



Vol. 13, No. 137  
March 2019

# HERALDS OF THE GOSPEL

*The Virginal  
Father of Jesus*





The city of Vienna, with Schönbrunn Palace in the foreground; detail, St. Clement Mary Hofbauer

## ***Wise Preacher, Apostle of Vienna***

**S**t. Clement was a priest and an apostle according to the heart of God. He exercised his priestly ministry with holy enthusiasm and rigorous exactitude, and it was in the ambit of preacher and director of souls that he showed himself to be the true apostle of Vienna. The original way in which he carried out this responsibility made him popular in the great capital and thoroughly broke with the pedantry introduced by Josephinism in Austria.

At that time, after Joseph II, genuinely Catholic sermons were hardly to be heard, because the truths of the Faith were no longer spoken of, but only elegant and agreeable topics such as Christianity, philanthropy, etc. A disciple of our Saint aptly observed that preaching regarding the Catholic Church was such a rarity that youths rejoiced when the orator proffered the words "Holy Catholic Church."

The preaching of St. Clement produced the effect of a bomb. The Eucharist, veneration to Our Lady and to the Saints, Confession, indulgences, Purgatory, hell, and the devil were themes that were prohibited by Josephinism, but truths that St. Clement expounded on from the pulpit with extreme clarity and firmness.

St. Clement resuscitated Catholic preaching in Vienna; his physical expression sharply contrasted with the elegant and vain posing of fashionable preachers; he was a popular preacher in the true sense of the word.

Taken from Chagas Azeredo, CSsR, Oscar.  
São Clemente Maria Hofbauer.  
Aparecida do Norte (SP):  
Livraria Nossa Senhora Aparecida, 1928



# HERALDS OF THE GOSPEL

Vol. 13, No. 137, March 2019

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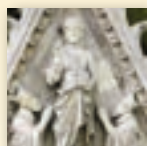
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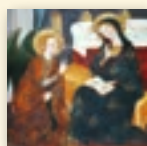
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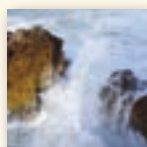
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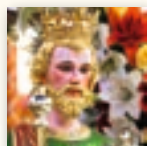
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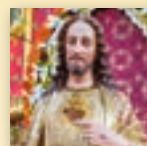
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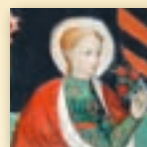
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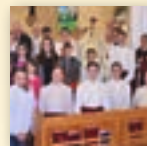
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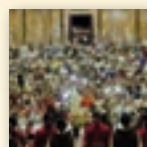
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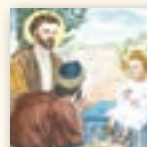
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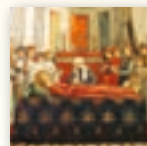
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# OUR READERS WRITE

## **TO BE COMMENDED FOR NATIVITY SCENE**

For yet another year, the Heralds of the Gospel rendered homage to the Child Jesus with the setting up of the Christmas Nativity Scene. It is a work not only of artistic merit, but also one of a catechetical nature, even for adults. The movement of the figures provides a visual experience that creates the impression of a living scenario. Each year, care is taken to add new features, so that the presentation is never repetitive. Another detail worth highlighting is the way the mysteries of the Nativity and the redeeming Death of Jesus are united with the magnificent exaltation of the Resurrected Lord's victory.

The Heralds of the Gospel are to be highly commended for their annual Nativity Scene, for through it they offer a precious work of evangelization. May the inventive effort that goes into producing this Nativity Scene inspire continual growth in our faith.

*Most Rev. Roberto Gomes Guimarães*  
Bishop Emeritus of Campos – RJ

## **LITERARY TREASURE ANALYSED WITH DEVOTION AND REFINEMENT**

Accept my eternal gratitude for the impeccable literary, cultural, and spiritual content of *Heralds of the Gospel* magazine that you send every month, which I welcome as a divine gift. My thanks to each one of those who collaborate in its preparation.

In the July issue, I read with special emotion and shared with my

prayer group the precious sonnet from the writer Lope de Vega, *What have I, that you my friendship seek?* Accompanied by the fantastic meditation by Santiago Vieto Rodríguez. I was enchanted with the love with which he refers to the Mediatrix of all graces, to our Guardian Angel, to the holy vocation that we all receive, as well as to our human weakness and the loving insistence of Jesus. For me, it was a literary treasure analysed with devotion and refinement.

Thank you and best regards.

*Gloria Francisca Arroba*  
Quito – Ecuador

## **ENRICHES THE SOUL AND MIND OF EVERY GOOD CATHOLIC**

I congratulate the Heralds of the Gospel for this magazine, a mirror of sound doctrine and edifying examples of holiness. From the stories for children to the papal pronouncements, its whole content enriches the soul and mind of every good Catholic. The Voice of the Popes enlightens us regarding the Magisterium of the Church defended and taught by Pontiffs from the past, whom it would otherwise be very difficult for us to know, and who, nonetheless, are of great current relevance, given what is happening in this revolutionary world.

*María del Carmen Sierra*  
Mexico City – Mexico

## **I FEEL IT HAS THE BREATH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

It is difficult for me to express an opinion on the magazine, since I have difficulty writing. Furthermore, I feel that it contains the breath of the Holy Spirit and, as

such, I have no words fit to offer suggestions.

I keep praying for all apostolic movements and, in a very special way, for the presence of the charism of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira in the Heralds of the Gospel.

*Alberto Matias Pereira*  
Valado de Frades – Portugal

## **ST. ROSALIA OF PALERMO**

I imagine that in antiquity the main criterion for building a fountain over a spring would be the abundance and purity of its water.

This image came to mind when I received the November issue of the magazine. It has accessible, but insightful doctrine, spiritual counsels that aim to sustain the purity of that which the vices of these times wish to permanently tarnish, and even advice useful for daily life! In short, everything reminded me of the freshness, purity and goodness of these springs... with a kind of inexhaustibility, for when I am finishing one issue, the next one arrives in my hands.

The section on the lives of the Saints is much appreciated by my older children, and we read it together. Reading the life of St. Rosalia of Palermo was of particular interest to them. Her story in the September issue contained a description of how the Angels prepared her a splendid Christmas banquet. An enchanting and angelic *beau geste*...

Many thanks for so much pure and inexhaustible water in these times in which, as a traditional Spanish Christmas carol says, much "water is muddied, and not fit for drinking."

*Carlos Vigo*  
Montevideo – Uruguay



## A NEW CIVILIZATION?

**A** sad naturalistic tendency of our days is to humanize even that which is most sacred, reducing everything to the insignificant proportions of contemporary man's capacity to comprehend. Unfortunately, this trend has failed to respect even the divine figure of Jesus Christ, viewing Him from such a human perspective that little of the Divine remains.

True theology, on the contrary, refuses to accept this systematic diminishment to which Jesus is often subjected, and points out not only His perfection, but also the excellence of everything that surrounded Him, by His will. Now, while to the Divine Maternity have been attributed the loftiest supernatural privileges that are known of Mary, theology has yet to fully develop the magnificent role of St. Joseph. For, as her spouse – and, above all, as father of Jesus – he was necessarily clothed in supreme excellence.

As Mary was for Jesus the best of mothers, Joseph was also for Him the best of fathers. Truly, with what devotedness did St. Joseph care for the Child Jesus; with what untold dedication did he watch over the Blessed Virgin! The few references to the Holy Patriarch in the Gospels show us a giant of faith and confidence, but leave to our piety and Catholic theological sense the sublime task of completing his image.

Now, to be truly a father is to epitomize within oneself the excellence of all the activities of a man. St. Joseph, zealous and responsible in his paternal duties, undoubtedly fought for the sustenance of the Holy Family. However, this was the least elevated of his prerogatives. With the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Child Jesus, he alternately assumed – according to circumstances – the role of supporter, consoler, guide and counsellor, of ruler and leader, of protector and defender, of instructor and director... In short, although Jesus had no need of this, He wanted to depend on Joseph, so that in everything He would be like us.

Inner strength, spotless purity, an iron will, and unshakeable confidence... in whatever circumstance we encounter St. Joseph, he is always such a model of action, readiness and holiness that we can unhesitatingly affirm that there is no field of human activity in which he is not a sure reference point and most perfect example. To understand the position of St. Joseph as the apogee of the human race, it is sufficient to consider that he represented for Our Lady the greatest figure after her Divine Son.

Thus, the perfections of St. Joseph are far more transcendent than popular piety customarily depicts. We must not see in him only a beautiful model for every man, but rather a true standard for the building of an entire civilization.

Nevertheless, this conception will only bear all its fruits when hearts are renewed by means of a new infusion of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is altogether possible that he will be associated with the triumph of the Wise and Immaculate Heart of Mary, giving rise to the hypothesis that the Reign of Christ, and Reign of Mary, will also be the Reign of Joseph... ✧



*St. Joseph -  
Basilica of Our  
Lady of the  
Rosary, Caieiras  
(São Paulo)*

Photo: Lúcio César Rodrigues  
Alves



## ***St. Joseph: Father of Jesus, Spouse of Mary, Patron of the Holy Church***



The reasons for which Blessed Joseph should be venerated as the special patron of the Church come especially from the fact that he is spouse of Mary and father of Jesus. From these sources have sprung his dignity, his holiness, his glory.

**D**uring periods of stress and trial – chiefly when every lawlessness of act seems permitted to the powers of darkness – it has been the custom in the Church to plead with special fervour and perseverance to God, her author and protector, by recourse to the intercession of the saints – and chiefly of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God – whose patronage has ever been the most efficacious.

The fruit of these pious prayers and of the confidence reposed in the Divine goodness, has always, sooner or later, been made apparent.

***In face of these circumstances,  
human remedies are insufficient***

Now, Venerable Brethren, you know the times in which we live; they are scarcely less deplorable for the Christian religion than the worst days, which in time past were most full of misery to the Church. We see faith, the root of all the Christian virtues, lessening in many souls; we see charity growing cold; the young generation daily growing in depravity of morals and views; the Church of Jesus Christ attacked on every side by open force

or by craft; a relentless war waged against the Sovereign Pontiff; and the very foundations of religion undermined with a boldness which waxes daily in intensity. These things are, indeed, so much a matter of notoriety that it is needless for Us to expatiate on the depths to which society has sunk in these days, or on the designs which now agitate the minds of men.

In circumstances so unhappy and troublous, human remedies are insufficient, and it becomes necessary, as a sole resource, to beg for assistance from the Divine power. This is the reason why We have considered it necessary to turn to the Christian people and urge them to implore, with increased zeal and constancy, the aid of Almighty God. [...]

We know that there is sure help in the maternal goodness of the Virgin, and We are very certain that We shall never vainly place Our trust in Her. If, on innumerable occasions, She has displayed her power in aid of the Christian world, why should We doubt that She will now renew the assistance of her power and favour, if humble and constant prayers are offered up on all sides to Her? Nay, We rather be-

lieve that her intervention will be the more marvellous as She has permitted Us to pray to Her, for so long a time, with special appeals.

***A devotion that is advancing  
to full growth***

But We entertain another object, which, according to your wont, Venerable Brethren, you will advance with fervour. That God may be more favourable to Our prayers, and that He may come with bounty and promptitude to the aid of His Church, We judge it of deep utility for the Christian people, continually to invoke with great piety and trust, together with the Virgin-Mother of God, her chaste Spouse, the Blessed Joseph; and We regard it as most certain that this will be most pleasing to the Virgin herself.

On the subject of this devotion, of which We speak publicly for the first time today, We know without doubt that not only is the people inclined to it, but that it is already established, and is advancing to full growth. We have seen the devotion to St. Joseph, which in past times the Roman Pontiffs have developed and gradually increased, grow into greater proportions in Our



time, particularly after Pius IX, of happy memory, Our predecessor, proclaimed, yielding to the request of a large number of bishops, this holy patriarch the patron of the Catholic Church.

And as, moreover, it is of high importance that the devotion to St. Joseph should engraft itself upon the daily pious practices of Catholics, We desire that the Christian people should be urged to it above all by Our words and authority.

### ***Father of the Son of God and spouse of the Virgin Mary***

The special motives for which St. Joseph has been proclaimed Patron of the Church, and from which the Church looks for singular benefit from his patronage and protection, are that Joseph was the spouse of Mary and that he was reputed the Father of Jesus Christ. From these sources have sprung his dignity, his holiness, his glory.

In truth, the dignity of the Mother of God is so lofty that naught created can rank above it. But as Joseph has been united to the Blessed Virgin by the ties of marriage, it may not be doubted that he approached nearer than any to the eminent dignity by which the Mother of God surpasses so nobly all created natures.

For marriage is the most intimate of all unions which from its essence imparts a community of gifts between those that by it are joined together. Thus in giving Joseph the Blessed Virgin as spouse, God appointed him to be not only her life's companion, the witness of her maidenhood, the protector of her honour, but also, by virtue of the conjugal tie, a participator in her sublime dignity.

And Joseph shines among all mankind by the most august dignity, since



**The Word of God was humbly subject to Joseph, He obeyed him, and He rendered to him all those offices that children are bound to render to their parents**

St. Joseph with the Child Jesus – St. Vincent Church El Real, Huesca (Spain); on previous page, Leo XIII photographed around 1898

by divine will, he was the guardian of the Son of God and reputed as His father among men. Hence it came about that the Word of God was humbly subject to Joseph, that He obeyed him, and that He rendered to him all those offices that children are bound to render to their parents.

### ***The home of the Holy Family, cradle of the nascent Church***

From this two-fold dignity flowed the obligation which nature lays upon the head of families, so that Joseph became the guardian, the administrator, and the legal defender of the di-

vine house whose chief he was. And during the whole course of his life he fulfilled those charges and those duties. He set himself to protect with a mighty love and a daily solicitude his spouse and the Divine Infant; regularly by his work he earned what was necessary for the one and the other for nourishment and clothing; he guarded from death the Child threatened by a monarch's jealousy, and found for Him a refuge; in the miseries of the journey and in the bitternesses of exile he was ever the companion, the assistance, and the upholder of the Virgin and of Jesus.

Now the divine house which Joseph ruled with the authority of a father, contained within its limits the scarce-born Church. From the same fact that the most holy Virgin is the mother of Jesus Christ is She the mother of all Christians whom She bore on Mount Calvary amid the supreme throes of the Redemption; Jesus Christ is, in a manner, the first-born of Christians, who by the adoption and Redemption are his brothers.

And for such reasons the Blessed Patriarch looks upon the multitude of Christians who

make up the Church as confided specially to his trust - this limitless family spread over the earth, over which, because he is the spouse of Mary and the Father of Jesus Christ he holds, as it were, a paternal authority.

It is, then, natural and worthy that as the Blessed Joseph ministered to all the needs of the family at Nazareth and girt it about with his protection, he should now cover with the cloak of his heavenly patronage and defend the Church of Jesus Christ. ✧

*Leo XIII. Excerpts from the Encyclical Quamquam pluries, 15/8/1889*



Jesus gives His blessing,  
Basilica of Saint-Denis, Paris

Sergio Hollmann

## GOSPEL

<sup>39</sup> Jesus told His disciples a parable: “Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? <sup>40</sup> No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. <sup>41</sup> Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? <sup>42</sup> How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,’ when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam

from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother’s eye.

<sup>43</sup> “A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. <sup>44</sup> For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thornbushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles. <sup>45</sup> A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks” (Lk 6:39-45).



# Who is a True Disciple?

Our Lord entrusts the mission of leading souls to the Kingdom of Heaven to the humble, since they recognize their own insufficiency. It is for this reason that their efforts for the salvation of souls are crowned with good fruit.



**Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP**

## **I – THE NEED FOR A SURE GUIDE**

In a world where true charity toward others is becoming a rarity as egoism takes centre stage, many people face the hardship of going through life without someone to show them the path to true happiness. Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira comments: “I remember going for walks as a child, and often seeing a dog on the street without an owner. Once, I saw my grandmother scolding a rebellious grandson, saying: ‘Go ahead! Be like a dog without a master if you want.’ Suddenly, the misfortune of not being guided fully struck my spirit. The joy of being guided is precisely that of a faithful person who has someone in whom to deposit his faithfulness. It is the joy of every man who has a sense of hierarchy, a sense of order and a sense of discipline.”<sup>1</sup>

The desire of being taught and the search for a sure guide is a characteristic of upright souls, who feel their own contingency and natural inability to reach the sublime heights of Revela-

tion alone. They turn to those who have received the mandate to teach in the name of God, desiring to be instructed by them in the ways of salvation. The role of those charged with this task is to indicate the right path, without deviating from the precepts of religion, turning aside to neither the right hand or to the left (cf. 1 Mc 2: 22).

### ***The Church, guide of souls***

More than to any single individual called to lead souls, God has entrusted this mission to the Holy Catholic Church, linking the salvation of all souls to the Petrine ministry. To be guided on this earth means, then, to be led by the Church, to open oneself to the light that flows from her and to the abundant graces she dispenses to humanity. It is up to evangelizers to be true guides, showing mankind the compass of truth, and in this way, setting those entrusted to them on the path of holiness. They must remember, however, that their role is that of

*The desire  
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souls*

*Those who set out on the apostolate without leading souls to Our Lord, wanting only to enjoy the prestige and fame usually garnered by bearers of the truth, are the blind of the Kingdom of God*

mere instruments; attributing everything to the Church's care.

This fundamental principle is one of the most important teachings contained in the Gospel of the Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

## II – SOURCE OR INSTRUMENT?

After transmitting the doctrine of the Beatitudes and preaching on loving one's enemies, Our Lord adds some parables before concluding the Sermon on the Mount, which is often compared in importance to the promulgation of the Old Law on Mount Sinai. His final teachings touch on those called to the apostolate, who bear the serious responsibility of the salvation of their neighbour and the perfect transmission of the doctrine that He brought into the world. The fact that these exhortations follow closely on Jesus' most sublime teachings suggests the importance of human instruments in spreading the Faith and their personal fidelity to the doctrine of the Gospel.

### *The blind leading the blind*

<sup>39</sup> Jesus told His disciples a parable: "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit?"

In this parable, through an eloquent spiritual application, the Divine Master emphasizes the folly of accepting direction from someone who cannot see. Those who set out on the apostolate without leading souls to Our Lord, wanting only to enjoy the prestige and fame usually garnered by bearers of the truth are the blind of the Kingdom of God. Such blindness stems from a serious discrepancy in visualization, as a contemporary exegete asserts: "Jesus refers to another type of blindness, the blindness of those who do not see events or people with God's eyes, and yet claim to speak in His place."<sup>2</sup> Those who are called to evangelize – all the baptized, therefore – play the role of models, true guides for those who have not been illuminated by the light of grace. Their words, their spiritual outlook and their personal example will serve as a paradigm for others, who will see in them the embodiment of the virtues and Christian doctrine they profess. The integrity of the lives of fervent souls can even awaken admiration for the Most Sacred Person of Jesus, as was observed among the Christians in the corrupt Roman Empire: "See how they love one another,"<sup>3</sup> commented the pagans, witnessing the practice of fraternal charity for the first time. The Apostle recognizes the power of example when he reminds the Corinthians: "We have become a



The parable of the blind guides, by Pieter Bruegel the Elder - Museum of Capodimonte, Naples (Italy)

Reproduction



spectacle to the world, to Angels and to men” (1 Cor 4: 9). And he tells the first community of believers at Philippi to “shine as lights in the world” (Phil 2: 15).

This vital teaching applies most especially to the figure of the priest, and demands that those casting the nets of the apostolate be very closely bound to the Divine Master. Leading souls to the Kingdom of Heaven means radiating the supernatural, communicating the joy that inundates the soul of those who know Jesus, who live from His life and who experience the outpouring of His goodness. It is through contact with Him who promised to draw all men to Himself (cf. Jn 12: 32) that we are called to bring the Good News of salvation to the world. St. Thomas Aquinas, citing Dionysius Areopagite, transcribes this noble thought: “Dionysius said: ‘even as the more subtle and clear essences being filled by the outpouring of the solar radiance, like the sun, enlighten other bodies with their brilliant light, so in all things pertaining to God a man must not dare to become a leader of others, unless in all his habits he be most deiform and godlike.’”<sup>44</sup> Otherwise, we will be as the blind leading the blind, usurping the evangelizing mission and deceiving those whom God wants to benefit. If we cut ourselves off from the divine roots, we will fall into error, and run the risk of leading those whom we guide into condemnation. This is why Dom Chautard says of those who are vigilant and do not allow themselves to be swept away by the errors of false guides: “Men have every right to be exacting and to ask much of those who offer to teach how to lead a new life. And they are quick to discern if their works measure up to their words, or if the moral theories which they so willingly display are nothing more than a lying front. It is on the basis of their observations in this matter that they will give him their confidence or refuse it.”<sup>45</sup>

### *Spiritual blindness*

Catholic doctrine teaches that the purpose of every evangelizing mission is to lead souls to Our Lord Jesus Christ: “The transmission of the Christian Faith consists primarily in proclaiming Jesus Christ, in order to lead others to faith in Him.”<sup>46</sup> However, throughout history, not a few people have turned this high mission into a lever for achieving personal goals, us-

ing the privileges due to proclaimers of Christ, to proclaim themselves, becoming spiritually blind. Called by vocation – often authentic, but sometimes questionably so – to instruct others, these blind guides judge that they have understood the truth more fully than anyone else. Such a full understanding can enrich the Church when it is authentic, but when it does not come from God, it becomes a spiritual cataract in the eyes of the soul. This blindness becomes manifest when such pseudo-guides refuse to accept correction, or admit to any fault pointed out to them. They never acknowledge their doctrine or their conduct as being subject to error.

As a contemporary theologian points out, “if these ‘guides,’ either official or pretended, ignore the primary requirement springing from the Gospel [...], if they wish to impose requirements upon the community that Jesus the Master did not prescribe, they declare themselves to be bad disciples. Being blind, they cannot but lead to failure the community that allows itself to be blinded by this teaching.”<sup>47</sup> Accordingly, when the apostle who is called to guide others takes Our Lord’s place and puts himself in the spotlight, he will invariably lead them astray. He will be held accountable on Judgment Day for having steered his followers into the abyss, for his obligation was to lead them to a good end by showing them the path to true happiness.

### *Characteristics of a true disciple*

<sup>40</sup> “No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher.”

Our Lord then sketches the profile of a true disciple, comparing the attitude of one who is blind with one who has perfect vision. With His superb didactic method, He first impresses the multitude negatively with the image of those who do not see, so as to then demonstrate the moral perfection of the faithful disciple’s conduct, so that the superiority of the latter is made even stronger by force of contrast.

He teaches that a well-formed disciple, developing all of his qualities, becomes an overflow of the master. This language was perfect-

*The pseudo-guides refuse to accept correction or to admit to any fault pointed out to them*

*No one can pretend to be a virtuous person when he sins interiorly, because he soon reveals his falsity*

ly adapted to a society in which religious education was based on the relationship between master and disciple – as was that of the rabbinical schools – thus referring to a familiar reality. Disciples learned by diligently attending the master's house, engaging in long talks and speculations on the Torah, and assimilating certain modes of interpreting the Law in which they were being instructed, eventually becoming a spiritual son. St. Paul himself would say he had been formed "at the feet of Gamaliel" (Acts 22: 3).

Starting with this concept, Our Lord established the line of discipleship in the New Testament from a new perspective. He makes it clear that effective learning cannot be seen as an emancipation of the one being instructed, nor does it signify an opportunity to learn the secrets of the art, as a sort of ladder which allows a person to supplant his teacher. With the advent of the Saviour, the true Master came to us; He who would shed the only Blood capable of redeeming the world. Before Him, all must mutely acknowledge their own littleness, to receive the measure of His spirit that is intended for them. Later, when employing the word in the condition of mere instruments, the disciples would offer the crystal-clear water of sound doctrine, gained from the direct contemplation of the Divine Master. This is how the greatest luminaries of the Church proceeded, who were, in turn, the most obedient followers of Jesus.

### ***We are all sinners***

<sup>41</sup> "Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? <sup>42</sup> How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,' when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother's eye."

These following verses deal with another aspect of blindness: the inability to see others as they really should be seen. The origin of

this defect is pride, because he who is not humble enough to consider God as He is, will also not make a well-formed judgment of his neighbour in accord with divine criteria. The image of the beam and the splinter reflects the disparity usually existing between the dissatisfaction of the proud and the reality of the defects of their neighbour.

The conduct of those who have a precise idea of their faults and failings is very different. Since they do not hold themselves as the final purpose of everything they do, they are better able to understand the weaknesses of others and treat them kindly, as Dorotheus of Gaza observes: "Saints are not blind and they hate sin, but they do not hate those who commit it; they do not judge, but are compassionate. They counsel, comfort, and care for the sinner as for an ailing member, employing all possible means to save him."<sup>48</sup> The humble always ask God for forgiveness and know that if they are not judged with compassion, they will be lost. Therefore, in dealing with others, they put themselves in their place and apply the same kindness that they would wish to receive from God. As Peláez expresses it, "self-criticism puts us in the ideal light to see the extent of others' defects. He who examines and criticizes himself learns to see with compassion."<sup>49</sup>

Taking the beam out of our own eye means banishing a pharisaic mindset about ourselves and having our sights set on those who are our lights: Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin. This will enable us to remove the splinter from our brother's eye, helping him to recognize his digression from our supreme models and, for love of Them, to desire his conversion. Any other method will be of no avail and will not yield fruit, as the following passage shows.

### **III – GOOD AND BAD FRUIT BORN IN THE HEART**

<sup>43</sup> "A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. <sup>44</sup> For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thornbushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles."



Our Lord uses the figure of the fruits growing from good and bad trees, composing a beautiful image to illustrate a principle that may seem obvious to us today. However, no one had ever been wise enough to formulate it before Him. In fact, only the One God, who tries hearts and minds (cf. Ps 7: 9), could have transmitted it. It demonstrates clearly that there is no difference between who we are and what we do. Later, Jesus would reproach the wickedness of the Pharisees toward His testimony: "If I am not doing the works of My Father, then do not believe Me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me and I am in the Father" (Jn 10: 37-38). What, for example, were the

works of the Pharisees? An enforcement of the Law so harsh that it oppressed everyone with its rigour, and no one was able to fulfil it perfectly. What were the works of the Lord? A new doctrine confirmed by miracles, resurrections, and the casting out of demons. That is, their works revealed their true identity.

The absence of figs on thornbushes, or grapes on brambles shows that the fruit of a tree is definable as good or bad, for there could never be fruit that was poisonous while simultaneously serving as food. We can apply this truth to the intentions of the heart, because although they are impenetrable to others, they sooner or later express themselves through our actions. No one can pretend to be a virtuous person when he sins interiorly because



Gustavo Krejci

St. Augustine -  
St. Mary's Church,  
Kitchener (Ontario)

he soon reveals his falsity. "Man acts according to what he is in reality; even if he tries to use artful simulation, his acts and his words are an exact reflection of what he is deep inside."<sup>10</sup> Therefore, we should never seek to reconcile good practices with reprehensible ones, trying to establish a bridge between God and the devil. Just as we do not eat thorns, we cannot assimilate bad doctrine, or allow a worldly spirit to enter our apostolic works, as some would wish. In this regard, St. Augustine teaches: "The doctrine of Christ, growing and developing, became mixed with good trees and with bad brambles. The good preach it as well as the bad. Observe where the fruit comes from, the origin of what nourishes you or troubles you. To the eye, they are tangled together, but

the root distinguishes them."<sup>11</sup> This infallible criterion always indicates the truth because, as Dom Chautard concludes, God is compelled to "withdraw from the apostle who is inflated with his own importance, all His best gifts, and to reserve these for the branch that humbly recognizes that all its life-sap comes from the divine stock."<sup>12</sup>

*Grace, the treasure  
of the good*

<sup>45</sup> "A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks."

*"Observe  
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eye, they  
are tangled  
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but the root  
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them"*

*What are our  
conversations  
about? To  
what do we  
incite others  
by what  
we say?  
What comes  
out of our  
mouths?*

The image of a store signifies what man holds most dear: his life's riches. Our Lord shows His preference for this symbolism in His preaching, using it on numerous occasions, such as when instructing on laying up treasures in Heaven (cf. Lk 12: 33) and seeking the hidden treasure in a field (cf. Mt 13: 44). He draws a connection between the Kingdom of Heaven and a precious pearl found by a merchant (cf. Mt 13: 45-46). He even compares the scribe to a father of a family who brings old and new things out of his treasure (cf. Mt 13: 52), and He invites the rich young man to give up everything for another treasure: a happy eternity (cf. Mk 10: 21). In this Sunday's passage, He speaks of the store in the heart.

Throughout life, it is natural to have a liking for whatever seems most excellent and in line with our own personality, since it is a characteristic of human psychology to conserve whatever we identify with ourselves, and reject whatever is foreign to our inclinations. If this holds true in the natural plane, it is even more applicable to matters of the spiritual life. What is the heart's store of someone who is good? It is eternal treasure, for if a drop of grace is worth more than all the natural good in the whole universe,<sup>13</sup> whoever lives in the grace of God possesses immeasurable wealth. However, we will only have an authentic store of treasure if our heart is converted; therefore we must govern it and keep it from following paths opposed to grace. To do this, we must root out attachments and whims that separate us from God, especially sin. If in the past we established an alliance with any of these deviations, we must make amends, for only in this way will we be able to build a heavenly treasure.

However, just as it is desired that earthly riches grow in quantity, our eternal treasure needs to increase in quality through contemplation, perpetual praise, thanksgiving and worship of God. This

will make it produce teachings that are useful to our neighbour, as are the words that flow from the fullness of a virtuous heart. Otherwise it will only produce fruits of egocentrism that are incapable of edifying.

### *The word is the mirror of the heart*

The consideration of the word is, for us, a call to examine our conscience. What are our conversations about? To what do we incite others by what we say? What comes out of our mouths? By our speech, we will see who we are interiorly, and will have an idea of the tree from which these fruits come, as St. Basil cautions: "The quality of the words shows the heart from which they proceed, plainly manifesting the inclination of our thoughts."<sup>14</sup> In this Gospel, Our Lord tells us it is through the conversations we engage in every day that we will learn what kind of treasure is stored in our soul. St. John Chrysostom is also very clear when expounding this doctrine: "For it is of the most natural consequence that when wickedness is abounding within, it will be poured forth through the words of the lips. When you hear a man with evil speech, do not suppose him to have only so much wickedness as the words display, but conjecture the fountain to be much more abundant; for what becomes external is only the overflow of the heart. [...] For the tongue, although often shameless, does not pour forth all its wickedness at once. The heart, however, unobserved by any human witness, has no fear to produce whatever evils it will; for of God it has little regard. Thus, while words may be examined and are proclaimed before all, the heart remains hidden in the shadows; wherefore the evils of the tongue are less frequent than those of the heart. But when the evil within becomes exceedingly great, then it furiously bursts forth with all that had been concealed."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Lecture*. São Paulo, 4 abr. 1972.

<sup>2</sup> BARTOLOMÉ GONZÁLEZ, Francisco. *Acercamiento a Jesús de Nazaret, vol II*. Madrid: Paulinas, 1985, p.39.

<sup>3</sup> TERTULLIAN. *Apologeticum*, XXXIX: ML 1, 471.

<sup>4</sup> ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Summa Theologiae*, Suppl., q.36, a.1.

<sup>5</sup> CHAUTARD, OCSO, Jean-Baptiste. *The Soul of the Apostolate*. Trappist, KY: Abbey of Gethsemani 1946, p.115-116.

<sup>6</sup> CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH § 425.

<sup>7</sup> MONLOUBOU, Louis. *Leery y predicar el Evangelio*. Santander: Sal Terræ, 1946, p.162.

<sup>8</sup> DOROTHEUS OF GAZA, apud CANTALAMESSA, OFM Cap, Raniero. *Echad las redes. Reflexiones sobre los Evangelios. Ciclo C*. Valencia: Edicep, 2003, p.214.





