



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

DECEMBER 2023

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## 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.

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## FEASTS FOR DECEMBER

THE FEASTS ON THE GENERAL ROMAN CALENDAR CELEBRATED DURING THE MONTH OF DECEMBER ARE:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 3 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, SUNDAY                     | 22 EMBER FRIDAY   |
| 6 NICHOLAS, OPT. MEM.                                | 23 JOHN OF KANTY; EMBER SATURDAY, OPT. MEM.   |
| 7 AMBROSE, MEMORIAL                                  | 24 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, SUNDAY  |
| 8 IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY,<br>SOLEMNITY        | 25 NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS), SOLEMNITY  |
| 9 JUAN DIEGO (USA) , OPT. MEM.                       | 26 STEPHEN, FEAST   |
| 10 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT, SUNDAY                   | 27 JOHN, APOSTLE, FEAST   |
| 11 DAMASUS I, OPT. MEM.                              | 28 HOLY INNOCENTS, FEAST  |
| 12 OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE (USA), FEAST                | 29 5TH DAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS; THOMAS<br>BECKET, OPT. MEM.  |
| 13 LUCY, MEMORIAL                                    | 31 FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY, FEAST  |
| 14 JOHN OF THE CROSS, MEMORIAL                       |   |
| 17 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT, GAUDETE<br>SUNDAY, SUNDAY | THE OPTIONAL MEMORIALS OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER<br>(DECEMBER 3), AND OUR LADY OF LORETO<br>(DECEMBER 10), ARE SUPERSEDED BY THE SUNDAY<br>LITURGY. ☐ |
| 20 EMBER WEDNESDAY                                   |   |
| 21 PETER CANISIUS, OPT. MEM.                         |   |

## OUR CENACLE CORNER

SEEKING A DEEPER RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD  
THROUGH MEDITATION OF PASSAGES FROM HOLY SCRIPTURES

*Distraction*

# GOD TOUCHED ME

*Publish his glorious deeds among the nations.  
Tell everyone about the amazing things he does. — 1 Chronicles 16:24*

## GOD'S GRACE AND MY JOURNEY TO THE EUCHARIST

*By Gerrard Gier, a devotee*

*"WE WERE BURIED THEREFORE WITH HIM BY BAPTISM INTO DEATH, SO THAT AS CHRIST WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD  
BY THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, WE TOO MIGHT WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE."*

*- Romans 6:3-4*

BEING BORN AND RAISED IN HAWAII, I REMEMBER GOING TO CHURCH AT A YOUNG AGE. I NEVER KNEW MUCH OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH, BUT I DID KNOW I WAS BAPTIZED. I REMEMBER MY MOM TAKING ALL FIVE OF US CHILDREN, WHILE MY DAD STAYED HOME AND WATCHED FOOTBALL. MY FAMILY WAS VERY MUCH THE "ATHLETIC FAMILY" AND AS WE GOT OLDER, SPORTS BECAME THE NORMAL WEEKEND ACTIVITY. WITH ALL FIVE CHILDREN IN DIFFERENT VARIOUS SPORTS, MY PARENTS WOULD "DIVIDE AND CONQUER" TO MAKE SURE AT LEAST ONE PARENT WOULD BE ABLE TO WATCH AT LEAST ONE GAME FROM THE WHOLE WEEKEND. THE MORE WE EXCELLED IN OUR SPORTS, THE LESS WE WENT TO CHURCH. UNFORTUNATELY, GOING TO CHURCH DID NOT REMAIN A PRIORITY. BUT THE #1 THING THAT WE ALWAYS DID, WAS ALWAYS EATING DINNER TOGETHER AS A FAMILY, AND ALWAYS SAYING GRACE. LITTLE DID I REALIZE HOW MUCH OF GOD'S GRACE WAS IN MY LIFE.

