



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

December 2016

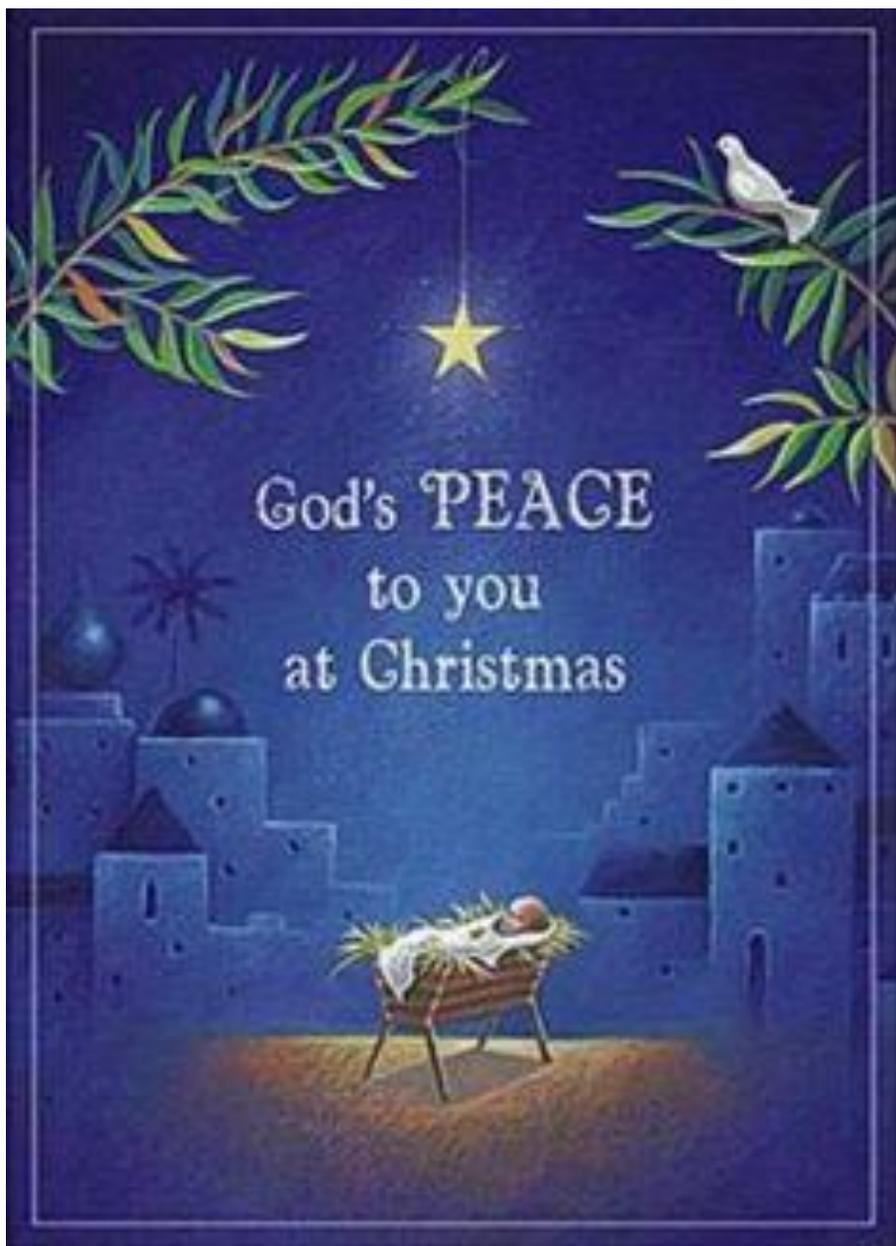
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OVERVIEW FOR THE MONTH

www.catholicculture.org

The month of December is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, which is celebrated on December 8. The first 24 days of December fall during the liturgical season known as Advent and are represented by the liturgical color purple. The remaining days of December mark the beginning of the Christmas season. The liturgical color changes to white or gold — a symbol of joy, purity and innocence.

The liturgy of Advent focuses on remembering Christ's first coming at Bethlehem which then directs our mind to

Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. The readings focus on the people of the Old Testament awaiting the Messiah, John the Baptist, heralding the way for Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary and her maternal preparations. □

FEASTS FOR DECEMBER

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

- 3. Francis Xavier, Memorial
- 6. Nicholas, Opt. Mem.
- 7. Ambrose, Memorial
- 8. Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patronal Feastday of the United States of America , Solemnity
- 9. Juan Diego (USA), Opt. Mem.
- 12. Our Lady of Guadalupe (USA), Feast
- 13. Lucy, Memorial
- 14. John of the Cross, Memorial
- 21. Peter Canisius, Opt. Mem.
- 23. John of Kanty, Opt. Mem.
- 24. Christmas Eve, Sunday
- 25. Christmas, Solemnity

- 26. Stephen, Feast
- 27. John, Feast
- 28. Holy Innocents, Feast
- 29. Thomas Becket, Opt. Mem.
- 30. Holy Family, Feast
- 31. Sylvester I, Opt. Mem.

