



HERALDS OF THE GOSPEL

Vol. 13, No. 146
December 2019



*He Became Man
to Save Us*

You Love Evil More than Good!

Why do you boast, O mighty man, of mischief done against the godly? All the day you are plotting destruction. Your tongue is like a sharp razor, you worker of treachery. You love evil more than good, and lying more than speaking the truth. You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue. But God will break you down for ever; He will snatch and tear you from your tent; He will uproot you from the land of the living. The righteous shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him, saying, "See the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and sought refuge in his wealth!" But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of God for ever and ever. I will thank Thee for ever, because Thou hast done it. I will proclaim Thy name, for it is good, in the presence of the godly (Ps 52:1-9).



King David, by Juan Rexach
Museum of Fine Arts, Valencia (Spain)



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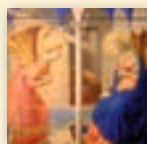
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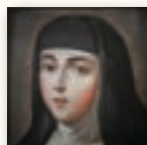
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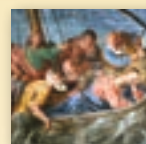
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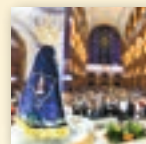
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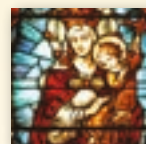
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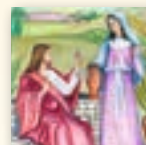
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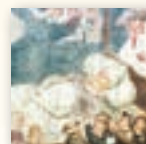
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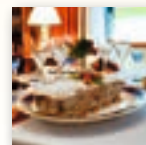
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OUR READERS WRITE

SORROW TRANSFORMED INTO JOY

I find that *Heralds of the Gospel* magazine is like a balsam for our interior life, which always inspires us to lift up our souls to Heaven.

The *Gospel Commentary* by Msgr. João in the August magazine is a good example: he shows how the supernatural perspective should guide our life. The article of Dr. Plinio in the same issue, *The Joys of Our Lady in the Assumption*, also teaches us how our earthly sorrow will be transformed into joy in Heaven.

We savour each article to the fullest, for we know we are blessed to have a jewel like this magazine in our days.

Vivian Chaves
San Jose – Costa Rica

ARTICLES OF DR. PLINIO AND DONA LUCILIA

The magazine greatly increases our understanding of the true Church, of Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary. I especially enjoy the articles of Dr. Plinio and Dona Lucilia because by increasing my love for them, my love for the Holy Catholic Church, Our Lord and Our Lady continually grows.

Ciro Alexandre Madrucci
São Caetano do Sul – Brazil

MANY EXCELLENT COLLABORATORS

For many years I have enjoyed the blessings of this Association, through the reading of the beautiful texts of *Heralds of the Gospel* magazine, and more.

Thus, I would like to thank you so much, and may God and Our Lady always grant you many excellent collaborators. I desire the greatest and best blessings from Heaven for this

institution, as well as for all its benefactors.

Maria Conceição Ribeiro
Vide – Portugal

LET US PREPARE FOR THE REIGN OF MARY!

The arrival of *Heralds of the Gospel* magazine at our home each month is awaited with growing expectation. Its articles, stories, reflections and arguments, based on Catholic doctrine, console and encourage us to follow the long and narrow road to sanctity.

There are several articles of the magazine that have made a special impression and have deeply moved me. For example, I would particularly like to mention the one dealing with the fire at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, written by Fr. Fernando Néstor Gioia, EP, and published in the June issue. It caused me to relive the sentiments I experienced while watching the formidable flames quickly ravaging the marvellous cathedral, as a thick smoke rose up to Heaven like incense. The entire Catholic Church was united in prayer in face of such a devastating fire.

I would also like to recall the article composed by Sr. Antonella Ochipinti, EP, for the July issue of this year, in which she spoke about the terrible damage that fire can cause. But the author did not neglect to mention, on the other hand, the noble and magical light of its ardent flames, and how they also serve to purify and transform. The article inspired me to reflect on how necessary it is to pass through the devouring flames of fire on the long and narrow path of sanctity, so as to purify our souls and attain Heaven.

Therefore, it is fitting to ask if Notre-Dame Cathedral, a historic symbol of Christendom, a place that

united Heaven and earth, was not burned by fire before the eyes of the whole world as a symbol of the purification that the Church and the world must undergo in such turbulent times.

From the innumerable wars, social upheavals, broken families and spiritual indifference, “a new Heaven and a new earth” (Rv 21:1) must be born. According to St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, this new historical era – also prophesied by the Blessed Virgin Mary in Fatima – will begin with a deluge of fire.

Let us stir our hearts and prepare ourselves to be purified, for this era is coming. Let us make ready for the Reign of Mary!

Kathya Jovel
San Salvador – El Salvador

TRUE CATHOLIC FORMATION

By means of its articles, *Heralds of the Gospel* magazine effectively provides a true Catholic formation.

The Gospel commentaries it publishes are an important tool to help us grow in faith by contemplating, in a more profound and insightful manner, the beauties of the Divine Master’s teachings.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary bless the *Heralds* and their apostolic mission of announcing the Kingdom of God through this magazine, among other means.

Thaíse da Silva
Natividade – Brazil

THEY ARE WELCOMED AS A TREASURE

I take this opportunity to thank you for the magazine, by which I have learned many things previously unknown to me. After reading each issue, I pass them on to the church in my neighbourhood, where they are welcomed as a treasure.

Oriana Borie Martínez
Quillota – Chile

HIGH PRIEST, REJECTED BY HIS OWN...

"He came to His own home, and His own people received Him not" (Jn 1:11). The shepherds were the only ones to hasten to the Grotto; the city of Bethlehem rejected the Holy Family; Herod killed thousands of innocent children out of hatred for Jesus... These affirmations, so oft repeated, could almost be considered commonplace. On that Holy Night, however, there was an absence that is little commented upon: that of the priestly class.

Having been placed at the service of God, the sacred minister, more than any other man, must live dedicated exclusively to the Most High. But if he is not faithful to his mission, he will close in upon himself, appropriate for himself the gifts received and fall into decadence. And not rarely, as *corruptio optimi pessima est*,¹ we will find him, at the end of the road, in the service of evil...

God had given the priestly class the necessary gifts to recognize the fullness of time. Thus, when Herod summoned the "chief priests" to ask them where the Messiah was to be born, they answered without hesitation (cf. Mt 2:4-6). Now, if they knew from tradition and from Sacred Scripture what was about to happen, why were they not the first to come and venerate Him?

On one occasion Jesus said: "You hypocrites!... why do you not know how to interpret the present time?" (Lk 12:56). At that moment, the Divine Master was speaking to the multitudes, but He would employ this harsh epithet even more fittingly to describe the attitude of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the priestly class of His time.

By manipulating the Mosaic Law, they had created a religion distinct from the true one, calculated to maintain their dominion over the population. And when the Good News of the Gospel frustrated their earthly ambitions, they turned against Our Lord: they rejected Him, fought Him, and finally crucified Him.

Thus, the absence of priests in the Grotto of Bethlehem was the first sign of the deicide and the harbinger of the great persecutions which, over the centuries, would lead millions of innocent people to their death, for the fiercest anger is that rooted in religious hatred.

Today, equality is deified, and freedom exalted to the utmost extremes. Nevertheless, troubling symptoms point to a return to the dark times of persecution, whether pagan or in the name of the goddess reason. Churches, priests and Christian faithful have become the target of the most radical intolerance.

Is the 21st century about to surprise us with a new religious war, marked by a gratuitous, slanderous and cruel hatred? Will it be conducted by leaders who indoctrinate the masses by acting as veritable priests of irreligion? In the prospect of such a hypothesis becoming a reality, it is indispensable that there be holy, upright and fervent priests, capable of sustaining the hope of the faithful amid the darkness caused by anti-Christian prejudice.

Let us ask the Child Jesus, the One Perfect High Priest, to always preserve on earth the true priests of Christ, propagators of the faith, capable of conferring upon the souls entrusted to them an unwavering union and resistance, which nothing can destroy. ✧



*The Child Jesus
dressed in the
habit of a Herald
priest*

Photo: Lúcio Alves

¹ From the Latin "The corruption of the best is the worst."



The True Beacon of the Liberation of Man

If God does not exist, if God is not a reference accessible to man, the consensus of the majority alone remains the supreme reference. And this consensus – we know it from the history of the past century – can also be a “consensus in evil”.

The word, the phrase that I would like to propose for this communal meditation is this great affirmation by St. Peter: “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). St. Peter stands before the supreme religious institution, which one should normally obey, but God is above this institution and God has given him another “command”: he must obey God. Obedience to God is freedom; obedience to God gives him the liberty to oppose the institution.

And here exegetes draw our attention to the fact that St. Peter’s response to the Sanhedrin is almost word-for-word identical to Socrates’ response to the sentence at the tribunal in Athens. The tribunal offers him freedom, liberation; on the condition, however, that he does not continue to seek God. But for him, searching for God, the quest for God, is a superior mandate, which comes from God Himself. And a freedom bought at the price of renouncing the journey towards God would no longer be freedom. Therefore, he must not obey these judges. He must not purchase his life at the cost of losing

himself but must obey God. Obedience to God has priority.

Obedience to God is freedom

Here it is important to stress that it is a question of obedience and that it is obedience itself that constitutes freedom. The modern age has spoken of the liberation of man, of his full autonomy, hence also of the liberation from obedience to God.

Obedience must no longer exist; man is free. He is autonomous: that is all. However, this autonomy is a lie: it is an ontological falsehood, because man does not exist on his own and for himself. And it is also a political and practical falsehood because collaboration, the sharing of freedom is necessary.

And if God does not exist, if God is not a reference accessible to man, the consensus of the majority alone remains the supreme reference. Consequently, the consensus of the majority becomes the last word which we must obey. And this consensus – we know it from the history of the past century – can also be a “consensus in evil”.

Thus we see that the so-called autonomy does not truly set man free.

Obedience to God is freedom because it is the truth; it is the reference that comes before all the other human needs.

In the history of humanity, these words of Peter and of Socrates are the true beacon of the liberation of man, who can see God and, in God’s name, can and must obey, not so much human beings, but God, thus freeing himself from the positivism of human obedience.

Today subtle forms of dictatorship exist

Dictatorships have always been against this obedience to God. The Nazi, and likewise the Marxist dictatorship, could not accept a God who is above ideological power. The freedom of the martyrs, who recognize God precisely in obedience to divine power, is always the act of liberation through which Christ’s freedom reaches us.

Today, thanks be to God, we do not live under dictatorships, yet subtle forms of dictatorship exist: a conformism, which becomes obligatory, thinking as everyone thinks, behaving as everyone behaves, and the subtle assaults on the Church or even

those that are less subtle show that this conformism can really be a true dictatorship.

This is what applies to us: we must obey God rather than men. However, this implies that we truly know God and that we truly wish to obey Him. God is not a pretext for one's personal will, but is really the One who calls and invites us, if necessary, even to martyrdom. Therefore, in measuring up to this word that ushers in a new history of freedom in the world, let us pray above all to know God, to know God humbly and truly, and in knowing God, to learn true obedience which is the root of human freedom.

This following of Jesus ends at the right hand of the Father

Let us choose a second passage from the First Reading. St. Paul says that God exalted Jesus at His right hand as Leader and Saviour (cf. Acts 5:31). Leader is a translation of the Greek term *archegos*, which implies a far more dynamic vision: *archegos* is the one who shows the way, who goes ahead; it is a movement, an upwards movement. God raised Him at His right hand. Therefore, speaking of Christ as *archegos* means that Christ walks before us, He precedes us, He shows us the way. And being in communion with Christ is being on the way, it is climbing with Christ, it is following Christ, it is the ascent, it is following the *archegos*, the One who has gone before, who precedes us and points out the way.

Here, evidently, it is important that we are told where Christ arrives and where we too must arrive: *hypsothen* – on high – ascending to the right hand of the Father. The “sequela” of Christ is not only the imitation of His virtues, it is not only living in this world, as far as we are able, as Christ lived, in accordance with His words, but it is a journey that has a destination. And the destination is the right hand of the



Benedict XVI, giving the Urbi et Orbi blessing on 4/4/2010

Today, thanks be to God, we do not live under dictatorships, yet subtle forms of dictatorship and subtle assaults on the Church exist

Father. There is this journey of Jesus, this following of Jesus which ends at the right hand of the Father. The whole of Jesus' journey, even reaching the right hand of the Father, fits into the horizon of this “sequela”.

In this regard, the destination of this journey is eternal life at the right hand of the Father in communion with Christ. Today all too often we are somewhat afraid of speaking about eternal life. We talk of things that are useful for the world, we show that Christianity also helps us to improve

the world, but we do not dare to say that its destination is eternal life and that from this destination stem the criteria for life.

From eternal life comes the light that illuminates this world

We must understand anew that Christianity remains a “fragment” unless we think of this destination, that we want to follow the *archegos* to God's height, to the glory of the Son who makes us sons in the Son, and we must once again recognize that only in the great perspective of eternal life does Christianity reveal its full meaning. We must have the courage, the joy, the great hope that eternal life exists. It is the true life and from this true life comes the light that also illuminates this world.

One may even say, leaving aside eternal life, the Heaven promised, that it is better to live in accordance with Christian criteria because living in accordance with truth and love, even in the midst of so much persecution is in itself good and is better than everything else. It is precisely this will to live in accordance with truth and love that must also be open to the whole breadth of God's plan with us, to the courage to jubilate already at the prospect of eternal life, the ascent, following our *archegos*. And *Soter* is the Saviour, who saves us from ignorance, in seeking the last things.

The Saviour saves us from solitude; He saves us from the emptiness that pervades life without eternity; He saves us by giving us love in its fullness. He is the guide. Christ, the *archegos*, saves us by giving us the light, giving us the truth, giving us the love of God. ✧

Excerpt from: BENEDICT XVI.
*Homily for the Eucharistic
Concelebration with
members of the Pontifical
Biblical Commission, 15/4/2010*



Sergio Holmann

The Annunciation, by Fra Angelico – Prado Museum, Madrid

✠ GOSPEL ✠

²⁶ The Angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a Virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the Virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And coming to Her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with You."

²⁹ But She was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ Then the Angel said to Her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for You have found favour with God. ³¹ Behold, You will con-

ceive in your womb and bear a Son, and You shall name Him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of David his father ³³ and He will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of His Kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴ But Mary said to the Angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?"

³⁵ And the Angel said to Her in reply, "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. ³⁶ And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; ³⁷ for nothing will be impossible for God."

³⁸ Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to Me according to your word." Then the Angel departed from Her (Lk 1:26-38).

The Most Sublime Gift in the Order of Creation

In Mary, God wished to unite the unsurpassable dignity of divine motherhood with the greatest gift of grace, which restored the beauty of the created universe and began the history of our Redemption.



Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP

I – GOD’S VISION IS THE TRUE VISION

During our earthly life, we human beings find it difficult to view events from a divine perspective. Because we are subject to the laws of time, our reasoning is discursive. This is different from the mode of thought proper to God, for whom everything exists as present. When we reach eternity and meet Him face to face, everything will be much simpler, as our intelligence will become deiform.

In this world, however, we know things by means of our senses, and we tend to regard only what they grasp as real, for we imagine this to be the most effective method of observing reality. But this idea is not correct, for everything is in God, as St. Paul taught in the Areopagus of Athens, “In Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). Each creature was in God from all eternity, and when He creates, He does this also within Himself, because nothing exists outside of God. While we see things externally,

God sees everything within Himself, with absolute perfection.

Two ways of looking at reality

An example would be useful in furthering our understanding of this problem. In the past, astronomical observatories were equipped with large and heavy scopes, which were called refracting telescopes. Beyond being difficult to manoeuvre, they were extremely costly to manufacture, because of the special lenses they required. With the advance of technology, such instruments were replaced by simpler, more efficient and less expensive reflecting telescopes that mainly use mirrors instead of lenses. By this system, the observer does not examine the stars directly with lenses, but rather images of the heavenly bodies reflected in mirrors. The result is a more accurate and precise vision of the firmament.

Something similar happens with us: when we cling to our poor human vision, it is as if we were using an outmoded telescope. Conversely, if we

*We come into
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Clearly, we are unable to penetrate what takes place within the Most Blessed Trinity. How to attain the brilliant loftiness of divine thought?



The Blessed Trinity – Monastery Hotel, Cusco (Peru)

Reproduction

seek to interpret facts in God, we will see everything within Him with greater clarity and accuracy. This is why we should strive to discern facts from God's perspective instead of judging them on our own.

History seen from the divine perspective

Naturally, we view history in a chronological fashion. As we see it, for example, there was the creation of the Angels; one of them rebelled, drawing a third of the other heavenly spirits after him, and they were all cast into hell. Then, Adam and Eve were created and placed in Paradise, where they lived happily until the moment when, deceived by the serpent, they disobeyed God and stained the universe with sin. Later, Our Lord came to redeem us.

This succession of events is true, but insufficient, and far from being the entire reality! What, then, is this reality?

Clearly, we are unable to penetrate what takes place within the Most Blessed Trinity. How can we tap into the brilliant loftiness of divine thought? They are three Persons who are identical, yet who derive supreme happiness from their mutual company!

Try as we might, we will never form an accurate notion of how the order of the universe was idealized, with all the wonders it contains. Yet, there is nothing to prevent us from pondering this. On account of our nature, we need images to help our understanding; we need to almost

“humanize” God. Accordingly, we may imagine the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit planning creation, in a conversation held from all eternity. For us, just trying to conceive of something that had no beginning is already a hurdle...

The foundations of the universe

God has within Himself – we purposely use the word *has* because, as was said, for Him there is neither past nor future – infinite possible universes: Angels and men that were not created, as well as endless possible ways for humans to interact with one another, or humans with Angels, and so on, indefinitely.

However, He chose and created this world in which we live, which is surely the best for the fulfilment of His designs, for since God is Perfection, He cannot prefer something inferior to what exists.¹ According to our concept, the formation of this universe must have been similar to the process of constructing a building. We begin with the foundations, established deeply in the earth, and upon them build up the walls, and finally add the upper parts.

In the mind of God, however, the foundation is the noblest and highest point. Therefore, the plan of creation starts with the *princeps* of creatures; Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by reason of Him that the rest is constructed, as St. Paul teaches in today's second reading:

“He chose us in Him [Christ], before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blem-

ish before Him. In love He destined us for adoption to Himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favour of His will" (Eph 1:4-5).

Now, it is common doctrine of the Church that, in the divine project, Our Lord Jesus Christ and Our Lady occupy the same place.² So God composed the universe taking both of them as His point of departure.

The most excellent of creatures

Jesus is the Second Person of the Trinity incarnate, God and Man. He does not have a human, but rather a divine personality; He is the Son Himself, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, although He assumed our nature.

Mary, Mother of God, has only a human personality, but She is the highest of creatures, the realization of the apex in the created world and even in the world of possible creatures that were never created. From all eternity, She was a cause of contentment for the three Divine Persons. We can imagine the Father, contemplating Her, exclaiming: "She will be my Daughter!"; the Son saying: "She will be my Mother!"; and the Holy Spirit: "She will be my Spouse!" In Their boundless love, They showered Her with every fitting bequest from the beauties of creation and the treasures of grace, and crowned Her with a singular gift: the Immaculate Conception.

It should be recalled here that this gift, like all the other prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin, flows from her essential privilege, that of divine motherhood. It was this unsurpassed dignity that raised Her in a relative but authentic way to the seventh plane of creation; that of the hypostatic order.

These premises serve to prepare us for a better understanding of the Liturgy of this Solemnity. Both its first reading and Gospel bring us Scriptural passages alluding to the Immaculate Conception: the famous verse of Genesis called the Protoevangelium (cf. Gn 3:15) and the Angel's salutation to Mary (cf. Lk 1:28), respectively. As this text of St. Luke has been discussed on other occasions,³ let us take this opportunity to make some considerations on the Immaculate Conception, based on the episode narrated in the first reading (Gn 3: 9-15, 20).

In the plan of creation mapped out by God, this incident was included as the antipode of the one we celebrate today.

II – "I WILL PUT ENMITY BETWEEN YOU AND THE WOMAN"

Love is eminently communicative: those who love someone for love of God want to give themselves entirely to the one they love. God loves us in this way from all eternity. Therefore, in addition to establishing man as king of creation, placing the other earthly creatures under his dominion, He gave him an abundance of natural, preternatural, and supernatural gifts. Adam and Eve, however, accepted the devil's offer – "you will be like God" (Gn 3:5) – and tasted the forbidden fruit, after which they suffered the consequences of their disobedience. Feeling their emptiness, or frustration, which is the inevitable sensation resulting from mortal sin, they tried to hide from God.

Since then, as a consequence of original sin, humanity, has fallen into the same error, one generation after another; that of fleeing from God after committing a fault. This attitude is a veritable spiritual suicide. The example of David, of St. Mary Magdalene, of St. Augustine and of so many other Saints throughout history who were mercifully received when, repenting of their errors, they beseeched God's pardon, shows us how mistaken the reaction of our first parents was. At every moment, God is there, ready to forgive us.

The sinner always seeks to justify himself

The Creator then asked the man, "Where are you?" (Gn 3:9). Obviously, God already knew... Adam was inside Him! But this was a way of awakening his conscience and leading him to recognize his sin. And so Adam tried to explain himself: "I heard You in the garden; but I was afraid" (Gn 3:10).

Again, despite having full knowledge of all that had happened, the Lord inquired: "You have eaten, then, from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat!" (Gn 3:11).

With this dialogue, God adapted Himself to the human mode of reason, to lead Adam, who was already trying to forget his guilt, to contrition. Whoever commits a mortal sin – in this case, one of disobedience – tends to immediately create a justification for his action. No one practises evil for the sake of evil.⁴

Adam and his wife sinned with the illusion of obtaining a good: being equal to God. So Adam excused himself: "The woman whom You put here with me – she gave me fruit from the tree,

Adam and Eve, however, accepted the devil's offer and tasted the forbidden fruit, after which they suffered the consequences of their disobedience

*It was in
light of this
“Fiat!” that
the Blessed
Virgin
received the
gift of the
Immaculate
Conception*

so I ate it” (Gn 3:12). That is, instead of asking forgiveness, he imputes the responsibility of the crime to God, as if to say: “The fault is Yours, not mine. You created this woman; she brought me the fruit and I ate it.” Eve, for her part, reacted similarly to God’s questioning: “The serpent beguiled me, and I ate” (Gn 3:13). When we do not assume responsibility for our error, we invariably cast the blame on others.

The consequences of sin... and God’s plan

The consequences of original sin are drastic for humanity. For having entered into enmity with God, Adam and Eve lost sanctifying grace and, with it, all their other supernatural gifts. Moreover, they forfeited their preternatural gifts, such as immortality and integrity – that perfectly stable balance between the passions, the reason, and the will – and, in Adam’s case, infused knowledge. Human nature was weakened,⁵ as the intelligence became darkened and the will leaned toward choosing evil. Adam and Eve were left weak in the fight against temptation. And as their descendants, we also receive this legacy from them.

No human being was capable of paying this debt. And although God could have forgiven it freely and unconditionally, since He was both the offended party and the Judge, the Second Person of the Trinity wanted to offer reparation to the Father, by assuming flesh to operate the Redemption.

Therefore, after cursing the serpent which the devil used as an instrument of temptation, God declared: “I will put enmity between thee and the Woman, and thy seed and her seed: She shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel” (Gn 3:15).

These words contain a synopsis of the Gospel message, because “by this divine prophecy, the merciful Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, was clearly foretold; His most

Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, was prophetically indicated; and, at the same time, the very enmity of both against the evil one was significantly expressed. [...] The most holy Virgin, united with Him by a most intimate and indissoluble bond, was, with Him and through Him, eternally at enmity with the evil serpent, and most completely triumphed over him, and thus crushed his head with her immaculate foot.”⁶

How did Our Lady crush the devil’s head? The answer comes to us in the Gospel. While Eve, accepting the serpent’s temptation, drew a curse upon the human race, Mary, by saying “may it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38), and consenting to be used as the venue for the clash between the Son of God and satan, defeated not only sin, but also death.

Sin serves to highlight Mary’s immaculate purity

It was in light of this “Fiat!” that the Blessed Virgin received the gift of the Immaculate Conception, filling the whole universe with joy, as its primeval beauty, marred by the stain of Adam’s guilt, was restored and received something additional in Mary. The mineral, vegetable, animal, human and spiritual kingdoms represented in her, were elevated by Mary’s fullness of grace and her relative participation in the hypostatic plane. In Her are thus summarized the seven degrees of creation.

Here, what was said at the beginning applies: if we set aside our human perspective of the chronological succession of events, and look at things from God’s eyes, we will understand that He chose this world, in which there was both the sin of the angels and of men, because in it, the mystery of the Incarnation and the privilege of Our Lady, free of all sin, would shine the most brilliantly. If there had been no original sin, her immaculate purity would not be as splendid and glorious.



Adam and Eve being expelled from Paradise
Church of St. Raphael, Heredia (Costa Rica)

III – THE GLORY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

According to an expression repeated by many Saints, *de Maria nunquam satis* – of Mary, one can never say enough.⁷ And just as we never feel sated of hearing about Her, we must also never be complacent when it comes to glorifying Her. By establishing the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception in Advent, the Church suspends the austere character of this liturgical time to celebrate it with pomp and rejoicing. Among the abundant reflections which this celebration awakens, let us remember that this exceptional gift of Mary represents a triumph of Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, for all that is hers is due to the fact of Her being His Mother. In this way, the tribute we pay to the Mother has the Son as its cause and its ultimate object.

The divine motherhood was precisely one of the arguments which popular piety used to support the Immaculate Conception, long before the proclamation of the dogma. Through the natural process of gestation, Our Lady's blood was used in the physical constitution of the Saviour, so that the Flesh and Blood of Jesus is the flesh and blood of Mary. It would be absurd to imagine the God-Man being formed from impure blood, in a maternal womb tainted by original sin, for an impure wellspring cannot bring forth purity. In virtue of the Incarnation, Mary had to be free of sin. If we uphold the divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, we must also defend the Immaculate Conception of His Mother.

Another beautiful aspect of this privilege is the glory it signifies for the Church, of which Our Lady is Mother. Since the Church's mission is to fight sin, diminish its effects and distribute grace to souls, there can be no greater honour for it than to have a Mother and Queen who is Immaculate and full of grace. But the Church, in turn, in relation to Mary, exercised its sanctifying office with a perfection impossible to equal in any other creature. For during the years of the Blessed Virgin's life after Jesus' Ascension, as She maternally guided and supported the nascent Church, She benefited from the Sacrament of the Eucharist, each Communion unfathomably increasing the extraordinary treasure of grace She had received in her Immaculate Conception.



Immaculate Conception - Basilica of Our Lady of the Conception on the Seaside, Salvador (Brazil)

The proclamation of the dogma

It was the privilege of Blessed Pius IX – whose long pontificate unfolded during a period of great tension against the Church – to include this Marian title among the dogmas of Faith. The Catholic world was already prepared, especially since the Holy Father and several of his predecessors had long promoted devotion to the Immaculate Conception, along with the prohibition of spreading theses contrary to this doctrine.

It is recounted that, on one occasion, the Pope having been exiled to Gaeta, Cardinal Lambruschini said to him: "Holy Father, Your Holiness will not change the world except by declaring the dogma of the Immaculate Conception." It was shortly thereafter, on February 2, 1849, that the Pope published the Encyclical *Ubi Primum*, addressed to the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops and Bishops of the Universal Church, to consult them on the question.⁸ With very few exceptions – less than ten percent of a total of more than 600 letters – the responses were favourable. When he returned to Rome in 1850, Pius IX convoked all

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The Catholic world was already prepared; the Popes had long been promoting devotion to the Immaculate Conception

the Bishops of the world to contribute to the work of the commission charged with preparing the Bull defining the dogma.⁹

Finally, on December 8, 1854, at eleven o'clock in the morning, two hundred ecclesiastical dignitaries gathered in St. Peter's Basilica, including Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops, for a solemn Pontifical Mass, during which the ceremony for the definition of the dogma took place. Before the Offertory, Cardinal Macchi, dean of the Sacred College, approached the Pope seated on the pontifical throne, and addressed to him the prescribed and ceremonial supplication on behalf of the Church:

"Holy Father, deign to raise Your apostolic voice during the celebration of this unbloody sacrifice already begun, and pronounce the dogmatic decree of the Immaculate Conception, which will be a subject of new jubilation in Heaven, and fill the world with joy."

Rising, Pius IX ordered that the *Veni Creator Spiritus* be intoned, accompanied in unison by all present. At the end of this canticle, the people knelt, and the Pope, standing, began reading the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, whose climax consisted in the following words:

"Wherefore, in humility and fasting, we unceasingly offered our private prayers as well as the public prayers of the Church to God the Father through His Son, that He would deign to direct and strengthen our mind by the power of the Holy Spirit. In like manner did we implore the help of the entire heavenly host as we ardently invoked the Paraclete. Accordingly, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for the honour of the Holy and undivided Trinity, for the glory and adornment of the Virgin Mother of God, for the exaltation of the Catholic Faith, and for the furtherance of the Catholic religion, by the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own:

"We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful."¹⁰

After the proclamation, a cannon salute was heard from Castel Sant'Angelo together with the

pealing of the bells of the Eternal City, celebrating the Church's official recognition of this Marian privilege, which makes the Heavens rejoice, and hell tremble; it fills her children on earth with consolation and her adversaries with misery. In short, it is a dogma which highlights the enmity between the offspring of the Virgin and that of satan.