EVEN THOUGH WE WERE NOT ATTENDING CHURCH, I ALWAYS CONTINUED PRACTICING GOOD, MORAL VALUES. IF YOU'VE EVER BEEN TO HAWAII, I'M SURE YOU'VE WITNESSED (OR AT LEAST HEARD ABOUT) THE "ALOHA SPIRIT." IT WASN'T UNTIL I WAS OLDER THAT I REALIZED THAT THIS SAME ALOHA SPIRIT WAS VERY SIMILAR TO THE TEACHINGS OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH — PRACTICING THE "GOLDEN RULE" IN TREATING OTHERS THE WAY THAT YOU WOULD WANT TO BE TREATED, APPRECIATING WHATEVER GIFTS HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO YOU, PUTTING OTHERS FIRST, AND GIVING OF YOURSELF AND NOT EXPECTING ANYTHING IN RETURN. LOOKING

BACK NOW, I SEE THAT THIS ALOHA SPIRIT THAT I CARRIED WITH ME IN HOW I TREATED OTHERS, WAS VERY MUCH ROOTED IN THE CATHOLIC FAITH.

THROUGHOUT HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE I WAS ALWAYS INTERESTED IN RELIGION. I WOULD ATTEND CHURCH AT VARIOUS CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS WITH DIFFERENT FRIENDS, INCLUDING CATHOLIC ONES. DURING MY JUNIOR/SENIOR YEAR IN COLLEGE, ONE PROFESSOR HAD WATCHED ME PLAY BASEBALL. HE APPROACHED ME AFTER THE GAME AND SAID, "IF YOU EVER NEED TO TAKE AN ELECTIVE (CLASS), YOU SHOULD TAKE MY RELIGION CLASS. I THINK YOU WOULD LIKE IT." THERE WERE NOT MANY CLASSES I GOT AN "A" IN, BUT FOR THIS PARTICULAR CLASS, I DID EARN AN "A." I THOROUGHLY ENJOYED THE CLASS AND LOOKING BACK, IT PROBABLY SPARKED A SPIRITUAL EMBER INSIDE OF ME.

I HAD DREAMS OF PLAYING PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL, BUT AN INJURY TOWARDS THE END OF MY SENIOR YEAR CHANGED ALL THAT — I HAD COME TO THE REALIZATION THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE MY PATH.

I WENT BACK TO SCHOOL AND GOT MY MASTER'S DEGREE. I HAD A GREAT FIRST JOB UPON COMPLETING MY GRADUATE STUDIES, BUT UNFORTUNATELY, GOT LAID OFF. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, I FOUND AN EVEN BETTER JOB. THIS PATTERN OF GETTING LAID OFF, BUT THEN FINDING A BETTER JOB CONTINUED FOUR TIMES!

TO ME, THAT'S BEING VERY BLESSED . . . THAT THERE WAS A "HIGHER POWER" WATCHING OVER ME. WAS THAT USUALLY THE CASE? GETTING LAID OFF AND

FINDING A BETTER JOB AFTER? I BELIEVE THAT I CAN ONLY CONTROL WHAT I CAN CONTROL. I TRY TO BE THE BEST IN EVERYTHING I DO, TRYING TO GIVE MORE THAN I RECEIVE, AND JUST "GOING WITH THE FLOW." THERE'S A HAWAIIAN SONG "JUST ALONG FOR THE RIDE." I CAN SEE MYSELF IN A CANOE, JUST TRAVELING AND SEEING WHERE THE OCEAN WAVES TAKE ME. YOU CAN ONLY PADDLE SO MUCH, BUT THE OCEAN IS SO VAST. TO GET WHERE YOU WANNA GO, YOU'VE GOT TO WORK WITH WHATEVER CURRENT YOU GET. AGAIN, YOU CAN ONLY CONTROL WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL . . . THE REST YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO TRUST AND GO BY FAITH.

I MET MY FUTURE WIFE SHORTLY AFTER MY SECOND LAYOFF. I WAS LIVING ALONE AND WITH NO JOB. AFTER I STARTED DATING HER, I CAME TO FIND OUT THAT SHE WAS TEACHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TO GRADE SCHOOL KIDS AT HER CHURCH. I WAS HAPPY THAT SHE WAS GROUNDED IN HER FAITH, ATTENDING CHURCH REGULARLY. HER FAITH WAS ONE OF THE THINGS I ADMIRER MOST ABOUT HER. WHEN THINGS GOT SERIOUS, I WENT DECIDED IT WAS TIME TO LOOK FOR A JOB AGAIN, AND AGAIN THROUGH GOD'S GRACE (ALTHOUGH I DIDN'T REALIZE IT AT THE TIME), FOUND ONE RIGHT AWAY.