The feasts St. John Damascene, (December 4) and St. Damascus (December 11) are superseded by the Sunday liturgy. □

OUR CENACLE CORNER

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

CHRISTMAS BIBLICAL PASSAGES

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

REFLECTIONS OF THE MEANING AND LESSON OF CHRISTMAS

By Bishop Thomas G. Dolan

For a long time now many people have written in this or a similar vein — that it is too bad that the Christmas season has become as much a celebration of exuberant consumerism as it is the celebration of the Incarnation. It strikes many as odd that the coming of Christ as a poor and humble child should somehow become an occasion for profligate consumption and, frequently, self-indulgence.

We wonder why it has come to this, and so we resolve that next year it will be different. But it will not be different unless we, ourselves, become different. Instead, it is likely that out of habit and momentum we will be more caught up than ever in the frenzy, until at last we mercifully reach the point we can no longer shop lest we drop. And so we give it all up as a bad job. Then a time of great anticipation and joy becomes for us an occasion fraught with frustration and disappointment. Merry Christmas, indeed!

Actually, these feelings about trying to escape the consumer binge do credit to those who experience them. It is, to be sure, important to keep in mind “the reason for the season.”

When we do that, we move closer not only to the meaning of Christmas but to the traditions regarding its celebration. Christmas giving goes back to a time when Christians gave one another small gifts in celebration and in imitation of God’s great gift to us, which is the incarnation of Christ.

We do not like to think in theological terms in this age when we are so preoccupied with other questions, but God could have made known His salvation in any way He chose. Think about it: He could have come bounding from the heavens as a magnificent, awesome, kingly figure. Instead, He chose to be born of a humble couple in straitened circumstances, far from home and out of money — and, indeed, out of luck because there was no room for them in the travelers’ lodge. And so, as a result of mean circumstances to which he submitted, he was born in a stable. The simplicity of that birth has given Christians ever since pause to realize that God chose to communicate the great mystery of His love and mercy by sending us the least threatening divine presence we can imagine — a small child totally dependent on his parents.

This was the beginning of a great problem for those who wanted a Wonder Counselor, Lord Mighty God, Father of the World to Come, Prince of Peace, King of All. The Jews had longed for a Messiah who would be a prophet like Moses, only greater. They longed for a savior who would lead his people to military and material victory over all their enemies, subjugate those enemies, and give the chosen ones wealth and power in their world.

It is only with difficulty and over time that some of them eventually came to grips with the fact that Jesus, born in the stable at Bethlehem, fulfills every prophesy made about the Messiah in the Old Testament, and yet did so in a way totally unexpected by the wise and the prudent of the generation to which he was born.

Today we glory in our knowledge (though not, it must be said, in our wisdom) and we are bedazzled by the myth that knowledge is power. It is Christmas that can remind us, if we choose to be reminded, that power is borne of weakness and strength of humility, and that the meek ultimately do and should inherit the earth.

So I say that in the midst of all our Christmas preparations we should take time to realize who is born on Christmas Day. A sign of our subtle inversion of values is the practice that has grown up of celebrating Christmas for children on December 24. Instead of the first Mass for Christmas at midnight, we have the so-called Santa Claus Masses at 4 or 5 in the afternoon, so that the children do not have to be bothered with thinking about Jesus and his birth on Christmas Day itself. This, of course, is a great convenience for parents and I sympathize with them in their acceptance of what basically is an anti-Christmas practice.

We should all realize that Christmas is a time when God in his humility shows us, if not who we are, at least what we should strive to be.

In that spirit we should extend ourselves in yearlong gift-giving, not offering immense gifts and fabulous benisons, but in providing little things that, one by one, make our neighbor’s lives holier, healthier and happier. □

Thomas George Dolan (born February 20, 1936), is a retired American prelate of the Roman Catholic Church who served as the eighth Bishop of the Diocese of Rockford, Illinois from 1994 to 2012.

IMITATING THE HOLY FAMILY FOUR TRAITS THAT MAKE IT POSSIBLE

www.wau.org
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Like many parents, every day my wife and I face real and challenging issues in our family. We have two teenage sons and three younger children. Like many families, our children fight and bicker.