Some considerations on the formula of the dogma

The beauty and precision of the terms used in the dogmatic formula are worthy of admiration. For example, the expression "in the first instance of her conception" indicates that Mary was free from sin from the moment that God, so to speak, pronounced the *fiat* for her creation and She began to exist in time, just as She had been idealized from all eternity.

The words "by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God" make it clear that it would have been normal for Our Lady to have been conceived with the stain of sin like any descendant of Adam and Eve; but since nothing is impossible with God, He wanted to waive this inheritance of death for His Mother.

The fundamental theological argument for the dogma is then expressed: "in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, [She] was preserved free from all stain of original sin." Explaining this doctrine, theology uses an expressive analogy: the two ways of redeeming a captive. In some cases, a captive, being in prison, is released upon the payment of a ransom. There are other cases, however, in which the person faced the risk of being taken into captivity, but someone paid his ransom before this happened. Recalling that eternal conversation of the Blessed Trinity, we may suppose that the Son addressed the Father, saying: "Before original sin touches My Mother, I apply to Her the price of My Blood which will be shed on Calvary."

Having been the object of this preventative Redemption, "Mary shares in common with all men, the fact of having been redeemed by the Blood of her Son; but with something particular, for this Blood was taken from her chaste body. [...] She shares in common with us that this Blood was poured out to sanctify Her; but has in particular that She herself was its source. We may thus say that Mary's conception is, as it were, the



Proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, by Francesco Podesti
Capitoline Museum, Rome

first origin of the Blood of Jesus. It is from there that this beautiful river began to spread, this river of graces that flows in our veins by the Sacraments, carrying the breath of life to the whole body of the Church."¹¹

Therefore, the story of our Redemption began with Our Lady's conception. Today's Solemnity is the feast of the liberation of those who were slaves of the devil but surrender themselves completely to Our Lord Jesus Christ, by the hands of the Blessed Virgin. We are children of Mary Immaculate! And just as we cherish our natur-

al mothers, so much the more should we love the Mother of our supernatural life!

Filled with gratitude, let us ask Her that, just as She triumphed over sin, She triumph also in our soul, enlightening it with a ray of her immaculateness. And cleansed from all our defects, may we be assisted by her Divine Spouse, and be transformed into effective instruments for the hastening of another triumph, the one that She promised at Fatima and for which we so long: that of her Wise and Immaculate Heart. ✧

*Today we
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by the hands
Mary*

¹ Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Summa Theologiae*, I, q.25, a.6, ad 3.

² Cf. PIUS IX. *Bula Ineffabilis Deus*. In: DOCUMENTOS PONTIFÍCIOS. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1953, p.3-23; PIUS XII. *Munificentissimus Deus*, n.40; JOHN PAUL II. *Redemptoris Mater*, n.8; ROSCHINI, OSM, Gabriel. *Instruções Marianas*. São Paulo: Paulinas, 1960, p.22; *La Madre de Dios según la fe y la teología*, vol. I. (Ed.2). Madrid: Apostolado de la Prensa,

1958, p.177-178; ROYO MARÍN, OP, Antonio. *La Virgen María*. Madrid: BAC, 1968, p.57.

³ Cf. CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. Can Mary Re-establish the Order of the Universe? In: *Heralds of the Gospel*. n.53 (Mar., 2012), p.10-17; Gospel Commentary for the Fourth Sunday of Advent — Year B, and Gospel Commentary for the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, are in Volumes III and VII, respectively, of the collection *New Insights on the Gospels*.

⁴ Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, op. cit., I-II, q.77, a.2.

⁵ Cf. ROYO MARÍN, OP, Antonio. *Dios y su Obra*. Madrid: BAC, 1963, p.499-500.

⁶ PIUS IX, op. cit.

⁷ Cf. ST. LOUIS-MARIE GRIGNION DE MONTFORT. *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la Sainte Vierge*, n.10. In: *Œuvres Complètes*. Paris: Du Seuil, 1966, p.492-493.

⁸ Cf. BIBLIOTHÈQUE DES ÉCOLES

CHRÉTIENNES. *Pie IX. Nouvelle Biographie*. Tours: Mame et C^{ie}, 1852, p.84-89.

⁹ Cf. VILLEFRANCHE, Jacques-Melchior. *Pio IX. Sua vida, sua história e seu século*. São Paulo: Panorama, 1948, p.130-133.

¹⁰ PIUS IX, op. cit.

¹¹ BOSSUET, Jacques-Bénigne. II^e Sermon pour la Fête de la Conception de la Sainte Vierge. In: *Œuvres choisies*, vol. X. Versailles: Lebel, 1822, p.34.



Stephen Nami

The Daily Life of a Herald Priest

How does a priest of the Heralds of the Gospel spend his time? To what activities does he dedicate himself? Let us look at the daily life of these ministers of Christ.



Fr. Aumir Antônio Scomparin, EP

In February 2001, Pope John Paul II granted pontifical approval to the Heralds of the Gospel, establishing them as a Private Association of the Faithful and giving them the mission of being “messengers of the Gospel through the intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.”¹

From that time on, the Association’s activities spread to dozens of countries. The spiritual children of Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias became more and more numerous, and the need arose to provide them adequate spiritual assistance. In this emergency, the Holy Spirit raised up from among the Heralds of the Gospel, priestly voca-

tions dedicated to the care of their brethren.

This need coincided with a long-cherished desire of the founder of the Heralds, expressed by him shortly before receiving the Sacrament of Orders: “I want to be more united to Jesus; I want to be a vehicle for Him to absolve those I meet in search of divine forgiveness; I want to be consumed as a host in His service, for the benefit of my brothers and sisters.”

With this noble yearning in the depths of his soul, Msgr. João and fourteen other members of his work were ordained priests by Bishop Lucio Angelo Renna, OCarm, then Bishop of Avezano, Italy, and they were temporarily incardinated in that diocese.

The Herald priest had emerged and, with him, a new human type in harmony with the charism and spirituality of the Institution.

Foundation of the priestly branch

In 2005, the same prelate erected the Clerical Society Virgo Flos Carmeli, and its pronounced growth led Pope Benedict XVI to recognize it as a Society of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right on April 21, 2009. Msgr. João was the founder and General Superior. Today, more than two hundred clerics, his spiritual sons, are incardinated in this Society.

Following the example of their founder, they seek to be paternal in their dealings with others, sound in

doctrine, untiring in the exercise of their ministry and thoroughly spotless in their moral conduct.

In their liturgical acts, they conform with perfect fidelity to the rubrics and the spirit of the rite instituted by the Church. The solemnity of their ceremonial and their gestures is intended to show how “in the earthly Liturgy, we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly Liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem.”²

An increasing number of the faithful are seeking the guidance of these Herald priests, certain that they will be received with pastoral zeal.

Our Lady of Graces Parish

At the end of 2009, two parish priests of Caieiras and Mairiporã, responsible for an extensive rural area in the Serra da Cantareira, north of the city of São Paulo, asked the Diocese of Bragança Paulista for the erection of a new parish covering this vast territory.

The Bishop at that time, Most Rev. José Maria Pinheiro, judged the request opportune and entrusted the new parish to the care of Herald priests, since many houses of the association are located there.

Herald priests then proceeded to celebrate Masses, visit the sick, preach

retreats, attend Confessions, give lectures and instruct the faithful in the preparation courses for the reception of the Sacraments. In the thirteen communities that make up the parish, hundreds of families, previously fallen away from religious practice, began to enthusiastically participate in these activities.

This is what Maria de Lourdes Macedo, for example, testifies:

“We were totally disassociated from the Catholic Church. My daughters had received the Sacraments of Baptism and Communion, but only one of them had received Confirmation. Since the time the Heralds came to visit us, inviting us to go to Mass, we were sure that through that Institution we were going to follow our faith. And every

“I want to be more united to Jesus; I want to be consumed as a host in His service, for the benefit of my brothers and sisters”

day that we went to Mass, we wanted to go more, to participate more. We began to thirst to be with Our Lord Jesus Christ at the altar.

“Today we are part of the pastoral team, and I can say that I am a true Catholic. We participate in the Masses and the theology courses; we go to Confession and pray the Rosary. When we stop to reflect on the life we were leading and that which we lead today – that is, on what our life was like without the Heralds and what it is like now, with the Heralds – we can say that we have been reborn for Christ. Jesus and Our Lady had a plan for all of us and made use of the Heralds to bring us closer and closer to Heaven.”

Confessions and caring for the sick

It is not only in the Diocese of Bragança Paulista that the Herald priests work.

In the neighbouring Archdiocese of São Paulo, Herald priests have become dedicated confessors. Every Wednesday and Friday they administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Sé Cathedral and, on Saturdays, in the nearby Church of St. Gonzalo.

To this are added events such as the one that took place on Septem-

Sérgio Caspodes



Leandro Souza



Leandro Souza



Herald priests – Following the example of their founder, they seek to be paternal in their dealings with others, sound in doctrine and spotless in their moral conduct. In their liturgical acts, they conform with perfect fidelity to the rubrics and the spirit of the rite instituted by the Church.



Our Lady of Graces Parish – In the fifteen communities that it comprises, the Herald priests celebrate Holy Mass, attend Confessions, visit the sick, preach retreats, give formation meetings, prepare youths and adults for the reception of the Sacraments and organize processions and social gatherings.

ber 22, in which fifteen priests of the Association helped to hear the Confessions of over fifty thousand young people gathered by the Archdiocese in Campo de Marte, in the Santana region of São Paulo.

Also in the Cathedral, every month, since March 2003, the Heralds have been holding the First Saturdays ceremony of reparation as requested by Our Lady in Fatima. The program begins with the recitation of the Rosary, followed by meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. During this time, many priests of the Institution remain available to the faithful, attending Confessions inside the Cathedral.

The Society of Apostolic Life Virgo Flos Carmeli maintains an on-call attendance for the sick in São Paulo. A priest and a lay brother are always ready to leave immediately to administer Confession, Communion and Anointing of the Sick to those who require this assistance.

Doctors and Masters in Theology

With the growth of the priestly branch, many clerics began to dedicate themselves in a special way to

Hundreds of families, previously fallen away from the Church, began to enthusiastically participate in parish activities

academic formation in order to meet the needs of the seminary's teaching staff.

At present, Virgo Flos Carmeli Society has thirty-six doctors and thirty masters, educated in different fields at the Gregorian, St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), Lateran and Salesian Pontifical Universities of Rome; and at the Pontifical Universities of Salamanca (Spain) and Bolivarian of Medellín (Colombia), as well as the Pontifical and Civil Faculty of Theology of Lima (Peru).

Some of these Herald clerics, Doctors in Theology or Philosophy, have been summoned to be part of the panel for the defence of master's or doctoral theses in pontifical universities.

These include Fr. Francisco Berrizbeitia, Doctor of Theology from the Gregorian University in Rome, or Fr. Carlos Javier Werner and Fr. Antonio Jakoš, Doctors of Theology from the Pontifical Bolivarian University in Medellín (Colombia).

Collaboration has been especially close with the latter university, where this year Fr. Marcos Faes, EP, taught the course *Theological Inquiries III*, "The savour-like aesthetic of St. Thomas: is it legitimate to delight in the admiring contemplation of beauty?"

The members of Virgo Flos Carmeli Society also dedicate themselves to the spiritual, moral and cultural formation of Heralds of the Gospel Cooperators, and have administered courses of catechetical formation for units of the Army and the Military Police of São Paulo State. Many of them are also teachers or pedagogical advisors in educational centres related to the Institution.

An itinerant missionary community

In addition, some clerics are part of the missionary community of the Heralds, the *Knights of Mary*. These priests, accompanied by young evangelizers, assist priests from all over



Photos: Daniel Letelier

Solid academic formation – Various professors of the seminary completed their studies in Roman universities. At left, Fr. Francisco Berrizbeitia, Doctor in Theology from the Gregorian; at right, Fr. Antônio Guerra, Doctor in Canon Law from the Lateran University, teaching Ecclesiology.

Brazil by visiting homes and businesses within parish boundaries. They invite everyone to rekindle their faith, successfully helping many to participate once again in parish life, frequent the Sacraments and become regular contributors.

At the end of the mission, they always hand over to the parish priest the house-to-house survey done on the sacramental needs of the faithful.

During the period of missionary activity, which usually lasts a week, the Herald priests begin the day with the celebration of Mass. They then expose the Blessed Sacrament and, while some go out on mission, others remain in adoration and attend to the Confessions of the large number of faithful who, after having received the visit of Our Lady in their homes, seek the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Enchanted with the work carried out by these missionary priests in her parish, Aline Daniel Demarchi, of Lindoeste (Brazil), says:

“After so many years spent in my parish, I have experienced many moments of grace and God’s care towards us. However, the coming of the Heralds to our city was a historical

With the growth of the priestly branch, many clerics began to dedicate themselves in a special way to academic formation

landmark, and a very great blessing, a gift from our Mother.

“Our Mother took us in her arms and showed us how much She loves us. On behalf of our entire parish, I want to thank the Heralds for the visit, for the teachings and for the example of faith and life. I speak especially about how valuable your witness has been to our young people and adolescents.”

In the same way, Karla Rodrigues expresses her admiration for the missionary work done by the Knights of Mary while they visited her city:

“I would like to express my admiration for the devotion, zeal and the positive impression that the Heralds of the Gospel made on me. I could

never have imagined that Our Lady of Fatima would visit me, and they brought Her to me... A pity it was not a permanent stay, because, I can say with certainty and due respect, I do not remember having attended a celebration with so much enthusiasm. If the Catholic Church were committed to maintaining, spreading and multiplying institutions like these, thousands of faithful would return... The people are starved for beauty and affection...

“Thank you for the visit and the opportunity. May the peace of the Lord be with you always and may the gaze of Our Lady guide you.”

During the missions, various groups are formed for the circulation of the shrine of the Immaculate Heart of Mary among homes. Many families benefit from the visit of Our Lady, as well as from the practice of the First Saturdays of reparation devotion held at the monthly shrine meeting in each city.

Lucy Roberta Perazzo, of Bauru (Brazil), one of the shrine coordinators, grateful for all the graces received through this apostolate, states:

“In January 2014, we received the Knights of Mary and made a commit-



Care for the sick – The Herald priests seek to be especially solicitous with those suffering from grave illnesses. In the photos, administering the Sacraments in hospitals of São Paulo (left) and the city of Juiz de Fora (right), in Brazil. Centre: giving a blessing to an invalid in a residence of Matola (Mozambique)

ment to this Marian devotion, which we love. We have ten shrines that visit two hundred and eighty families. It is a blessing from God for us! And every first Saturday we pray the Rosary with the families, with great devotion and love, and we participate in Holy Mass. We are grateful for everything and for the graces received through this devotion. May God continue to bless your mission!”

Strength and efficacy are found in prayer

Despite all these activities, the Herald priests do not neglect to focus their main attention on the fulfilment of their obligations to God, knowing that the strength and effica-

cy of any evangelization is in prayer. The daily life of these priests, in addition to being taken up by the commitments of their ministry, is directed with special zeal toward the duties of the spiritual life.