WE AGREED WHEN WE HAD CHILDREN, THEY WOULD BE RAISED CATHOLIC . . . AND SO BEGAN THE TANGIBLE AND VISIBLE BEGINNINGS OF MY WALK TOWARDS A DEEPER CATHOLIC FAITH. WE GOT MARRIED IN A CATHOLIC CHURCH A YEAR AFTER BEING ENGAGED. OUR FIRST CHILD WAS BAPTIZED IN THE SAME CHURCH WE HAD GOTTEN MARRIED AT. AND WHEN OUR SECOND CHILD CAME ALONG, WAS BAPTIZED AT THE SAME CHURCH AS WELL. ALTHOUGH WE AGREED THE CHILDREN WOULD BE RAISED CATHOLIC, MY WIFE NEVER BUGGED ME ABOUT ATTENDING MASS EVERY SUNDAY. HER ONLY REQUEST WAS THAT ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS, SUCH AS EASTER AND CHRISTMAS, WE COULD ATTEND MASS TOGETHER AS A FAMILY. OF COURSE, I OBLIGED.

AS THE CHILDREN GREW OLDER IT WAS TIME FOR OUR ELDEST CHILD TO BEGIN TAKING CLASSES TOWARDS RECEIVING THE SACRAMENTS OF RECONCILIATION AND THE EUCHARIST. OUR YOUNGEST WAS NOT OLD ENOUGH TO JOIN IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES, HOWEVER, WAS ENROLLED IN THE PRE-SCHOOL OF OUR LOCAL PARISH. THE PATH OF THEIR FAITH JOURNEYS WERE

BEGINNING AS WELL. MY KIDS WERE LEARNING THE CATHOLIC FAITH, BUT I DID NOT KNOW MUCH ABOUT IT.

I ASPIRE TO BE A GREAT FATHER, TO GROUND OUR CHILDREN IN THE CATHOLIC FAITH. BUT IN ORDER TO DO THAT, I FELT THAT I HAD TO "PRACTICE WHAT I PREACHED." HOW COULD THEY GROW IN THEIR FAITH, WHEN THEIR OWN FATHER DID NOT PRACTICE THE FAITH? I DID NOT WANT TO TALK ABOUT ANYTHING THAT I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT. BUT GOD HAD A PLAN FOR ME!

OUR YOUNGEST CHILD WAS ENROLLED AT THE PARISH PRESCHOOL IN AUGUST OF 2013. OUR OLDEST WAS ENROLLED IN SACRAMENT PREPARATION SOON AFTER IN SEPTEMBER. THEN THAT OCTOBER, MY WIFE AND I ATTENDED THE MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT WEEKEND RETREAT AT ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE IN CHINO HILLS. THIS WEEKEND RETREAT WOULD BE THE NEXT STEPPING STONE IN ALL OUR FAITH JOURNEYS.

THE WEEKEND WAS TO CULMINATE THAT SUNDAY AFTERNOON WITH A BEAUTIFUL MASS OFFERED FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILIES OF ALL THE COUPLES. THAT AFTERNOON BEFORE THE MASS, MY WIFE AND I MADE OUR COMMITMENT TO GOD – FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, WE WILL ATTEND MASS EVERY SUNDAY ALTOGETHER AS A FAMILY.

IT TOUCHED ME IN THAT MOMENT BECAUSE IT MADE ME REMEMBER MY CHILDHOOD AND ATTENDING CHURCH WITH MY MOM AND SIBLINGS, WITH MY DAD AT HOME. I ASKED MYSELF, "AM I PARTICIPATING AND 'PRESENT' IN MY FAMILY?" TO BE A GREAT FATHER MEANS I HAVE TO BE INVOLVED AND PRESENT IN ALL PARTS OF OUR FAMILY LIFE, INCLUDING RAISING OUR CHILDREN IN THE CATHOLIC FAITH. I HAVE TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE ATTENDING MASS AND THAT I'M ABLE TO ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS OF FAITH.