Sometimes they are loving and kind, but at other times they are disrespectful. Sometimes they resist doing chores and homework.

In addition to these very common problems with our children, my wife and I have to balance work and family life, make educational decisions for our kids, track our finances, and work through marital disagreements. This is our life! While we would never trade any of our kids (at least not most days!), each day presents its own set of dilemmas along with plenty of tension.

This reality stands in stark contrast to the perception of the Holy Family that I cherished as a child. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph seemed to have such a peaceful existence. After all, Mary and Jesus never sinned, and Joseph behaved like a saint! This makes it easy to dismiss the "Holy Family" as passé or irrelevant in today's world.

That's why it's so vital not to settle for a shallow understanding of the Holy Family! Even though they lived in a different age and culture, the family life of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph can bring us hope by showing us how we too can live as a "holy family."

Beset with Trials. Joseph and Mary faced real problems, even serious crises that families typically don't confront. Imagine how you would feel if armed soldiers were searching house to house for your son or daughter, intent on murdering your child! Fear, rage, and bitterness might grip you, not just for days but for years. This is just one of the trials that Mary and Joseph endured. Afraid for their son's life, they fled their home and the only country they had ever known. Later they had to forgive those who had threatened them lest they be bound by bitterness.

Even before Jesus' birth, Mary had already endured trial. Many in her town may well have known of her pregnancy outside of marriage. Rumors in a small town can be vicious, and Mary was likely the butt of various jokes and gossip from those with whom she had grown up. All of this before facing the normal struggles of raising a son!

Jesus' parents also faced financial pressures. Because Jesus had been born into relative poverty, there was barely enough money to pay for even the least expensive Jewish circumcision. Living modestly was the rule by which they lived. They had to be frugal and still tithe.

Then, as their son turned twelve, they faced perhaps their greatest scare: a runaway child!

If one of your children were missing for several days, wouldn't fear and guilt consume you? For days, Mary and Joseph must have battled the condemning thoughts that any parents would face in a similar situation: Will we ever find our son again? Is he hurt? Why didn't I keep him with me? Did he run off intentionally?

Can We Become a Holy Family? So, if Mary and Joseph faced trials just like ours, then what exactly is a "holy family"? And how are we supposed to live like them? First of all, even though much of their lives involved mundane routine, Joseph and Mary had a sense of God's call and plan for their lives. They knew that in raising Jesus, they played a unique role in God's plan. Even during the worst times, they couldn't escape the fact that God's hand was on their lives in a special way.

Of course, while no mother or father will ever again raise the incarnate Son of God as their own child, every husband and wife should have a similar sense of God's plan for their family. God has called each family together uniquely; no one else has been given the opportunity to love and raise your children. We must find that sense of awe even during the "dog days" of sibling rivalry and financial stress. God has called you personally!

Mary and Joseph's relationship wasn't based on common interests or similar personalities. While they may have been very compatible, this wasn't the basis of their unity. Their relationship with God was the foundation of their marriage, and it was this strength that held them together during trials. Similarly, it is vital that in our homes, at least one parent — if not both — find their strength through a relationship with God.

Husbands and wives don't always approach their faith in the same way. Often (but not always!), wives have a deeper sense of the need for God's presence in the family. In these situations, perhaps only the wife will find her strength through prayer. Single parents especially need to turn to the Lord for the energy and wisdom to raise their children.

Whatever the circumstances, it is a blessing when one parent deepens in his or her faith walk with God. During trials, the faith of one parent will produce strength and peace for the whole family. Of course, it's best when both parents are seeking to wholeheartedly follow the Lord.

Set Apart for God. Another aspect of being a "holy family" is that we have an awareness that we have been

set apart for God to live out his call and build his kingdom. When we possess such an awareness, our lives will naturally reflect a different set of priorities than those held by most other people in the world. We don't need to own the most possessions. We don't need our children to win every game or academic award. We won't find our security in the pursuits that many others desire.

Instead, being a holy family means that we try to obey God in all of our decisions. God is not simply our co-pilot, helping us out during those few times when we call upon him. Instead, we want each decision that we make — whether it involves parental discipline or family dinners — to be pleasing to him. We want to listen to God and live in the way that he wants us to live. This is what it means to be "set apart for God."

We want to trust God, especially in the midst of the most difficult situations. When our kids are behaving badly and we don't know how to respond, when the funds in our checkbooks are low and the fuses are short in our marriage, we want to find a way to obey God's will in our relationships. This is what it means to be a holy family.

