



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

November 2016

HELP, I HAVE TO VOTE

By Fr. Dwight Longenecker

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

Never in living history has an American presidential election been so divisive and difficult. Many Americans look at the two candidates running for the highest office in the land and wonder how on earth the two most unpopular politicians have made it to the top. A national election is not a beauty pageant or a popularity contest, but a serious process whereby the electorate should choose the person most qualified to be president. Catholics are especially involved in the election process and historically, candidates from both of the major parties have been eager to attract the Catholic vote.

November's election, however, is not only about who will win the Oval Office. On November 8, there are also 469 seats in Congress to be decided — 34 in the Senate and all 435 seats in the House of Representatives. Much of what a President Trump or President Clinton can accomplish will be decided by the makeup of Congress. In addition, the citizens of 12 states will elect their governor, 44 states will elect their legislators, and six major cities across the country will elect their mayors.

When we go into the voting booth, we should be informed not only about the presidential contenders, but also about the positions of our congressmen and congresswomen and senators as well as our candidates for governor and state legislatures. In many ways, our votes for legislators and local officials are more important than how we vote for the president because local officials often have more impact on the local level where life is real.

Can't I Be A Catholic Ostrich?

Faced with unpopular candidates whose positions are far from Catholic, many voters would like to put their heads in the sand and hope for better choices next time. However, being a Catholic ostrich is not one of the options. As Catholics we are called to be involved in the political process and make choices that are not only informed about the issues and the candidates but done with a prayerful attitude and a well-formed conscience. Our U.S. Catholic bishops have issued a comprehensive guide as we face the election. Called Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, it can be downloaded from the website of the Catholic Bishops, USCCB.org.

In other words, Catholics who have the right to vote also have the responsibility to vote, and if we have the responsibility to vote we also have the responsibility to resist popularity contests or simply vote "the way my dad always did." We shouldn't vote on a single issue or vote out of sentimentality or simply in reaction against a candidate we don't happen to like. We should also avoid dreamy idealism. We must be realistic, study the issues, party platforms, and candidates' records. In other words, we need to get our heads both out of the sand and out of the sky. When considering how to vote, we should remember Jesus' advice to be as "wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

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OVERVIEW FOR THE MONTH

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The month of November is dedicated to the Souls in Purgatory, whose feast is celebrated on November 2. With the exception of the last Sunday, November falls during the liturgical season known as Ordinary Time and is represented by the liturgical color green. The last Sunday, which marks the beginning of the Advent season, the liturgical color changes to purple, representing a time of penance.

During November, as in all of Ordinary Time (Time After Pentecost), the Liturgy signifies and expresses the regenerated life from the coming of the Holy Spirit, which is to be spent on the model of Christ's Life and

under the direction of His Spirit. As we come to the end of the Church year we are asked to consider the end times, our own as well as the world's. The culmination of the liturgical year is the Feast of Christ the King. "This feast asserts the supreme authority of Christ over human beings and their institutions.... Beyond it we see Advent dawning with its perspective of the Lord's coming in glory."— The Liturgy and Time, A.G. Mortimort. □

FEASTS FOR NOVEMBER

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 All Saints, Solemnity | 21 Presentation of Mary, Memorial |
| 2 All Souls, Feast | 22 Cecilia, Memorial |
| 3 Martin de Porres, Opt. Memorial | 23 Clement I; Columban; Bl. Miguel Agustín Pro (USA), Optional Memorial |
| 4 Charles Borromeo, Memorial | 24 Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions, Memorial; Thanksgiving Day |
| 9 Lateran Basilica, Feast | 25 Catherine of Alexandria, Optional Memorial |
| 10 Leo the Great, Memorial | 27 First Sunday of Advent, Sunday |
| 11 Martin of Tours; Veterans Day (USA), Memorial | 30 Andrew, Feast |
| 12 Josaphat, Memorial | |
| 15 Albert, the Great, Opt. Memorial | |
| 16 Margaret of Scotland; Gertrude, Optional Memorial | |
| 17 Elizabeth of Hungary, Memorial | |
| 18 Churches of Peter and Paul; Rose Philippine Duchesne (USA), Optional Memorial | |
| 20 Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, Solemnity | |