They dedicate more than two hours daily to the recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours, the Rosary and other personal prayers. In addition, they celebrate two Masses for different groups of the Institution and try to reserve the first moments of the day for Eucharistic Adoration, prayer, meditation and spiritual reading, participating in the acts of the community as a whole.

In this way, a Herald priest lives not only to evangelize and adminis-

ter the Sacraments, but above all, according to the rules of the Institution, to perfect and sanctify himself. Although he is in this world made up of religious indifference and unbelief, he is sensitive to the call of grace within him:

“Be holy!” – teaches St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori.³ This is the goal that must guide the life of each one of us. ✧

¹ Words pronounced during the General Audience of February 28, 2001.

² SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL. *Sacro-sanctum concilium*, n.8.

³ Cf. ST. ALPHONSUS MARY LIGUORI. *A Selva*. Porto: Fonseca, 1928, p.3.

They dedicate more than two hours daily to the recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours, the Rosary and other prayers



Priests singing the Divine Office in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, Caieiras, (SP)

A Word of Gratitude

How good it is to have the Heralds here in our Diocese of Bragança Paulista! This is what I see; this is the reality with which I live, and I cannot declare anything different.

Most Rev. Sérgio Aparecido Colombo
Bishop of Bragança Paulista



Stephen Nami

I have just celebrated the Eucharist here in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary and administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to a considerable number of brothers and sisters, members of the various communities that make up the parish of Our Lady of Graces, entrusted to the pastoral care of the Heralds of the Gospel. I take the opportunity to give a testimony about their work, and will say at the outset that it is a testimony marked by joy and sentiments of gratitude.

We all have the same mission

On December 6, 2019, I will complete ten years of episcopal ministry in the Diocese of Bragança Paulista, where the Heralds of the Gospel have many houses. And I want to say that, since I have arrived here, our relationship has always been – to use the expression of Pope Francis – one of closeness. Their reception of their Bishop was marvellous, always very respectful, and I also welcome them with joy and respect, because, after all, we all have the same mission: we must be heralds of the Gospel!

Apostolic and missionary zeal

In the parish that this Diocese has entrusted to them, everyone is taken care of. The children are not deprived of their First Holy Communion, nor the young people of Confirmation. Couples do not lack the spiritual support that is proper to them, especially regarding marriage preparation. The sick are not left unattended. None of the more than ten communities is without Mass on days of precept: Masses begin on Saturday afternoon continue throughout Sunday.

I am very happy to have such priests in our Diocese. Here in this very dense and beautiful jungle, there are several communities... true missionary ecclesial communities. I am a witness to this, since I have been in several of them. Not to mention the care for each of the churches and chapels, because it is there that the living Church gathers and gives to the Lord the best that it has to offer.

My experience with the presence of the Heralds in Bragança Paulista is, in short, very positive and very beautiful. They are solicitous not only towards the Bishop and the parish en-

trusted to them, but also towards the Diocese as a whole.

Their help was never lacking in the parishes most in need. And how many priests come to the Heralds in search of help in a time of sickness, or when they need to be away for a few days! All of this is wonderful.

Victory belongs to the good

And so, what can I say? What I have already said: how good it is to have the Heralds here in our Diocese of Bragança Paulista! This is what I see; this is the reality with which I live, and I cannot declare anything different.

On the contrary, I think it is good to make this testimony known, because the good always prevails. If there are difficulties and challenges, it is through dialogue, communion, through sharing and fraternal correction that, with the grace of God, they will be resolved. The Gospel must speak ever louder and, for this very reason, my words must be ones of gratitude, joy, friendship and support.

May God bless you always! ✧

A Treasure for the Entire Church

They are at once missionaries and contemplatives. They lead a fraternal life in community, but act in different parts of Brazil, carrying out missions focussed on Our Lady. The Heralds of the Gospel are a gift for the Church.

Bishop Benedito Beni dos Santos

Bishop Emeritus and present Diocesan Administrator of Lorena



Iwould like to give my testimony regarding the Heralds of the Gospel, to whom I am linked as a Bishop, but also by friendship and affection, and whom I have known since 2002, when I was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of São Paulo for the Lapa region.

How I came to know the Heralds

As soon as I took office, I was assigned by Cardinal Claudio Hummes to accompany them. As they were still

Looking at the life and work of the Heralds, we can see that they have always remained faithful to the Gospel

organizing their Seminaries of Philosophy and Theology, I had the opportunity to collaborate in their structuring and to appoint competent professors, faithful to the Magisterium of the Church, to teach in them.

But our relationship truly began when I met Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, at that time simply Br. João Clá Dias. He was the first member of the Heralds of the Gospel to be ordained and incardinated in a Diocese of Italy. Together with four other Bish-



Bishop Benedito Beni dos Santos presiding over a priestly ordination, on 18/5/2019, in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, Caieiras (SP)

Thiago Tamura Nogueira

ops, I was present at the ceremony in which he and other members of the association were ordained priests.

In fact, Msgr. João is a complete person, a gift from God to the Church. First, because he teaches by the witness of his life. Hence the name of the Association founded by him. The Heralds proclaim the Gospel, not only with their mouths, but mainly through their conduct.

A spirituality that leads to mission

The first pillar of the spirituality of the Heralds is devotion to the Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. They are people of the Eucharist.

The second pillar is devotion to Our Lady.

The Church is Marian. The Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of the Church and therefore “a type of the Church,”¹ as the Second Vatican Council recalled.

Our Lady belongs to the identity of the Church, and Mary Assumed into Heaven is precisely the image of the Church of future glory. Whoever has devotion to Her is a true member of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Through devotion to Our Lady, the Heralds are deeply connected to the Church, to the Pope and to their Pastors, assuming this important mission which is to proclaim the Gospel.

However, they carry out this mission in a very current perspective: that of the New Evangelization, which has as its objective those who have been baptized but not sufficiently evangelized. The Heralds seek out those who have fallen away from the Church, especially those who are immersed in the secularist mentality and live as if God did not exist.

It is a work, therefore, that addresses the current reality. This was high-



Bishop Benedito Beni dos Santos and Msgr. João Clá Dias, EP, were received in audience at the Apostolic Palace on 26/11/2009

*Msgr. João is
a gift from God
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of his life*

lighted by the 2012 synodal assembly, in which I participated, and whose theme was *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*.

The Heralds of the Gospel are a gift for the entire Church, because they are both missionaries and contemplatives. They live like monks, but they act in different parts of Brazil, especially the sisters, carrying out missions focussed on Our Lady.

They live to serve others

The members of the Heralds live according to what is proper to a Chris-

tian in general, and according to the chastity, obedience and poverty that characterize a consecrated person.

While the majority of them are laypeople, they lead a simple way of life in their houses, analogous to that of monks. They dedicate themselves to the contemplation of God, in an atmosphere of fraternity and in a spirit of prayer for the whole Church

All ecclesial movements face problems at some time, because they are not composed of Angels, but of human beings whom the Holy Spirit guides and enlightens. But looking at the life and work of the Heralds, we can see that they have always remained faithful to the Gospel and to

the teaching of the Church. They are people who have the Eucharist at the centre of their existence, and they live not for themselves, but to serve others.

They accomplish a great service in the field of social assistance and in the care of the poor, especially in education.

But, in my opinion, a strong point of the Heralds of the Gospel is evangelizing through art, especially through music, showing the beauty of Gregorian chant.

The Heralds of the Gospel are a treasure for the entire Church and, as I said, a gift from God for the Universal Church, because they are present in seventy-five countries. ✧

¹ “By reason of the gift and role of divine maternity, by which She is united with her Son, the Redeemer, and with His singular graces and functions, the Blessed Virgin is also intimately united with the Church. As St. Ambrose taught, the Mother of God is a type of the Church in the order of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ” (SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, *Lumen Gentium*, n.64).

Sublimity and Purity

When the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was defined by Pius IX, a veritable storm of hatred, protests and indignation was unleashed by non-Catholics and Catholics alike. How can such an attitude be explained?



Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira



Timothy Ring

We will comment to-day upon a passage from the encyclical of St. Pius X regarding the Immaculate Conception. After speaking about the contemporary denial of original sin and its consequences, the Holy Father affirms:

Anarchism, the most pernicious doctrine...

“But let people believe and confess that the Virgin Mary has been from the first moment of her conception preserved from all stain; and it is straightway necessary that they should admit both original sin and the rehabilitation of the human race by Jesus Christ, the Gospel, and the Church and the law of suffering. By virtue of this, rationalism and materialism is torn up by the roots and destroyed, and there remains to Christian wisdom the glory of having to guard and protect the truth.

“It is moreover a vice common to the enemies of the Faith of our time especially that they repudiate and proclaim the necessity of repudiating all respect and obedience for the authority of the Church, and even of any human power, in the idea that it will thus be more easy to make an end of faith.

“Here we have the origin of anarchism, than which nothing is more pernicious and pestilent to the order of

things whether natural or supernatural. Now this plague, which is equally fatal to society at large and to Christianity, finds its ruin in the dogma of the Immaculate Conception by the obligation which it imposes of recognizing in the Church a power before which not only has the will to bow, but the intelligence to subject itself. It is from a subjection of the reason of this sort that Christian people sing thus the praise of the Mother of God: ‘Thou art all fair, O Mary, and the stain of original sin is not in Thee.’ And thus once again is justified what the Church attributes to this august Virgin: that She has exterminated all heresies in the world.”¹

...and the ultimate end of the Revolution

This passage contains such a wealth of thought that it deserves to be explained and summarized.

St. Pius X aimed to show here how the acceptance of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception on the part



Some of the editions of “RCR”, published in various languages; above, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Bela Vista House, Mairiporã (SP)

of the faithful is a remedy for that which we call Revolution in the essay *Revolution and Counterrevolution*.²

In that work, we pointed to anarchism as the most advanced expression of the Revolution, that is, the state of things towards which communism aims to move. The defenders of this doctrine hold that there must be a dictatorship of the proletariat, but a passing one. After this has modelled men according to communist purposes, humanity will have reached such a degree of evolution, of “perfection”, that it will no longer need laws or jails, will commit no more crimes, will not engage in wars and will not need government.

There will then be anarchy, which is not presented as pandemonium, disorder, but as an order without law, in which all men are sovereign kings. No one will obey anyone else, and freedom, fraternity and complete equality will reign.

The formulation used by St. Pius X is very interesting, because it emphasizes that there can be no worse error than anarchism: “than which nothing is more pernicious and pestilent to the order of things whether natural or supernatural.”

It is not, therefore, an assertion of a historical character – that never has an error as bad as anarchism appeared – but a doctrinal one: if a perverse and corrupt man were to seek within the order of the possible the worst of errors, he could find none worse than anarchism.

Hostility even in Catholic circles

St. Pius X affirms that the acceptance of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception results in the acknowledgement of the Church’s authority, because it is by means of the Magisterium that it has come to be known that Our Lady was conceived without original sin.

The Church teaches based on the Gospel. To submit to it implies ac-



St. Pius X photographed by Felici in March of 1908

It is not an assertion of a historical character, but a doctrinal one: in the order of the possible, anarchism is the worst error



Dr. Plinio in the 1970s, venerating the Pilgrim Statue that wept in New Orleans

cepting Sacred Scripture and, consequently, Revelation and the supernatural order. This presupposes submission to a power that regulates the external and internal human acts, not only those of the will, but also those of the intelligence. In short, it means taking the most diametrically opposed attitude possible to anarchism.

The Pontiff shows how having faith in the Immaculate Conception is a supremely efficacious act to extricate all the roots of the Revolution from the human soul, and he applies to Our Lady that beautiful phrase, which is found in the Liturgy: “*Gaude Maria Virgo, cunctas hæreses sola interemisti.*”³

Thus, through her Immaculate Conception, the Blessed Virgin, crushing the head of the dragon – the father of heresies – eliminated the latter from the whole world and fought, through the centuries of the Church’s life, for the extinction of all errors. This is the idea contained in this splendid passage from St. Pius X.

When the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was defined by Pius IX, a veritable storm of hatred, protest and indignation was unleashed in Europe by non-Catholics and Catholics alike. In many sectors of the Church there was outrage because this dogma had been defined. How to explain such an attitude?

Egalitarian hatred

According to this dogma, the Virgin destined to be the Mother of God was conceived without original sin from the first moment of her existence. The hostility toward the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ and Mother of the Church, is explained by the egalitarian hatred of seeing Her placed at the highest point to which a mere creature can attain.

Moreover, because She is a woman, God’s will is shown in a much more salient way. The Most High takes the

element generally considered secondary in the human order and places it atop the whole pyramid of creation, greatly wounding the egalitarian spirit.

On the other hand, it greatly pains the revolutionaries that the Blessed Virgin Mary was the exception to a rule to which there had never been exceptions. The idea of a woman conceived without original sin, and thereby elevated to a tremendous height in relation to all human beings, produces in them a veritable rage.

But there is also another reason for this anger. The Immaculate Conception vexes them not only for its anti-egalitarian aspect, but also because of the hatred the vulgar bears towards the sublime.

Our Lady was conceived without original sin. She is at once a Virgin and the Mother of God. These truths reflect the sublimity of a pure, immaculate being, elevated above all that can be imagined, virginal in her innermost being. She did not experience any of the impulses which, even in a Saint, can represent the thorn of the flesh. Her being was not even subject to it.

So transcendent is Mary in sublimity, so lofty and refined regarding purity, so exalted within the human condition, and so different from our own state that She appears before our eyes as a figure immensely greater than us, eliciting our admiration.

In Our Lady, we have an idea of the sublimity to which God can elevate the human creature – a sublimity, however, to which we have not been elevated.

The quintessence of blessedness

From this flows a kind of honour and glory for the entire human race, clashing head-on with the revolutionary spirit. This spirit hates all that is sublime and elevated, not only because it is egalitarian, but also because of another expression of egalitarianism, which is love for the banal, the trivial, if not the degenerate. That is why revolutionaries have true hatred for the Immaculate Conception of Mary.



Immaculate Heart, by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo - Prado Museum, Madrid; on the following page, façade of the Old Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico City. Inset: the original miraculous image

The idea of a woman elevated to a tremendous height in relation to all human beings produces in them a veritable rage

This anger also expresses itself in the hatred that people, moved by the spirit of darkness, have for those who, like us, seek to practise virtue, particularly as regards purity, composure and dignity.

Such people can spread the worst calumnies about us just because we observe perfect chastity. Composure, nobility, and distinction in manners, even in those of a more modest background, draw the attention of everyone and attract the sympathy of the good, but incite outright hatred in the wicked.

Those who love vulgarity hate us because we try to guide spirits upwards. We try to transmit to our people the demeanour and dignity of children of God and of Our Lady, thus reflecting something of the royalty of the Blessed Virgin herself.

This incenses them, and their wrath is for us a reason for joy. Our Lord has called those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness blessed, but in this beatitude there is a sort of quintessence: to suffer rejection for the very same reasons for which She is hated.