Another important aspect of living as a holy family involves repentance and prayer. Many of us recall the movie that defined today's definition of repentance: "Love means never having to say you're sorry." Oh, if this were only the case! If you and I are to have a holy and loving family, then the exact opposite is true.

Love means seeking and offering forgiveness on a regular basis. Love means not holding grudges and angers. Love means recognizing when I have wronged my spouse and making sure that our relationship hasn't been damaged. Repentance in a marriage is one of the most beautiful gifts from heaven. It softens the heart of the offended, and it heals the hurt in a relationship. We would all do well to practice repentance and forgiveness and to teach our children to do the same.

A holy family also means that we will find ways to pray together as a family. We find this difficult with our kids, especially our teenagers. But in the long run, short times of family prayer combined with family attendance and participation at Mass will have a positive impact on our children. As Mother Teresa used to say, "The family that prays together stays together."

Each Family Is Unique. I know some families who really are holy. One couple has raised six children, one of whom is disabled. During these last twenty-five years, they have encouraged each of their children, including their disabled daughter, to follow the Lord and to develop their unique gifts. Most importantly, their life and love witness to a vibrant faith.

I am a close friend of another couple who don't see eye to eye on a host of issues, but they too are holy. Both had been widowed, and combining two separate families into one was a real trial for them. They brought together different parenting philosophies and strategies for discipline, and sometimes their views conflicted severely. But because of their willingness to repent and forgive each other and because they sought God's way over their own, their children have experienced a beautiful home life.

A third couple is struggling with a strong-willed child. Even though they don't have any magic answers, they are trying to learn how to help their daughter. Her angry outbursts and moods can negatively affect the atmosphere of the whole family. However, this couple has told me that their daughter has taught them how much they need God as the foundation of their family. They too are a holy family.

The strengths and weaknesses of each family differ greatly. But in every case, they are holy because they are trying to put Jesus first in their lives as best they can. One or both parents are seeking God in prayer. They are trying to make love and encouragement flow in their homes more than criticism and negativity. They are doing their best to teach their children how to repent to one another. And in every case, as a family, they attend weekly Mass.

Of course there will be moments when we fall short. At those times, we may even begin to wonder whether it's worth trying to imitate the Holy Family. Remember, however, that God is pleased with our faithfulness. While we tend to focus on our failures, he sees the intentions of our heart. When things aren't going well, it's tempting to throw up our hands in despair. Instead, we can call upon God in each moment of the day, asking him to bless our efforts to be a family that witnesses to his life and love. □

God Touched Me
“ Hear Me Oh Lord As I Pray ”
November 17, 2016 @ 12:30 AM
By Susan V.

I close my eyes and open my heart,
And feel my worries and cares depart.
I yield myself to the Father above,
And let Him hold me in his loving ways.
When I'm troubled, worried, and ready to give up,
Feeling like my world is falling apart.
The burden I find too heavy to bear,
With all my problems, quite hard to share.

At times when I feel tired, discouraged, and helpless
I turn to you Oh Lord and ask for forgiveness.
Into a brighter and less troubled day you give,
The countless graces and blessings I received.
As I feel the pains and suffering my body endures,
With faith I let go and let you lead my way.
You see me on my knees, with tears on my face,
I pray for mercy in your most Holy Name.
With my heart, filled with despair,
I feel your presence and loving care.

I pour out to you my heart and soul,
As you guide me when things are too impossible.
You give me strength so I can carry on.
To take my cross and follow you.
You never gave up on calling me
Just to let me know you're there waiting for me.
And to make me feel that I, too, am a child of God
To be much closer and have deeper connection with You.

Teaching me to humble myself, I now offer humility
As I battle this disease that can take my life away,
The fear that I felt in my heart now turns to Hope
You answer my prayers and make my Faith stronger.
“Thy will be done.” In Jesus Most Holy Name
Thank you for loving me and helping me to Believe
That you will always be there for me.
The peace that I have now in my heart
It's from Father above that has been watching over me
Every moment as I praise your Most Holy Name
Hear Me Oh Lord, As I Pray..□

**If you have any personal articles
on 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
alice.a@spiritualarmyofgod.org
(702) 274-4315 and/or (213) 385-7798.**

SPIRITUAL ARMY NEWS DISPATCH



**HAVE A SAFE AND PEACEFUL TRIP,
PILGRIMS OF THE SPIRITUAL ARMY
OF GOD THE FATHER!!!**

And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

ISAIAH 2:3

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

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

"WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT GOD WILL NOT DESPISE
A BROKEN SPIRIT AND CONTRITE HEART?"
(PSALM 51:17)

WWW.GOTQUESTIONS.ORG

Psalm 51 was written by King David after he committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband killed to cover his sin (*2 Samuel 11*). It has been said of David that he sinned big, but repented bigger. He is a model to us of what real heart repentance looks like. He wrote this psalm as an agonized cry to God for forgiveness.