The feast of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini (November 13) is superseded by the Sunday Liturgy. •□

OUR CENACLE CORNER

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

PATIENCE

NUMBERS 21:4

JAMES 1:4

JAMES 5:7

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

MEDITATING ON THE SAINTS ALL SAINTS DAY

*Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart. (Psalm 24:3-4)*

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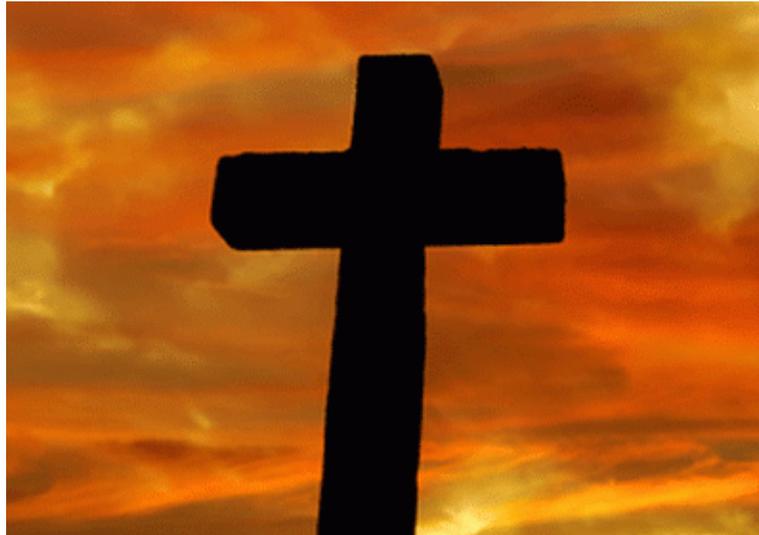
www.wau.org

From the very beginning, the church has honored and revered its martyrs and heroes. What began on a popular and local level gradually became woven into the liturgy, beginning around the fourth century in the Eucharistic Prayer. In the fifth century, a feast honoring all the saints was declared in some Eastern churches, and from there the celebration was taken up in Rome. In 835, Pope Gregory IV declared All Saints Day a feast for the entire church.

A day commemorating the saints is actually a day of rejoicing in the greatness of the Lord and hoping in his love. The victory that we see in the saints testifies to the Lord himself. It was not just their own efforts that produced such holiness, but the work of the Lord, who wants to pour the fullness of the life of Jesus into our hearts. This has been the hope and joy of all holy men and women always and everywhere, and it is our hope and joy as well.

The Book of Revelation contains a vision of the redeemed of the Lord, gathered around the throne of God: "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14). The victory of the redeemed came through the blood of Jesus, which washed them, purified them, and sealed them with the promise of eternal life.

The power of this precious blood of Christ is available to us every day by faith. We can turn to Jesus at any moment and ask for his blood to cover our sins and cleanse us. We can call on Jesus at any moment for him to pour out the power of this death and resurrection to strengthen us and enable us to live as God's children.



"What love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God" (1 John 3:1). We are his children; he has adopted us as his very own! Every day, our Father's hand is extended to us and we have the great privilege to take hold of him.

Let us fix our eyes on the Lamb at the center of the throne who has promised to be our Shepherd and to lead us to "springs of living water" (Revelation 7:17). The Lord, who has worked in the lives of the saints, is ready to work in us if we will turn to him. Our God, who has chosen us to be his very own, is faithful!

Points for Meditation:

Think of the saints whom you most admire. Then list the qualities they possessed that attract you. How did God use these character traits to make these men and women holy? How can he use your natural gifts and talents to help you grow in holiness?

Spend some time meditating on the beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12). Focus on the promises that Jesus makes to those who follow him. How

are these promises—the kingdom of heaven, the vision of God, participation in the divine nature, eternal life, and rest in God—a part of your every day decision-making? To what extent do they influence the goals you have for your life? On this day of grace and celebration, ask the Lord to give you a deeper desire to see his promises fulfilled in your life.

