Among the Bishops of Rome, Pope Benedict XV is outstanding for advocating the apostolate of the Rosary. He says that, "The Rosary is the perfect prayer." It recognizes Mary as the Mother of God who wants nothing more than for those who have strayed from her Son to return to His embrace. The Rosary invokes Mary as the Mediatrix of all graces, including the graces of conversion.

It was not coincidental that when Our Lady appeared to Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes, she was fingering the beads of the Rosary and invited Bernadette to join her. The year was 1858, when France and other countries of Western Europe had become victims of the anti-Christian virus of the French Revolution.

It is also not coincidental that the Basilica at Lourdes is dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. The countless miracles of healing that have taken place at Lourdes in the past century and a half are only external witnesses to the deeper wonders of spiritual healing through the recitation of Mary's Rosary.



*Continued on Page 4*

# OVERVIEW FOR THE MONTH

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

The month of October is dedicated to the Holy Rosary. The Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary is celebrated on October 7. October falls during the liturgical season known as Ordinary Time, which is represented by the liturgical color green.

The celebrations of the Church for the month of October are wonderful and unique. The feasts of some of the most popular saints of the universal Church are celebrated during this month: St. Therese the Little Flower (France), St. Francis of Assisi (Italy) and St. Teresa of Avila (Spain). Read more about the lives of these saints. Perhaps the family can pick one virtue that each saint practiced well and try to implement it.

The feasts in October also include two of the most popular, time-honored devotions of Catholics, the devotion to the Holy Rosary (October 7) and the Guardian Angels (October 2). In October 2002 our Holy Father John Paul II wrote the Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (the Rosary of the Virgin

Mary)." This letter introduced the five Luminous or Mysteries of Light. Try to make a more concerted effort to pray the Rosary together as a family during the month of October. Also, October 16 is known as "Pope Day" on which we celebrate the gift of the papacy and our current pope.

Every person has a guardian angel assigned to them, and October 2 the Church celebrates the role of these Guardian Angels. We should show devout gratitude to God for placing these angels at our service. Having a guardian should give us confidence during all of life's difficulties. Every Catholic should know the *Angele Dei* (Angel of God) prayer and pray it often. The Directory on Popular Piety suggests that families pray it at morning and evening prayers or after the Angelus. □

## FEASTS FOR OCTOBER

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

- 1 Therese of the Child Jesus, Memorial
- 2 Guardian Angels, Memorial
- 4 Francis of Assisi, Memorial
- 5 Faustina Kowalska, virgin, Opt. Mem.
- 7 Our Lady of the Rosary, Memorial
- 14 Callistus I, Opt. Mem.
- 15 Teresa of Jesus, Memorial
- 16 Hedwig; Margaret Mary Alacoque, Opt. Mem.
- 17 Ignatius of Antioch, Memorial
- 18 Luke, Feast
- 19 Isaac Jogues, John de Brébeuf and companions (USA), Memorial
- 23 John of Capistrano, Opt. Mem.
- 24 Anthony Claret, Opt. Mem.
- 28 Simon and Jude, Feast

The feasts of St. Bruno (October 6) and St. Paul of the Cross (October 20) are superseded by the Sunday liturgy. □

## OUR CENACLE CORNER

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

### IMPEDIMENTS TO ANSWERED PRAYERS

#### DOUBT AND UNBELIEF

JAMES 1:6-8

### SIN AND UNFORGIVING

MATTHEW 15:10-20  
EPHESIANS 5:26-29; 31-32

# HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

## OUR GUARDIAN ANGELS – HOW WE SHOULD REQUIRE THEIR LOVE

by Father Raphael V O'Connell, SJ

A Chapter from **Holy Angels** - in which Fr. Raphael records and discusses all that we know about angels from the scriptures and the traditions of the Church.

Our guardian angel is our best and oldest friend. He has been with us from our birth, and will abide with us till the end. In all the ups and downs of our life, he has never once departed from our side. Even our coldness towards him, our utter forgetfulness of him, our rank ingratitude, have not been able to drive him from us. Our sins themselves, however heinous, have not silenced his voice of admonition and warning. They have only served to move him to pray more urgently for us, to chide and rebuke us, and to endeavor to rouse within us sentiments of bitter remorse, in order to bring us back once more to the narrow path.

We may choose for ourselves this one or that one among the saints, to be our specially beloved patron, but God himself has picked for us our guardian angel, and has given to him a very particular affection for us, and a very deep solicitude for our best welfare.

*Behold, I will send my angel, who shall go before thee, and keep thee in thy journey, and bring thee into the place that I have prepared. Take notice of him, and hear his voice, and do not think him one to be condemned; for he will not forgive when thou hast sinned, and my name is in him. But if thou wilt hear his voice, and do all that I speak, I will be an enemy to thy enemies, and will afflict them that afflict thee. (Exodus 23:20-22)*

These words were spoken by the Lord to his chosen people when they were on their way to the Promised Land. But we know that everything that befell them was symbolic of God's dealings with his Christian people, and the Church herself applies these words to our guardian angels.

Here, then, we have clearly pointed out to us our duty towards our guardian angel. God wants us above all things to be docile to his voice, and not to imagine that we can disregard it with impunity. We owe him, doubtless, love and respect and gratitude, but we show these best by our fidelity in following at all times his guidance. His voice may be still and small to those who open wide their ears to the promptings of the passions, and of a worldly spirit, but by one who listens it can be

distinctly heard above all inward strife, and the din and tumult from without.

Saint Bernard, commenting on the words of Psalm 90 – already quoted, “He hath given his angels charge over thee, that they keep thee in all they ways,” – lays down three duties that we owe to our guardian angels. The first is reverence, which the mere presence of so exalted a being demands of us. If we had an abiding sentiment of reverence for him, we should never permit ourselves to do in his presence that we should fear to do before the eyes of a man whom we respected.