Psalm 51:17 says, "My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise." The meaning of this is connected with the verse just before it. Verse 16 says, "You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings." David is stating that there is nothing we can offer God to appease Him when we have sinned. More animal sacrifices were not what God was looking for. God desires true repentance.

Many people miss this truth. Rather than repent, they try to "clean up their act," give more, pray more, or busy themselves in other religious activity in the hopes that God will finally "get over" being mad at them. In **Psalm 51**, David is saying that God wants none of that. External religious activity cannot replace internal, heartfelt contrition (*1 Samuel 16:7*).

Psalm 51:17 points out the one thing God desires more than any other: brokenness over our own sin. When we agree with God about how bad our sin is, we take the first step toward reconciliation with Him. As long as we try to

justify, excuse, or rationalize the evil of our own hearts, we never find our way back into God's presence. Repentance is the doorway to freedom. Satan knows this and does everything he can to detract us from it. He suggests things that our selfish nature likes to hear: "Your sin wasn't that bad." "Compared to others, you're okay." "God has forgotten it already. No need to confess it." When we listen to the devil's oily words, we veer away from the doorway to freedom and remain in bondage. We may feel remorse or regret, but neither is a sufficient substitute for true repentance (see *Hebrews 12:17*).

David reminds us that the only path to forgiveness is a broken heart and a humble spirit (*cf. Matthew 5:3*). When we throw ourselves on the mercy of God, He delights to lift us up (*Luke 18:13-14*). When we openly acknowledge our sin against God, turn from it, and cry out for cleansing, God promises that He will hear us and forgive (*1 John 1:9*).

It is interesting to note that, although David sinned against Bathsheba and her husband, David makes this statement to God: "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight" (*Psalms 51:4*). David gets to the heart of why God so hates sin. It is a violation of His very nature. We are created in that image, but our sin mars it, like a smudge on a mirror. A broken spirit and a contrite heart invite God to clean that smudge and restore us to right relationship with Him. ☐

" The next step will be to fight and resist the evil forces that envelope every corner of human society. I am the Lord God who is Lord of heaven and earth. **Give me your heart and let me feel the sincerity of everyone so changes and prosperity will come to your land as you never expected.**

Cleansing my children will be drastic and will come above and under the earth. Prepare, prepare, prepare my children and resist the evil one."

Jesus of Nazareth, Your Loving God
November 5, 2016

THANK YOU

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

Psalm 106:2

THE 800 OUR FATHER DEVOTION

The Spiritual Army of God the Father acknowledges with thanks our generous December sponsors of the 800 Our Father Devotion. We are grateful that we have merited their partnership and support in providing a venue of spirituality and fellowship for the devotees of God the Father.

Las Vegas, Nevada

Gary and Maria Sheets

Los Angeles, California

Next devotional schedule will be
in January, 2017

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?

Thank you, my Lord, for the beautiful family you have given Frank and me. We are very blessed and we appreciate Your love. . "Thank you very much, my Lord and my God!"

Rosario Brown

Thanks be to God for all the Christmases of my life. Family memories include the crush of well-attended midnight mass, and meals at home and occasionally with friends out in Las Vegas, as well as decorating Christmas trees, after shopping for them and bringing them in, and figuring out how to make them stand. Close family friends shared tips about where to get the trees and how to shore them up. Spiritual Army of God Christmases include the O antiphon novena, shared with my parents, and calls from Evelyn to let me know of the special moment of midnight prayer Christmas-Eve-to-Christmas, then praying as best I could, with extra faith and assurance because of our group. I am truly grateful. May my birth family blend into the Spiritual Army of God the Father family again, now with my brother and sister and their families.

Joyce

Thank you, God, for your protection and guidance.

Robert Pua

I thank God for giving me the strength to get through my chemotherapy sessions. I also thank everyone who prayed for me during this difficult times. GOD IS GOOD!!!

Tess Luna

Thank you, my Lord and my God, for sending your Holy Spirit to enlighten us during the preparation of the Souvenir Brochure for the 10th Anniversary of the Cenacle House. We are dedicating this brochure to You and we pray that through this brochure, we will be able to propagate Your Name and make You known, honored and loved by all men.

Evelyn Pua

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

The 800 Our Father Devotion – Next schedule will be in January, 2017

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 80108 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

The 800 Our Father Devotion – December 17, 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 AM 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.