Many saints led challenging and often painful lives, but still managed to retain their joy and love of the Lord because of their intimacy with Jesus. What are some concrete ways in which you can deepen your intimacy with the Lord? •□

Lord Jesus, the saints in heaven behold your glory and know the rewards of your life. Fill me with hope in your promise of eternal life. May we all share the joy of your saints in heaven

WHY ALL SOULS DAY IS IMPORTANT GOODBYE, IMPERFECTIONS

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What tremendous love God has for us! What an amazing promise he has made: "As Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

When we were baptized, our old nature—marred through disobedience and defiled by sin—was joined to Jesus on the cross and died. Through baptism, St. Paul explains, we are buried with Jesus in his grave. Now, we can share in his victory over death. No longer enslaved to sin, we are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In our daily lives, however, we often fall short of the life we received in Baptism.

While tasting the new life of Christ, we act out of our old nature and give in to temptation and sin. This is why All Souls Day is so important. It reminds us that God, knowing the weakness and frailty of our

human nature, has made a way for us to enter his holy presence perfectly cleansed and acceptable to him. As the church teaches, "All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1030).

St. Catherine of Genoa once wrote: "Apart from the happiness of the saints in heaven, I think there is no joy comparable to that of the souls in purgatory" (On Purgation and Purgatory). Purgatory is not an antechamber of hell, one step short of damnation. Rather, it's the "waiting room" for heaven—the process where we undergo a final cleaning up in order to appear before the all-holy God.

Can you imagine what it will be like when you're purified of all imperfections? When all love of self is transformed into love for God? Let's rejoice today in the power of the cross. By it, we and all those who have died in faith and baptism have been transformed. Together with all the saints, may we rejoice in the blessings of the life to come!

Points for Meditation: The tradition of the Church is to pray for those who have passed on from this world. This kind of intercession is possible because of the union of

all those who belong to Christ, a union that is not broken even by death. Spend some time today praying for family members and friends who have died. Pray that they may be purified and made ready to meet the Bridegroom face to face.

Every Christian shares in Jesus' victory over death (Romans 6:9). As you think about the

promise of eternal life and Jesus' commitment to bring about your total purification, ask the Spirit to fill you with an unshakable confidence in Christ.

Purification of our imperfections begins in this life as we respond to God's grace. Tell the Holy Spirit that you welcome his work of convicting you of sin and purifying you of all that cannot stand in the light of God's holiness. Thank him for his gifts of repentance and forgiveness. •□

Lord Jesus, by your cross and resurrection you overcame death and freed us from the power of sin. You have raised us up to new life. We rejoice today in the sure inheritance you have won for us!



GOD TOUCHED ME

SPEAK, LORD, FOR YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING!

*"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, on your own intelligence do not rely;
In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths."
- Proverbs 3:7*

By Anonymous

The day started out like any other work day. I got up, got ready for work, and headed out onto the road. I had been on the freeway for less than a minute when all of a sudden my cell phone rang. It was a bit unusual for work to be calling me in the morning so I pressed the Bluetooth button on my dash to see exactly who it was. It was my co-worker asking me about some document that our boss needed ASAP. I tried to walk her through the steps of how to search for the document on the computer, but our attempts were fruitless. We had been having network problems since last week so it seemed inevitable that this would happen. Our last resort was for me to email her the last template that was sent out. She could make the minor edits and then provide our boss with the requested changes. No problem – crisis averted!

I had to pull over somewhere so that I could look for the document from my email and send it to her. I immediately took the next exit off the freeway and searched for a place to park. There was a Costco just one block away so I figured that would be a safe place to park since it was early in the morning and the stores weren't going to open for a couple more hours. I easily pulled into the first parking stall since there were hardly any cars, nor any people around.

I immediately searched my email and was able to locate the file. I sent the file and quickly called back my co-worker to let her know it was sent so that she could start working on the edits. I placed my hand on the gear shift to head back out on the road when all of a sudden I heard a "knock" on my driver-side window.

I was taken aback to see an older man standing right outside my car. I was only parked in that spot for mere seconds and didn't see anyone earlier. Where did he come from? And what did he want? I quickly scanned him and then looked left and right to see if anyone else was with him. I had to think quickly about what I was going to do next since I didn't know if this man had good or bad intentions. By his disheveled appearance, it was safe to assume he was homeless. Being in the suburbs, there are transients around, but you don't see them as readily as you would in say, downtown Los Angeles. No internal warning signals were going off so I cautiously lowered the driver-side window, just enough so that I could hear him, but not big enough that he could try to reach his arm inside my car.