The second duty is one of devotion, in return for all his affectionate love for us. We cannot doubt its depth and sincerity. It is enough for him that God has made us in His own image, that He has so loved us as to give His only begotten Son for us, that He has confided us to the keeping of the angels, as younger brethren of and future co-heirs with these holy spirits, in the heavenly kingdom.

The third duty is that of unbounded confidence in his watchful guardianship and protection. No real harm can come to us if we trust in him. He is ever on the alert; the demons can never take him by surprise. He is endowed with heavenly wisdom and will surely direct us aright amid the deceits and snares of the evil one. He has undoubted might

to repel even the fiercest assaults of our enemies if we but recommend ourselves to him. We may go forward fearlessly under his protection, but we ought to strive to render ourselves deserving of it by frequently appealing to him in our various needs.

There is yet another duty which we owe to the guardian angels in general. It is one of reverence for those over whom they watch, how little so ever and insignificant they may otherwise appear to be. Our Divine Lord makes the dignity which comes to the little ones from the tutelage of their guardian angels, a very pressing motive for respecting them and avoiding that might prove a scandal or a stumbling block to them. And Saint Hilary, apropos of



Our Lord's warning on this head, has the following eloquent passage,

*He has imposed the appropriate bond of mutual love, for those especially who have truly believed in the Lord. For the angels of the little ones daily see God; because the Son of man has come to save what was lost. Hence, the Son of man saves, and the angels see God, and the angels of the little ones preside over the prayers of the faithful.*

That the angels preside, we have on unquestionable authority. The angels then daily present to God the prayers of those who are saved through Christ. Hence it is a dangerous thing to despise one whose desires and petitions are borne to the eternal and invisible God through the dazzling ministry of waiting angels.

But if regard for their blessed guardians forbids us to show contempt for the little ones, surely our interest in their spiritual and physical welfare, whether proceeding from general motives or from some particular relationship which binds us to them, may well prompt us to pray often for them to their guardian angels, and to recommend them earnestly to those powerful protectors whom God himself has charged to watch over them and to keep them in all their ways. Parents and teachers who adopted this practice would doubtless quickly see the effect of their prayers in the greater docility of the children, and their more rapid progress in knowledge and in virtue.

For ourselves, too, devotion to our guardian angels cannot fail to be the source of many heavenly favors, but it should especially insure to us the possession of three precious gifts which are strikingly characteristic of the holy angels. The first is that of walking constantly in the presence of God. Never for a moment are they distracted from it. They are not allured by the pleasures of the world, they are not disturbed by the din and tumult of human passions. Their gaze is ever riveted on the face of their Creator, and their mind is absorbed in the contemplation of His unspeakable beauty.

The second treasure which this devotion should secure us is a true spirit of obedience. The angels are ever ready at God's beck, and the accomplishment of His will is their greatest joy. They will gladly ask for us a like devotedness, and the habitual proposing to ourselves of their example will be a powerful incentive to us to endeavor to imitate them.

Lastly, the pearl of the virtues, holy purity, will be safe under their protection. It is called the angelic virtue, and the angels are eager to see us become by its practice most like unto themselves. The struggle is a hard one – in some cases it is fierce and unremitting – but by the grace of God and the assistance of our good angel, whom we should lovingly invoke while the combat lasts, the victory will be ours, and what a glorious victory it will be! To have overcome in our frail flesh and in spite of the treachery of the flesh, which is arrayed with the demons against us, all the wiles and malice of our wicked foe, and to have kept intact amid the most violent assaults the

priceless heritage which we carry in vessels of clay – that, to be sure, is a triumph to which we may holily and wholesomely aspire, and for which we shall remain forever indebted to the encouragement and support given to us in the conflict by our ever-loving, ever-faithful guardian angel. □

---

*Continued from Page 1*

## **THE APOSTOLATE OF THE HOLY ROSARY**

The same is true of Our Lady's message at Fátima. During her apparitions to the three peasant children, she told them to tell the faithful to do penance and pray the Rosary. Otherwise the world would be chastised for its sins. She also told the children that when we recite the Rosary, we should add between the decades what has now become a standard practice in the Catholic Church. We are to pray, "O my Jesus, forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of hell, and bring all souls to heaven, especially those who most need Your Mercy."

The same is true of Our Lady's message at Fátima. During her apparitions to the three peasant children, she told them to tell the faithful to do penance and pray the Rosary. Otherwise the world would be chastised for its sins. She also told the children that when we recite the Rosary, we should add between the decades what has now become a standard practice in the Catholic Church. We are to pray, "O my Jesus, forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of hell, and bring all souls to heaven, especially those who most need Your Mercy."

**Sanctification of Believers.** The apostolate of the Rosary is also directed to the sanctification of the mass of believing Christians.

If there is one truth of faith taught by the Second Vatican Council it is the fact that we are called not only to salvation, by escaping hell, but to sanctification by our imitation of Jesus Christ.

The Rosary, we are told by the Church is an extraordinary means of changing tepid Christians into ardent followers of Christ. Why? Because the foundation of holiness is the practice of mental prayer, and the foundation of mental prayer is meditation on the truths of our faith.

The fifteen mysteries of the Rosary are the cardinal mysteries of Christianity. Prayerful reflection on these mysteries is at once a deepening of the faith and a profession of the faith. There is no more effective practice in the Catholic Church for achieving this deepening and profession of the Christian faith than the frequent recitation of the Rosary.

If we ask how the Rosary is such a potent conduit of sanctity, the answer is that the three sets of mysteries of the Rosary are the expression of our three greatest needs.