ATTENDING MASS EVERY SUNDAY FELT BOTH FAMILIAR TO ME, AND IN SOME ASPECTS, NEW TO ME AS WELL. EVERYONE ONCE IN A WHILE I WOULD ASK MY WIFE WHAT SOMETHING PARTICULAR MEANT, WHETHER IT WAS A GESTURE, OR STRUCTURE OF THE MASS. WHEN I MAKE A COMMITMENT TO SOMETHING, I'M NOT JUST GOING TO "GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS." I NEED TO KNOW WHAT I NEED TO DO, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHY WE DO IT AND WHAT IS THE MEANING BEHIND IT. I KNEW I WASN'T ABLE TO RECEIVE COMMUNION, BUT I WOULD

JOIN THE KIDS AND RECEIVING A BLESSING FROM THE PRIEST EVERY MASS. WE WOULD EVEN SIT ON CERTAIN SIDES OF THE PEWS AT CHURCH, JUST TO MAKE SURE WE WERE ON THE SIDE WHERE THE PRIEST WOULD BE SO THAT I COULD GET THE BLESSING FROM HIM AND NOT FROM A EUCHARISTIC MINISTER.

IN THE FALL OF 2014, MY WIFE MENTIONED THAT THE NEXT SESSION FOR THE ADULT CONFIRMATION OR RCIA PROGRAM WOULD START SOON. I WANTED TO CONTINUE MY SACRAMENTS, BUT I GOT BUSY AT WORK, AND DIDN'T FEEL READY. I HAD A WEEK OR LESS TO DECIDE AND IT FELT RUSHED AND I WAS NOT PREPARED MENTALLY. BUT I MADE THE PROMISE TO MYSELF THAT I WOULD JOIN NEXT YEAR'S CLASS. HERE I AM, ATTENDING MASS REGULARLY, BUT NOT RECEIVING COMMUNION . . . IT DIDN'T SEEM FAIR.

THIS PAST SEPTEMBER, I FINALLY WAS ABLE TO SIGN UP FOR THE ADULT CONFIRMATION CLASS. (I DIDN'T DO THE RCIA PROGRAM SINCE I WAS ALREADY BAPTIZED AS A CHILD.) IN LEARNING MORE AND MORE ABOUT MY CATHOLIC FAITH, I KNOW THAT THE EUCHARIST IS ONE OF, IF NOT, THE MOST IMPORTANT PART ABOUT BEING CATHOLIC. GETTING A BLESSING EVERY WEEK JUST WASN'T THE SAME AS BEING ABLE TO RECEIVE THE BODY AND BLOOD OF OUR LORD, JESUS CHRIST. FOR TWO YEARS, I FELT LEFT OUT.

FOR ME, THE CLASS HAS BEEN GREAT, INFORMATIVE IN HELPING ME LEARN ABOUT OUR FAITH, ITS TEACHINGS, AND TRADITIONS. BUT TRULY THE HIGHLIGHT HAS BEEN FINALLY BEING ABLE TO RECEIVE THE BODY AND BLOOD

OF CHRIST. ALTHOUGH IT HAS ONLY BEEN A WEEK, I NOW TRULY FEEL I AM OFFICIALLY A CATHOLIC. I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT, BUT I DO FEEL THERE IS A GREAT BLESSING AND GRACE THAT COMES WITH IT. I AM NOW TRULY ROOTED IN MY CATHOLIC FAITH. BEFORE IT WAS JUST GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS, BUT NOW THAT I'VE RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST, I HAVE TO BE CHRIST TO OTHERS. AFTER THAT MOMENT, FROM THIS POINT ON, I AM TRULY PRACTICING WHAT I'M PREACHING.

IT'S NOT JUST GOING TO CHURCH ON SUNDAYS, BUT LIVING YOUR FAITH IN YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE. I THANK GOD THE FATHER FOR ALWAYS BLESSING ME AND GIVING ME THE STRENGTH AND GRACE TOWARDS MY JOURNEY TO THE EUCHARIST. I'M LIVING EACH DAY TO HUMBLY SERVE MY GOD THE FATHER. IF HE ASKS ME TO DO SOMETHING, I WILL BE OBEDIENT BECAUSE I AM HIS HUMBLE SERVANT . . . AND MY JOURNEY ISN'T OVER YET! I LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BEING "CONFIRMED" IN MY CATHOLIC FAITH THIS COMING EASTER SEASON.

*"ALWAYS REMEMBER THE LIFE YOU HAVE IN THIS WORLD IS YOUR ACTUAL OFFERING BEFORE GOD'S THRONE IN THE EVERLASTING REALM."* • □

**Editor's Note:** Gerrard received his 1<sup>st</sup> Communion on Sunday, December 6, 2015, at the Spiritual Army's 1st Sunday Devotion to God the Father at the Monastery of the Angels, with the late Fr. Vincent Hughes, OFM, celebrating. Currently, year 2023, he is attending the Diaconal Training Program in the Diocese of San Bernardino.