Honestly, the next few seconds were a blur. He was asking for assistance in any way I could help him, whether

it be food or money, but I don't recall the exact words he said. I kind of went into auto-pilot mode and reached for my wallet, trying to recall mentally if I had any cash on me. He continued speaking politely but I was half listening and half thinking about what my co-worker needed from me. Perhaps I had a \$5 bill or \$10 bill somewhere? I searched and found a \$20 bill. I looked around and didn't see any snacks in my car either. I was more anxious to get back on the road and get to work, so I sheepishly offered the money to him. As he humbly accepted the money I saw him take a closer look. It warmed my heart to see the look on his face quickly turn. He was squinting at first and then was ever so grateful. I was just happy to be able to offer a little ray of sunlight for this man since he obviously could use the \$20 bill more than I did. All of sudden, something happened that really shook me to my core.

As I was slowly pulling away onto the street, I looked over to my left to make sure there were no cars from oncoming traffic. I checked to my right and then left again one more time. This time, I saw the man within the frame of my left side mirror. He was weeping and then fell onto his knees. He then looked up to the sky, pointed to the heavens, and then dropped his arms down onto his lap in surrender. I too, immediately thanked God for this very moment as tears began to well in my eyes.

As I look back on this day, I realize with great awe and gratitude of the magnificence and splendor that is God's will and God's holy plan. How He threw a small teeny, tiny little wrench into my normal morning routine and turned it into a moment that I will never forget! What started out as an inconvenience or disruption in my day, turned out to be a moment of humility and a simple act of God's love in our lives! Sometimes I wonder if this man was feeling at his lowest . . . maybe he even challenged if God existed in his life? It's probably safe to assume by his reaction in the mirror that in that moment, God answered his prayer. But in this same moment, I truly felt God's love for me! God intended for that document at work to get "lost." God intended for me to exit the freeway at that exact moment so that I could be where He needed me to be. Even every (perceived) misstep I take – it is all God's will. It was ALL part of God's great plan! I need to remember that even if the road has its twists and turns, I need to trust in Him because whatever He has planned for me will be far greater than I can imagine!

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HELP, I HAVE TO VOTE

The bishops outline four foundational principles to consider and five guidelines to help us apply those principles, and then summarize with a collection of specific aims that help build a just, prosperous, and civilized Christian society.

A Four-Square Foundation

Jesus told the parable of the man who built his house on the sand and the man who built his house on the rock (see Matthew 7:24–27). When the storms came the house on the sand crumbled, while the house on the solid foundation stood firm. The bishops' document reminds us of the four foundation principles for Catholic citizens. These principles are drawn from the long history of Catholic social teaching — beginning with Pope Leo XIII at the end of the 19th century and continuing today with Pope Francis.

The first principle is the dignity of human life. Human life is sacred because every person is created in the image and likeness of God. The dignity of each person therefore means that the individual takes precedence over the state, and the state must protect the life and dignity of each person.

The second foundational principle is subsidiarity. This means that solutions are to be found and initiatives are to be taken at the most local level possible. The smallest social unit of all is the family. Catholics affirm that the family — based on the natural marriage between one man and one woman — is the fundamental unit of society. It is a government's function to support and uphold this basic unit of society where children are conceived, born, and nurtured.

The third foundation principle is the common good. Governments are not in existence for themselves, but are meant to serve all people and develop a common good for all. This includes proper care for workers, defense of human rights, concern for the vulnerable, and protection of the shared environment. The final foundation principle is solidarity. This is the conviction that we are indeed "our brother's keeper."

Tools In The Toolbox

To vote confidently, the Catholic citizen must not only be aware of the four principles, but must know how to apply them. The bishops lay out five tools to help us do just that.

First, we are to have well-formed consciences. This means we must be alert to moral problems and be aware of the Catholic answers. We don't make moral choices based only on what seems practical or on our emotional and personal responses. We must learn what is right and wrong and have enough backbone to stand up for all that is beautiful, good, and true.

Second, we must exercise prudence. Prudence is the ability to discern the right way when the choices are confusing and contradictory. I often explain that prudence is a

combination of common sense and supernatural understanding. It is good sense enlightened by grace.