*Continued on Page 8*

# KNOWING OUR SAINTS

ST. ANTHONY MARY CLARET (1807-1870)

FEAST DAY: OCTOBER 24

## HISTORIC-LITURGICAL NOTE

The founder of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Anthony Mary Claret died in the Cistercian monastery at Fontfroide in France on October 1870. He was canonized in 1950 and listed in the Roman Calendar in 1960. Anthony was born at Salent in the Diocese of Vich in Catalonia, Spain, in the year in which Napoleon invaded Spain. He was trained for manual labor, since his father was a weaver, but in 1829 he entered the seminary at Vich. Ordained to the priesthood in 1835, he was assigned as pastor in his home parish. Later he went to Rome to work for the Propagation of the Faith. He also entered the novitiate of the Jesuits but had to leave because of ill health, so he returned to Spain and was assigned as pastor of a parish. His apostolate consisted of rural preaching, conferences for the clergy and publications (he wrote more than 150 books). Because of his successful apostolate he aroused the animosity of some of the clergy and as a result he left Catalonia for the Canary Islands (1848). After a year he returned to Catalonia and resumed his preaching apostolate.

In 1849 Anthony gathered together five priests who formed the basis of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (popularly known as Claretians). At the suggestion of the Queen of Spain, Isabella II, Anthony was named archbishop of Santiago, Cuba (1850). For the next seven years he made pastoral visitations, preached against the slavery of the Negroes, and regularized numerous marriages. As a result of his activity he was frequently threatened with death and on one occasion an attempt was actually made on his life. In 1857 he was recalled to Spain as confessor to the queen. In this way he was able to exert some influence in the naming of bishops, set up a center of ecclesiastical studies at the Escorial, and work towards the recognition of religious orders in Spain. In 1869 he was in Rome, preparing for the First Vatican Council. He followed Isabella II into exile and at the insistence of the Spanish ambassador, was placed under house arrest in the Cistercian monastery at FontFroide, where he died at the age of 63. His remains were ultimately returned to Vich.

## MESSAGE AND RELEVANCE

In the new Opening Prayer of the Mass for this nineteenth-century apostle we pray: "Father, you endowed Anthony Claret with the strength of love and patience to preach the gospel to many nations." From his earliest years in the priesthood Anthony had a zealous missionary spirit that took him to Rome, the Canary

Islands, and eventually to Cuba. Not only did he serve as rector of the seminary at the Escorial in Madrid, but he promoted Catholic publications and founded an academy of St. Michael for artists and literary persons. In Cuba he worked for the general uplifting of the population but did not succeed in founding a school of agriculture, as he had wished. He did, however, establish the Apostolic Institute of Mary Immaculate.

The patience of St. Anthony Claret was tested in the political upheavals of the nineteenth century, both in his native Spain and in Cuba. His efforts at reform stirred up a great deal of hostility. Therefore, we ask in the Opening Prayer that we may "work generously for God's kingdom and gain our



brothers and sisters for Christ." In the Office of Readings, an excerpt from the writings of St. Anthony Mary Claret states: "The zealous man desires and achieves all great things and he labors strenuously so that God may always be better known, loved and served in this world and in the life to come, for this holy love is without end."

This great apostle, whose major work, "The Right Way", reached millions of people, promoted fidelity to the gospel among all classes of people, and especially among the laity and religious. In this way he anticipated the teaching of the Second Vatican Council concerning the vocation of all the faithful to the perfection of charity.

(Taken from "Saints of the Roman Calendar" by Enzo Lodi. Published by Alba House, Society of St. Paul, 2187 Victory Blvd., Staten Island, NY 10314.)

# GOD TOUCHED ME

## CLINGING TO THE LORD ALONE

*By: Georgia Cua*

*I know how to be humbled, and I know how to abound. I am prepared for anything, anywhere: either to be full or to be hungry, either to have abundance or to endure scarcity. Everything is possible in Him who has strengthened me.*

*Philippians 4:12-13*

Our family had always dreamed of having our own house. We whiled away many an hour talking about "when we'd have a house". My husband wanted a little garden. The kids wanted a dog and their own rooms. I wanted my own desk and a guest room so that our parents would feel comfortable spending long periods of time with us. At the time, I was very much into yoga and was in a New-Age phase of my life. In those days, I addressed my prayers to "the Universe". I had read Rhonda Byrne's "The Secret" and how one could place orders with the Universe for the desires of one's heart. The house was the burning desire of my heart. My journals were filled with sketches of this dream house. I cut pictures from home magazines and catalogues of furniture and home accessories and filed them away in a special folder. The house would be spacious, with lots of light, enough room for everyone. It would have train connections to the city for my husband to get to work and good schools for the kids. It would not be anywhere near a nuclear power plant! We searched Canton Zürich high and low for this house. We spent most weekends driving around with three cranky kids in the car visiting properties. We had studied our finances, and knew that even with the generous help offered by our parents, we needed two incomes to afford a house. At the time, I was already very unhappy in my job. I was depressed and often unwell. However, I stayed with the job because I felt that, as long as I was working, I was keeping the dream of the house alive. When I finally quit my job a little more than a year ago, I thought I was also giving up on this dream of having a house.

By chance, my mom had put me in contact with the Son Helper. The first time I spoke to him on the phone, he advised me to listen to my heart. Incidentally, for the previous two years, my heart had been telling me (literally) to quit my job. Listening to my heart and quitting my job to spend more time with the children marked the start of a slow but steady rekindling of my Catholic beliefs. To entice me out of my depression, i.e., the carrot on the stick I used to get myself up every morning, I had been taking courses to train as an Anusara yoga teacher. I loved yoga and the people I met through yoga. However, I had never really "connected" to Ganesh or Shiva or any of the deities from the Hindu cosmology

that went along with yoga philosophy. In the end, I think that the world different religions are like windows into the same house. It is the same One True God, but different people call Him by different names. I went through my New-Age stage where I tried calling Him by other names, but eventually realized that the names for Him that resonated most with me were the names prayed by my parents and grandparents and great-grandparents. So I packed away my trendy New Age coat and settled back into my Catholic roots. Instead of addressing the Universe, I started praying once more to God the Father, to Jesus Christ, to the Holy Spirit, to the Blessed Virgin. After years of going to Church only on Christmas and Easter (and whenever my mom was visiting), I started going to Mass every Sunday and on weekday mornings. My dad, who had suffered from depression all his life, worried about me quitting my job. He knew (as I did) that staying home would possibly make me vulnerable to more depression. Indeed, there were some difficult times, particularly in the first few weeks. My brain was used to racing at 200 km/hour, and this was not compatible with hanging out the laundry. However, eventually, I learned to breathe and slow down. For the last few years, I had always had this feeling that someone was chasing me. In the following weeks, this feeling melted away, and I felt calmer. Hanging the washing became a meditation, a prayer. I still occasionally got mad at the kids, but significantly less than before. I listened to a lot of Joel Osteen podcasts.