## REFLECTIONS OF THE MEANING AND LESSON OF CHRISTMAS

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 PROPHECY MADE ABOUT THE MESSIAS 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. □

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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.

***“Many will persecute my true church including those whom they call leaders. But let this be clear to all, judgment is coming without avail. Many will fail not only in my true church but also to those who pretend to be leaders of governments. That day is coming very soon.”***

***Jesus of Nazareth , your loving God***  
***11182023***

# SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

## DISTRACTION

BY VICTOR ARANETA

A DISTRACTION IS SOMETHING THAT TAKES YOUR ATTENTION AWAY FROM WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING. THEY CAN BE EXTERNAL FACTORS SUCH AS VISUAL TRIGGERS, SOCIAL INTERACTIONS, MUSIC, TEXT MESSAGES, PHONE CALLS; OR INTERNAL FACTORS, SUCH AS HUNGER, FATIGUE, ILLNESS, WORRYING OR DAYDREAMING. THUS, DISTRACTION IS VERY EMINENT, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE ARE PRAYING.

MANY ARE INVITED BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN. WHEN WE PRAY, THIS IS THE TIME WHEN THE ENEMY ATTACKS WITH CANDOR. THERE WILL BE NO LETTING UP ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE ON YOUR KNEES PRAYING FOR SOMEONE.

IN THE BIBLE THERE ARE TWO THAT REALLY STAND OUT:

"BUT MARTHA WAS DISTRACTED WITH MUCH SERVING..."  
LUKE 10:40

"AND THIS I SAY FOR YOUR OWN PROFIT, NOT THAT I MAY PUT A LEASH ON YOU, BUT FOR WHAT IS PROPER, AND THAT YOU MAY SERVE THE LORD WITHOUT DISTRACTION."  
1CORINTHIANS 7:35



AS WE LEARN FROM SOME OF THESE BIBLICAL CHARACTERS THEIR ENVIRONMENT HAD A LOT TO DO WITH THEIR DISTRACTION FROM GOD'S PLAN. THE SAME IS TRUE FOR US. LEVERAGE YOUR ENVIRONMENT AND BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE IN YOUR HOME, PRAYER ROOM AND SURROUNDINGS.

**PRAYER:** LORD, I COME AGAINST EVERY POWER OF DISTRACTION IN MY WAY TO SUCCESS AND BREAKTHROUGH. I PRAY THAT YOU WILL DESTROY THEM. AND WHISPER IT TO MY HEART, IN THE MIGHTY NAME OF YOUR SON JESUS. AMEN. □

## Upcoming Events

### 1<sup>ST</sup> FRIDAY DEVOTION

DECEMBER 1, 2023

IN LAS VEGAS:  
THE CENACLE HOUSE  
AT 2:30 PM

IN LOS ANGELES: VIA ZOOM  
AT 8:30 PM  
VIA ZOOM

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

DECEMBER 2, 2023

IN LOS ANGELES:  
THE MONASTERY OF THE ANGELS  
DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS AT 8:30 AM  
MASS AT 10:00 AM  
CENACLE AT 11:15 AM

IN LAS VEGAS:  
THE CENACLE HOUSE  
AT 1:00 PM

### 1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY DEVOTION

DECEMBER 3, 2023

IN LAS VEGAS:  
ST. SHARBEL CATHOLIC CHURCH  
MASS AT 9:30 AM FOLLOWED BY  
DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS AT THE CHAPEL

IN LOS ANGELES:  
THE MONASTERY OF THE ANGELS  
MASS & BENEDICTION AT 11:00 AM

### 800 OUR FATHER DEVOTION

DECEMBER 16, 2023

IN LAS VEGAS: THE CENACLE HOUSE  
AT 8:00 AM

IN LOS ANGELES: VIA ZOOM  
MASS AT 9:15 AM

### FEAST OF THE HOLY INFANT JESUS

JANUARY 6, 2024

IN LAS VEGAS: THE CENACLE HOUSE  
IN LOS ANGELES: THE MONASTERY OF  
THE ANGELS  
DETAILS TO FOLLOW