Third, we must not only do good; we must avoid evil. There are some things that are so evil that we cannot support a candidate who supports them. Intentional killing of the innocent can never be supported, for example.

Fourth, we must avoid both the temptation to treat all moral choices as equal and the opposite temptation to ignore some evils because we oppose one particular evil. So, for example, environmental pollution is not as bad as human trafficking, but we mustn't ignore the evil of pollution in our zeal to stamp out human trafficking.

Finally, we must make difficult and often complex moral choices as we decide who to vote for. We are not single-issue voters.

A candidate's position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee support. Yet a candidate's position on a single issue that involves an intrinsic evil, such as support for abortion, may legitimately lead a voter to disqualify a candidate from receiving support.

The Hot-Button Issues For Catholics

Based on the four principles and five tools for good choices, the Catholic bishops have produced a list of hot-button issues for Catholics. These are the game changers that should be vitally important for Catholic voters.

The first is human life. Catholics want to end abortion, euthanasia, the destruction of embryos through research, and artificial conception technologies. They also call for an end to capital punishment and unjust war.

The second is the defense of marriage as a lifelong, faithful union between one man and one woman. We reject false gender ideologies and call for the state to do everything possible to support the family as it has been known by humanity from the dawn of time.

The next five policy recommendations are for a compassionate reform of the immigration system and care for the poor around the world. This includes the defense of workers and support for basic human rights (especially freedom of religion), abolition of unjust forms of discrimination, and education and adequate health care for all.

The final policy recommendations are for an end to imprudent war, persecution of religious and racial minorities — especially Christians in the Middle East — and the pursuit of peace, justice, and dignity for all people.

If you can find candidates who stand for all those things, give them your full support and shout their names from the housetop! If not, pick and choose carefully and prayerfully, and after you vote, commend your country, your family, and yourself into God's hands, asking for the grace and freedom to live peacefully, act justly, and walk humbly with your God. • ◻

Visit Fr. Dwight's blog, browse his books, and be in touch at DwightLongenecker.com.

SPEAK, LORD, FOR YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING!

I am a sinner. I have my flaws. I feel unworthy and undeserving, but I must always be grateful of all the graces and blessings He has bestowed upon me and my family. And so I pray each and every day for God to use me in whatever way He so chooses. It's in moments like these that I feel the sunshine of His love! I feel the rays of joy in my heart! I want others to know that through Him, with Him, and in Him, you will find the peace and contentment you seek in your life! I find that when there are many trials and tribulations in someone's life, the common denominator is that they don't have God as the #1 in their lives. I promise you . . . if you put Him first, everything in your life will fall into place!

With all the chaos and strife in our country and culture right now, it seems to me that we, as a country, have pushed God to the side. Moral relativism has taken over and we have lost sight of what brought us to this land in the first place. Have we forgotten how we got here? Have we forgotten what was written in the

Declaration of Independence? Or about what was written in President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address? Take a moment right now and repeat the Pledge of Allegiance . . . We have declared ourselves to be a "nation under God" and yet our actions speak differently! And we are especially at a crossroad at this very moment in our country's history! There is no better time than NOW to stand up for our LORD! Let us put Him in the center of our lives in order for this country to once again stand united. Let us make Him first in our lives and see what fruits can come from it! It is time to make a deliberate choice! It is time to make a mindful decision in everything we say and everything we do! WE can make this world a better place by standing up for those who have no voice! We must choose our words and our actions by whatever will bring God to others! My

goal in life is simple – make it into heaven! . . . and I will try my hardest to make sure that my spouse and my children (and my children's children) make it to heaven as well! We must fight evil and avoid sin, especially those evils that are disguised. We must remember that we are all in a constant state of spiritual warfare! Our actions on earth must reflect what is God's love and we must stand by His truth! We can take this next step by voting for the next presidential candidate this coming election.

I know this topic brings up A LOT of issues. But let's just get down to what is most important – What is/are the top

issue(s) that YOU hold dear to your heart? Which issues would affect YOUR future and the future of YOUR CHILDREN? And

your GRANDCHILDREN's future? Is it abortion? Or maybe it's the legalization of same sex marriage? Or perhaps the threat of terrorism in the United States? Now the million dollar question . . . which candidate supports what your heart is telling you?