Our eldest daughter was in the first grade and was starting to attend catechism classes. I volunteered to teach her group. It was perhaps a strange thing to volunteer to do, since I had to teach in German, which I didn't speak very well. To the post-it note from my New Age phase on my desk where I had written the words "yes I can", I added the words "do all things in Christ who strengthens me". I started a blog about the catechism class. Teaching the catechism classes improved my German. Working with the parish made me feel like part of a big family. For the first time since we had moved to Switzerland, I felt I belonged.

*Continued on Page 9*

# MEDITATION AND COMMENTARY

## WHAT THE HOLY ROSARY MEANS FOR ME

By Father Charles M. Mangan  
[www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org)

October is almost finished for another year. But the devout recitation of that which the Church particularly recalls this month, the spiritual exercise we call the Rosary, is far from over.



As a priest, I have been asked dozens of questions about the Holy Rosary, perhaps the two most frequent being: How do I pray the Rosary? Why is it important?

During these days of October, I ask myself: What does the Holy Rosary mean for me?

Thanks to my parents and teachers, I know how to pray the Rosary. I hope that

I comprehend its timeless value.

But what does the Holy Rosary mean for me? This inquiry requires additional pondering.

After some head scratching, I came up with three responses out of a possible multitude, each of which cites a privileged opportunity.

First, the Holy Rosary is for me an opportunity to adore the Most Blessed Trinity, thereby drawing closer to God and making progress along the challenging path to Paradise. Almost two thousand years ago, Jesus invited His Apostles to pray. Above all, praying is the offering of fitting worship and praise to our Creator. Had the Lord never demonstrated His amazing love and abiding compassion for us after the Fall of Adam and Eve, it still would be right and absolutely necessary for us to pray as an expression of laud for our Maker.

The Rosary helps me to adore my Beloved Father in Heaven Who constantly extends His unfathomable mercy

towards me, my Savior and Brother Jesus Christ Who lives in Sacred Scripture and the Church's Apostolic Tradition and is present in a most unique way, as the Prayer after the Divine Praises during Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament puts it, in every Tabernacle throughout the world, even until the end of time, and my Counselor the Holy Spirit Who inspires me to embrace good fully and avoid evil.

Second, the Holy Rosary is for me an opportunity to answer the urgent summons of Our Lady of Fatima. Six times during 1917, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary appeared to Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco in Fatima, Portugal, encouraging them to pray the Rosary daily for the end of the War (World War I). Although that War has concluded, there are plenty of others that seek our attention and elicit our earnest prayers. And, of course, our prayer list filled with diverse needs never ends. Our Blessed Mother uses my humble prayers to work much benefit throughout the universe. The Mother of God knows better than any other human person that prayer is indispensable.

The Rosary helps me to reply affirmatively to Mary's request to pray her Rosary for all the intentions lodged deep in the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Pure Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Third, the Holy Rosary is for me an opportunity to unite myself to all the holy men and women, boys and girls who are reciting (and who have recited) this prayer that Pope John Paul II hails as his favorite. Imagine the Poor Souls in Purgatory (The Church Suffering) who prayed the Rosary. Now they look to us to assist them in their plight as they continue onward to the Everlasting Kingdom. Imagine the Saints in Heaven (The Church Triumphant) who recited the Rosary. With the abundant grace of God, they have achieved their goal of perfect union with Jesus in Paradise. Now they attentively await our arrival. Imagine the Faithful here on earth (The Church Militant) who presently pray the Rosary. They are convinced of the intercessory power of Our Blessed Lady and recognize her God-given ability to change hearts and minds. □

## THE APOSTOLATE OF THE HOLY ROSARY

We need to grow in gratitude for all the blessings the Lord has given us through the Incarnation of His Divine Son. The Joyful Mysteries provide us with the grounds for our deepest gratitude to the loving God.

We need to grow in patience to accept the trials and sufferings, which the Lord sends us in this valley of tears. The Sorrowful Mysteries give us the strongest motivation in the world for patiently enduring pain. God became man so that He might endure pain out of love for us. Should we not be willing to suffer out of love for Him?

We need hope as we see one creature after another disappointing us here on earth. The Glorious Mysteries are the horizon on which we can meditate and strengthen our hope of rising from the dead, of joining Our Lord and His Mother, in body and soul, in that heavenly kingdom for which we were made.

All of this, and infinitely more, are locked up in the promise of Divine blessings through the prayerful recitation of the Rosary.

**One final word.** All that I have said was not only an exhortation to say the Rosary. Absolutely not! I am pleading with you to become apostles of the Rosary. Promote the Rosary. Urge the Rosary. Teach the Rosary. Shall I say, advertise the Rosary. It is through the Rosary that we can bring countless souls back to Christ from whom they have strayed. It is through the Rosary that we can make them lovers of Christ through the mediation of His Mother, the Mother of Miracles since the marriage feast at Cana even to the dawn of eternity. □

The above article is from a conference originally entitled, "The Rosary: A Prayer for All Times", to which Fr. Hardon added a subtitle, so that the full title will read: "The Rosary: A Prayer for All Times - The Indispensable Prayer for Our Times." It was written before His Holiness, John Paul II, issued the Apostolic Letter Rosarium Virginis Mariae that added five more mysteries (the Luminous Mysteries) to the Rosary.

... *I am your Mother Mary.*

*On this day of my 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday, the sacrifice you offer will not be your presence in this devotion dedicated to me, but the love and good deeds you extend to others after this day. The true meaning of this 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday that I have asked in Fatima is your good works for your brothers and sisters -- the true measurement of your relationship with God. This relationship you will feel as it becomes closer to God's throne. Always remember the life you have in this world is your actual offering before God's throne in the everlasting realm.*

*I am happy that you have given time to listen to this call my children.*

*I love you my children.*

*- Mary, your Lady of the Rosary  
090713*

*The white cloth that you offer before me is a mantle of protection and healing. The prayers you said, the faith you have and the outpouring belief that my white mantle will bring protection and healing to everyone.*

*My children as you come forward, dedicate not only yourself but those close to you especially those who left the Church, those unbelievers, those unborn and those who are neglected. Many souls are now in purgatory because of the sin of neglect. The lack of caring for oneself, for others and the gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the ones chosen. Neglect of responsibility, and neglect of children's needs. Neglect of setting a good example for everyone close to you. The mercy of God's heart lies on the very existence of the place you call purgatory.*

*I thank you for adhering to my call. I love you my children."*

*- Mary, your Lady of Rosary  
092113*



## **GOD TOUCHED ME**

We made a slight change in how we said our bedtime prayers. Previously, after we had prayed the health and intentions for all our family members, we would add at the end "Dear God, please let us have a house one day". Now we prayed, "Dear God, if it is Your Will and if it is good for us, please let us have a house one day. Your Will be done." Somehow, somewhere along the way, my heart's burning desire for the house was replaced by the desire to know God's Will so that I could follow it. It is not always easy to know God's Will though. So I often also prayed, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

In our parish, there is a beautiful Byzantine-style icon of the Blessed Mother and Child Jesus holding each other cheek to cheek. On June 2, 2013, during the First Communion Mass in our parish, I "felt" the icon, "asking" me to help spread the light and love of Christ by painting that picture. In my heart, I said "Yes, Mama Mary, but how?" Since it was the First Communion Mass, there were a lot of people taking photos. I took two photos of the icon with my phone. The next day, I made my first sketches. I found lots of websites and YouTube videos about painting icons. (Thank You, God, for the internet!) On Wikipedia, I found out that this particular type of icon is called the Eleusa Theotokos, or Virgin of Tenderness. The Theotokos of Vladimir in Russia, which is revered for having saved the city of Moscow from invasions in 1395, 1450, and 1481, is among the most famous examples of the Eleusa Theotokos. According to legend, it was among the icons originally painted by St. Luke, the patron saint of iconographers. Coincidentally, the feast day of the Theotokos of Vladimir icon in the Russian Orthodox church is June 3, the day I did the first sketches.

In the following days, if I did not spend some time working on the icon during the day, I would dream about it at night. After some days drawing the figures on to the canvas in pencil, I was ready to start painting. I bought a book on Amazon called "Techniques of Traditional Icon Painting". Painting an icon is done in different stages. At each new stage, I would be hesitant to start. What if I made a mistake that I could not undo? I would delay a day or two or three, but eventually I would go forward, always praying that my hands be guided.

All this time, we were still house hunting. On July 3, 2013 (one month after starting the icon), we visited a house that we fell in love with. It checked most items on our list. It was a bright and sunny house, well cared for by the family who was selling it. It had the right number of rooms and good public transport. There was a little garden. The St. Jakobsweg (the Camino de Santiago) in Switzerland was only a few kilometers away. However, it was significantly over our budget. Also, it was just a few days until we were leaving for Ireland for the summer holidays. Good properties don't stay long on the market in Switzerland. We did not expect it to work out.



While we were in Ireland, we received an e-mail from the realtor who had shown us the house. She had received several offers for the house. However, since we were the first family who had visited, she wanted to give us a chance to make an offer. After some intense discussions, my husband and I decided to make an offer for what we could afford on a single income, which was significantly less than the asking price. To our great surprise, the seller accepted our offer. They had already moved back to England. They asked us to take over the remaining furniture and were keen on finalizing the sale as soon as possible.

The following weeks were a whirlwind of activity. We had a property evaluator take a look at the house, who verified that there were no problems with it. We approached various banks about mortgages. The eight months of teaching catechism classes had improved my German enough such that we were able to transact almost everything in German without a problem. It also helped that the seller was an English family, which meant that the realtor provided us with English translations of all official documents at no extra cost to us. All the while, with the dream of the house right on my doorstep, I suffered from cold feet. Actually, I did not want to move anymore. I was finally happy where I was, in our town, with the kids in their schools with their friends, with our parish. I did not want to start all over again. I prayed for guidance.

Things came into perspective when, during a meeting with our bank manager, she said, "How fortunate you are to get a great price on a lovely house, with your mortgage at an excellent interest rate, and have it affordable on a single income with monthly payments a lot less than what you are currently paying for rent". It was when she summarized the situation in this way that I

recognized God's hand in it. Who else but God could make things come together so perfectly? The house was a blessing. God was answering our prayers. The appropriate response was not to be afraid, but rather to welcome this new phase in our lives with open arms and give Him thanks and praise.