As we approach the feast of the Immaculate Conception, let us ask the Blessed Virgin Mary for the beatitude of being ever more devoted to Her, and of representing Her in such a way that our union with Her can be said to be the true reason for which we are hated. ✧

Taken, with minor adaptations, from: *Dr. Plinio. São Paulo. Year XX. N.237 (Dec., 2017); p.10-12*

¹ ST. PIUS X. *Ad diem illum lætissimum*.

² Cf. CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Revolução e Contra-Revolução* [Revolution and Counterrevolution]. 5.ed. São Paulo: Retornarei, 2002.

³ From the Latin: "Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, for Thou alone hast put an end to all heresies." Beginning of the antiphon *Gaude Maria Virgo*.

Patroness of Latin America



Placed under the patronage of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Latin America gives the impression that it is reserved to be the immense territory where the glory of her Reign will shine with greater splendour.

Today's international news often speaks about the Latin American bloc as a whole, promoting the idea that it constitutes an immense family of nations, in the Catholic sense of the word. It is thought of as a bloc, and we ardently hope, one that has yet to be sculpted by Providence into one of the masterpieces of history.

Now, this unity of Latin America has been confirmed precisely by the fact that it has a Patroness under the invocation of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and the cohesion of this whole is so real that, in the domains of the Blessed Virgin Mary, it constitutes a separate fief, upon which She places special designs.

Mission to take Catholic culture to the highest point

It is important to recognise that Latin America represents the legacy left by Catholic Europe to this century and to those yet to come. The Latin spirit, a very rich one among the many varieties that make up the human race, has a unique aptitude for higher things – and therefore for the truths of the Faith, for the supernatur-

al – making it one of the most precious elements of the Catholic Church.

The Latin world has kept relatively intact the noblest values of the tradition which formed it. Latin peoples have resisted modernization more than North Americans and Europeans, and this, in some way, is the reason for our glorious “under-development”: that is, the distance that still separates us from the deplorable things that come with modernity.

Based on the above, it can be perceived that Ibero-America has the mission of raising and placing on a pinnacle the torch of Catholic Latin culture, entirely at the service of the Faith, to shine throughout the world. Apart from that, it is meaningless.

This Catholic culture has been broken and brought to its knees, but it resurjects in our continent with all the vigour of youth and future possibilities, preserving and enriching the legacies received from the incomparable cultural expressions of European Christendom. We are the re-birth and re-blossoming of these values in the regions protected by Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Fervent supplication to the Virgin of Guadalupe

Thus, on the day we celebrate Her, we should have our souls well-disposed to ask Her: before all else, to keep Latin America increasingly subject and united to Her, and, for this very reason, with all the bonds that constitute its cohesion to be even more accentuated. And may this immense potential, at the appropriate time, rise up to serve the Holy Church, becoming the best and most dynamic element for the formation of a new Christian civilization.

In fact, Latin America gives the impression that it is reserved by Our Lady to be the immense territory where the glory of her Reign will shine with greater splendour. Accordingly, we can add this supplication: “Our Lady of Guadalupe, realize in in these plans, so that the Reign of Mary may be established over us, and for us, without delay. Amen.” ♦

Taken, with minor adaptations, from: *Dr. Plinio*.
São Paulo. Year IX.
N.105 (Dec., 2006); p.24-29

MOTHER MARIA TERESA OF THE HOLY TRINITY

She Lived Solely to Love Him

A humble Carmelite from a convent in Guatemala, she received on her body the signs of the Passion, and her heart was mysteriously pierced with a golden dart. For love of Christ crucified, she endured unspeakable torments with joy and resignation.



Sr. Gabrielli Ramos, EP

Reproduction



"He was bruised for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with His stripes we are healed" (Is 53:5). Any one of us, in reading these words of Isaiah, would naturally apply them to the Immolated Lamb, who with His Most Precious Blood liberated us from slavery to the devil and opened to us the gates of the Eternal Kingdom.

However, examining the lives of the Saints, we will find some whom God wished to participate in a special way in the redemptive work of His Divine Son. They are the expiatory victims, whose sufferings and prayers for sinners rise to the throne of the Most Holy Trinity as an offering of sweet odour.

Noteworthy among these privileged souls are St. Jacinta and St. Francisco Marto, the little shepherds of Fatima, or St. Bernadette Soubirous. As children, they heard from the

lips of Our Lady the invitation to offer themselves in holocaust for the conversion of sinners, and they admirably accepted it.

Among the list of servants of God who offered themselves as expiatory victims, we might add a humble Carmelite nun who lived in Guatemala in the 19th century: Mother Maria Teresa of the Holy Trinity. God poured out upon her the wonders of His grace, while subjecting her to the most terrible trials.¹

Pious childhood and adolescence

It all began in 1753, when Juan Fermín de Aycinena e Irigoyen, a Spaniard from Navarre, crossed the ocean to settle in the Captaincy General of Guatemala. After having been widowed twice, he married Micaela Piñol y Muñoz. On April 15 of 1784, their marriage was blessed with a daughter, Maria Teresa de Jesus Anastasia e Cayetana.

The formation she received from her mother, guided by Christian doctrine, fostered in her a pronounced contempt for the things of the world from her childhood. No dress or jewel ever captured her attention; on the contrary, she only felt satisfied at Mass, reciting the Rosary and in prayer.

While still a very young girl, she made the firm resolution to never let a day pass without visiting the Blessed Sacrament. In these pious encounters, the Divine Redeemer manifested Himself mystically without her being able to understand the magnitude of the graces received, as she was still a child.

When she reached adolescence, Maria Teresa applied herself fervently to spiritual exercises, often wearing a hair shirt as penance. At the age of thirteen, she decided to make a vow of chastity before a statue of St. Joseph, whom she took as her god-father.

Religious vocation put to the test

She had not yet reached the age of twelve when she witnessed the death of her father, whom she had accompanied for a whole year in a painful illness, accepted with Christian resignation.

The sad event initiated a difficult phase in the life of Maria Teresa, characterized by terrible interior trials. At that time, “discouragement and tepidity came in waves to wage war against her poor soul and to fill it with the most terrible desolation and bitterness,” wrote Fr. Ildefonso Albore, her principal biographer.²

Her desire to consecrate herself entirely to God, once so vivid, was no longer alive in her soul. Taken by an oppressive spiritual aridity, the one who so longed to be Christ’s spouse came to regret having made the promise of chastity.

During this time, a young man from a good family expressed his desire to marry her, but was vigorously rebuffed. Nevertheless, when the proposal of an advantageous marriage came from a knight of high society, her heart wavered.

Disturbed and unspeakably afflicted, the seventeen-year-old girl decided to take refuge in prayer, spiritual exercises and reading with renewed determination. When the storm passed, she understood that it was only in recollection that her soul found true peace. She then made a firm resolution to follow the path of religious life.

Following the path of her Crucified Lord

After overcoming a long illness and the opposition of the doctors, Maria Teresa finally joined the Discalced Carmelite Convent in Santiago de Guatemala. On November 21, 1807 she received the habit and with it the name of Maria Teresa of the Holy Trinity. A year later she made

her solemn profession, once again in the midst of severe interior trials.

In her life at the convent, she exercised the most diverse functions, always serving as a model of obedience, observance of the rule, unpretentiousness and detachment. What she herself tells us about her time as a nurse is proof of her generosity: “The illness of the sisters has been a painful martyrdom for me. I would give my life a thousand times so that they could recover their health.”³

During her time as mistress of novices, she encouraged the growth of every virtue and perfection in the convent by her example and by the gentle, prudent and charitable way in which she formed them. All this was the fruit of an interior life which, from the time of her entry into Carmel, she sought to mirror along the ways of her Crucified Lord, whom she strove to please and serve exclusively.

Thus, in a few years of consecrated life, this heroic spouse of Christ was prepared for the beginning of the great battle that He had reserved for her.

Great sufferings purify her soul

Since her early childhood, Maria Teresa’s health had always been very poor, but four years after her profession, her illnesses became more painful and frequent.

Stomach pains assaulted her for prolonged periods, high fevers consumed and weakened her and acute migraine headaches tormented her repeatedly. A fall on December 21, 1814, broke her hip, leaving her unable to walk and causing her tremendous affliction.

In April of the following year she began to suffer from a dreadful illness which left her prostrate for almost a year. She suffered convulsions, especially at night, with no part of her body being spared from this

martyrdom. On two occasions she arrived at death’s door.

To her physical pains were added the interior aridity she had been enduring for a long time, and the action of the evil spirits, “who tormented her in an unspeakable way during the most painful moments of the illnesses she had to face. They harassed her soul with an unimaginable intensity.”⁴

She accepted all the trials that the Lord sent her with splendid resignation. This purified her spirit and elevated her to a very high degree of union with God, making her worthy of extraordinary mystical gifts.

She receives the sorrowful signs of the Passion

In 1812, Mother Maria Teresa asked Jesus for the grace to experience His most bitter Passion, and soon after, her desires began to be fulfilled. This is how she herself recounts it:

“While I was in my cell one day, about one thirty in the afternoon, stretched out as usual upon the Cross and recollected in prayer, I saw the Divine Jesus, who approached me in the form of a pilgrim. He had a nail in His hand, and with unspeakable tenderness and marvellous gentleness, He said to me: ‘Since you ask Me so insistently and I cannot deny it, here you have this insignia of My sorrowful Passion.’ And, saying this, He fixed it, from the right side, on the top of my head. Touching that part of my forehead, which hurt terribly, I actually found the head of the nail covered by skin.”⁵

The following year, Jesus imposed the crown of thorns on her, and in 1816 she received the wounds of the Passion. The Archbishop of Guatemala, Ramón Casaús y Torres, OP, when visiting her on the occasion of Sorrowful Friday, was edified to behold the presence of the stigmata on the nun’s hands and feet.

Also at that time her heart was pierced with a golden dart by the Archangel St. Michael, provoking in her death throes, and a kind of spousal ring was formed more than once on one of her fingers, a symbol that could be contemplated by all the religious.

Crucifixions and spiritual nuptials

Reflecting on these mystical phenomena, her biographer comments: “The nail, the crown and the wounds are very remarkable signs of the Passion of her Jesus, rich signs of the self-denial and pain with which she was favoured. But she had yet to be nailed to the Cross.”⁶

From March 8 to October 11, 1816, she spent almost every Friday crucified, that is, fixed to a cross from noon until three o’clock in the afternoon. During this period, she underwent death agonies and even died mystically.

However, in the midst of such excruciating sufferings, she received ineffable consolations in the form of ecstasies and raptures. On the feast day of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, she remained for some time suspended in the air after having received Holy Communion. And on September 24, when she was rapt in ecstasy during thanksgiving, she received the grace of spiritual nuptials with her beloved Jesus.

As much as the nun made every effort to keep the graces received a secret, it was inevitable that the whole community would learn about them. Before long, the talk of the whole city revolved around what had happened to the Servant of God.

On the recommendation of the Archbishop, who wanted to make known the truth of the events, many ecclesiastical and civil authorities witnessed the famous ecstasies and crucifixions. Of special importance among the testimonies they have left us are



Cloths placed on the hands of the Carmelite were miraculously painted with figures and phrases

Above, one of the handkerchiefs miraculously painted by Angels; below, the document signed by the Archbishop testifying to the miracle; on opening page, portrait of Mother Maria Teresa displayed at the Soumaya Museum, Mexico City

three reports written by Friar José Buenaventura Villageliu, OFM, who was entrusted by Archbishop Ramón with her spiritual direction between 1816 and 1821.⁷

Paintings made with blood by Angels

On June 21, 1816, the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, after having received Holy Communion, Maria Teresa went into ecstasy, as was her custom at the time. However, the nuns noticed that during her conversation with the Divine Spouse, an image was beginning to form on the cotton scarf that covered her head. It was the depiction of a heart, painted with the colour of fresh blood.

After a rigorous search of her cell, it was deemed impossible for Maria Teresa to have drawn it. Thus, they came to the conclusion that it had been drawn by Angels using the blood of her wounds.

After this incident, they began to fix cloth and paper tissues on the hands of the Carmelite each time she entered into ecstasy, and they were painted with figures and phrases related to the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ: hearts, crosses, crowns of thorns, nails, lances, rings and the names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Months later, letters written by Angels and Saints also began to appear. Archbishop Ramón Casaús was able to gather forty-nine missives from the heavenly spirits, two from St. Aloysius Gonzaga, one from St. Teresa and one from St. Francis de Sales.

Twice confined in the convent prison

In some of these celestial missives orders were given to the Archbishop. Two of them, for example, ordered him to lock the mystic in the convent prison for a few days, because “the Lord wants to be glorified in this soul.”⁸

Thus, on December 10, amidst the tears of the entire community, Maria Teresa was led, on crutches, to her first imprisonment. She accepted the punishment with complete humility and without asking for explanations, remaining imprisoned for eleven days. She was incarcerated again on January 31, 1817, this time for a few weeks.

When the day came to set her free, she was found to be in a deplorable state of health. The Archbishop ordered her feet to be released from the chains and, seeing the difficulty she had in walking on crutches, he said to her: "In the name of Jesus Christ, I order you in obedience to put aside the crutches and to walk securely and well without them."⁹ When she heard this, she immediately released them, and stood up with her feet firmly planted on the ground.

Envy and calumnies of some religious

With her health fully recovered, Mother Maria Teresa took up work in the kitchen and other services of the community. She performed the functions of sacristan and, once again, mistress of novices. She became a counsellor for some of the most distinguished matrons of the city, who flocked to her to ask for guidance.

Seeing that community life was perfectly established in the convent, she made arrangements with the king for the foundation of a new monastery in the city.

In the meantime, the ecstasies and other mystical phenomena did not



She preserved the signs of the Passion, and periodically emanated an extraordinary perfume

Mother Maria Teresa in the habit of a professed nun - Archdiocesan Museum of Guatemala

cease. In addition to preserving the signs of the Passion, on certain days she emanated an extraordinary perfume wherever she went.

Mother Maria Teresa aroused admiration, but also envy. Two or three religious, who disliked her because of the observance she had managed to establish in the convent, affirmed that they had seen her draw her own blood with razors and needles, use perfume in her cell, and other calumnies of this nature.

The accusations, although false, spread until making their way to the king, and through him reaching the Court of the Inquisition. People who had once admired her now made her the object of ridicule and scorn. Ungodly doctors endeavoured to heal the wounds of her hands and feet by

using toxic substances and other malefic means.

Public recognition of her virtues

These torments and contradictions would last for decades until, at the age of fifty-seven, Maria Teresa felt her last days approaching. When she asked for the last Sacraments, the whole community wept copiously, realizing that they would soon lose her.

On November 29, 1841, at half past four in the morning, her eyes closed and her soul left the earth forever. The whole city proclaimed her name and the popular sentiment was so intense that it was necessary to designate guards to maintain order in the church where her body lay in repose.