Words are just words, but actions are actions. Can you tell more about a person by what they say or by what they do? It may seem as though there are no viable

candidates this election, but we must remember . . . God doesn't call the QUALIFIED, He qualifies the CALLED. Think of the Bible and how God used Noah and Moses! Think of how Peter was entrusted the keys to the kingdom of heaven, despite having denied Jesus during His Passion. Think of Saul and how he was persecuting Christians. . . of how his heart was touched and he repented and converted. Think of how St. Paul was chosen to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles! See how God's great plan ALWAYS has and ALWAYS will change our lives for the better! **Let us put our faith and hope in the LORD! Trust in God's plan!** For this election, I'm going to ask our LORD to vote for me! Please tell me Lord! Speak to my heart and lead me to the road you have laid out for me!



This coming November 8th, I'm going to cast my vote according to what is morally right! It doesn't matter what this candidate said or what that other candidate has done. I'm going to block out all the chatter and think of what would be most pleasing in my Father's eyes? What would you do if Eternal Father was the one collecting everyone's ballots on November 8th? I have prayed to the Holy Spirit to guide my heart. I know that even if the choice I make, might come with a heavy heart and uncertainty of how this person will handle the presidency, I know I can walk up to the LORD in confidence (but with my head hanging low, unworthy sinner that I am), and at least I'll know that in my heart, I voted with what was AND is morally right, and what would be pleasing to my Father's heart.

I pray that you too will make a decision. Think of how this small act of casting a ballot will affect YOUR future, your CHILDREN's future, and this country's future in the years to come. Do not be priest or Levite that walks passed the man left for dead by robbers. Be the good Samaritan that has the courage to do what is right! We cannot be complicit any longer! We must pray for strength and ask God to give us the moral courage to stand up for what is right! Always pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance in all you do, especially this coming week as you make your decision. Remember, our human weakness is short-sighted and can only see but a small teeny, tiny fraction of what is the magnificent tapestry of God's great plan!

"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." St. Teresa of Calcutta ☐

**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
AND/OR
VICTOR.A@SPIRITUALARMYOFGOD.ORG
(702) 274-4315 | (213) 385-7798**

"I am your Mother Mary

Today is an important day dedicating yourselves in the presence of the Lord God Almighty. Starting this day, open your hearts and do good deeds for others. this act pleases God.

My children, no other is pleasing to God but your own self humbling before Him and putting less focus on oneself and more focus on your deeds that do good for your less fortunate brothers and sisters.

In the days ahead, I will be speaking to you more as changes are happening fast around you and the need to pray more before the Eucharist as a constituent Body of my son Jesus. In silence you come and unite with my Son and Lord God into your hearts.

These days are important for God. Set them as days of cleansing of the world and the humankind. Pray, pray, pray my children for everyone and for world peace.

I love you my children. Thank you for listening to my call."

*Mary, Your Lady of Peace
10152016*

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

A MIRROR OF YOUR SOUL THE BLESSINGS OF KEEPING A PRAYER JOURNAL

By Don and Angela Swenson

You go to mass one day, and something in the gospel makes you sit up and take notice. Maybe it makes you want to grow in a spirit of thankfulness or to examine a relationship. By the end of the liturgy, though, you can't remember the readings, let alone your insight. You know something special happened, but you can't recall what it was. Have you ever had an experience like this? I certainly have. How many times have I prayed the liturgy of the hours, reflected on a scripture passage, or been inspired by a homily or spiritual writer—only to forget it all during the day!

If you have this tendency, and even if you don't, it can be helpful to keep a prayer journal. Perhaps you started one in the past, but it fizzled out for lack of time or because you weren't sure what to write. That happened to me, too. But I've kept at it for twenty years and can see the fruit it has borne in my life.

You and the Lord. A prayer journal is a spiritual diary, a private communication between you and the Lord. It's a place where you can pour out your thoughts to him.

What do you write? Anything that touches or moves you spiritually: God's word and your response; ordinary happenings at work or at home; your joys and triumphs, pain and frustration, in events both small and great. A journal helps you keep track of what happens as you sit with the Lord and ponder what He is saying to you through scripture and your experiences.