From that point onwards, things moved fast. On September 12, the feast day of the Holy Name of Mary, we finalized the sale of the house. When we first walked into the house after the sale, I consecrated the house to God the Father and prayed that this move would bring us closer to Him. I decided that I wanted to finish painting the icon before we moved. I spent the days packing and would work on the icon when everyone was asleep at night. While I painted, I could not stop singing the refrain from one of the songs from Mass, "Bitt Gott für uns Maria!" (Pray to God for us, Mary. By pure coincidence, I finished the icon on September 22, which happened to be the feast day of St. Mauritius, who is the patron saint of our old parish. On September 25, I brought it with me to the Wednesday morning Mass to be blessed. After blessing the icon, our parish priest Don Remo asked me about our move. When we heard where we were moving to, he said, "Please tell Father Patrick that Don Remo from Regensdorf is sending his regards. Father Patrick is a good priest." We moved into the house on Friday, 27 September. I attended my first Mass in our new parish on Sunday, 29 September, the feast day of St. Michael the Archangel.

We are not yet one week in the new house. Each day, I wake up and give God thanks for His blessings, His

generosity, His goodness. I thank Him for this house, for the wonderful friends, memories, and experiences we had in our old town, for the new adventures He has planned out for us in the new one. I also thank Him for leading me to icon painting. I don't know if it will ever help pay the mortgage, but I love icon painting. (It is a good thing that the mortgage is affordable on a single income!) In thanksgiving, I decided that, once things have settled down, I will paint a large icon of God the Father. I have a little space in the attic that I am using as a prayer/icon painting room. Our new town is called Ottikon. And when you put G, my initial, and Ottikon together, you get Gottikon, or Gott Ikon (God icon in German). Another coincidence? All praise and thanksgiving to God Almighty Father! ☐

**Editor's Note:** The Theotokos of Vladimir icon above is the actual completed painting of the author. To access Georgia's blog, go to [www.spiritualarmyofgod.org](http://www.spiritualarmyofgod.org), then click on Links.

*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:*  
[evelyn.pua@spiritualarmyofgod.org](mailto:evelyn.pua@spiritualarmyofgod.org)  
[alice.a@spiritualarmyofgod.org](mailto:alice.a@spiritualarmyofgod.org)  
 (702) 274-4315 and/or (213) 385-7798



## WHAT DO WE BELIEVE IN AS CATHOLICS?

Would you like to learn more about the Catholic Faith and its teachings? May be you have been away from The Faith, or just have a longing to get answers to questions you have been toiling in your mind. You may be in doubt about some of the teachings you learned as a kid.

Many of us have grown up with the Catholic Faith, while others have arrived at a later time. Either way, as life continues to present new situations to us, we encounter both the strengths and the newer questions of faith – the "whys" began to occupy our thoughts, and sometimes doubts and lack of understanding present themselves as blockages of the heart.

To help enter fully into the Creed of our faith,

**Sister Judith  
 of St. Euphrasia Catholic Church in Granada Hills,  
 is introducing a weekly series  
 for eight consecutive Mondays  
 from October 14 to December 2, 2013,  
 from 7:00 to 8:30 PM.**

The weekly session topics are as follows:

10.14	"I Believe in . . ." <i>The what, how, and why of faith</i>
10.21	God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit <i>What has the Trinity to do with my life?</i>
10.28	Born of the Virgin Mary <i>Mary's role in Salvation History, in the life of the Church</i>
11.04	Incarnation, consubstantial with the Father . . . <i>What is the implication of the incarnation for our humanity?</i>
11.11	Suffered under Pontius Pilate, died . . . <i>The immediate and eternal effects of sin</i>
11.18	Heaven, hell, purgatory – life everlasting – communion of saints <i>Why do we believe, what do we believe?</i>
11.05	I believe in the Holy Spirit . . . <i>What IS the Church? Symbols, models and characteristics of Church</i>
12.02	Forgiveness of sins/resurrection to New Life <i>Forgiveness OK, but what about justice? What is the role of mercy in our lives? Who do we include in the "I believe in the resurrection of the dead"?</i>

## SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

- You are enjoined to practice Eucharistic Adoration at least an hour a week. Let us render God adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and petition. Kindly check with your respective parishes for schedules. Some churches are open 24-hours for Eucharistic Adoration.
- Pray at least one rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary daily.
- Pray the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy at 3:00 PM and at 9:00 PM daily.
- Pray the Angelus at 6:00 PM daily.
- Pray the Pro-Life Scriptural Rosary [[www.rosaryoftheunborn.com](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**.
- Think about how you can develop a greater devotion and depend on your guardian angel every day.
- Learn how to make rosaries, cord and/or wire for missions for this month.
- Read the Twelve Promises of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Strive to fulfill the obligation for the Nine First Fridays.
- Find out more about the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart, and establish this practice in your home. A book to read on this is *Enthronement of the Sacred Heart* by Francis Larkin.
- Pray for doctors and those who care for the sick through the intercession of St. Luke, patron of physicians.

## THANK YOU

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

*Psalm 106:2*

### FOR PRAYERS HEARD AND PETITIONS GRANTED



*God's gift of a beautiful baby to  
Grace P. despite complications during  
pregnancy!*



*Missing 11-year old Marco Vinicio,  
found safe in two days!*

### 2000 HAIL MARY DEVOTION

The Spiritual Army of God the Father acknowledges with thanks our generous September 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

Ines Carrington | Guada Eugenio

#### Los Angeles, California

Nona Alapag | Joey Cinco

Linda Fajardo | Florita Gajito

Glecy Rosario | Aida Terashima  
*Sponsors / Coordinators*

# SPIRITUAL ARMY NEWS DISPATCH

## OUR TRAVELING STO. NINO DEVOTION HELP US "BECOME LIKE LITTLE CHILDREN TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"

As had been the tradition with The Spiritual Army of God the Father (the "Army"), its miraculous statue of the Infant Jesus of Prague began home visits in early September of this year, launching the planning and preparation of activities for the annual Sto. Nino Fiesta on January 18, 2014 at Saint Casimir's Lithuanian Church in Los Angeles.



Eight families have signed up for these visits. The first four families who welcomed the Infant Jesus to their homes live approximately 40 miles away from the Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master, the home of the Army's devotional prayers, cenacles and meetings. It is refreshing to note that these devotees travel far and long to pray and worship with us several weekends each month!