Thus were acknowledged the virtues of this soul who was the receptacle of such beautiful expressions of the love of Our Lord, who knows how to abundantly reward those who fight for Him against the devil, the world and the flesh.

Although not yet raised to the honour of the altars, Maria Teresa of the Holy Trinity is an example for the all of the Americas, for her resignation in the face of suffering and her audacity in seeking the greater glory of God. She is a type of prefigure of the Saints that Providence desires to raise up in these lands. Therefore, let us do everything in our power to follow in the footsteps of this virtuous Carmelite of the Americas, to honour with our lives the love that the Sacred Heart of Jesus has for each one of us. ✧

¹ Information on the life and writings of this Servant of God, as well as updated news regarding the process of beatification can be found at www.madremariateresa.org (in Spanish).

² ALBORES, Ildefonso. *Vida de Sor María Teresa de la Santísima Trinidad Aycinena*. Guatemala de la Asunción: San Pablo, 2006, p.23.

³ Idem, p.32.

⁴ Idem, p.38.

⁵ Idem, p.42-43.

⁶ Idem, p.46.

⁷ A facsimile of these reports can be found at www.madremariateresa.org.

⁸ ALBORES, op. cit., p.54.

⁹ Idem, p.56.



The Fight: an Expression of Divine Love

How many times have we experienced terrible trials and storms! How often have we felt ourselves sinking beneath the waves, while the Master seemed to sleep! Could it be that, at these moments, He no longer loved us?

Steep rock faces serve as the backdrop for an admirable episode that is startling at first sight, but from which we can learn numerous lessons: small birds falling at breakneck speed! They are eaglets which, having reached the appropriate age to start flying, were thrown by their own parents down the cliff...

We could well see in this episode a symbol of how God treats us at times: He subjects us to trials that seem absurd, but that are very formative for our sanctification. And since we do not always take into consideration what God has in mind, it is not unusual to hear comments like: “How can He do this to me?” Or, “Why does He treat me like this?”

If the trial is prolonged or intensifies, there is the risk of revolting against Divine Providence. Why? Among other reasons, due to a lack of understanding that everything that happens to us is in accord with God’s loving design.

God never tires of loving, pardoning and doing good

Who is not moved upon reading the parable of the prodigal son in the Holy Gospels? It seems impossible to find a better example of paternal love than the one demonstrated by this father, as he showers with the most poignant gestures of affection, compassion and mercy his rebellious, ungrateful and sinful son. Even before the latter repented and returned home, his father was anxiously awaiting him, as can be gath-

With the parable of the Prodigal Son, Jesus sought to give us a pale idea of the infinite divine paternity

ered from the fact that he saw the young man “while he was yet at a distance” (cf. Lk 15:20).

With this parable, the Divine Master sought to give us a pale idea of the infinite divine paternity, which never tires of loving, forgiving and doing good: “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in Heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (Mt 7:11).

But, in the light of this infinite goodness, how are we to understand the seemingly harsh way that God often treats His own?

Suffering and difficulties purify the soul

Let us return to our original example.

Indeed, eagles have recourse to an apparently crude, but very effective, method to help their young fly: they carry them on their backs and, having reached a high altitude, cast the fledglings into the air.



Sr. Antonella Ochipinti, EP

However, this is not an unnatural behaviour. On the contrary, the eaglets, moved by instinct, learn to save themselves from death, and the effort made leads them to quickly attain great heights, just like their parents.

These daring birds, following their natural impulses, reflect an interesting aspect of God: the divine didactic method He uses to instruct His children and to make great heroes of them.

Suffering and difficulties purify the soul and frequently bring it back from the wrong path. Thus, the divine “corrections” that God, as the most perfect Father, sends us, do not imply that we are not His children. Rather, they are a confirmation of this filiation, as the Apostle teaches:

“It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time at their pleasure, but He disciplines us for our good,

*To teach
their young
to fly at the right
time, eagles have
recourse to a
crude but effective
method*

that we may share His holiness” (Heb 12:7-10).

*The desires of the flesh
oppose those of the spirit*

Job had already proclaimed that the life of man on earth was warfare and that his days were like those of a mercenary (cf. Job 7:1). This bellicose situation is an undeniable reality, the result of original sin. The fall of our first parents resulted in the loss of peace through the introduction of disorder into the human soul, with all its consequences. The powers of the human soul were shaken, and man began to feel in himself the confusion of the intelligence, the weakness of the will and the unruliness of the sensible appetites. Two conflicting laws were es-

tablished in him: that of the flesh and of the spirit.

St. Paul warned the early Christians of this incompatibility, saying that “the desires of the flesh are against the spirit, and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would” (Gal 5:17).

*The fight is constant in
human life*

In order to acquire peace, it became necessary to fight. It is a fight against one’s own evil inclinations, and against the corruption of the world, for the disorder of man has disfigured all earthly creatures. Above all, it is a fight against the serpent and his cursed race, because God Himself, after questioning Adam about his wrongdoing, established a permanent enmity between the children of light and those of darkness:

“I will put enmities between thee and the Woman, and thy seed and her seed: She shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel” (Gn 3:15).

St. Peter’s message to the Christian community in his epistle is no idle warning, as he exhorts them to be vigilant against the devil, for

he prowls about like a lion seeking whom to devour (cf. 1 Pt 5:8).

It is evident that the devil, in his angelic nature, does not rest for an instant in pursuing his goal of losing souls. For this reason, resistance to his attacks must be constant and tireless.

Heroism was missing in terrestrial Paradise

None of this should be seen as a tragedy or as merely God's punishment of sinful man.

Msgr. João notes that in terrestrial Paradise everything was super-excellent; only one thing was missing: heroism. And this was one of the main reasons why God allowed the serpent to enter.¹

We commonly imagine Eden as a world of peace, order and tranquility. And, in fact, everything was perfect and virtuous. Man lived in full harmony with the will of God and had direct contact with Him: "The Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Gn 3:8).

However, the Creator wished to elevate His beloved creature, made in His own "image and likeness" (Gn 1:26), to the pinnacle of perfection, accentuating his virtues and

sealing his fidelity. How? By means of a trial.

By surmounting the obstacle that God had put in his way, Adam would acquire a new radiance, a new strength, a new splendour. Overcoming this trial, he would be worthy of an even greater reward, and would show all his love and gratitude to his Creator and Father.

God always sends trials out of love

However, Adam sinned. Like a member of the body that suffers a fracture and needs physiotherapy to build up its strength after the period of immobilization, conflict became something necessary for man, to strengthen and perfect his soul.

Thus, everyone, whether good or bad, will at some point face trials, difficulties and tribulations. These may serve as atonement for a fault, correction of a bad tendency, or purification of the spirit with a view to achieving greater holiness. They may also represent sufferings designed to obtain, through the Communion of Saints, graces and gifts for other members of the Church.

But whatever the cause of these setbacks, we must keep in mind that God always sends them out of love,

for the only way that leads to true and solid virtue, and therefore to eternal happiness, is the arduous climbing of a mountain called heroism.

At times, the Divine Master appears to sleep...

At the beginning of the Church, after an intense day of apostolate spent among the inhabitants of Capernaum, Our Lord decided to cross to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. He wanted to rest for a while, distancing Himself from the crowds who had been following Him for many days and had received every kind of grace and benefit from Him.

He departs with the Apostles at dusk. Suddenly, the sky becomes overcast, night falls and the sea becomes turbulent. The winds beat impetuously against the humble boat, threatening to sink it.

Faced with a desperate situation, the disciples, terrified, futilely employ every human means to prevent more and more water from entering the boat. The gigantic waves mercilessly lash them, and they soon realize that divine intervention is their only salvation.

"Master!" they cry out. And Our Lord, who was resting at the stern



Francesco Leccaros

The sky becomes overcast, night falls and the sea becomes turbulent. The winds beat impetuously against the humble boat, threatening to sink it.

Our Lord asleep in the boat during the storm on Lake Tiberias
Charterhouse of Pisa (Italy)

of the boat, wakes up. With a simple command, the squall is transformed into complete calm, and the elements, in an instant, obey the Ruler of the sea, the sky and the earth (cf. Mk 4:35-41).

How many times do we witness similar tempests, not at sea, but in our own lives! How many times, in the moments when the waves almost overwhelm us, does the Master seem to be asleep?

“The Lord reproves him whom He loves”

When the Apostles, terrified by the danger, awoke Our Lord, what response did they hear from His divine lips? “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” (Mk 4:40).

A most important lesson! In the midst of the storms, let us not fear, for Our Lord is always present in the boat. He is the one who brings about the tempest for the good and salvation of our souls. Just have faith in Him!

Moreover, “As incredible as it may seem, He permits the tempest to be unleashed against souls beloved by Him. God Himself declares that He acts in this way: ‘My son, do not despise the Lord’s discipline or be weary of His reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom He loves, as a father the son in whom he delights’ (Prv 3:11-12).”²

It was the Apostles who were involved in the episode of the boat, and who were more beloved than they? Precisely because He loved them with predilection, Our Lord wished to correct their lack of faith



Sacred Heart of Jesus - Private collection

Precisely because He loved them with predilection, Our Lord wished to submit the Apostles to that tribulation

by submitting them to that tribulation. “For had He been awake when it happened, either they would not have feared, or they would not have besought Him, or they would not so much as have thought of His being able to do any such thing.”³

Storms must not be seen as a punishment or disdain from God; on the contrary, they are manifestations of His care and affection!

Like gold in the crucible

When a general wants to form a good army, he submits his troops to intense training, with hard trials and arduous obstacles. In this way, he strengthens them in preparation for the difficult times of war and increases the chances of victory.

The Most High does likewise with those on this earth who will fight for Him, for the Holy Church and for eternal life. And the greater the love of God for a soul, the more intense will be its “training”, for the “gold” of our souls only reaches its full value when it is put “to the test” in the “fire” of combat. He “knows very well, as a very wise craftsman, how long the gold must be in the crucible, and when it is time to remove it.”⁴

Let us recall that when St. Peter began to sink into the sea, Our Lord extended His hand so that he would not succumb to the waves, saying: “O man of little faith, why did you doubt?” (Mt 14:31).

He who became man to save us repeats those same words to each one of us with insistence. Whatever the difficulties we may face, let us have complete faith in His paternal goodness. Just as Our Lord took St. Peter by the hand and led him safely to the boat, at the appropriate time He Himself will fight and triumph in us! ✧

¹ cf. CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. Even at the Hour of Apparent Defeat, Supreme Good Triumphs. In: *New Insights on the Gospels*. Città del Vaticano-Nobleton: LEV;

Heralds of the Gospel, 2012, v.V, p.253-254.

² CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. The Tempest: a Chastisement or a Grace? In: *New Insights on the Gospels*. Città del Vaticano-Nobleton:

LEV; Heralds of the Gospel, 2014, v. IV, p.184.

³ ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM. Homilías sobre el Evangelio de San Mateo. Homilía 28, n.1. In: *Obras*. 2.ed. Madrid: BAC, 2007, v.I, p.569.

⁴ RODRÍGUEZ, SJ, Alonso. *Ejercicio de perfección y virtudes cristianas*. 2.ed. Madrid: Testimonio, 1985, p.492.



Photo: Stephen Nami

Two Great Marian Feasts

On Saturday, October 12, all of Brazil celebrated the feast of its Patroness with joy and fervour. And on the following day, the entire Church commemorated the anniversary of the last apparition of Our Lady to the three shepherd children in the Cova da Iria, which occurred on October 13 of 1917.

For this reason, the second weekend of October bore an especially brilliant Marian note wherever the Heralds of the Gospel are active.

500 persons consecrate themselves to the Blessed Virgin Mary

On October 12, a group of 500 made their consecration to the Blessed Virgin, having followed the method

of St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort. The consecration took place in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, located in Cotia, Greater São Paulo. The preparatory course was provided by Herald priests, and the Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by Fr. Alex Barbosa de Brito, EP. Owing to the size of the group, the ceremony was held outside the Basilica.

Homages to Our Lady of Fatima

On October 13, the Heralds of different countries gathered with Bishops, Nuncios and parish pastors, in a spirit of ecclesial communion, to pay homage to Our Lady of Fatima. The photos that follow give a sampling of these events. ✧



Carlos Gavilanes



Juan Pablo Calavid

Colombia – The Cathedral of Bogota was filled with faithful on October 13, to participate in the Mass celebrated by Fr. Carlos Tejedor, EP (left). In Medellin, the commemorations were held in the Parish of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, with Auxiliary Bishop José Mauricio Vélez Garcia as the principal celebrant (right).



Photos: Jano Aracena

Peru – Hundreds of faithful gathered in the Holy Name of Jesus Parish, in Lima, to participate in a Eucharist in honour of Our Lady of Fatima, organized by the Heralds of the Gospel. Msgr. Germano Penemote, Counsellor of the Apostolic Nunciature, presided, with the concelebration of diocesan priests and those of the institution.



Photos: Nuno Moura

Portugal – Approximately 1,500 of the faithful flocked to the Sanctuary of Sameiro, in Braga, to attend the Solemn Mass celebrated by Canon José Paulo Abreu, president of the Confraternity of Sameiro. After Mass, all renewed their consecration to Jesus through the hands of Mary before the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima.



Photos: Victor Tamayo

Ecuador – At the Azogues Diocese, the anniversary of the Fatima apparitions was commemorated with a Mass in the cathedral, presided over by Bishop Oswaldo Vintimilla, and concelebrated by Fr. Marlon Jiménez, EP. The country's political unrest did not prevent similar ceremonies from being carried out in parishes of Quito, Guayaquil and Cuenca.



Photos: Jano Aracena

Peru – To mark a pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Lord of Miracles, made on October 12 by participants in the Save Me, O Holy Queen Campaign, Archbishop Nicola Girasoli, Apostolic Nuncio to Peru, presided at a solemn Eucharist before the miraculous image. Three priests from the Heralds of the Gospel concelebrated.



Photos: Juan Tomás Tavarez / Miguel Angel Villegas

Colombia – Most Rev. Héctor Cubillos Peña, Diocesan Bishop of Zipaquirá, administered the Sacrament of Confirmation on October 8 to a group of 31 faithful in the Heralds' Church in Tocancipá. The Mass was concelebrated by Fr. Juan Francisco Ovalle Pinzón, EP.



Photos: Nuno Moura

Portugal – Most Rev. Jorge Ortega, Archbishop of Braga, blessed and inaugurated the new chapel of the house of the feminine sector of the Heralds of the Gospel in Guimarães. After the ceremony, the young people offered him a supper and a musical concert. The Archpriest of Guimarães and Vizela and the parish priest of Vizela accompanied the prelate on the visit.



Photos: Santiago Canals / Urbano Ngoca

Mozambique – Archbishop Piergiorgio Bertoldi, Apostolic Nuncio to Mozambique, commemorated the feast of St. Charles Borromeo with a Solemn Eucharist in the Ambrosian rite at the House of the Heralds of the Gospel in Matola. Fr. Arão Mazive, EP, superior of the community, concelebrated. A dinner was held following Mass.