If you need encouragement to start (or restart) your journal, think of King David, a man after God's own heart. Many psalms are attributed to him and were part of a collection of prayers used by the Jews as they came to worship at the temple.

Actually, the whole Book of Psalms reads like an all-encompassing prayer journal. Some psalms are outpourings of tender love for God. Some are eloquent songs of praise. Others express delight in nature, frustration over defeats, or profound grief and repentance for sin. Healing, suffering, comfort—the psalms are a rich source of inspiration!

Start here. Begin your prayer journal by making a few choices. First, decide what you will use: a notebook, a computer, a ring binder, a blank diary, or maybe a special prayer journal. Choose when you will pray (preferably, the same time each day) and where (a place that is quiet and free of distractions).

When you pray, quiet your thoughts. If it's helpful, light a candle or listen to Christian music. Out loud or in the stillness of your heart, invite Jesus to be with you.

There's no formula for what to do or when. You might read scripture—next Sunday's gospel, perhaps, or a psalm. Or just talk to the lord about whatever is on your mind. I often pray out loud; it tends to keep me focused. So does writing down a short text and trying to memorize it. For example, in Luke 11:1-13, where Jesus teaches us how to pray, I was struck by the words ask, seek, and knock. I memorized a few verses, and all that week, I earnestly asked, sought, and knocked for Jesus' presence. If you don't feel especially inspired, simply look at a crucifix, and ask the Holy Spirit for light.

Whatever else you do, be sure to listen in holy silence. Sometimes, it will seem that nothing happens. Other times, you may sense the awesome presence of Jesus.

By their fruits. Keeping a prayer journal can help you to be faithful to the discipline of daily prayer and to get more out of it. If you date each entry, you can see where you are making progress and where change is needed. Keep track of your prayer requests, and you will discover that god has answered prayers from a month or even years ago. You will find yourself returning to entries that have touched you. For me, many of these focus on Jesus as the good shepherd who supplies all I need. In loneliness, he is my friend; when I am tempted, he is my salvation; in weak moments, he is my strength.

As you journal, you will find creative ways to respond to the Lord. When I come across inspiring quotes, I put them into my journal. Sometimes I create drawings or charts, or link several texts from all that I meditated on. I may jot down a key word or phrase from my journal—something to carry and reread during the day to imprint God's word on my heart.

In the interior castle, St. Teresa of Avila likens each person to a castle with seven mansions. What moves me is that Jesus, the lord and king in the central mansion, invites me to journey to this center every day! He invites you, too. So try it. Write a letter to Jesus. Pour out your heart. Sit quietly. And then . . . Listen! •

The "I" in this article is a husband-and-wife team. Don Swenson is a professor of sociology at Mount Royal University, Calgary, Canada. Angela is a retired registered nurse and midwife.

SPIRITUAL ARMY NEWS DISPATCH

SCHOLARS OF THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER MINISTRY

The Spiritual Army of God the Father is pleased to announce a new addition to our scholarship program, Michael Ray P. Palma. He is studying at the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart seminary in Manila.

He is the third student added to our list of scholars. The other two are: Patrick Salmasan who is in his junior year in Bachelor of Science, major in Information Technology at Jose Rizal University in Mandaluyong, Metro Manila; and Brother Ronald Panizares Roco, a seminarian at St. Augustine Major Seminary in Tagaytay.

The Spiritual Army of God the Father Scholarship program will provide financial assistance for full-time college students who will meet the criteria set by the ministry. The awarding of scholarship is renewable every semester subject to fulfillment of requirements and availability of funds. ☐

THE SPIRITUAL ARMY IS AT THE ST. FRANCIS DE SALES FESTIVAL IN LAS VEGAS

The Las Vegas Chapter of The Spiritual Army of God the Father has sponsored a booth at the St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church Festival held on October 23, 2016. The festival was celebrated with live music (mariachi and band), food, raffle, game booths, rides and activities for children. The Spiritual Army's booth sold Filipino egg rolls (lumpia shanghai) and chicken or pork barbecue on a stick.