Priestly ordination in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, Caieiras, 24/4/2015

#### IV – CONCLUSION

The psalmist compares life to a mere breath and a passing shadow (cf. Ps 39: 5-6), of negligible duration. We are all heading towards the great day of reckoning, when Jesus will summon us to His presence and lead us to the dwellings of His Father's house, if we are found worthy of reward. We already know, however, that to enter the Kingdom of Heaven is granted to the good according to the fruits that they have yielded. These fruits will reveal the sincerity of our surrender to God. He has taken the initiative to love us by the free decision of His own will, drawing us out of the dust and bringing us to the highest supernatural peak, the life of grace. How have we shown our gratitude? This is the Sunday of the liturgy of generosity, of our response to God for all that He gives us.

Bearing in mind that these fruits also refer to the way we conduct our neighbour along the path of salvation, let us ask for the precious intercession of the Blessed Virgin, to obtain for us the grace of being transformed into disciples of gratitude for all that we have received from God. What is more, we ought to become children whose lives can be compared to the crystal face of a monstrance, an instrument that does not impede the faithful from contemplating the Eucharistic Jesus; rather, its excellence depends on its transparency.

Let us be authentic followers of Our Lord and devoted children of the Church who strive to spread throughout the world the light received from above. In this way we will bear every sort of good fruit, because “when men resolve to cooperate with the grace of God, the marvels of history are wrought.”<sup>16</sup> ✧

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<sup>9</sup> PELÁEZ, Jesús. *La otra Lectura de los Evangelios, Ciclo C, vol. II*. (Ed.2). Córdoba: El Almendro, 2000, p.104.

<sup>10</sup> MONLOUBOU, op. cit., p.162.

<sup>11</sup> ST. AUGUSTINE. Sermo CCCXL/A, n.10. In: *Obras, vol. XXVI*. Madrid: BAC, 1985, p.37.

<sup>12</sup> CHAUTARD, op. cit., p.11.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, op. cit., I-II, q.113, a.9.

<sup>14</sup> ST. BASIL apud ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Catena Aurea. In Lucam*, c.VI, v.43-45.

<sup>15</sup> ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM. Homilia XLII, n.1, In: *Obras, vol. I*:

*Homilias sobre el Evangelio de San Mateo (1-45)*. (Ed.2). Madrid: BAC, 2007, p.809-810.

<sup>16</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Revolução e Contra-Revolução*. (Ed.5). São Paulo: Retornarei, 2002, p.132.

# A “Fiat!” that Resounded throughout History

On the Solemnity of the Annunciation, Dr. Plinio meditates on Mary’s thoughts at the Angel’s greeting, her joys in the private life of Jesus, her perplexities during the Passion, and, above all, her submission to the divine will.



Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

**I**n the common language of modern man, certain concepts such as splendour, pomp and glory, tend to be confused with the idea of wealth and ultimately reduced to an economic question.

The Annunciation took place in a poor house, but it was a splendid episode, for it foretold the miraculous birth of a Child who would reign on the throne of David and whose dominion would extend to the whole earth in future centuries.

## *Thoughts on the mystery announced to Her*

Our Lady’s question – “How shall this be, since I have no husband?” (Lk 1:34) – prompts the following thought: either She had received a revelation from God that She would remain a virgin, or, at the very least, She felt a call to perpetual virginity deep in her soul and did not doubt that this call came from God.

Her words imply the following reflection: “I know that in order to reconcile these two apparently contradictory attitudes of God – who inspires me to virginity, but never-

theless, wants me to be the Mother of the Saviour – a marvel will take place, for He never contradicts Himself.”

Mary did not doubt that the Angel really came from God, for She treated him as an emissary of the Almighty. But her thoughts were directed to the mystery contained in the message he brought; how to explain that her Son could have all the power that was announced to Her?

As a descendant of David, Our Lady knew that her Son would also be of this line. She was aware that St. Joseph, her spouse, was of the same royal lineage, and that, although the Child would not be born of him, He would be a descendant of the prophet-king according to the Law. There is a beautiful expression used by theologians: “*Caro Christi, caro Mariæ* – The flesh of Christ is the flesh of Mary.” That is, Jesus inherited the flesh and blood of the great monarch of Israel from Her.

A perusal of the evangelical narrative leaves the reader with the strong impression that Our Lady pondered the meaning of the words

“will give to Him the throne of His father David” (Lk 1:32), and the nature of the Kingdom that would be bestowed upon her Son. Thus, She wondered whether this concerned the birth of the Messiah for whose coming She so longed.

The Blessed Virgin had received St. Gabriel with a degree of fear. How is it that She, who was conceived without original sin and free of moral imperfection, could be afraid of an Angel?

The presence of an angelic spirit, especially that of an Archangel, is something so powerful as to leave a human being overwhelmed. It was natural that Mary feel the full weight of his presence. However, it was not the heavenly messenger that provoked fear in Her, but rather the communication of the impressive mission that was to be hers, for in her humility She feared not perfectly corresponding to God’s sublime plans. But the explanation of the Angel – “Do not be afraid, Mary, for You have found favour with God” (Lk 1:30) – inundated Her with serenity and peace.



Exegetes affirm that when the Blessed Virgin uttered the “*Ecce ancilla Domini* – Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord” (Lk 1:38), the Holy Spirit conceived Our Lord in her immaculate womb. Thus, the splendidous consequence of that simple yet beautiful dialogue was the Incarnation of the Word.

### *The life and thoughts of Our Lady in Nazareth*

Our Lady conserved the promises of the Angel within her soul and, in seeing the Child Jesus grow in age and grace with God and men (cf. Lk 2:52), She naturally thought of the mission reserved for Him.

Aware that her Son was God, Our Lady believed it feasible that He would obtain resounding and extraordinary successes. And would She not have thought, as Jesus grew into a young man, that at some point He would leave the family home to fulfil His mission?

But that would be a long time coming. He chose to live with Her and St. Joseph for thirty years. Everything seems to indicate that the head of the Holy Family passed away before Our Lord began His public life. Tradition tells us that when St. Joseph breathed his last, Our Lady and Jesus were there flanking his bedside, which is why the great Patriarch is also patron of a good death.

How we would like to witness this scene! A simple bed, Our Lady on one side and, on the other, Our Lord – upon whom the attention of Mary and the dying man is riveted, as He addresses sublime words of comfort to them. Our Lady, with her unfathomable solicitude attends St. Joseph, praying for him and consoling him... And what a host of Angels!

Death's dark shadows gradually draw nearer. St. Joseph begins to realize that the companionship that



Annunciation - Manresa Cathedral (Spain)

## ✠ GOSPEL OF THE ANNUNCIATION ✠

In the sixth month the Angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a Virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary. And he came to Her and said, “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with You!” But She was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be.

And the Angel said to Her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for You have found favour with God. And behold, You will conceive in your womb and bear a Son, and You shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His Kingdom there will be no end.” And Mary said to the Angel, “How shall this be, since I have no husband?” And the Angel said to Her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon You, and the power of the Most High will overshadow You; therefore the Child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to Me according to your word.” And the Angel departed from Her (Lk 1:26-38).

had been, in a sense, his Heaven, was about to cease. But he knew that a most felicitous mission awaited him – upon arrival at the Limbo of the patriarchs, he would announce that the Messiah had taken flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Most likely, at the mere mention of the names of Jesus and Mary, that whole place would light up...

After the death of St. Joseph, Our Lady would have reflected about Jesus: “When will He begin His public life? Will we part company? With whom shall I stay? What news will I have of Him? When will His Kingdom be established? Will I witness its implantation while yet on earth, or from Heaven? Many times, conversing with Him I have noticed His expression becoming sadder. And to the extent that sadness can be likened to a shadow it becomes sombre.

He has spoken to me of an immense sacrifice that He must suffer. I know that it is the death on the Cross, to which the Scriptures refer and which He Himself has announced to Me. I see myself, on one hand, surrounded by splendour, and on the other, by the prospect of dismal defeat.”

### ***“My Mother, the moment has arrived!”***

Days, months and years pass... For thirty years Jesus and Mary lived under the same roof, as He continually embellished Her soul with wonders.

One day – we may conjecture – He approached Her and, with untold veneration and affection, enveloped Her in His gaze, saying to Her: “My Mother, the moment has arrived!” Perhaps He said this with a smile marked

by the grief of parting, but a grief already foreseen and marked with gladness. His mission was beginning and would end in His glory.

He knew that, essentially, He was heading towards the Cross. But along this route He would recruit the Apostles, the disciples and all those of the nascent Church. He would preach His marvellous doctrine for three years, perform miracles that would impress and persuade the whole world, found the Church, and institute the Sacraments. And then He would die...

What would Mother and Son have said at this parting? Was it a last-minute surprise? Or did He tell her a month in advance? In this case, would this month have seemed like a minute for Our Lady in her desire to delay the leave-taking? These are wonders that will be revealed to

us in Heaven, and that will leave us speechless with veneration and adoration.

Then Our Lord begins His public life. Our Lady is sought out by the Holy Woman and is incorporated into this family of souls that Jesus entrusts to Her care.

### ***“Conversations” with the Holy Spirit***

All of these considerations seem extremely beautiful to us. But how limited they are, compared to even higher realities!

We know, for example, that Our Lady is the Spouse of the Divine Holy Spirit. What graces the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity must have granted Her, so that she might know and meditate upon all that would happen! What questions the Virgin Mary must have put to her

Divine Consort, addressing Him with the words: “My King, my Lord and my Spouse”?

If her relationship with her spouse according to law, St. Joseph, was so beautiful and touching, how must it have been with the Divine Holy Spirit? For example, at the time of the Incarnation, He became her Spouse. Now, in the ceremony of betrothal, the man offers his wife a magnificent gift. What extraordinary gift did the Divine Holy Spirit grant Mary? What graces? What splendours? This surpasses our poor imagination...

### ***The hopes and fears of Our Lady***

In contemplating the preaching and miracles of Our Lord during His public life, it seemed to Our



**Death's dark shadows gradually draw nearer. St. Joseph begins to realize that the companionship would cease...**

Death of St. Joseph, Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Bonndorf (Germany)



Lady that the promise of glory was being realized. But, on the other hand, with her incomparable discernment of spirits, Mary Most Holy perceived satan prowling about nearby, and She felt the hatred that he instilled in some souls.

Let us consider another circumstance. St. Thomas Aquinas affirms in his beautiful Eucharistic hymn *Lauda Sion*: “*Quem, in sacræ mensa cenæ, turbæ fratrum duodenæ datum non ambigitur* – We profess this Bread from Heaven to the Twelve by Christ was given, for our faith rest firm in Him.” At the Last Supper, Our Lord celebrated the first Mass.

Our Lady was probably at the Cenacle and would have received Communion. What a marvel the First Communion of Our Lady must have been!

But She would also have heard the terrible prophecy: “One of you will betray Me.” She saw Judas leave the Cenacle hastily with this intention. The Gospel narrates the scene touchingly, with words fraught with symbolic character: “It was night...” (Jn 13:30).

After this, She saw Our Lord take His leave. Perhaps He bid Her farewell. Did He tell Her that His hour had arrived, or did He leave Her in doubt? He and the disciples and went out after having sung a Passover hymn, and disappeared into the darkness of that same night which echoed with the footsteps of Judas.

What took place with Our Lady in the moments that followed? Most likely the promises of triumph received in the Annunciation were the substance of her meditation. However, there was the price of glory, not mentioned by the Archangel during that joyous encounter, and this price was pain.

We turn our thoughts, then, to the Sorrowful Virgin, at the direst hour

of the Passion – to my understanding, the moment when Our Lord exclaimed in a loud voice: “My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me?” (Mt 27:46). It is a cry of suffering and anguish, but also the initial words of a Psalm whose final triumphant tone seems to foretell the Resurrection. What sufferings did the most holy soul of Mary experience upon hearing this cry from Jesus?

On the other hand, before His death, She glimpsed a first ray of joy, when She heard Him say to the good thief: “To-day you will be with Me in Paradise” (Lk 23:43). This affirmation meant that Our Lord never lost sight, even amidst the most harrowing torments, that He was opening the gates of Heaven for humanity.

***The promises are realized amidst apparent contradictions***

From the present reflections, we can draw a conclusion that can be summed up in a few words.

With the Annunciation, the Incarnation was communicated to Our Lady, and through Her to all of humanity. With her “Yes!”, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The Word of God shone forth in a spiritual dawning, verdant with superlative promises.

But if God’s promises arouse the most joyous hopes, they usually also entail apparent and terrible contradictions. This is the way Providence acts. In this sense, the Annunciation was also the proc-



Juan Carlos Villagómez

**God’s promises arouse the most joyous hopes, but they usually also entail apparent and terrible contradictions**

Our Lady of Sorrows  
Formation House of the Heralds of the Gospel,  
Quito

lamation that true glory does not consist in being spared humiliations and defeats, but rather in fighting for the truth.

The most holy soul of Our Lady, being acquainted with promises, joys and contradictions, represents for Catholics the sublime example of submission to God’s will, expressed by Her in an unmatched manner in the humble “*fiat*” that echoed throughout her entire life. ✧

*Taken, with small adaptations,  
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N.72 (Mar., 2004); p.14-19*

# The Foundation for Every Victory

What is the basis for the constancy of the Saints, which gives them confidence amid disaster and detachment in triumph? The response comes from Him who on Calvary was not afraid to confront failure.



Sr. Mariana Morazzani, EP

**T**hose who like to closely observe the people they encounter throughout life have undoubtedly been enchanted to perceive the diversity of souls, the variety of temperaments and the surprising array of characteristics with which the Good God had endowed human beings, making each one, from a certain perspective, unique, unrepeatable and supreme.

One thing, however, seems to be a constant in all of the sons and daughters of Adam, and that is inconstancy.

## *Capable of swift and radical changes*

In Brazil, the four seasons are never very well defined. It is not uncommon to experience all of them in a given day: a wintry dawn, an autumn morning, a summer afternoon and a springtime evening...

At times, daybreak is radiant, without any indication of what is to come – a torrential rainstorm with lightning and thunder in the late afternoon. On

other occasions, the contrary happens: the day starts gloomy, overcast and grey, but this gives way to an evening of hope, painted with the brilliant hues of a conquering sun.

We could say that souls are also like this, capable of swift and radical change. They awaken optimistic and joyful, smiling at life; a few hours later, their outlook is precisely the opposite: disappointment, sadness and despair. “Lows” and “highs” that can be very abrupt are common, especially among those who trust in themselves, depending on whether they meet with adversity or are successful in a given situation or undertaking.

This reality of our nature suggests a question: is it possible for a person to remain ever the same, and not to give in to so many variations? We soon come to the surprising conclusion that it is impossible to remain constantly stable in all aspects, for a sleepless night or an illness are enough to physically change the “climatic conditions” of our soul.

Furthermore, for a person to strive to remain unalterable throughout his

entire life would not be the most perfect way, for this was not how God proceeded with the work of creation. Throughout the course of life, one must experience change; there must be dawns, sunsets and middays.

Where, then, is constancy to be found on this earth?

## *The rock upon which the constancy of the Saints is founded*

The Sacred Heart of Jesus, Supreme Founder of serene and innocent souls, gave a perfect and complete solution to this problem with the metaphor of the prudent man, who built his house on rock: “the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock” (Mt 7:25).

Yes, it is true that everything changes; there are storms, floods and hurricanes, but there is a rock, an unseen foundation that remains unchanged and serves as the basis for the constancy of the Saints!





Fábio Alves

Waves hitting rocks in Nazaré (Portugal)

Despite the variety of souls and the diversity of the designs of Providence, there is a foundation which cannot be substituted and which God demands of everyone: the willingness to face humiliation, rejection, and scorn for His name. Briefly put, the readiness to fail!

So necessary did this interior attitude become for fallen human nature that the Man par excellence – despite being hypostatically united to God – experienced the sentiment of failure. The Son of the Most High, to whom the Lord gave the throne of His father David (cf. Lk 1:31), had to undergo distressing humiliations, suffer the most cruel torments and die in the most infamous manner, between two criminals.