Photos: Nuno Moura

Portugal – On September 28, the Metropolitan Archbishop Francisco Senra Coelho of Évora diocese celebrated the Eucharist in St. Dominic Savio Parish in the city of Vendas Novas, where he instituted a community of Heralds of the Gospel missionaries. A priest of the institution will celebrate some of the Sunday Masses in this parish.



Photos: Chantal

Rwanda – The first Saturday of September was commemorated in the parish of Rango with a Mass celebrated by Fr. Léon Panhuysen, SDB. On the following day, the members of the Shrine Apostolate from this parish commemorated the Feast of Our Lady's Nativity by making evangelizing visits to families of the area.



Photos: Rita de Kassia Carvalho Defanti da Silva

Recife (Pernambuco State) – On October 8, youth from the feminine sector of the Heralds visited Maria Lucinda Hospital with the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima, bringing comfort and hope to the sick. During the visit, Fr. Christian Durães, EP, administered the Sacraments to many patients.



Photos: Thaís Morato

Maringá (Paraná State) – The Florestan Fernandes School was the setting for a musical presentation offered by the feminine sector of the Heralds (left) on October 12. On the 8th of the same month, a concert, together with catechesis and a visit of the Pilgrim Statue was carried out at St. Rose of Lima Parish in this southern city (right).



Photos: Alcídio Miranda

Jaru (Rodônia State) – Fr. Aumir Scomparin, EP, coordinator of the Mercy Fund, travelled to this north-western Brazilian city to deliver a vehicle donated to the Rural Women's Support Institute (photo 1). He also gave a talk at the Agricultural Family School (photo 2) and presided at a distribution of shrines in the main Parish of St. John the Baptist (photo 3).



Photos: Vaguine Martins

Juiz de Fora (Minas Gerais State) – Metropolitan Archbishop Gil Antônio Moreira, of Juiz de Fora, administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to 14 youths and adults on October 20. The ceremony took place in the chapel of the Heralds' House. Two Herald priests: Fr. Sebastião Alves and Fr. Victor Castillo, concelebrated.



Photos: Ricardo Schneider

Garuva (Santa Catarina State) – On September 11, Fr. Flávio Remígio, EP, visited Hope Ranch in this city of southern Brazil to celebrate a Mass for the residents, who are undergoing drug dependence rehabilitation. In his homily, he emphasized the transforming power of divine mercy for those who acknowledge their faults with honesty.



Photos: Rodrigo Florin

Nova Friburgo (Rio de Janeiro) – The Most Rev. Edney Gouvêa Mattoso, Diocesan Bishop of Nova Friburgo, presided over a Eucharist in thanksgiving for the first anniversary of the Oratory of Our Lady of Fatima, inaugurated on October 13 of last year. At the end of Mass, the sisters of the feminine branch presented him with the gift of a beautiful rosary.



CHURCH AND WORLD EVENTS

Two million faithful participate in Círio of Nazaré

On October 13, the 227th edition of the traditional feast of the Círio of Nazaré was held. Almost two million people converged from all the states of Brazil to the city of Belém in order to honour Our Lady in one of the largest processions in the world.

Celebrated on the second Sunday of October, this year the feast had as its motto: *Mary, Mother of the Church*. The programme begins with a solemn Eucharist at 5:30 am. The procession then departs from the Metropolitan Cathedral to the Basilica of Our Lady of Nazaré over a route of 3.7 kilometres, which takes between four and five hours to complete. The statue of the Mother of God, beautifully encased, is transported on an elaborately decorated float pulled by a four-hundred-metre rope. The faithful vie for the honour of at least touching it.

Church dedicated to Our Lady declared national shrine

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has elevated the country's oldest site of Marian pilgrimage to the rank of a national shrine. It is located in the city of St. Augustine in Florida. The announcement was made on October 11 during a Mass in the shrine itself, dedicated to Our Lady of La Leche (the Milk),

an invocation brought from Spain in the 16th century.

The temple is located in the Mission Nombre de Dios (Name of God), founded by Franciscan missionaries. The elevation to a national shrine is the culmination of a process that began in 2012, when the Holy See approved that the feast of Our Lady of La Leche be included in the diocesan calendar. The canonical coronation of the image will take place in the year 2020, as part of the 150th anniversary of the establishment of St. Augustine Diocese.



Indian Prime Minister praises St. Mariam Thresia

In his monthly radio program, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, expressed his satisfaction with the canonization of Blessed Mariam Thresia Chiramel Mankidiyan.

"It is an honour for all the Indian people to know that she will be declared a Saint by Pope Francis on the 13th [of October]," he said. "I offer my heartfelt homage to Mariam Thresia and I congratulate all the citizens of India, especially our Christian brothers and sisters, for this event."

Sr. Mariam Thresia was born on April 26, 1876 into a family of the Syro-Malabar Rite. In May 1914, she founded the Congregation of the Holy Family in Mannuthy, in the State of Kerala. She died on June 8, 1926. In June of 1999 she was declared Venerable, and was beatified in April of the following year. During her short life she founded numerous schools, shelters for the poor, and orphanages.

One half of a village in Bangladesh baptized

Sixty-seven people from twelve families in the village of Kointail – half of its population – were received into the Catholic Church in a baptismal ceremony celebrated on October 20 in the parish of Bhutahara, Rajshahi Diocese, Bangladesh. The work of catechization in this village took place over almost two decades and, starting from one initial family, the current number of conversions was attained.

The parish comprises forty villages, with a total of approximately four thousand faithful. Phillip Mardy, one of the newly baptized, told *AsiaNews*: "In the past we had no particular god. We adored the trees, the earth and other things. When we received Baptism, we were overjoyed to be part of God's people. Today we are truly happy. From now on we will preach Jesus in place of so many other gods and goddesses."



Presentation of Bible in Konkani

The Holy Bible has been translated for the first time into Konkani, a language spoken by about eight million people in India. Most Rev. Anthony Alwyn Fernandes Barreto, Bishop of Sindhudurg, and Most Rev. Filipe Neri Ferrão, Archbishop of Goa and Daman, presented the translation on October 13.

Although this language is usually transliterated into the Latin alphabet, its original spelling uses Devanagari, an alphasyllabary scripting sys-

Aparecida: Over 162,000 Faithful Celebrate Patroness

The tremendous influx of faithful arriving to commemorate the feast of Our Lady of Aparecida obliged the national shrine to keep its doors open from the early morning of Saturday, October 12, until 10 pm on Sunday. In all, more than 162,000 pilgrims paid homage to their Patroness that weekend, forming long lines to approach the alcove where she is venerated.

On October 12, Masses began at 5 am. The 7:00 Eucharist was dedicated to the children and that

of 10:00 was celebrated by Archbishop Orlando Brandes, with the immense shrine filled to capacity. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro attended the 4 pm Mass, the first time that the head of the Republic has participated in the celebration of the feast day of the Patroness.

At the beginning of the evening, a large procession passed through the streets of the city and the last Mass of the day was celebrated at 8:00. The events concluded with a beautiful fireworks display.



Photos: Thiago Leon - a12.com

In the various Masses celebrated throughout the 12th, thousands of the faithful filled the National Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida

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Centenary of the Basilica of Montmartre

On October 20, the emblematic Parisian church dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, located atop the hill of Montmartre, celebrated the centenary of its inauguration, which took place on October 16, 1919. The commemorations began with a solemn Mass presided over by Most Rev. Michel Christian Alain Aupetit, Archbishop of Paris.

The Sacred Heart Basilica of Montmartre is located on the highest point of the city of Paris. Its construction began after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, by popular initiative. By 1914, the church had already been completed, but it could only be inaugurated after the end of the First World War.

Today it is one of the most visited churches in the City of Light. Four Masses are celebrated daily, with

confessors available to attend people in several languages, as well as perpetual Eucharistic Adoration.



Reproduction

**Frame of the transmission via internet
of the Opening Mass of the Jubilee**

tem used in Sanskrit and other official languages of the country.

This new edition of the Sacred Scriptures comprises eight thousand copies. They will be distributed in the cities and towns of the states of Goa, Maharashtra and Karnataka, where Konkani is the only language understood by the natives. Work on the publication of the text began in 2014.

Process of beatification opened for martyr of Eucharist

On October 2, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints approved the opening of the process of beatification of Juan Roig Diggle, a member of the Young Christians of Catalonia murdered out of hatred for the Faith during the Spanish Civil War.

He was often entrusted with the mission of taking the Viaticum to the

sick, risking his own life. It was on one of these occasions that, on the night of September 11, 1936, he saw his house being surrounded by enemies of the Faith. The young man only had time to consume the Sacred Species he was carrying before being dragged to the cemetery of the city and murdered with five shots to the heart and one to his head. His last words were: "May God forgive you, as I forgive you."



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“She shall crush thy head”

The promise of the Protoevangelium affirms the complete victory of Mary Immaculate over the devil, closely linked to the supreme victory of Jesus.

The Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, by which Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, cites, as a biblical foundation for this singular privilege, the words God addressed to the serpent, a figure of the devil: “I will put enmities between thee and the Woman, and thy seed and her seed: She shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel” (Gn 3:15 Vulg).

“She crushed his head with her virginal foot”

With this divine rebuke, the Pontiff declares, “God announced His merciful remedies prepared for the regeneration of mankind – words by which He crushed the audacity of the deceitful serpent and wondrously raised up the hope of the human race.”

Furthermore, as the Church Fathers and other ecclesiastical authorities explain, in this promise “the most merciful Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, was clearly and openly foretold: His most Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, was also indicated; and, at the same time, the very enmity of both against the devil was manifestly expressed.”

United to her Divine Son “by a most intimate and indissoluble bond,” the Blessed Virgin Mary became

“with Him and through Him, eternally at enmity with the evil serpent, and crushed his head with her virginal foot.”¹

His victory is her victory

Commenting on this passage of the Papal Bull, Fr. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrangé, OP, highlights that Our Lord represents “pre-eminently the posterity of the Woman in conflict with the posterity of the serpent.”²

However, the renowned theologian explains, “But if Jesus is termed the posterity of the Woman, that is not because of His remote connection with Eve, who was able to pass on to her descendants only a fallen and wounded nature, deprived of the divine life. Rather is it because of His connection with Mary, in whose womb He took a stainless humanity.”³

This connection stemming from the Divine Maternity also unites the victory of both, as Fr. Adhémar d’Alès indicates: “The source of this enmity that God has placed between the race of the Woman and the race of the serpent is not found in Eve; for Eve, like Adam, fell victim to the serpent. The source of the enmity can only be found in Mary, Mother of the Redeemer. Consequently, the person of Mary is present in the Protoevangelium, although in a veiled manner, and the text of the Vulgate – *ipsa* [She shall crush] – expresses a conclusion that is really



Timothy Ring

The Virgin with the Child defeating the dragon - Parish of Our Lady of the Angels of Porciúncula, Bogotá (Colombia)

inferred from the sacred text, because the victory of the Redeemer is morally, but truly, the victory of his Mother.”⁴

And Fr. Garrigou-Lagrangé concludes: “The promise of Genesis speaks of a victory that will be complete: ‘She shall crush thy head.’ And since the victory over satan will be complete, so also the victory over sin which makes the soul slave and the devil master. But as Pius IX teaches in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, the victory over satan would not be complete if Mary had not been preserved from original sin by the merits of her Son.”⁵ ✧

¹ PIUS IX. *Ineffabilis Deus*, n.12.

² GARRIGOU-LAGRANGÉ, OP, Réginald. *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life*. St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1948, p. 55.

³ Idem, ibidem.

⁴ D’ALÈS, Adhémar. Marie, Mère de Dieu. In: *Dictionnaire apologétique de la Foi Catholique*. Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1916, t.III, col.118.

⁵ GARRIGOU-LAGRANGÉ, op. cit., p.56.

At Jacob's Well

As she watched the sheep graze placidly, the Samaritan girl caught sight of the very travellers that she had seen in her dream! She realized that they were Jewish, but something strongly urged her to set aside tradition and help them...



Sr. María Mercedes González, EP

Close to what is now Nablus, in a valley dotted with vineyards and olive groves, we find the ancient well of Jacob. It is the setting of the well-known Gospel episode of the Samaritan woman.

At the time when Jesus was born, the site was surrounded by humble dwellings. In one of them lived an aged farmer, together with his twelve children on a small plot of land.

He was especially fond of his youngest daughter, and took great pains to teach her the Samaritan traditions of old. Whenever they contemplated the starry night sky together, she would listen, spellbound, as he spoke of the future coming of the *Taheb*, the restorer of all things.

An avid learner, she paid close attention to the teachings given at the Temple of Gerizim. Thus, she knew from a young age that a powerful prophet was to come and free her people from its plight. The thought of this Redeemer's birth captivated her, and she daily prayed to meet him and to be able to serve him, repeating with all her heart:

— Oh ye heavens, send down the dew, that the earth may at last bring forth the Saviour!

She wondered if the Messiah awaited by the Jewish people would also be

the Saviour of the Samaritans. If he was to be born in Bethlehem of Judah, as foretold, how would he make his way to Samaria to teach and save them, given the rift between the Jewish and Samaritan peoples? This was a problem that often occupied the young girl's mind. As time went on, she felt more and more convinced that the prophecies would soon be fulfilled.

One day, her father entered the house after herding the sheep into the

fold, stroking his long beard gravely. He seated himself on the patriarchal divan, and gathered his children and servants around him. They listened attentively as he explained that the Emperor Caesar Augustus had decreed a census in Palestine, to determine the extent of his dominion and the number of his subjects.

All inhabitants of the land would be obliged to return to the cities of their forefathers to be registered. And this would mean that that many



Illustrations: Elizabeth Bonyun

In conversation, they explained the reason for their journey

of the neighbouring Jewish and Galilean folk would be seeking a short-cut through Samaria. So, the father warned them:

— Take care to avoid stirring up conflicts with the Jews, who will pass through our land in great number. At the same time, bear in mind the enmity that separates us, and see that you also avoid behaving in an overly friendly manner with these people who bear a mortal hatred toward us.

These words left his young daughter pensive and perplexed: what was the reason for such hostility between the two peoples? Amid these thoughts, her old presentment grew within her, and she felt increasingly sure that something extraordinary was about to take place.

That very night, she had a mysterious dream which filled her with hope. She saw herself, already a grown woman, going to Jacob's well with an earthen jar to fetch water for the sheep. It seemed to be around noon, for the sun shone with scorching rays.

Arriving at the well, she came upon a man seated majestically at its edge. He appeared somewhat tired, perhaps having walked a great distance.

Seeing that he was Jewish, she hurriedly went about filling her water jar without saying a word. However, the man broke the silence with a request:

— Would you kindly give me some water?

With that, the girl awoke with a start:

— Oh, no! Jews and Samaritans cannot speak to each other!

But, fatigued as she was from the previous day of work, she soon fell back to sleep, and dreamt once again.