The guests experienced the warmth of the vendors' hospitality by sampling their wares and joining in the fun. The parishioners of St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church welcomed everyone with free admission and parking. Coupons to pay at each booth were available for purchase at the gate. The Las Vegas devotees would like to thank the 2016 festival donors for their generous support. ☐

THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER CENACLE HOUSE IN LAS VEGAS CELEBRATES ITS 10TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY

When The Spiritual Army of God the Father, Las Vegas chapter, was first established, the devotees held their devotions at a private home. A few months after, they were permitted to have the devotions at St. Bridget Catholic Church. When the parish priest, Fr. James Swenson, passed away, the devotees moved to St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church for the First Saturday devotion and at the chapel of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church for the Eternal Father devotion. On October 6, 2006, a condo at 8455 West Sahara Avenue #172, Las Vegas, NV was purchased and was fixed up to be a prayer house which we now call the Cenacle House. The first prayer devotion held there was the 2000 Hail Mary devotion in November, 2006. From then on, all of the Las Vegas chapter's devotions have been held at this place. The devotees are very happy to help create this place of peace and contemplation, hoping that many would benefit spiritually through the coming years. ☐

UPCOMING EVENTS

TOY DRIVE FOR THE LOS ANGELES CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

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

PILGRIMAGE TO HOLY LAND & JORDAN

DECEMBER 5-15, 2016
DAILY ACTIVITIES AND OTHER
INFORMATION ARE AVAILABLE AT
WWW.SPIRITUALARMYOFGOD.ORG

THANK YOU

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

Psalm 106:2

THE 2000 HAIL MARY DEVOTION

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

Las Vegas, Nevada
Lucien & Mila Lumba

Los Angeles, California
Victor & Alicia Araneta | Linda Cruz
Linda Fajardo | Cora Pablico
Carolina Pineda | Celia Tiguelo

FOR PRAYERS HEARD AND PETITIONS GRANTED

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

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

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

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU PRAISED AND THANKED THE LORD

FOR ALL THAT HE HAS DONE FOR YOU

WITH A GENUINE HEART AND A PROSTRATE POSTURE?

To God the Almighty Father, on bended knees I come before Thee O Lord full of gratitude for my complete healing. I feel your immense love for having chosen me to bear this pain and suffering. May You be praised O Lord my God, my Creator, my Sanctifier.

- Vi Carlos

Thank you, my Lord and my God, for your spiritual guidance throughout the 12 years of Your ministry in Las Vegas and for the 10th year anniversary of Your prayer house (the Cenacle House). Thank you for sending Your Holy Spirit to enlighten us in everything that we do. Our hearts overflow with thanks to our Lord God Most High for His grace and faithfulness to us over the years.

- Evelyn

I am thankful for the Spiritual Army of God ministry. I am thankful that I did host the 2000 Hail Mary devotion (it was on October 15, 2016). I am thankful for this privilege.

- Joyce

Thank you, God, for dying for me

Thank you, God, for your love for me

Thank you, God, for all your blessings, big and small

Thank you, God, for letting me know that in the midst of trials, I can walk tall

Thank you, God, for letting me know that I am never alone and that you are always with us eternally

Thank you, God, for letting me know that only your grace is sufficient for me

Thank you god, for letting me know that there is power in the most holy rosary of the blessed virgin Mary

Thank you, God, for letting me know that nothing is impossible with God and that Jesus never fails!

*Your humble servant,
Deborah Lorenzo*

DEVOTION SCHEDULE



THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER

cordially invites you to the following devotions:

IN LOS ANGELES:

1st Saturday Devotion

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

Devotion to God the Father

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

2000 Hail Mary Devotion – November 19, 2016

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

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

IN CHINO HILLS:

Sacred Heart Devotional Group for Departed Souls

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

IN LAS VEGAS:

Sacred Heart and Precious Blood of Jesus Devotion for Departed Souls

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

1st Saturday Devotion

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

and

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

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

Devotion to God the Father

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

2000 Hail Mary Devotion – November 12, 2016

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

Mother of Perpetual Help Novena & Rosary Prayers

Every Wednesday after the 7:30 A.M. Mass
St. Francis de Sales Parish | 1111 Michael Way | Las Vegas, NV 89108

IN THE PHILIPPINES

2000 Hail Mary Devotion - Metro Manila Area

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