Nevertheless, this rock, whose birth name is “readiness to fail,” upon being baptized in the Blood of Christ, became a solid support for humanity in this valley of tears. The supreme and apparent defeat of Jesus robed the Cross in the purest and most refulgent light that can be found on earth.

***It is impossible to attain sanctity without the cross***

It is because we do not build our house on this rock that the periods of fervour in our spiritual life – filled with ideals and excellent ideas – are followed by tragic periods, in which we have the sensation of interior collapse, just like the house that the foolish man built on sand: “it fell; and great was the fall of it” (Mt 7:27).

If we were to seek the causes for such radical turnabouts, it is probable that we would discover within ourselves a great desire to “do well,” to succeed in our undertakings, to be seen as successful in the estimation of others, or perhaps only in our own eyes. In other words, we would see that we have tried to climb many mountains, except the one that we are called to scale, that of Calvary.

There is only one way of obtaining constancy of spirit, and that is by convincing ourselves that it is impossible to attain sanctity without the cross.

In the life of every holy person, there were humiliations, obstacles, misunderstandings, ingratitude, cal-

umnies, sorrows, perplexities and “dead ends.” They bore all of these difficulties, meekly striking their breast, thanking God for their trials, pardoning those who offended them, showing concern for others, humbling themselves and recognizing that they deserved even worse!

***“Come abide in my Heart”***

Therefore, if we wish to maintain unshakeable equanimity of soul in every circumstance, it is not enough to dwell on the poetic considerations suggested by the parable of the rock. We must be aware, above all, that this rock has a name: readiness to fail in any of our undertakings on this earth.

Souls that acknowledge their frailty in face of difficulties, humbly submitting to the divine plans and accepting every misfortune and defeat that Providence wishes to send them, move the Immaculate Heart of Mary, who draws them close to Herself, saying: “Come abide in my Heart, where every failure is transformed into victory!” ✧



## *Exempt from Original Sin: Why Not?*

How long did the Magisterium take to define the Immaculate Conception of Mary? Nineteen centuries, even though the entire Church clamoured that the declaration be made long before this. Is not something analogous taking place with St. Joseph?

**Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP**

**W**hen God formed Adam from clay, He did not want him to remain alone, but gave him the companionship of Eve; thus, in His “image and likeness [...], male and female He created them” (Gn 1:26-27). Likewise, upon conceiving the plan of redemption and endowing His Son with the best of mothers, it did not seem right that She remain alone; He therefore ordained to place at her service a strong and chaste man who would protect and reverence Her.

But who would be proportionate to Her who most perfectly reflects the grandeur of God? What creature would have sufficient majesty to be the spouse of the Queen of Heaven and earth? How to find someone with a certain approximation to the Lady whom God would call Mother?

From all eternity, the Divine Artisan prepared a man, whose incomparable gifts and privileges could be summed up in two sublime titles:

virginal father of Jesus and spouse of the Virgin Mary!<sup>1</sup>

### *Exempt from sin since conception*

In order to appreciate the moral stature of St. Joseph, we must begin by considering the sanctity of those with whom he would live in a setting as intimate as that of a family.

In the first place, we must consider the perfection of Mary.

It is important to have a notion of Our Lady's degree of purity in order to fathom the extent to which the man chosen to be her *alter ego* – other I – was gifted by the Holy Spirit with a heart that was pure beyond all imagination.

In view of the Divine Maternity and the co-redemptive mission of Mary, Providence applied the merits of the most precious Blood of Christ to her benefit, in a *sui generis* and excelling manner. Our Lady, in anticipation of the future Passion and Death of Jesus, was sanctified from the first instant of her concep-

tion, being not only free from original sin and all of its consequences, but also being endowed with a plenitude of grace that would only increase throughout her life.

In Her, there was not the least trace of an inclination to concupiscence; on the contrary, her soul maintained complete harmony, ever submissive to the will of God through correspondence to all the motions of grace. Her passions were subordinated to reason, illuminated by faith. Consequently, She was a virginal creature, endowed with the gift of a super-excellent uprightness, entirely directed toward the most sublime perfection.

St. Joseph would be united to Her by the most intimate of natural bonds: matrimony.

### *Espoused to an angelic man*

The friendship between spouses is such that St. Thomas<sup>2</sup> affirms that the indivisible union of spirits is the essence of marriage. Life under the same roof, the frequent interaction



and the familiarity filled with reverence and respect that existed between Joseph and Mary prompt a decisive question: would it be possible for the man destined to be inseparably united in marriage to the Immaculate Virgin be victim of the effects of original sin? Not only from the standpoint of preserving Our Lady from risk incurred by proximity to a husband subject to the corruption of concupiscence, but for an even higher reason.

Our Lady is “the earthly Paradise of Jesus Christ, the new Adam,”<sup>3</sup> as the great French theologian St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort affirms. If in the garden of Eden, created for men, God introduced only persons without sin and did not permit them to remain there after they had offended His infinite majesty, how can we imagine that he whom God had predestined to be the guardian of His paradise, far more beautiful and sublime than the terrestrial one, and to be one with Her, would be marred by the consequences of original sin?

How would Our Lady feel if she lived day and night with a man inclined to baseness by concupiscence? Could She comprehend that God had preserved Her from all the contagion of sin only to join Her in matrimony to someone stained with the sin of Adam? In sum, if the guardianship of terrestrial paradise was, after the sin, entrusted to the Angels alone, it was only be fitting that Our Lady be espoused to an angelic man.<sup>4</sup>

In this way, the moral stature of St. Joseph can be measured by the grandeur of Our Lady. If her sanctity is sublime and incalculable, so must his be, albeit to a lesser degree, because God chose him to be united with Her in mar-

riage and together to form one spirit. Added to this is the fact of his being the first Marian devotee and, consequently, the one who benefitted most from her universal mediation.

### *Necessary collaborator in the hypostatic union*

Added to this is St. Joseph's predestination to have, with regard to the Son of God, the affection and responsibilities of a true father, even

*Would it make sense that the one chosen to educate, guide and protect the Word Incarnate be a man marked by the sin of our first parents?*



Espousals of Mary and Joseph, by Fra Angelico - Museum of San Marco, Florence (Italy); on previous page, St. Joseph - Tabor Formation House, Caieiras (São Paulo)

though he had not cooperated in procreation.

He will shine before Heaven, the Angels and the just of all time as the father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Would it make sense that the one chosen to educate, guide and protect the Word Incarnate be a common man, marked by the disorder resulting from the sin of our first parents?

This is heightened by the fact that God created St. Joseph in view of his sublime mission. Since Our Lady was immaculate due to her intimate association with the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word,<sup>5</sup> why would he not enjoy a similar privilege? If in anticipation of the merits of the Passion of the Son, the Mother of God was preserved from the stain of sin, can it not be said, also in light of the spotless purity of Mary, that Joseph was exempt from original sin and its consequences, as well as full of grace in proportion with his extraordinary vocation?

On account of his ministry, St. Joseph was ordained to collaborate in a necessary manner in the realization of the plan of the hypostatic union.<sup>6</sup> The Son of God wished to be born of Mary by a miracle of the Holy Spirit, but He chose for Himself a well-constituted family. Given that the husband is the head of the wife, and the Creator respects the natural order that He himself established, St. Joseph's consent was requested for the conception of his Spouse.

Therefore, we must conclude that since Our Lady, from all eternity, was united in the divine mind by an intimate and indissoluble link to the decree of the Incarnation of the Word,<sup>7</sup> St. Joseph, too, was destined by the same Lord to be the legitimate spouse of Mary and the virginal father of Jesus, thus participating in

this singular plan. When conceiving the idea of Mary, God did not do so without thinking of him who would be one with Her: Joseph.

### **The “*sensus fidelium*” regarding St. Joseph**

Holy Scripture does not make an explicit reference to St. Joseph being conceived in grace. However, the Church has declared some truths as dogmas of the Faith that are found only implicitly in Revelation.

God gave man the capacity to reason and, therefore, starting from a principle, to deduce consequences and reach a conclusion. Now, to this capacity of reason is added the virtue of faith. Faith and reason are not at odds, but rather complement one another. Faith perfects, supports and illuminates the intelligence, giving it wings to soar much higher, for it is a participation in God’s own understanding.

To this is added Church Tradition, which, guided by the Holy Spirit, has progressed over time in analysing the mystery of St. Joseph’s sanctity. Thus, we ought to rejoice with the outlook that the affirmations regarding the absence of original sin and its consequences in the Holy Patriarch, at first timid and increasingly more categorical over the centuries, are reaching

their climax. This has reached the point that to oppose this perception of the *sensus fidelium*,<sup>8</sup> only an *ex cathedra* pronouncement to the contrary would suffice.

### **Why only now?**

How long did it take the Magisterium to define the Immaculate Conception of Mary? Nineteen centuries, even though the entire Church clamoured that the declaration be made much earlier. Why so much time? Because such is the grandeur of Our Lady that, at the dawn of the Church, some began to worship Her as a goddess.<sup>9</sup>

St. Thomas<sup>10</sup> teaches that every intermediate thing, seen from one extreme, seems to be the other extreme. Now, looking up at Her from below, Our Lady seems very much like God, which explains in some way why the divine nature was erroneously attributed to Her.

It was only in the fourth century, when the foundations of Christology were more solid, that the first Marian dogma, the Divine Maternity, was proclaimed. It was thus made clear that, although purely a creature, Mary participated, as the Mother of God, in the highest level of the work of creation: the plan of the hypostatic union, albeit in a relative manner.

Something analogous is taking place with St. Joseph. He remained shrouded in silence for twenty-one centuries, because it was necessary first to deeply implant adoration of Our Lord and establish devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin. But the time is now at hand for comprehending the degree to which he was elevated by God so as to be the worthy spouse of Mary and the virginal father of Jesus Christ.

The Author of these lines wishes to be one of the instruments in the hands of the Church to crown the figure of St. Joseph as a man conceived in grace. On the day in which the Seat of Truth makes an infallible pronouncement in this regard, the grandeur of the glorious Patriarch will be accepted by all with great rejoicing.

### **The most beautiful, fitting and excellent**

After having scrutinized the most qualified theologians and consulting his own heart at length, the Author finds nothing to discredit the immaculate conception of St. Joseph, a theory that is in complete harmony with the Holy Gospels.

In this way, no question is raised regarding the unique exclusivity of the privilege by which the Virgin Mary was exempt from original sin

<sup>1</sup> In a manner similar to the case of Our Lady, the *ex proximitate* argument has decisive weight in Theology for comprehending the figure of St. Joseph. For, having been chosen as the head of the Holy Family, he was placed in such close proximity to the very Source of grace, Jesus, and the Mediatrice of all graces, Mary, that he became the creature most benefitted by the redeeming power of Christ, after only his virginal Spouse. As a result of his ministry and his closeness to God Incarnate and His Most Holy Mother,

St. Joseph received a plenitude of grace unprecedented in history (cf. GRACIÁN DE LA MADRE DE DIOS, OCD, Jerónimo. Josefina. L.I, c.1. In: *Obras*. Burgos: El Monte Carmelo, 1933, t.II, p.378-382).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Summa Theologiae*. III, q.29, a.2.

<sup>3</sup> ST. LOUIS-MARIE GRIGNON DE MONTFORT. True Devotion to Mary, n.6. In: *God Alone*. Bayshore, NY: Montfort Publications, 1987, p.292.

<sup>4</sup> The exemption from all concupiscence in St. Joseph is affirmed by the Jesuit Alfonso Salmerón: “There was no disordered inclination of concupiscence in him [*omnis concupiscentiae fomes extinctus in eo fuit*], so that he might more worthily live with his Spouse” (SALMERÓN, SJ, Alfonso. *Commentarii in Evangelicam Historiam et in Acta Apostolorum*. Tractatus XXX. Coloniae: Antonium Hierat & Ioannem Gymnicum, 1602, t.III, p.234).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. PIUS IX. *Ineffabilis Deus*, n.1.

<sup>6</sup> The first theologian to mention this fact was Suárez (cf. SUÁREZ, SJ, Francisco. *Misterios de la vida de Cristo*. Disp.VIII, sec.1, n.10. In: *Obras*. Madrid: BAC, 1948, t.III, p.270-271).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. PIUS IX, op. cit., n.1.

<sup>8</sup> The *sensus fidelium* is related to “a sort of spiritual instinct,” given to the baptized, “that enables the believer to judge spontaneously whether a particular teaching or practice is or is not in conformity with the Gospel and with apostolic faith” (INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL





*The Author wishes to be one of the instruments in the hands of the Church to crown the figure of St. Joseph as a man conceived in grace*

Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias blesses a statue of St. Joseph, Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, Caieiras (São Paulo)

from the first moment of her conception, and “shone always adorned by the splendours of a most perfect sanctity.”<sup>11</sup> She was freed in view of the Redemption of Our Lord Jesus Christ and endowed with an unmatched plenitude of grace, while St. Joseph was also freed, in light of her Co-redemption, receiving grace by her mediation and in a lesser degree than that which inundated the predilect Daughter of God the Father.<sup>12</sup>

Permit the Author to express – with the “liberty of the children of

God” (Rom 8:21), but with utmost respect for the pronouncements of the Holy Church – a thought that he hopes one day to see confirmed by the authority of the Chair of Peter. From the moment in which within a Catholic heart, even if it be only one, sprang forth the idea that St. Joseph, given his mission, must have been conceived without original sin, there can be no more vacillation. For this principle applies: In relation to the Word Incarnate, God did all that was most perfect. Is not the conception in grace of St. Joseph that which

is most beautiful, most fitting and most excellent, from the standpoint of the Incarnation? This, therefore, is what God did.

May the profession of this truth redound to the greater glory of this extraordinary Saint, his Immaculate Spouse and their Divine Son. ✧

*Taken, with small adaptations, from:  
“São José: quem o conhece?”  
[St. Joseph: Who Knows Him?]  
São Paulo: Lumen Sapientiae,  
2017, p.31-47*

COMMISSION. *Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church*, n.49)

<sup>9</sup> “According to the testimony of St. Epiphanius, the Collyridians, in Arabia, venerated the Virgin as a goddess and offered, with idolatrous rites, small bread-rolls or cakes in her honour. This sect was comprised almost exclusively of women, and the priestly offices were reserved for them. Among the eastern Montanists, adherents of Marianism and philo-Marianism adored Mary as a goddess” (ALASTRUEY,

Gregorio. *Tratado de la Virgen Santísima*. 4.ed. Madrid: BAC, 1956, p.841).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, op. cit., I, q.50, a.1, ad 1.

<sup>11</sup> PIUS IX, op. cit., n.1.

<sup>12</sup> Having in mind the teachings of the Popes of the twentieth century regarding the uniqueness of the privilege granted to Mary in her Immaculate Conception, the Author perceives that it is the explicit desire of the Magisterium to highlight the fact that no other Saint has re-

ceived this privilege, for it is evident that the sanctity of Mary is superior to that of all the Angels and the Blessed. Nevertheless, delving deeper into the substance of this privilege of Mary in light of these same teachings, he believes it is possible to admit a similar, but inferior, privilege for St. Joseph, in virtue of the proportionality that existed between the Holy Patriarch and his virginal Spouse, both on account of the matrimony between them, and their common mission as virginal parents of Jesus. Accordingly, just as Mary, in

having been redeemed in the best way, glorifies the power of the Passion of her Son, the *alter ego* of Mary, Joseph, by the power of the Universal Mediation of Our Lady, would have been redeemed in an excellent and elevated manner, below Her, and above all the Saints, thus being the most precious fruit of the tears of Mary shed in spiritual union with the Blood of the Redeemer at the foot of the Cross.

ST. JOSEPH

## Counsellor of Eternal Wisdom

Who was this extraordinary man, from whose personality the Word Incarnate would draw something for His humanity? What was so precious in Joseph that God the Father wished to transmit to Jesus?



Fr. Lucas Garcia Pinto, EP

Francisco Lecaros



**T**he tenuous and golden light of the slowly setting sun lingers in the interior of a modest home. Its rooms, despite their simplicity, are filled with serenity, blessings and sweetness, a discreet reflection of which can be noted in the scent of the flowers gathered by the lady of the house and tastefully displayed throughout.

Close to one of the windows can be seen a fine table and some chairs, notable not for their material, but for their perfection and craftsmanship. The carpenter who fashioned them is the owner of this poor house, and is seated near the table, with his small son on his lap. He is teaching him to read. With a scroll of the Scriptures open before him, the father imparts Sacred History to the little boy.

### *A mystery reserved for the future*

The scene is uncommon for today's world, where disordered customs are destroying every home. But

in a society illuminated by the light of grace, it would be seen as natural, and would not awaken great admiration... That is, if we did not know that the inhabitants of this house were Jesus, Mary and Joseph!

"O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom 11:33). The Most High, Eternal and Omnipotent God "became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14). The Infinite became small to embrace our weaknesses, while He was carried in the arms of Mary and Joseph.

Much has been said about the grandeurs of the relationship between Mary and her Divine Son. However, this does not make up even five per cent of all that will still be made explicit by the Church, for "*de Maria nunquam satis*," St. Bernard affirms.

Nevertheless, across the two millennia Church history, very little has been set forth on the figure of St. Joseph. Like many of the mysteries of God, this was reserved for the future glories of the Mystical Body of Christ.

### *Sublime mission of instructing the Divine Infant*

Although shrouded in a deep silence, St. Joseph had a lofty mission in the plan of the Incarnation. Among the Hebrew people, it was largely the fathers' task to instruct the children, especially the sons, in the area of religion.

As much as Catholic piety may lead us, with the eyes of our soul, to imagine the Child Jesus in the arms of Mary being educated and formed in the sublime relationship between Mother and Son, we find in Scripture a divine determination, established by Moses, that the father teach his son everything related to the Law and worship: "When your son asks you in time to come, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord our God has commanded you?' then you shall say to your son..." (Dt 6:20).

Joseph was "a just man" (Mt 1:19). With this adjective – so simple, yet so profound – the Evangelist defines



and reveals Mary's spouse. Now, being just, Joseph must have been irrep-  
roachable in the observance of the  
Law and, therefore, it fell to him to  
teach the Divine Infant.

What a beautiful scene it must have  
been on that first Passover when the  
Child Jesus rose from the table, as the  
Law prescribed, and before eating the  
lamb – a prefigure of Himself! – asked  
His father: “What does this mean?”

With what tenderness and emo-  
tion St. Joseph must have explained  
the Judaic rite to Him! With what  
words would he have pointed out, in  
those prefigures, the image of those  
days which they had already begun  
to live in Nazareth!

### *Teacher and Counsellor of the Incarnate Word*

Long before, the prophet had  
asked: “Who has directed the Spirit of  
the Lord, or as His counsellor has in-

structed Him? Whom did He consult  
for His enlightenment, and who taught  
Him the path of justice, and taught  
Him knowledge, and showed Him the  
way of understanding?” (Is 40:13-14).

And the response was found in that  
humble house: Joseph! Only Joseph  
was found worthy before God to be  
the Counsellor of Eternal Wisdom.

He who had given the tablets of  
the Law to Moses, hears from Jo-  
seph what He ought, in His humani-  
ty, to do to please God! He, who had  
enlightened prophets, learns with Jo-  
seph how to interpret the words of the  
prophecies! He, who had engraved  
His image throughout the entire uni-  
verse, is taught by Joseph to admire  
His own reflections in creation!

The consideration of this lofty  
mystery leads us to exclaim, for all  
eternity, with St. Paul: “O the depth  
of the riches and wisdom and knowl-  
edge of God! How unsearchable

are His judgments and how inscu-  
table His ways! For who has known  
the mind of the Lord, *or who has  
been His counsellor?* Or who has giv-  
en a gift to Him that he might be re-  
paid?” (Rom 11:33-35). The Creator  
abandons Himself into the arms of  
Mary; Eternal Wisdom receives in-  
struction from the lips of Joseph!

### *Example of virtue, serenity and confidence*

“Jesus, when He began His minis-  
try, was about thirty years of age, be-  
ing the son (as was supposed) of Jo-  
seph” (Lk 3:23). Who was this ex-  
traordinary man, from whose person-  
ality the Word Incarnate would draw  
something for His humanity? What  
was so precious in Joseph that God  
the Father wished to transmit to Je-  
sus? In contemplating the two, would  
it be possible not to see and sense a re-  
lationship that is profound, absolute



Francisco Lecaros

**The Creator abandons Himself into the arms of Mary; Eternal Wisdom receives instruction from the lips of Joseph!**

The Holy Family in the house of Nazareth - Church of St. Eulalia, Bordeaux (France);  
on previous page, statue of St. Joseph with the Child Jesus - Church of Mount Zion, Palma de Maioraca (Spain)

and divine? Of all that Joseph transmitted to Jesus, what was most august? His trade? The Law? Education? Undoubtedly, none of these.

In Nazareth, the Man-God received the best of classes: good example. An example of virtue, of serenity, and of confidence. He who already knew St. Joseph from all eternity, could contemplate there, from within His human nature, that “divine” man whose abandonment into the hands of Providence touched His Sacred Heart.

***Jesus learned with him  
to contemplate Mary***

Nevertheless, of all the gifts and grandeurs God placed in the soul of St. Joseph, one stands out as substantially inseparable from his mission. Joseph was to transmit integrally to Jesus that to which he had applied his entire life: love and devotion to Mary Most Holy!

With Joseph, the Child Jesus also learned to consider the qualities and perfections of His Mother. The omniscient Word of God needed no mediation to contemplate Her who had begotten Him. But although he had no need, he desired to do this through the eyes of his virginal father. And Joseph, *alter ego* – another I – of



St. Joseph with the Child Jesus  
Shrine of Notre-Dame de Laghet  
La Trinité (France)

the Divine Paraclete, living receptacle of the love of the Eternal Father for Mary, would betray his own mission if he did not use every means to draw souls to Her and make Her more loved. The mission of St. Joseph begins in the Holy Family, for Jesus was the first to be led by him to Our Lady.

“The Holy Patriarch was an authentic slave of love to his Spouse [...]. He thoroughly analysed the gifts and virtues of Mary; eagerly sought to imitate Her in her dedication to Jesus Christ; and let not even one gesture or word pass without applying to it all his admiration.”<sup>1</sup>

Over the course of time and for all eternity, St. Joseph will always be “the perfect father, the powerful mediator, the wisest teacher, the untiring protector, and model of slavery to Jesus through the hands of Mary,”<sup>2</sup> who uses the infinite resources God has placed in his hands to crown the Blessed Virgin within every heart! ✧

<sup>1</sup> CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. *São José: quem o conhece?... [St. Joseph: Who Knows Him?]* São Paulo: Lumen Sapientiae, 2017, p.436.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, p.438.



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# True Charity

The word “charity” has lost its principal meaning in the eyes of many. It is understood almost exclusively as the act of helping one’s neighbour from a material perspective. In what, then, does true charity consist?



Sr. Mariana de Oliveira, EP

**I**n the first Letter to the Corinthians, we read the following affirmation from St. Paul: “So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (13:13). These words highlight the importance of this virtue without which we will never climb to the peaks of sanctity.

At the end of this life, we will be judged by our love,<sup>1</sup> that is, according to our charity. And upon reaching beatific vision, only this theological virtue will remain, for faith will give way to vision, and hope, to possession.

## *The only true charity*

However, in our days, the word “charity” has lost its principal meaning in the eyes of many. It is understood almost exclusively as the act of helping one’s neighbour from a humanitarian perspective, such as by providing food, clothing or even psychological assistance. But it is evident that the star of the theological virtues cannot be reduced to human undertakings that, as noble as they may be, are disassociated from the supernatural world.

Instilled in the soul at the moment of Baptism, the only true charity is the theological virtue that

makes us love God with our whole heart, above all things, and our neighbour for love of God – that is, because God is in him or at least so that He may come to be.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the Apostle cautions: “If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing” (1 Cor 13:3).

When love of God is absent, these actions are merely philanthropic acts. Their value is merely temporal; they may collaborate in the building up of the Kingdom of God, but they can also be conducive to distancing us from it.

If, on the contrary, it is animated by the virtue of charity, material assistance is given to our neighbours with the immediate or remote goal, either direct or indirect, of helping them to attain Heaven.

## *The robust charity of a holy girl*

A episode from the life of St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, the great Italian mystic, effectively illustrates the essence of the definition presented above. On one occasion, when she was still small, her mother asked her:

— My daughter, why is it that on some days, you remain constantly at

my side without leaving me for an instant?

In her innocence, the girl replied:

— Because, on the days that you receive Communion, I sense in you the aroma of Jesus!

The virtue of charity was already so robust in that soul from her infancy that the Saint acted under its impulse, without disordered affections. She loved people to the degree that they led her to the sole Being her heart desired.

## *The essence of Christian perfection*

All the virtues are strengthened by, and can only be called so when they are united to, charity. In fact, an act good in itself, but done only for self-interest and vanity, without the intention of pleasing God, does not merit the title of virtue. Therefore, “charity is not only the synthesis but the very soul of all virtues.”<sup>3</sup>

“Love never ends” (1 Cor 13:8), and those who remain serene in face of misfortune, accepting “the sufferings, the privations, the humiliations, the financial setbacks, labours, sicknesses – in short, those crosses with which the hand of God’s Providence puts us to the test,

strengthens our virtue, and helps us to atone for our faults,”<sup>4</sup> these will be true disciples of Jesus, progressing along the path of sanctifying love.

As God is Charity itself, we must take Him as the principal example in the practice of this virtue, loving Him as He loved us in giving Himself up to be crucified for us on the height of Calvary. When Our Lord invites us to follow Him by taking up our cross and denying ourselves, He is calling us to nothing other than this immersion in charity, stripped of any egoism and crowned in service and immolation for love of Him and our neighbour.

### *Example of heroic charity*

This is the disposition we find in the lives of the Saints, as demonstrated, for example, by an episode involving St. Clement Mary Hofbauer at the time in which he was dedicated to the apostolate in Poland.

He had the custom of going out into the streets to ask alms to maintain the children of his orphanage, which he did with great joy and not counting the cost. Upon passing by a bistro and noting the vivacity of the people gathered there, he decided to

approach, in the hope of being well-received...

He went up to one of the men seated there, who by his manner of dressing appeared to be of some wealth, and made a courteous request for help for his boys. However, his interlocutor, seized by a fit of anger, responded in a hostile, arrogant and insulting manner.

Inspired by charity and desiring only the good of his children and of that poor soul, who by his actions evidenced the state of blindness and egoism in which he found himself, the Saint remained calm after hearing those aggressive words. Nevertheless, the man, not satisfied with the insults uttered, ended by shamefully spitting his drink into the face of the religious.

With the composure and equanimity that only a great Saint possesses, St. Clement tranquilly took out his handkerchief, cleaned his face and, like the Divine Master, who in face of innumerable incidents of abuse remained as meek as a lamb, said:

— That was for me; now give me something for my little orphans!

This splendid act of humility and love of God was sufficient not only to convert that hardened soul, but

also to edify all those who had the grace to witness the magnificent scene.<sup>5</sup>

### *The most valuable alms*

To bear the rudeness of another with heroic meekness for love of God constitutes a greater act of virtue than to distribute food weekly to the poor, while lacking this love. Indeed, in the eyes of the Most High, an imperishable and, so to speak, invisible alms, done for the soul of a brother, is often more valuable than perishable assistance.

At the very beginnings of the Church, we see St. Peter and St. John at the gate of the Temple, curing a paralytic who asked them for material assistance... They had neither gold nor silver, but they acted in the name of the Lord of all created riches (cf. Acts 3:6). Was not the cure more profitable to the poor sick man than a few material coins? And even more than the physical cure, was it not of greater value to him to learn of Jesus, His doctrine and His power?

The Divine Master Himself, in exhorting the people after the multiplication of the loaves, encouraged them to strive not only for food that is corruptible, but for that which lasts



Sergio Holmann

*Even more than the physical cure, was it not of greater value to him to learn of Jesus, His doctrine and His power?*

St. Peter and St. John curing the paralytic – St. Pius V Museum, Valencia (Spain)





Statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus belonging to the Heralds of the Gospel

to eternal life (cf. Jn 6:26-27). In this way, He shows us that the children of God cannot be concerned only with material goods, but must be continually repeating to themselves and those around them: “*Sursum corda* – Lift up your hearts!”

To practise charity is above all to desire the spiritual good of our neighbour, bearing his defects with patience and rising above any antipathy, misunderstanding or dispute, so as to always promote union. St. Paul exhorts us in this sense: “Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (cf. Phil 2:3-4).

*If we do not close  
our soul to grace, it  
will always indicate  
the way that is most  
in accordance with  
the Sacred Heart  
of Jesus, burning  
furnace of charity*

How often is our neighbour left waiting for the alms of our good example, our meekness and our uprightness?

### *To be a saint, love suffices*

Many others see sanctity as some kind of utopia, counselled by the Church, but impossible to be attained by common people. They are unaware that the perfection of the Saints consists in doing everything under the influx of charity.

We are called to perfect ourselves in this virtue. Let us be attentive, for the practice of charity, which covers a multitude of sins (cf. Prv 10:12), is not far from us, but within arm’s reach. As long as we do not close our soul to grace, it will always indicate the way that is most in accordance with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, burning furnace of charity. ✧

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS. Dichos de luz y amor, n.59. In: *Vida y Obras*. 5.ed. Madrid: BAC, 1964, p.963.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. TANQUEREY, Adolphe. *The Spiritual Life: a Treatise on Mystical and Ascetical Theology*. 2 ed. Tournai, Belgium: Desclée & Co., 1930, pg. 578-9.

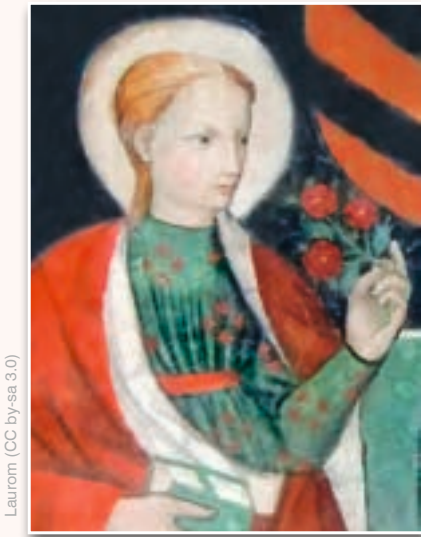
<sup>3</sup> Idem, p.163.

<sup>4</sup> Idem, p.164.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. AZEREDO, CSsR, Oscar Chagas. *São Clemente Maria Hofbauer*. Aparecida: Santuário, 1928.

ST. ROSE OF VITERBO

# *Mercy and Intransigence Flowing from Ardent Love*



Laorum (CC by-sa 3.0)

From her earliest childhood, the seraphic soul of Rose received a lofty mission, of profound, far-reaching and exceptional import: to suffer the martyrdom of fidelity, while fighting the wave of greed and rebellion that seemed to engulf Europe.



**Bruna Almeida Piva**

**“**Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor 13:4-7).

This passage of Sacred Scripture aptly summarizes the life of Rose of Viterbo. A simple Italian peasant, she endured persecution, suffering and adversity, and proclaimed to future ages that nothing is impossible for a soul who truly loves Our Lord Jesus Christ.

## ***Born in the thick of war***

The city of Rose’s birth had become the setting for a violent dispute in the thirteenth century. The Holy Church, besides being as-

sailed by the Cathar heresy, was at that time being persecuted and defied by Frederick II, the German Emperor who aimed to annex Italy to his domains, and to achieve this, did not hesitate to appropriate even the pontifical lands, of which Viterbo was also a part.

The Italian peninsula became divided into two parties: the followers of the emperor, called Ghibellines, and the defenders of the Holy Father, known as Guelfs. The latter had a numerous and strong presence in Viterbo, which led Pope Gregory IX, expelled from Rome by the rebels, to take refuge in the Pontifical Palace located there. Thus, St. Rose, born in 1235, was closely acquainted with the chaos of her time and the fury of the enemies against the Church.

In 1240, Viterbo fell into the hands of officials of the Emperor,

who tyrannized the population. The people and the Guelf nobles were forced to work in the building of a fortress, transporting stones and wood in an exhausting routine.

Furthermore, the impious sovereign ordered the imprisonment of all those suspected of taking up arms against him in support of the Pope. Their foreheads were branded by their torturers with incandescent irons and they were confined in contaminated dungeons along with cadavers, or at times burned alive. The inhabitants of Viterbo were threatened with death at every moment, whether due to misery, hunger or incarceration in the terrible dungeons they themselves had to build...

Such was the historic context in which little Rose grew up. Thus, from her earliest childhood, she understood the holiness of the Church



and the depravity of her persecutors. In face of this twofold scenario, two extremes coexisted harmoniously in her young soul: a strong love for good, and an intense hatred of evil.

### ***Childhood abounding in miracles***

From a tender age, Rose showed authentic signs of virtue and the odour of her sanctity attracted the attention of her relatives and those close to her. Even before learning to walk, she eagerly accompanied her mother to Masses and other acts of piety in St. Mary in Poggio Parish, demonstrating extraordinary recollection.

She rejoiced upon hearing episodes from the life of St. Clare, who had lived a cloistered life in Assisi since 1212 with other young women who followed her radical path of consecration to Christ. She was especially enchanted with the narration of the miraculous defeat inflicted by this holy foundress on the Saracens who tried to take possession of her convent!

It is said that one day the little girl was observed unawares in her room, surrounded by little birds that happily flew around her, allowing her to hold and stroke them, undoubtedly drawn by her great innocence...

Her biographers also narrate that when Rose was only three years old, a sister of her father died. Upon receiving the news, the holy girl approached the coffin, knelt, and raised her hands in prayer to Our Lord Jesus Christ. Then, imposing her small hands on the cadaver and gently calling out to her aunt, she mi-

raculously restored her life, to the amazement of all those present.<sup>1</sup>

### ***First contacts with society***

Following the example of the Divine Infant, Rose grew each day in wisdom and grace, before God and men (cf. Lk 2:52). Thus, in contact with those around her, Rose analysed the conversations she heard with deep insight.

The general anxiety that reigned led this little seraph to meditate at length on how to show her love to Our Lord Jesus Christ, expiate for the sins committed against Him, and to combat those who insulted the Church. Not finding, at first, the means to do this, she began to help the sick she met, and to give them food.

Regarding this zealous apostolate, another biographer comments: "It was said that God always heeded her supplications. Some of the sick were certain that it was she who had cured them. 'I owe her my life!' her aunt would say. Her mother, in turn, declared: 'Without her prayers I would not have had this other child, nor would I even be alive.' And a companion of the

Saint related: 'Moved by my tears and my fear of being admonished, Rose put my jug back together, after it broke when it came out of the well.' Thus, a golden legend gradually developed around Rose, on account of the people who turned to her intercession and benefitted from her unfailing goodness."<sup>2</sup>

All of these prodigies could only arise from a life of deep piety, and Rose did not lack this. In her room, "a cramped space illuminated by a small grated opening at the top of a thick wall, similar to that found in a prison,"<sup>3</sup> she spent long hours in prayer, kneeling on the uneven floor, absorbed in contemplation. There, she practised harsh and austere penances, and there she received innumerable mystical communications and supernatural visions, which were already commonplace for her. Many spied on her, so as to be edified at the sight of her fervour!

Rose felt called to monastic life. However, as later happened with St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, she was prevented from entering a convent due to her young age... Nevertheless, undeterred, she strove to model her life at home as closely as possible to religious life.

### ***The Blessed Virgin Mary entrusts her with a mission***

At eight years of age, Rose fell gravely ill. A fever kept her bedridden for fifteen painful months. As a result of her illness, she was reduced to "a poor pallid girl, lying in a corner of her room, on a straw mattress."<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, "she never complained, and



**Then, imposing her small hands on the cadaver and gently calling out to her aunt, she miraculously restored her life**

St. Rose, resuscitating a relative - Shrine of St. Rose, Viterbo (Italy); on previous page, fresco in the Cathedral of Ivrea (Italy)

Saiko (CC BY-SA 3.0)

when she was afflicted by a coughing fit, she gently whispered: "Thank you, my Lord!"<sup>5</sup> Like a little lamb, she allowed herself to be immolated by the wise hands of God and rejoiced in consoling Jesus with her sufferings. But in her generosity, she believed her sufferings insufficient and, hindered from practising greater penances, she implored the Divine Redeemer insistently: "My sweet Lord, make me suffer for Thee, otherwise call me to Thy side!"<sup>6</sup>

God did in fact call her, not to Heaven, but to fight the apostate emperor who, like the ancient Roman Caesars, sought to make himself the ruler of the whole world.

One day, in the presence of some neighbours and acquaintances, with her eyes closed and barely conscious as a result of her sickness, a slight smile suddenly appeared on the angelic child's face... Her eyes opened wide, shining, and she stood up. She was in an ecstasy!

After conversing with some heavenly visitors, she ordered the onlookers: "Kneel down! Greet the Queen who arrives, surrounded by Angels and Saints!"<sup>7</sup> Then, like someone repeating, word for word, a text dictated by another, she began to repeat what the Blessed Virgin said to her: "My daughter, you shall wear the habit of penance and preach against the enemies of the Faith! Do not be afraid! All those who listen to you will be blessed in this life and in the next, and those who turn a deaf ear to you will be chastised!"<sup>8</sup>

Thus, Our Lady confirmed all the desires that grace had sown in her soul from the earliest age, and entrusted to her a lofty mission, of profound, far-reaching and exceptional import: to suffer the martyrdom of fidelity, with firm and categorical resolution, combatting the wave of greed and rebellion that seemed to engulf Europe.

### *Her preaching begins*

After the miracle, the young Saint immediately began to carry out the celestial commands: she cut her hair, donned a poor and rough penitential tunic, and set out on pilgrimage to St. John the Baptist Church, for it was June 24, the commemoration of his birth. Numerous faithful followed behind her; having heard of her miraculous cure and the apparition of Our Lady, they wanted to contemplate her holiness first-hand.

From then on, Rose dedicated herself exclusively to preaching: she went through the streets of the city, always with a crucifix in her hands, speaking to the crowds and enkindling in them the love of the Crucified and repentance for their sins. Her zeal for the cause of the Church, her passion for the Divine Redeemer and her desire to bring an end to the offences against Him gave her a holy obstinacy for the conversion of souls, so that she preached both in season and out of season, without concern for herself, with an inexhaustible patience and admirable wisdom.

Often, the numbers gathering to hear her exhortations were so great, and the girl so small of stature, that she had to climb up on rocks to be seen by all... The contact with her soul of light encouraged the weak, brought back the wayward and sanctified the good.

### *Incompatible with error*

Gifted with intrepidity, and unwavering in face of evil, St. Rose often engaged in heated arguments with certain Ghibellines who dared to utter injurious words against the Pope and the Church. One day, one of them insulted and brutally struck her. Far from becoming angry, she calmly said: "Unfortunate soul... Within three days you will be struck!" In fact, three days later, the

unbeliever was found with leprosy and became the object of horror to all his countrymen.<sup>9</sup>

This presence of this virtuous girl in Viterbo was a source of exasperation for the enemies of the Faith, for she converted a great many of their followers, constantly foiled their plans and enkindled enthusiasm in the army of the Papal defenders. Impetuous, audacious and fearless, Rose refuted outrageous affronts and rebuked the faithless. Despite her youth and frailty, she became the scourge of the Cathars and the ruin of the Ghibellines, through her crystal-line fidelity.

But the hatred of the wicked against Rose reached its peak when she began to prophesy the approaching death of Frederick II: "Listen carefully! Within a few days you will exalt with joy, for you will obtain a great victory! This night, an Angel has announced to me the proximate death of the emperor!"<sup>10</sup> Enraged, the Ghibellines leaders and governors decided to exile her, since killing her would provoke an uncontrollable rebellion.

Having no other recourse, the seraphic virgin, accompanied by her parents, John and Catherine, was forced to leave her village at night, in the middle of a harsh European winter, with no destination. They took refuge in the citadel of Soriano, where the Guelfs held power.

Some time later, the death of Frederick II, which occurred on December 13, 1250, was publicly announced. Thus, after eighteen months of exile, Rose could return to her native land, where she finally saw the immediate fruits of her apostolate and efforts: Pope Innocent IV recovered the pontifical cities, one by one, and proceeded to Viterbo where he ordered the demolition of the Ghibelline fortress and the subjugation of the rebels.



### **Final years lived in recollection**

Having fulfilled the task entrusted to her by the Blessed Virgin, and desiring to withdraw into seclusion, Rose asked to be received into the Clarist monastery of San Damiano, but the superior rejected her under various pretexts. The truth was that she considered the Saint “a dangerous visionary, likely to disturb the peace of the community with her folly.”<sup>11</sup>

The holy girl did not insist, but announced: “You will not receive me now, but the day will come when you will be very glad to accept me!”<sup>12</sup> And she resigned herself to spending the rest of her days in recollection in her home.

Before long, some young friends joined her, and, instructed by her wise teachings, they also dedicated their lives to the service of God. In this way, Rose brought together a sizeable number of followers and founded a prosperous community of women guided by the rule of the Third Order of St. Francis. However, the nuns of San Damiano soon

obtained a bull from Pope Innocent IV prohibiting the establishment of any religious community within two miles of their convent. The disciples of St. Rose were obliged to disperse.<sup>13</sup>

Those who should have supported her despised her as an insane woman and sought to drive her away; however, without the least resentment or complaint, she consoled herself by recalling that such rejections and moral sufferings were also endured, in a pre-eminent degree, by her beloved Jesus.

### **Serene entry into eternity**

After spending several months secluded in her home, the little Angel of Viterbo succumbed to the illness by means of which God would call her to Heaven. Always of fragile health, Rose rapidly approached her agony. She confessed, received Viaticum with admirable piety and serenely expired, pronouncing the sacred names of Jesus and Mary.

The people of Viterbo wept copiously and immediately began to

have recourse to her intercession, as a Saint. The Blessed in Heaven, on their part, joyfully received her who, on this earth, did nothing but proclaim by her works the stirring words of the psalmist: “For what have I in Heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? For Thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away: Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever. For behold they that go far from Thee shall perish: Thou hast destroyed all them that are disloyal to Thee. But it is good for me to adhere to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God: That I may declare all Thy praises, in the gates of the daughter of Sion” (cf. Ps 72:25-28).

Eighteen months after Rose’s death, her body, which had been buried in the parish cemetery of St. Mary in Poggio, was exhumed and found incorrupt. Seven years later, on September 4, 1258, Pope Alexandre IV had her transferred with great ceremony to the Convent of San Damiano, the same that had previously rejected her. ✧



**“You will not receive me now, but the day will come when you will be very glad to accept me!”**

At left, the cloister of the old Monastery of San Damiano, in Viterbo;  
at right, the incorrupt body of the Saint, venerated in the Shrine of St. Rose, annexed to the old convent

<sup>1</sup> Cf. BARASCUD, Jean-Charles-Dieudonné. *Vie et miracles de Sainte Rose de Viterbe. Vierge du Tiers-Ordre de Saint-François*. 2.ed. Paris: Victor Sarlit, 1864, p.5-7.

<sup>2</sup> BEAUFAYS, OFM, Ignacio. *Santa Rosa de Viterbo*. Buenos Aires: Caritas, 1942, p.28-29.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, p.10.

<sup>4</sup> Idem, p.33.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, ibidem.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Idem, p.34.

<sup>7</sup> Idem, p.36.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Idem, ibidem.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Idem, p.51-52.

<sup>10</sup> Idem, p.53.

<sup>11</sup> Idem, p.67.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Idem, ibidem.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. BARASCUD, op. cit., p.143.

# ***Marian Fervour in Nova Scotia***

Could an institution started in Brazil make the love of the Blessed Virgin Mary grow among the pious faithful of Nova Scotia? Would the charism and spirituality of the Heralds of the Gospel be welcomed there? Let us see what they have to say.



**Sr. Monica MacDonald, EP**

**I**t was evening, and the snowflakes fell silently to the ground creating an angelic and marvellous atmosphere. With daybreak, as the first rays of the sun gradually illuminated the snow-white scenery, one had the impression that the Blessed Virgin Mary had covered the wintry landscape with her pure mantle as a reminder of her constant protection and maternal presence.

Nevertheless, neither the low temperature nor the abundant snow could diminish the warmth in the hearts of the small and picturesque maritime village of Port Hood, in Nova Scotia, where we were on mission on that March 25.

As it was the Solemnity of the Annunciation, a fervent group of families gathered that morning in the parish church to sing hymns in honour of their Blessed Mother and to pray the Rosary. They interspersed the latter with meditations on the beautiful feast day. The hospitality, musicality and joy of these people, as well as their sincere Mari-

an piety, were especially apparent at that moment.

But how did the Heralds arrive at such a remote place, on the far eastern coast of the vast Canadian territory?

## ***A long voyage in search of the Heralds***

The story began in 2003, when a search for sacred music led a young mother of Port Hood to contact the Heralds of the Gospel of Canada by mail. They sent her some CDs and videos of musical presentations that, when her young daughter Mary Teresa watched them, enkindled a flame of enthusiasm in her.

The idea arose to go to Toronto to meet the institution first-hand, but it was not easy for them to plan a trip of almost two thousand kilometres at the beginning of the harsh Canadian winter.

However, when they heard that the International Choir and Orchestra of the Heralds of the Gospel would be travelling to Canada in November, together with Msgr. João

Clá Dias, the founder of the institution, Mary Teresa had no doubts and managed to convince her mother to make the trip.

Nothing can hold back hearts attentive to the voice of the Holy Spirit when it is a matter of following their calling. Thus, impelled by the enthusiasm of the future religious sister, the girl, her mother and two small brothers boarded the train at the station in Halifax and set out on a journey of nearly twenty-eight hours to Toronto.

To pass the time, the child prayed, sang and played with her brothers. And, as the train began to leave the Atlantic coast behind, moving through woodlands, fields and snow-covered cities, her heart began to beat more rapidly in expectation of the longed-for meeting with the Heralds...

Finally, on November 29, 2003, Mary Teresa's desire was fulfilled when she met Msgr. João in St. Paul's Basilica in Toronto, during a ceremony of reception of habit for various members of the institution.



A while later, enchanted with the charism of the work, the little girl decided to begin a period of vocational discernment in one of the houses of the Heralds in Brazil, where she completed her studies and religious formation. Today she resides at the motherhouse of the Society of Apostolic Life Regina Virginum in Caieiras, São Paulo, and is part of the same international choir that she met as a child. As an organist and music teacher, she helps people draw closer to the Faith through the beauty of sacred and liturgical music.

***“Our life would be less happy and holy”***

After the blossoming of the seed planted in the heart of the young Mary Teresa, the evangelization of the Heralds began to take hold in the distant and fervent province of Nova Scotia.

More than a dozen inhabitants of Port Hood have adhered to the spirituality of the institution and have become Cooperators of the Heralds of the Gospel.

“It would be impossible to narrate all the graces received since

I was admitted,” affirms Roberta MacEwan. “Without my formation as a Herald I wouldn’t be the mother that I am... The spiritual formation provided by our founder, Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, helps us to live fully our Catholic Faith and transforms every aspect of our lives, such that every day is exciting, even amidst sorrow, and we echo the words of St. Paul, ‘Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice’ (Phil 4:4).”

Impressed by the impact of the most recent evangelizing mission in Nova Scotia, Roberta concludes: “The Heralds have a zeal for souls and this zeal is infectious. It has

*On November 29, 2003, Mary Teresa’s desire was fulfilled when she met Msgr. João in Toronto*

been a special joy to watch the apostolate grow here in Port Hood, and particularly to see many souls blessed through the consecration to Our Lady and through the abundant formation provided to them. We have seen family members return to Church, addictions overcome, children baptized, and have seen the members of the consecration group grow in hope and in confidence in the maternal protection of Our Lady, at a time in the world and in the Church when many are struggling with despair.”

Her daughters Mary Flora and Effie, fifteen and thirteen years of age respectively, added: “We both love the beautiful churches of the Heralds, their houses with the ceremonial lifestyle, the amazing habits they use and the sanctity and happiness of the members. The recent visit of the sisters, as well as the priests and the brothers, has made everyone very enthused. Without the Heralds our life would be less happy and holy.”

***New impulse for the spiritual life***

Lorelei MacDonald, who considers it “a gift” that her daughters



At left, little Mary Teresa, accompanied by her mother, greets Msgr. João for the first time; At right, singing behind the organist in a recent presentation of the International Choir and Orchestra of the Heralds of the Gospel, in December of 2018

Grace and Julia are studying with the Heralds in Brazil, shares this same joy with her husband Keith. As parents of a family and active Cooperators of the Heralds in Port Hood, they point out the effects of the charism of the institution on all aspects of their life:

“The Heralds have changed everything... They are generous and charitable in their teaching. This world is so dark, and they bring light and joy, changing the atmosphere wherever they go, because they bring truth, beauty and uprightness. They have this ability because they have something that guides them, and gives them hope, faith and love: the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church.”

Mary Buchanan has special memories of the visits of the first Heralds of the Gospel to Port Hood, affirming that this contact was the impetus and compass for her spiritual and apostolic life:

“I am so thankful for the many graces and blessings that have been poured out right here in our own little town. Before knowing the Heralds, we were very active in our journey of faith. We were involved in lots of programs in an attempt to fix the problems of the Church

and the world, but to no avail. Over time, and because of the Heralds, we came to realize that the sole solution for this situation is Our Lady.”

And Cathy MacDonald, after recalling her first encounter with the Heralds, comments: “Suddenly we began seeing things in a whole new way, being exposed to truths that immediately convinced us and lifted our souls up. It was this wonder with the Heralds that sustained me and sustains me until today.”

### *Graces obtained through the consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary*

After the ceremony for the consecration to Our Lady of her husband and son, held on April 9, 2018, Mary Rose MacIsaac, filled with joy, recalls the graces obtained after her first contact with the Heralds in 2017.

Invited by a neighbour, she entered the preparation course for consecration to the Blessed Virgin, according to the method of St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, ministered by the Heralds, and soon after became a tertiary. But problems soon arose:

“During this time my son called in a state of despair, talking of sui-

cide. He was bankrupt, his wife had left him and he was feeling like he had failed in life. He stayed with us for a year recovering, and while I was preparing for the renewal of my consecration, my son and husband took the course under the direction of the Heralds. Wow! We have received many, many graces and blessings since then. My husband now prays the Rosary daily, attends Mass and Adoration at the parish. And my son has improved: he has reconciled with his wife and found a job. I am grateful for all the support he received from the Heralds.”

Having also had the grace to see her children return to the Church and her grandchildren being baptized, Mary Rose adds: “I dare not think about where our lives would be had it not been for the intercession of Mary, and all the prayers of the Heralds.”

The consecration to Our Lady and the preparation course were truly the occasion of innumerable graces.

Marion Beaton had the opportunity to participate in one of these courses during a time of great personal trial, receiving special strength of soul to forge ahead during the illness and death of her daughter:

*“Now we know the price paid for this new movement: its founders have forged the path of sacrifice and suffering”*

Accompanied by their families, young people from Port Hood gather in the parish church to pray the Roseary on the First Saturday, 7/4/2018



Private file of the author





*“As Msgr. João Clá  
was passing,  
he looked at us,  
and I wanted  
to run to him...”*

Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias  
with the Cooperators of Port Hood  
in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary,  
Caieiras (São Paulo), 8/4/2015

“The consecration gave me much insight into the journey of my spiritual life... For me, Our Lady walked with me through the sickness and letting go of our dear daughter Rebecca.”

### *Abundant fruits from a short trip*

Confronting the problems presented by the language barrier, the distance and cultural differences, a group of families from Port Hood decided to travel to Brazil for Holy Week in 2014, so as to become personally acquainted with the founder, the charism and the work of the Heralds. The stay was short, but deeply marked the pilgrims, being for some a truly life-changing event.

Among the many graces received by Sandra Chisholm during the days spent in Brazil, those related to the beauty of the liturgical ceremonies celebrated in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary especially stood out:

“It was a taste of Heaven on earth. Something was seared into our hearts and souls forever. The procession of the Herald priests at Holy Thursday Mass was the most unforgettable sight of the whole pilgrimage: two by two they processed,

in perfect unison, garbed in magnificent vestments, hands clasped in prayer, shining with purity and holiness. They were like their Lord! Christ was in them! They were, it seemed to me, the perfect union of the Lion and the Lamb and the thought came: ‘They are as gentle as the lamb, yet as fearless as the lion... who will stand before them?!’”

After narrating many other experiences during the trip, Sandra affirms: “During the recessional, as Msgr. João Clá was passing, he looked at us, and I wanted to run to him... He gazed upon each one of us, and that made all the difference. Now we know the price paid for this new movement and gift to the Church and to all people: its founders have forged the path of sacrifice and suffering.”

And she concludes showing how much that trip provided a new course for her spiritual life: “It was a most abundant time of grace, those months following my stay in Brazil. I had already tasted the joy that I was created for and I wanted to drink deeply of it.”

Mary Margaret Gillis also tells of the graces she received during a trip to Brazil, especially while praying in

the churches of the Heralds of the Gospel and at the tomb of Dr. Plinio and Dona Lucilia in Consolation Cemetery in São Paulo: “It had been years since I had spoken to my son. So, when I went to Brazil, I prayed that he would return to the family.”

A short time after returning home, she had a long and unexpected phone conversation with her son, prompt proof that her request had been heard.

\* \* \*

These testimonies help us to see how much the charism of the Heralds has spread throughout different peoples and nations, unhindered by distance and borders: from India to Colombia, from Mozambique to Canada, from Brazil to more than seventy nations. For it is but one of the many and varied manifestations of the Holy Spirit, who gives the impetus to go throughout the world preaching the Gospel to all peoples (cf. Mk 16:15), heeding the request of Jesus.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, make the fruits of this apostolate grow, multiply and endure! ✧





Barranquilla Cathedral

## On Pilgrimage to the Atlantic Coast

**D***uc in altum* – Put out into the deep (Lk 5:4). Inspired by this Gospel mandate, young students from the feminine and masculine branches of the Heralds of the Gospel from Colombia set out from Bogotá toward the Atlantic coast to bring the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima to various cities.

The mission began in Barranquilla, where the Emeritus Bishop, Most Rev. Víctor Tamayo Betancourt, presided over a solemn Eucharist in Mary the Queen Met-

ropolitan Cathedral, attended by more than a thousand ardent devotees of the Blessed Virgin. Other cities visited were Santa Marta – where the main Eucharistic Celebration was presided by the diocesan Bishop, Most Rev. Luis Adriano Piedrahita – Riohacha, Valledupar, Maicao and San Juan del Cesar. In addition to the solemn Eucharist Celebrations, the pilgrimage program also included processions and times during which the Pilgrim Statue remained on display for the veneration of the faithful.



Riohacha Cathedral



Barranquilla Cathedral



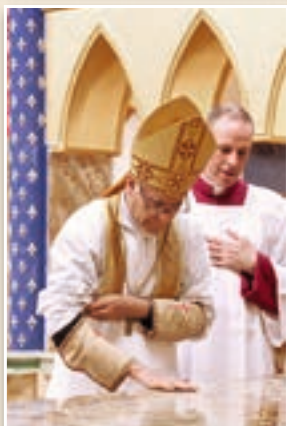
Our Lady of Torcoroma Parish, Barranquilla



Santa Marta Cathedral

Photos: Guillermo Torres Bauer





Photos: Stephen Nami / David Domingues

## ***Heralds in Paraguay Inaugurate Church***

**T**he new church built by the Heralds in Paraguay to serve the growing number of people eager to participate in the Holy Mass or to be attended in Confession was inaugurated with ample press coverage and a large influx of faithful. According to the desire of Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, founder of the Heralds of the Gospel, it is dedicated to the Mother of Good Counsel – an invo-

cation to which this entity is especially linked. The dedication ceremony was presided over by Most Rev. Joaquín Robledo, diocesan Bishop of San Lorenzo, accompanied by diocesan priests and priests of the Heralds of the Gospel. More than a thousand people participated in the celebration. In the photos above are various scenes of the Holy Mass and the beautiful Rite of Dedication.





David Domingues

## ***Recife: Cornerstone of New Church Laid***

**Y**et another church according to the charism and characteristic style of the Heralds of the Gospel is being constructed, this one in the municipality of Moreno, in a pleasant area of the urban region of Recife. The cornerstone of the future Chapel of Our Lady of Recife was launched on January 5, during a solemn Mass

presided by Msgr. Luciano José Rodrigues Brito, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Olinda and Recife, and concelebrated by various diocesan priests of the Heralds of the Gospel. Participants in the ceremony included the mayor of Moreno, Evaldo Rufino de Melo and other local authorities.



Gustavo Bravo

**Juiz de Fora (MG)** – Desiring to unite themselves more to Our Lady, 117 people from a variety of parishes of the city consecrated themselves to the Blessed Virgin according to the method of St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort during a Eucharist celebrated in the local house of the Heralds of the Gospel.





## CHURCH AND WORLD EVENTS .....

### *Feast of the Baptism of the Lord celebrated in the Holy Land*

Approximately fifteen hundred faithful celebrated the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the church erected in honour of St. John the Baptist near the Jordan River, at the site where the biblical scene is believed to have occurred. The Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Most Rev. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, OFM, presided over the Eucharist, concelebrated by many priests. Before the Mass, dozens of priests went to the river in

procession to fill large pitchers with water, which, after being blessed, was used to bless the faithful.

The vestiges of several churches and baptismal fountains in this remote region, as well as a sophisticated irrigation system dating to the epoch of the Roman Empire, demonstrate the site's importance and corroborate the belief that the Baptism of the Lord took place there. In recognition of its significance, the locale was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2015.



### *Millions venerate the Nazarene in the Philippines*

According to information furnished by *Fides* agency, over five

million faithful participated this year in the traditional procession of the Black Nazarene, which takes place every January 9 through the streets of Manila. The procession began with a prayer vigil in Rizal Park, in the centre of the Philippine capital, and took twenty-four hours to complete the 6.5 kilometre route to the Basilica of the Nazarene, in the Quiapo district.

The statue depicts Our Lord life-size, in a kneeling position, with His Cross on the way to Calvary. It was carved in Mexico by an anonymous sculptor and transported to the archipelago by Augustinian missionaries at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Black Nazarene is taken on procession three times annually: January 9, Good Friday and December 31. The January 9 procession commemorates the transfer of the statue from the original shrine to the present-day Basilica, which took place on this date in 1787.

## *St. Peter's Basilica Displays New Lighting*

**O**n January 25, the new interior lighting system for St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican was inaugurated, a project that spanned two years, from planning to installation.

The work was a challenge for technicians, as it involved the installation of one hundred thousand LED lights, distributed over strategic points situated at heights ranging from twelve to one hundred and ten metres, so as not to interfere with the viewing of the many works of art adorning the sacred precinct.

As a result, the twenty-seven thousand daily visitors to St. Peter's Basilica can now admire a detailed



Reverenda Fabbrica de San Pietro

### **The dome of the main nave of St. Peter's seen with the new lighting**

view of the most extensive mosaics in the world, covering an area of ten thousand square metres in the central cupola and lateral naves.

The new lighting is digitally controlled, and can be adapted to the circumstances and ceremonies held on the Altar of Confession or the Altar of the Chair, throughout the liturgical periods of the year.

***Statue of Our Lady  
found intact  
in Brumadinho***

Amid the tragedy caused by the dam collapse in the Brazilian city of Brumadinho, a video published by an Emergency Service worker brought consolation for the faith of those affected. The video shows a small shrine containing a statue of Our Lady of Aparecida, taken intact from a house that was destroyed under the heavy torrent of mud.

The video was recorded and posted on Facebook by the worker who, deeply impressed, commented: "I know that I have friends here who do not share my devotion or my religion. But when I saw this statue of Our Lady of Aparecida taken completely intact from a house that had disappeared in the mudslide, I wept."

The dam of the Córrego do Feijão iron mine, located in the municipality of Brumadinho, Minas Gerais State, broke on January 25 causing one of the greatest catastrophes in the history of Brazil: at least 157 people died and 165 are still missing at the time of this writing.



***Martyrdom of  
fourteen Conceptionist  
nuns recognized***

On January 15, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints promulgated the decree of the martyrdom of

Mother Maria del Carmen Lacaba and thirteen other Franciscan Conceptionists, killed for hatred of the Faith between August and November of 1936, during the Spanish Civil War. After being forced to abandon their respective convents and take refuge in private homes, the religious were imprisoned, tortured and shot to death.

On the same date, the miracle attributed to Blessed Marguerite Bays of the Secular Franciscan Order was recognized, opening the process for her canonization. Also declared were the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Anna Kaworek, co-foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Michael Archangel in Poland, and the Servant of God Maria Soledad Sanjurjo Santos, from the Congregation of the Servants of Mary, Ministers to the Sick, of Puerto Rico.

## ***Peruvian bishops and priests are consecrated to Our Lady***

**O**n January 18, forty-nine bishops of Peru from forty-five ecclesiastical circumscriptions consecrated themselves to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the presence of the pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima, which had come from Portugal to visit several dioceses of the

country. The act, held at the Seat of the Apostolic Nunciature at the end of the 113th Plenary Assembly of Peruvian Bishops, was led by Most Rev. Héctor Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte, OFM, President of the Peruvian Bishops' Conference and Archbishop of Trujillo. Arch-

bishop Nicola Girasoli, Apostolic Nuncio to Peru was also present.

Ten days earlier, during the visit of the pilgrim statue to the Diocese of Chiclayo, a group of sixty priests also made their consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The ceremony was held at the close of the farewell Mass for the statue, celebrated in the Cathedral of Chiclayo. The formula of consecration used was the same as that recited by Benedict XVI during his visit to the Fatima Shrine in Portugal, in 2010.



***Peruvian bishops during the last Plenary Assembly***



## Chapter Room of the Cathedral of Toledo is Restored

**O**n January 22, the Chapter Room of the Cathedral of Toledo was re-opened to the public. Owing to its wealth of frescoes, it has been dubbed the Spanish Sistine Chapel.

Painted by the famous Juan de Borgoña in the sixteenth century, these frescoes depict thirteen scenes from the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Passion of Our Lord, and are complemented, in the lower

part, by a series of portraits of the Archbishops of Toledo. The re-opening took place after a prolonged restoration, focusing on the cleaning of the varnishes, the mixture of resins and organic glue that had accumulated over centuries, the removal of retouching that had covered the original works, as well as the repair of deterioration that had occurred over time. The ornamentation covering the ceilings and walls was also renovated.



holylanfranciscansaustralia.org

At left, overview of the Chapter Room in all of its splendour, after the restoration; at right, detail of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, by Juan de Borgoña

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STORY FOR CHILDREN... OR ADULTS FULL OF FAITH?

# ***A Pair of Sandals for Little Jesus***

The merchant rummaged through his wares and found a tiny pair of sandals, the smallest in stock. Still... they were twice the size of the Boy's little feet. How could such a problem be resolved?



**Maria Auxiliadora Lima**

**T**he sound of hammering fills the little carpentry shop. St. Joseph is hard at work. It is late afternoon and a thunderstorm is brewing on the horizon, bringing gusts of fresh air into the little room. While the venerable hands of the Patriarch hammer the nails and sand down the last planks of a charming little table of cedar wood, his heart is raised to the treasure that God has entrusted to him – Mary and Jesus, who is just a little over a year old.

As he finishes the piece, he hears the serene voice of his spouse, who appears on the scene with little Jesus in her arms. Seeing that he has completed his daily tasks, she asks:

— Joseph, our Son will soon be taking His first steps, and we cannot allow His little feet to touch the floor unshod. Perhaps today would be a good opportunity for you to go out with Him to buy Him a pair of sandals.

The Holy Patriarch glances out of the window and sees that the sky is covered with billowing clouds. If it starts to rain while they are out, Jesus will get wet and could catch a cold.

A little perplexed, but with his unalterable calm, he says to Mary:

— My Lady, if you wish, I will go at once; I only ask that the Boy stay here with you, for I am afraid we may get caught in a rainstorm.

However, the Blessed Virgin turns to the window and, looking up at the sky, responds with a smile:

— Take the Boy with you and do not worry about anything.

Hearing this, Jesus extends his little arms to St. Joseph, who takes Him tenderly and, fully trusting in the words of his spouse, he sets out right away.

However, as they turned the corner of a street crowded with merchant tents, St. Joseph noticed that some of the dealers were already closing shop due to the threat of rain. As he walked, a series of baskets of every size met his eyes, filled with all kinds of goods: carpets, fabric, tools, ointments and grains... the Holy Patriarch continued resolute-



**Without changing his peaceful expression St. Joseph looked at the Child and smiled**

ly toward the tent that sold footwear.

The owner of this tent, Balthazar, had a pleasant impression as he saw the Saint draw near: "What a dignified man! I don't know why, but the sight of him raises my spirits... and look at his little Son – what an extraordinary Child!"

As he made these observations, the merchant nimbly rolled back the rain covering he had placed over his display, exposing his wares once again. They were the best products he had to offer: fine sandals made from the choicest leather. Their laces of white or red-dyed linen had been skilfully crafted by his wife.

Balthazar greeted them with enthusiasm:

— Good afternoon, sir! How may I help you?

— I apologize for the poor timing, but I need a pair of sandals for my Son. Do you have anything available that would do?

Barely able to contain his emotion, the merchant said:

— For this little Boy? Let's see...

After rummaging through his goods, he found a very small pair, the smallest in stock. But they were twice the size of Jesus' little feet! Now what? Joseph could not return home empty-handed...

Filled with regret, Balthazar tried to find some way to help:

— My good sir, maybe I have something inside...

He dashed into his house, which stood a few metres from the tent. He knew that there was no merchandise there, but he planned to of-



**It was then that the Child Jesus walked for the first time**

fer the superb pair of sandals that he had made for his youngest son, a few weeks previously, and which had not yet been used. In a twinkling, he took them from the shelf and returned to the tent:

But not even these fit the infant God-Man...

— They're too big! – the merchant exclaimed in disappointment, as he tried them on His sacred feet.

While the poor man mumbled his apologies, Jesus, who was seated on the counter, leaned forward and touched the tip of each of the sandals, as if wanting to play with the pretty scarlet laces. What was Balthazar's surprise when he reached out to remove the sandals and saw that now they fit perfectly!

— What happened? The sandals shrunk!! Did you see what I just saw? – he sputtered in amazement to St. Joseph.

Without changing his peaceful look, St. Joseph smiled at the Child Jesus. When Balthazar saw father and Son exchange looks, he felt that he was touching on a sublime mystery. Then Jesus turned and looked straight at the good vendor, moving His little feet and clapping His hands as if wanting to show His

thanks and pleasure with His new footwear.

Just then, the first rain drops started to fall.

— We will take this pair – said St. Joseph – How much do they cost?

— Nothing, my lord. Consider them as a gift from me and my wife to your enchanting little Son. And, whenever you

need a new pair, do not hesitate to come here to find them! It would be an honour to serve you with the best we have.

But Jesus tugged at his father's arm, and Joseph understood His gesture to be an order that he should pay the man. So, in the end, Balthazar was obliged to accept the coins that St. Joseph handed him, and then bid them farewell.

The rain was now falling steadily. Covered from head to foot with his father's cape, Jesus thoroughly enjoyed the trip home, for He liked the rain, and once or twice He even extended His little fingers outside of the cloak to catch some raindrops!

When they arrived home, Our Lady came to meet them, and removing the cape that was covering them, she showed her spouse that it was dry to the touch... St. Joseph was a little surprised at first, but he soon grasped what had happened.

It was then that the Child Jesus left St. Joseph's arms and walked for the very first time, with His little arms outstretched in the direction of Our Lady. His holy parents knelt and made an act of adoration. In about five or seven steps, Jesus reached His Mother and embraced Her with infinite tenderness. ✧



# THE SAINTS OF EACH DAY

**1. St. Felix III**, Pope (†492). Of the Roman nobility, he entered the clerical state and succeeded St. Simplicius to the Chair of Peter.

**2. Blessed Charles the Good**, martyr (†1127). Prince of Denmark and Count of Flanders, son of King St. Canute IV. He was assassinated in front of the altar, by men at arms whom he had endeavoured to conciliate.

## 3. 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.

**Blesseds Liberatus Weiss, Samuel Marzorati and Michael Pius Fasoli of Zerbo**, priests and martyrs (†1716). Franciscan religious missionaries stoned to death in Gondar, Ethiopia.

**4. St. Casimir**, king (†1484 Grodno - Belarus).

**St. John Anthony Farina**, bishop (†1888). Great pastor and

educator. He founded the Institute of the Sisters Teachers of St. Dorothy, Daughters of the Sacred Hearts, for the education of poor girls, in Vicenza, Italy.

**5. St. Phocas the Gardener**, martyr (†fourth century). Generous and hospitable, he was beheaded in Sinop, Turkey, simply for being Christian.

## 6. Ash Wednesday.

**St. Julian**, bishop (†690). He convoked three Councils in Toledo, Spain. In his writings he explained true doctrine, displaying charity and zeal for souls.

**7. Sts. Perpetua and Felicity**, martyrs (†203 Carthage - Tunisia).

**St. Paul of Prusa**, bishop (†850). He was expelled from his homeland and died in exile in Prusa, present-day Bursa, Turkey, for defending the cult of sacred images.

**8. St. John of God**, religious (†1550 Granada - Spain).

**Saint Faustino Míguez**, priest (†1925). Piarist religious who founded the Congregation of the Daughters of the Divine Shepherdess, in Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Spain.

**9. St. Frances of Rome**, religious (†1440 Rome).

**St. Pacian**, bishop (†c. 390). Bishop of Barcelona, Spain. In preaching the Faith, he affirmed: "Christian is my name and Catholic my surname."

## 10. 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent.

**St. Simplicius**, Pope (†483). He comforted the afflicted during the barbarian invasions, sustained the unity of the Church and fought the Monophysite heresy.

**11. St. Dominic Cam**, priest and martyr (†1859). Dominican religious born in present-day Vietnam. During the persecution, and even in prison, he endeavoured to keep Christians steadfast in the Faith.

**12. Blessed Fina of San Gimignano**, virgin (†1253). Afflicted by a serious disease at ten years of age, she died five years later, having endured her sufferings with admirable patience.

**13. Blessed Agnello of Pisa**, priest (†c. 1236). He was admitted into the Franciscan Order by St. Francis of Assisi, who sent him to England to found a province of the Order there.

**14. St. Matilda**, queen (†968). Wife of King Henry I of Germany, she dedicated herself to assisting the poor and founding hospitals and monasteries.

**15. Blessed Artemide Zatti**, religious (†1951). Salesian Coadjutor Brother who dedicated his life to caring for the sick in a hospital in Patagonia, Argentina.

**16. St. Julian of Anazarbus**, martyr (†fourth century). After prolonged torture, he was bound in a sack with serpents and thrown into the sea in Cilicia, present-day Turkey.

## 17. 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent.

**St. Patrick**, bishop (†461 Down - Ireland).

**St. John Sarkander**, priest and martyr (†1620). Jesuit, pastor of Holesov, in Moravia, tortured on the rack for conserving the seal of Confession.

**18. St. Cyril of Jerusalem**, bishop and Doctor of the Church (†c. 386 Jerusalem).



**St. Turibius of Mogrovejo**  
Episcopal Palace of Lima



**St. Salvador Grionesos of Horta**, religious (†1567). At age twenty he entered the Franciscan convent of Barcelona, Spain. He was misunderstood and persecuted by his confreres because of his gift of miracles.

- 19. Solemnity of St. Joseph**, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Patron of the Church.

**Blessed John Buralli of Parma**, priest (†1289). Franciscan religious sent by Pope Innocent IV as legate to the Greeks to attempt to restore their communion with the Latin Church.

- 20. Blessed Ambrose Sansedoni**, priest (†1287). Dominican religious formed by St. Albert the Great and fellow-student of St. Thomas Aquinas.

- 21. Blessed Thomas Pilchard**, priest and martyr (†1591). A gifted and humble man, he was executed during the reign of Elizabeth I of England for being a Catholic priest.

- 22. Blessed Clemens August Graf von Galen**, bishop (†1946). As Bishop of Münster, Germany, he was a reflection of the Gospel figure of the Good Shepherd to the people. He openly fought against the errors of national-socialism and the violation of human and Church rights. His courage earned him the name “the Lion of Münster.”

- 23. St. Turibius of Mogrovejo**, bishop (†1606 Saña - Peru).

**Blessed Methodius Dominick Trčka**, priest and martyr (†1959). Redemptorist priest imprisoned in a dank cell in the Leopoldov Prison in Slovakia, where he died of pneumonia.

- 24. 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent.**



Reproduction

**Blessed Fina of St. Gimignano Collegiate Church of St. Gimignano (Italy)**

**Blessed Maria Serafina of the Sacred Heart**, virgin (†1911). Founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Angels, adorers of the Blessed Trinity in Caserta, Italy.

- 25. Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord.**

**Blessed James Bird**, martyr (†1592). At age fifteen he embraced the Catholic Faith and practised it secretly. At age nineteen he was condemned to death in Winchester, England, for refusing to participate in a heretical Liturgy.

- 26. St. Peter of Sebaste**, bishop (†c. 391). The younger brother of St. Basil the Great, he was elected Bishop of Sebaste, present-day Sivas, Turkey. He valiantly defended the Faith against the Arian heresy.

- 27. St. Rupert**, bishop (†c. 718). First Bishop of Salzburg, Austria, he evangelized and converted much of the population. He baptized Duke Theodo II and with his help built churches and monasteries.

He is considered the Apostle of Austria and Bavaria.

- 28. St. Guntram**, king (†593). King of the Franks, he governed wisely, founded monasteries and shared his wealth between the Church and the poor.

- 29. Blessed John Hambley**, priest and martyr (†1587). Drawn, hanged and quartered during the reign of Elizabeth I of England for being a Catholic priest.

- 30. St. Peter Regalado de Valladolid**, priest (†1456). Spanish Franciscan religious, disciple of Peter of Villacreces, he promoted strict observance of the rule in the convents of the Order.

- 31. 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent.**

**Blessed Natalia Tulasiewicz**, martyr (†1945). During the military occupation of Poland, she was imprisoned in the concentration camp of Ravensbrück, Germany, and executed by inhalation of lethal gas.



# *The Joy of Simplicity*

They do not claim to have the majesty of eagles, the elegance of peacocks or the melodious song of the nightingale. But their simple chirping seems an apt expression of the overall joy that they transmit.



**Giuliana D'Amaro**

**I**t is a familiar sight to those who live in tropical countries: during summer days, scores of birds skim the rooftops in sweeping flight. They are small and delicate, and the outline of their pointed wings is of rectilinear perfection; they look like scissors cutting the air. The colouring of their plumage, white alternating with navy blue or black, calls to mind the Dominican habit... They are swallows.

These winsome birds have stunning vivacity; their flight is agile and their wing movements lithe. They seem to play with each other doing acrobatics in the air, executing twists and loops ... Sometimes, in a vertiginous swoop, they miss the obstacles that arise along their path by mere millimetres. It is as if they are celebrating the sunlight!

In contemplating this spectacle, one has the impression of harmony and lightness, and an overall feeling of rejoicing. Swallows are

happy to be swallows, doing what they do best! They enjoy soaring through the blue expanses of the sky, extending their wings to the sun and being carried on the afternoon breeze. Their vivacity is an appropriate reflection of the joy of living, being who they are in all simplicity.

They do not claim to have the majesty of eagles, the brilliance of hummingbirds or the elegance of peacocks. Rather, their beauty is delicate and filled with innocence. Neither do they pose as melodious warblers, like nightingales and canaries. But their simple chirping seems an apt expression of the overall joy they transmit.

We should be the same way. We should not worry about being something we are not, in showing off qualities and skills we do not have. Each soul is called to radiate a specific aspect of God's infinite perfections. And, by reflecting this specif-

ic light in a unique way, man fulfils his mission, giving glory to the heavenly Father.

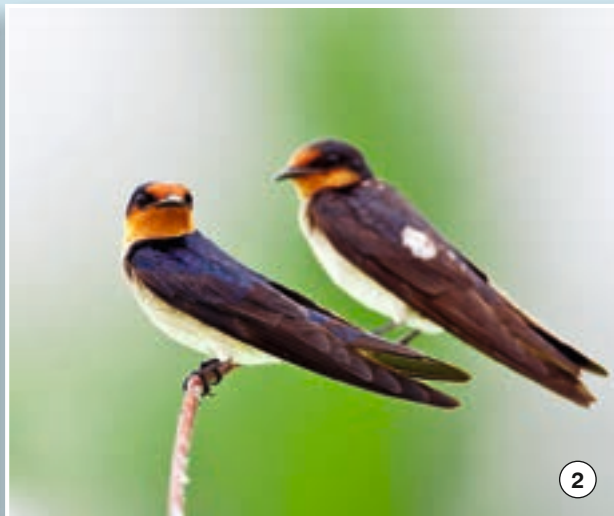
This is true happiness: to know that one is a child of God, the source of eternal peace and supreme joy! This is the joy of innocent souls who, like little swallows immersed in the deep blue sky, live at peace because they feel that they are within the Creator. In Him they are free, and in Him alone they are happy.

Contemplating these little birds is a summons to raise our sights to higher realities, to heavenly joys. One could almost say that they are not just birds in flight but, even more, a sign of countless Angels soaring, singing the wonders of God, transmitting to us their own joy.

Swallows on the wing remind us of the words of Sacred Scripture: "Rejoice always, for this is the will of God for you" (cf. 1 Thes 5:16,18). ✧



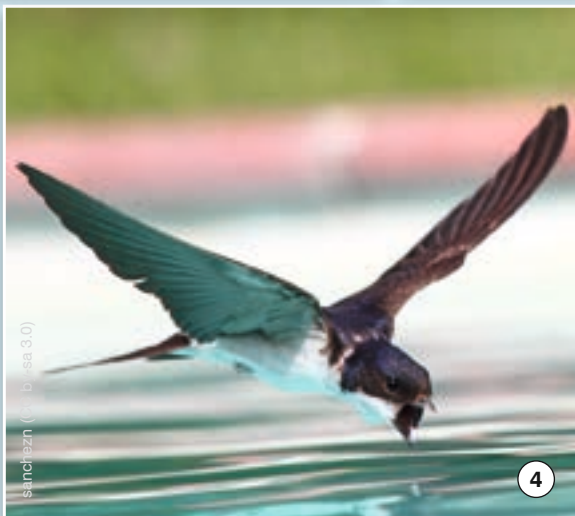
1



2



3



4



5



6



7

Photos: Tree swallows (1 and 7), Australian swallow (2), blue and white swallow (3), wire-tailed swallow (5), and the common house martin (4 and 6)



## ***Repose of the Holy Spirit***

**T**he Holy Spirit, with the seven gifts, reposed in the heart of Mary with untellable plenitude and with the gift of wisdom adorned Her with incomparable beauty.

There is even more. Purity of heart effectively prepares the way for the increase and the culmination of wisdom. And since the Virgin Mary shone with great purity and holiness – such that after God Himself, one cannot conceive of any greater – it follows that uncreated Wisdom communicated and infused itself into the soul of Mary most abundantly, and that in Her, the gift of wisdom made such unspeakable progress that, above all mere creatures, this eminent Mother of Wisdom shines with this gift in an incomparable way.

*Gregory Alastruey*

*Treatise on the Blessed Virgin Mary*

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom,  
private collection