Devotees host the Infant Jesus statue typically for up to nine days. Accompanying the image of the Infant Jesus are novena prayers, flowers, red seedless grapes, plain M&Ms, and various toys -- tucked in the Infant's little, green luggage. The Infant Jesus is positioned in a special spot in the house -- in the living room or kitchen or wherever the family gathers, the prayer room or, for ill people, in their bedrooms.

In the company of the Infant Jesus for nine days, testimonies were given as to most hosts "becoming like little children": a son keeping his promise to prepare each and every meal of the Infant Jesus while his parents were away taking care of business for one whole day -- even taking photos of the food before and after each offering [and comparing them]; couples checking on what seem like tiny bites on the chocolate M&Ms; a husband admonishing his wife and friends "You, of little faith" as they would not believe that it wasn't he who took one of the twelve missing grapes offered by his wife the night before they went to bed; a widow admitting that she didn't offer the Infant that special cookie from her hometown; and another son who wanted the Infant Jesus on the kitchen counter [instead of his Mom's bedroom] as he felt welcomed by Him each late night that he comes home!

And of course, testimonies of prayerful encounters, the many favors and graces received -- the approval of green cards [or immigrant status], the resolution of a financial burden, healing and good health, conversion of a prodigal daughter, freedom from anxiety, peace -- the list goes on.

The Army enjoins you to be Childlike in your faith -- not believing anything and everything you are told, but rather cultivating an open readiness of mind, free from prejudice and preconceived ideas. Let us be childlike in humility, deprived of ambition, pride and self-importance. Let us pray that God will help us to focus on Him in a Childlike way realizing we are dependent on Him for everything that matters. □

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**TOY DRIVE FOR THE  
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
[ONGOING]**

**FEAST DAY OF  
THE HOLY INFANT JESUS**  
SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 2014  
ST. CASIMIR CATHOLIC CHURCH  
2718 ST GEORGE STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90027

**PILGRIMAGE TO  
MOTHER MARY'S  
APPARITION SHRINES  
PORTUGAL | SPAIN | FRANCE**  
DECEMBER 4-21, 2014  
DAILY ACTIVITIES AND OTHER  
INFORMATION ARE AVAILABLE AT  
[WWW.SPIRITUALARMYOFGOD.ORG](http://WWW.SPIRITUALARMYOFGOD.ORG)

**\$400 GUARANTEES YOUR  
RESERVATION AND YOU HAVE UNTIL  
OCTOBER 3, 2014 TO PAY  
PILGRIMAGE COST**

# 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 – October 19, 2013

at the Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master | starting at 8:30 a.m.

*Please call Victor at (213) 385-7798 if you wish to become a Sponsor of the 2000 Hail Mary Devotion.*

### IN 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 will be at 10:00 AM before the devotional prayers.

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

#### Devotion to God the Father

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

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

#### 2000 Hail Mary Devotion – October 19, 2013

*Please call (702) 255-9616 or (702) 274-4315 for*

*dates and venues for the coming months or for more information or if you wish to Sponsor the Devotion.*

### IN LAUGHLIN, NEVADA:

#### 1st Saturday Devotion

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church | 3055 El Mirage Way

Holy Mass starts at 8:00 A.M. Devotional prayers follow.

### IN SAN DIEGO

#### Rosary to the Father

Monday – Saturday after the 8:00 A.M. Mass [Look for Iris Haj]

St. Mary's Church | 1160 S. Broadway | Escondido, CA 92025

### IN THE PHILIPPINES

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

Letty Rollan has organized the 2000 Hail Mary Devotion in various areas of Metro Manila

through the members of the "Mother Butler." Please call her U.S. Vonage phone (510) 779-6652, text her

at Manila #916-384-9300, and/or call her Manila landline 939-4677. Mention Mila Lumba's name to be recognized.



## THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING POPE FRANCIS: THE 99 LOST SHEEP

By Phil Lawler

If the Pope's main responsibility is to keep us all comfortable, then Pope Francis is failing miserably.

But that's not really the Pope's job, is it?

For the past several weeks -- and more than ever in the past 24 hours, since the release of the Pope's blockbuster interview in America -- friends have been complaining that the Holy Father has a tendency to say things in a way that could cause confusion. He makes statements that the media can easily distort, they say. And they're undoubtedly right.



But there's a precedent for that way of speaking. Jesus made people uncomfortable. The Lord's words and gestures were often misinterpreted, and his critics found it easy to put things in an unfavorable light. Jesus ate with tax-collectors and sinners, they charged; He didn't show sufficient respect for the Law. Now the Vicar of Christ is subject to similar accusations. Somehow it fits.

Would it be better, really, if the Pope limited himself to statements that could not possibly be distorted? Should he stop trying to make subtle distinctions, or making new observations about controversial topics? That would be a form of self-censorship: shaping the message to suit the media. Far better, I think for the Pope to speak frankly, telling the truth in and out of season, letting the chips fall where they may.

Yes, the media will distort the message. They will pretend, as far as they can, that Pope Francis has changed the fundamental message of the Church. But sooner or later that ploy will fail, because the Pope will say something directly contrary to the message the media have attributed to him.

In this case, it didn't take too long. The ink wasn't dry on all the stories alleging that the Pope wanted to hear less talk about abortion, when the Pope himself delivered a blistering indictment of the "throwaway culture" that denigrates the value of human life. "Every unborn child unjustly condemned to be aborted has the face of Jesus Christ," the Pope told a group of doctors today.

Those who read the Pope's interview carefully, rather than relying on sensational and simplistic interpretations,

realize that he did not say anything terribly new. His style of speech, his approach to issues, is unfamiliar. But the content of his message is the familiar teaching of the Catholic Church.

Oddly enough, some of the Pope's critics recognized that he had not endorsed the changes in doctrine that they longed for. The Washington Post acknowledged that the interview contained no new teachings. Damon Linker, writing in the New Republic, sounded forlorn

as he observed: "The interview contains no sign that the Pope is willing to budge on any of the items on the progressive Catholic wish-list of reforms."

Here we have an odd phenomenon: While the Pope is allegedly trying to downplay unpopular Church teachings, the very critics of those teachings are emphasizing them! Dissident Catholics are anxious to exploit the Pope's words, to argue that we no longer need to oppose legal abortion and same-sex marriage. But critics of the Church are, in effect, reining in the dissenters, reminding them that the Church still does oppose abortion and homosexual activities. One way or another, as Pope Francis observed, the teachings of the Church on these issues are well known.

"We cannot insist only on issues related to abortion, gay marriage and the use of contraceptive methods," Pope Francis said (emphasis added). He did not say that we should be silent. Later he added that "it is not necessary to talk about these issues all the time (emphasis added again). The Pope's key observation fell between those two sentences, when he said: "But when we speak about these issues, we have to talk about them in a context."

It is the context, then -- not the controversial issues themselves -- that concerns the Pontiff. He does not want the Church to hammer away on points that are already well known. He sees a problem of diminishing returns. The people who are disposed to accept the Church's teachings are already convinced; those who are hostile to those teachings are no longer listening. We need to find new ways to reach them.

And we can reach them, the Pope promises, if we return to the fundamental truths of Christian faith. "A beautiful homily, a genuine sermon must begin with the first proclamation, with the proclamation of salvation," he told his Jesuit interviewer. Someone who accepts the essential truth of the Gospel, someone who sees the route to salvation, might then be open to hearing more about Catholic moral teaching. On the other hand, those who disregard the essentials -- those who have come to see the Church as merely a political structure, imposing old rules -- are unlikely to be persuaded by one more iteration of the arguments.

(By the way, some of my friends have argued, with ample justification, that the Pope is simply wrong to say that the Church has spoken out too often about abortion, homosexuality, and contraception. In fact, my friends observe, bishops and priests have been conspicuously silent on those issues. That is sadly, undeniably true. Yet still the Pope has a point. Bishops and priests do not constitute the Church. We are the Church -- you and I, as well as the bishops and priests and religious. Have we, you and I, sometimes taken pleasure in denouncing an evil, when it would have been more effective, and more charitable, to say something about God's merciful love? I, for one, plead guilty to that charge.)

Is this a radically new message? Not at all! Pope Benedict XVI frequently said that the faith is not a matter of accepting intellectual propositions, but a matter of making a commitment to Christ. Pope John Paul II admonished the faithful that our job, as missionaries in a secular world, is to help our neighbors "see the face of Christ." This remains the fundamental challenge of evangelization: to bring people to Christ. With the help of grace, their behavior might change after they embrace the faith -- not before.

So why are so many faithful Catholics upset by what the Pope has said? Because he has abandoned Church teaching? No. Because he has said something very new? No. Many of my friends, I fear, are disturbed because the Pope's approach -- his cajoling tone, his irenic line of thought -- might give aid and comfort to the enemy. Yet that's dangerous for a Christian, isn't it -- to think of people as enemies?

By now we all know people -- friends, neighbors, relatives, colleagues -- who have procured abortions, or who are active homosexuals, or live in irregular marital situations. How do we treat these people? Too often, I fear, we try to ignore them, or at least ignore their problems. We could do better.

But how can we help them? It will not help, in most cases, to keep telling them that their behavior is immoral. They have tuned out that message. But maybe, with patience and prayer, we can help them to recognize the grace of God, to see the power of the Gospel, to accept the message of mercy that Pope Francis emphasizes at every opportunity. A friend may be willing to confront his own

sin, as soon as he realizes that a loving God is ready to forgive him.

A few weeks ago I wrote in this space to support John Allen's suggestion that Pope Francis should be known as the "Pope of Mercy." Let me now sharpen that suggestion, by pointing to one statement that strikes me as the hermeneutical key to understanding the pastoral approach taken by this surprising new Pontiff.

In June, in a talk to an ecclesiastical congress of the Rome diocese, Pope Francis recalled the story of the Good Shepherd, who leaves his 99 sheep to search for one that is lost. Then he suggested that in today's secular culture, the shepherds of the Catholic Church confront a very different problem. "It's the 99 who we're missing!" he said. "In this culture, let's face it, we have only 1. We are the minority!"

The pastor of a Catholic church has several challenges that he must approach simultaneously: encouraging good Catholics to become better Catholics; encouraging indifferent Catholics to become good Catholics; encouraging lapsed Catholics to become active; and encouraging non-Catholics to enter the Church. Ordinarily the pastor works first with the active Catholics -- with those who are already in the pews -- hoping to form a cadre that will help him evangelize others. That was certainly the approach taken by Benedict XVI, who testified to the power of a "creative minority" in the Church and in the world.

Pope Francis, however, sees a need for a more drastic approach. The sheep are leaving the fold; the 99 are already lost! So he has devoted his first attentions to the outsiders; he speaks constantly of bringing the Gospel to those "on the periphery." As a young Jesuit, he wanted to be a missionary. As things turned out he never served in distant lands, but he brought a missionary outlook to his work in Buenos Aires, and now he has brought it to Rome.

More to the point, Pope Francis has brought his missionary outlook to you and to me. He wants us to join him in the task of bringing the Gospel to the "periphery," telling our neighbors about God's infinite mercy, proclaiming the joyful news of salvation. He's asking us to do things that, frankly, we are not always comfortable doing.

Yes, the Pope makes me uncomfortable. As well he should. □

---

Phil Lawler is the editor of Catholic World News (CWN), the first English-language Catholic news service operating on the internet, which he founded in 1995. CWN provides daily headline news coverage for the Catholic Culture site, where Phil Lawler also offers regular analysis and commentary.