This time she found herself in the meadow close to the well, tending her father's sheep. She suddenly spotted a pair of travellers in the distance. As they approached, she saw that it was a man leading a mule upon which a lady of noble bearing was seated.

Seeing them travel-worn, and perceiving that the lady was expecting a child, she wanted to help them. She seized the water jar, which was about half full, and was hastening toward them, when...

— Wake up! Your father is calling you!

A new day had begun, and she readied herself quickly to tend the sheep. That day they grazed as placidly as ever, but their shepherdess was lost in thought. As her eyes scanned her surroundings, they suddenly met with a sight that made her spring to her feet: it was the travellers – the very couple she had seen in her dream!

She rubbed her eyes and saw that there was no mistake. Ensuring that the water jar still contained a good supply, she immediately set out to meet them with it.

As she drew near, she realized that they were Jews coming from Nazareth for the census. Nevertheless, she felt very strongly urged to set aside tradition and help them. Approaching, she offered them water. They thanked her for her charity and gratefully quenched their thirst. In conversation, they explained the reason for their journey and told her that the Child of the beautiful Lady would soon be born.

Something made the girl relate this family to the prophecies she had heard ever since she was very young. Moreover, their faces seemed to shine with a special radiance. The expected Messiah was closer to her than she imagined!

She was so impressed that she asked the travellers to return the same way so that she could meet the Child, and the Lady nodded with an affectionate smile. But what was her surprise when the husband of the admirable Lady added:



Thirty years later...

— May God reward your generosity! Wait and see... one day, living water will be offered to you, and whoever drinks of it will be satisfied for ever!

The young Samaritan girl had just met the Holy Family! Her dreams were now explained, and more importantly, it seemed that her longings for the coming of the Redeemer would soon be fulfilled!

Due to Herod's persecution, it was not possible for Mary and Joseph to return the same way. The girl grew up and, over the years, she drifted from her first innocence. However, the promise of that radiant man remained alive in her soul.

Thirty years later, Our Lord passed through Samaria and, at Jacob's well, met that same woman whom Joseph and Mary had once known as a girl. He offered her the living water of grace and she accepted it. The Child whom she had longed to meet in her youth now manifested Himself to her as her Saviour! ✧

THE SAINTS OF EACH DAY

1. 1st Sunday of Advent.

Blessed Liduina Meneguzzi, virgin (†1941). Italian missionary of the St. Francis de Sales Institute, she died in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia.

2. Blessed Raphael Chyliński, priest (†1741). Franciscan religious, he carried out his apostolate as preacher and confessor in Lagiewniki and Krakow.

3. St. Francis Xavier, priest (†1552 Shangchuan - China).

Blessed Edward Coleman, martyr (†1678). Falsely accused of conspiracy against King Charles II of England, he was hanged, drawn and quartered for having embraced the Catholic Faith.

4. St. John Damascene, priest and Doctor of the Church (†c. 749 Mar Saba - Israel).

St. Annan, Bishop (†1075). He founded many churches and monasteries in the Dioceses of Cologne, Germany. A man of courage and talent, he earned great esteem in ecclesiastical and civil circles, during the time of Emperor Henry IV.

5. St. Gerald of Braga, Bishop (†1108). Native of Gaul, he professed his vows in the monastery of Moissac and from there went to Braga, Portugal, where he was elected Bishop.

6. St. Nicholas, Bishop (†fourth century Myra - Turkey).

St. Joseph Nguyen Duy Khang, martyr (†1861). Catechist arrested during the persecution of Emperor Tu Duc. He was scourged, imprisoned and finally beheaded in Hai Duong, Vietnam.

7. St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church (†397 Milan - Italy).

St. Fara, abbess (†657). Sister of St. Faro, Bishop of Meaux, and of St. Chagnoald, Bishop of Laon. She founded the Benedictine monastery of Faremoutiers, of which she was abbess for many years.

8. 2nd Sunday of Advent.

Blessed Aloysius Liguda, priest and martyr (†1942). Polish priest of the Congregation of the Divine Word, cruelly murdered by guards of the Dachau concentration camp in Germany.

9. Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (in Canada and the US, transferred from the 8th).

St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin (†1548 Mexico City).

Blessed Bernard Mary of Jesus Silvestrelli, priest (†1911). Superior General of the Passionists who died in Moricone, Italy. He worked for the growth and expansion of the Congregation.

10. Blessed Marcantonio Durando, priest (†1880). Vincentian priest, he favoured the growth of the Daughters of Charity in Italy, and founded the Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus the Nazarene.

11. St. Damasus I, Pope (†384 Rome).

Blessed Francis Lippi, hermit (†1292). Soldier living a licentious life, he lost his sight and, repentant, went on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, where he was cured. He returned to Italy, becoming a Carmelite hermit.

12. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas.

Blessed Conrad of Offida, priest (†1306). Franciscan religious who loved and practised to



a high degree the humility and original poverty of the Order.

13. St. Lucy, virgin and martyr (†c. 304/305 Syracuse - Italy).

Blessed Anthony Grassi, priest (†1671). Religious from the Congregation of the Oratory, he died in Fermo, Italy. A humble and peaceful man, he encouraged the brothers to observe the rule by his example.

14. St. John of the Cross, priest and Doctor of the Church (†1591 Úbeda - Spain).

St. Nimatullah al-Hardini Kassab, priest (†1858). Religious from the Lebanese Maronite Order, he dedicated himself to theological studies, the formation of youth and pastoral work.

15. 3rd Sunday of Advent.

Blessed Charles Steeb, priest (†1856). Born in Germany to a Lutheran family, he converted and was ordained a priest. He



**Death of Blessed Urban V
Assumption of Our Lady Cathedral,
Bolzano (Italy)**

founded the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Verona, Italy.

16. St. Eberhard, confessor (†867). Duke of Friuli and important figure in the Holy Roman Empire. He founded a monastery of Canons Regular in Cysoing, France, where he was buried some years after his death.

17. Blessed Hyacinth Cormier, priest (†1916). Superior General of the Dominican Order born in Orleans, France; he aimed to restore everything according to the spirit of the founder, beginning with prayer and studies.

18. St. Gatian of Tours, Bishop (†third century). First to govern the Diocese of Tours, France.

19. Blessed Urban V, Pope (†1370). French Benedictine monk elevated

to the Chair of Peter, in Avignon. He worked mainly at restoring the Apostolic See in Rome and re-establishing unity in the Church.

20. St. Philogonius, Bishop (†324). Originally a lawyer, he was elected Bishop of Antioch, where he began the fight against Arianism with St. Alexander and other companions.

21. St. Peter Canisius, priest and Doctor of the Church (†1597 Fribourg - Switzerland).

St. Themistocles, martyr (†third century). Pastor of Lycia, present-day Turkey, he offered himself to be tortured and condemned to death in place of St. Dioscorus and thus obtained the crown of martyrdom.

22. 4th Sunday of Advent.

St. Ischyriion, martyr (†c. 250). He died in Egypt, impaled on a sharp stake for refusing to sacrifice to idols.

23. St. John Cantius, priest (†1473 Krakow - Poland).

St. Thorlak of Skalholt, Bishop (†1193). Elected Bishop of Skalholt, Iceland, he dedicated himself to the moral renewal of the clergy and the people.

24. Blessed Bartholomew Maria dal Monte, priest (†1778). He preached the Word of God to the Christian people and clergy in many regions of Italy. He founded the Pious Work of the Missions.

25. Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed Bentivoglio, priest (†1232). In his youth he met St. Francis of Assisi, whom he followed, leaving behind all his possessions.

26. St. Stephen, deacon and protomartyr.

St. Vincentia Maria Lopez Vicuña, virgin (†1890). She founded the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate in Madrid, Spain.

27. St. John, Apostle and Evangelist.

Blessed José Maria Corbin Ferrer, martyr (†1936). Member of the Marian Congregations and Catholic Youth, he was shot to death on a ship in Santander, Spain, during the Spanish Civil War.

28. Holy Innocents, martyrs.

St. Catherine Volpicelli, virgin (†1894). She founded the Institute of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart in Naples.

29. Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

St. Thomas Becket, Bishop and martyr (†1170 Canterbury - England).

Blessed José Aparicio Sanz, priest and martyr (†1936). In the parishes in which he exercised his ministry, he erected Eucharistic associations and propagated the devotion of Forty Hours. He was executed in Paterna, during the Spanish Civil War.

30. Blessed Eugenia Ravasco, virgin (†1900). Foundress of the Institute of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

31. St. Sylvester I, Pope (†335 Rome).

St. Columba, virgin and martyr (†fourth century). Having been imprisoned in Sens, France, at sixteen years of age, she refused to abandon the Faith and was beheaded by order of Emperor Aurelian.



Bread Made in Honour of the Di

Holy Church instituted Advent as a time of expectation for the Solemnity of Christmas. And “Stollen” is a delicious German bread that can well symbolize the preparation of our hearts for the coming of the Saviour.

Let us imagine how paradisiacal it must have been for the Holy Family to live together in the humble house of Nazareth, and how the Divine Child, when hungry, asked His Mother for some food.

What would She give to Jesus? A piece of bread? If She did so, it would obviously be a first-class delicacy. For if “the fragrance of the bread tells the truth about the baker,” as the saying goes, what would be the aroma of the food prepared by the Queen of Heaven and earth?

Let us go forward in time to the German city of Dresden in the middle of the 15th century. A Butter-Verbot¹ still existed in the Church at that time, which prohibited the consumption of butter during periods of abstinence. For this reason, during Advent the inhabitants of Dres-

den prepared a bread called Stollen, made only of water, yeast, flour and vegetable oil.

Its taste was so unpleasant to Ernst of Saxony and his brother Albert that they decided to ask Pope Nicholas V for permission to include butter in its preparation, at least for the meals made at court. The request, however, was rejected by the Pontiff. Persevering in their objective, the princes continued to insist with each of the Popes who succeeded him until, at last, Innocent VIII heeded them.

At first, only the nobles benefited from the privilege, but soon it was extended to all the people. As time went by, Stollen’s preparation was enriched, bringing us the present-day recipe: a lightly fermented sweet bread, containing plenty of butter, spices, dried and

crystallized fruits, among other ingredients.

Each Stollen has a unique flavour, depending on the baker. The varieties have multiplied over time and there are even those who keep their recipe secret. But it has become a typical bread for the Christmas season, whose oblong shape and white dusting reminds Germans of the Divine Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes.

Furthermore, Stollen also has another characteristic that evokes the Child Jesus. The inhabitants of Dresden say that, in order to obtain optimum results, its preparation must begin six months before the Christmas celebrations, which in some way makes it a symbol of Advent itself.

“*Nemo summo fit repenter*,”² as the Latin adage says... The Blessed Virgin had to wait nine months to

vine Child



Isabela Obrzut



give birth to her Only-begotten Son, during which time She constantly grew in sublime intimacy and loving rapport with Him. And the Holy Church, in her wisdom, instituted a time of meditation and waiting to purify our souls with a view to the Solemnity of Christmas.

Thus, while the Stollen ages in the German pastry chef's workshop, or in the pantry of our home, and Mary prepares for the arrival of the Child Jesus, let us prepare our spirit for this great event. Let us offer the Redeemer our heart as a warm shelter, so that, affectionately received there, He may reign over each one of us. ✧

¹ From German: butter prohibition.

² From Latin: "Nothing great is done suddenly."

How to Prepare a Stollen for this Christmas

INGREDIENTS

1st part: 500 g (3 1/3 cups) of flour / 1 tablespoon of dry yeast / 1 tablespoon of vanilla sugar (optional) / a pinch of salt / zest of 5 lemons and 5 oranges / 1 teaspoon of cardamom / 1 teaspoon of cinnamon / 1 teaspoon of anise / a pinch of nutmeg.

2nd part: 2 eggs / 375 g (1 1/2 cups) of butter / 250 g (1 cup) of ricotta cheese / 100 g (1/2 cup) of sugar / 6 drops of almond extract. Some of the butter can be replaced with vegetable shortening, but the dough will not be as soft and will be more prone to crumbling.

3rd part: 200 g (1 1/3 cups) of golden raisins / (1 1/3 cups) 200 g of Thompson raisins / 100 g (3/4 cup) of ground almonds / 200 g (2/3 cup) of dried apricots and 100 g (1/3 cup) of candied fruit, all finely cubed / rum or cognac.

Topping: 100 g (1/2 cup) of butter / 50 g (1/3 cup) of confectioner's sugar / 50 g (1/3 cup) of vanilla sugar (or omit and double the confectioner's sugar).

INSTRUCTIONS

Soak the raisins in rum or cognac for forty-eight hours before beginning.

In a bowl, combine the ingredients for the first part. For added flavour, start with whole spices and

grind them just before using. Mix the ingredients for the second part in a blender.

Add the liquid ingredients (part 2) to the dry ingredients (part 1) and stir until smooth. Gently stir in the ingredients of the third part. Pour the mixture into bread pans, lightly greased with butter and sprinkled with flour. Place in preheated oven (350 F) and bake until golden brown (approximately 30-40 minutes). Test with toothpick to see if baked through.

While the bread is still warm, remove it from the pans and cover with the topping: Brush generously with melted butter, and then dust with the mixture of the two sugars (confectioner's and vanilla). Handle the bread gently so as to avoid any cracking.

Wrap tightly in aluminium foil and keep in a dry cool place (not the fridge). In warmer climates, one week will be sufficient. However, for best results it is best to leave the Stollen age for at least one month.

If you decide to let it age for a longer period, injecting amaretto into it with a syringe once a week will preserve it and enhance the flavour. As a variation to the recipe, the Stollen can be covered with marzipan, coated with semi-sweet chocolate and decorate it with slivered almonds.



Union of Soul with the Divine Infant

*O*n Christmas Night, the Infant Jesus had the full use of His intelligence. And there in His poor cradle, He suffered as He foresaw unbelief and impiety spreading throughout so many places on the earth. But, on the other hand, He also contemplated all the souls filled with zeal for the glory and service of God, living and fighting for the triumph of virtue, suffering because of the sins and offenses that men commit against Him, making reparation with penance and a spirit of austerity.

Thus, the sacred mind and heart of the divine Newborn was turned to fervent Catholics, as He beseeched the Eternal Father to grant them the necessary strength to persevere in the good fight for the good.

Let us, then, draw near to the manger, and ask Jesus, through Our Lady, St. Joseph, the Angels, the shepherds and the Magi Kings, to accept our desire to be conformed to His divine plans. Let us offer Him our aspiration to unite ourselves to His cogitations, meditations, and prophetic considerations in the manger, so that we may live Christmas in unison with Him.



Teresita Morazzani

The Nativity – Private collection
of Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP

Let us implore a complete union of soul with the Divine Infant, in such a way that all that is in His heart be also in ours, all that beats in the Immaculate Heart of Mary beat also in ours, and that the Christmas we celebrate may reflect the exact meaning of all that Jesus and Mary experienced on that night a thousand times blessed, in the mountains of Bethlehem.

Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira