



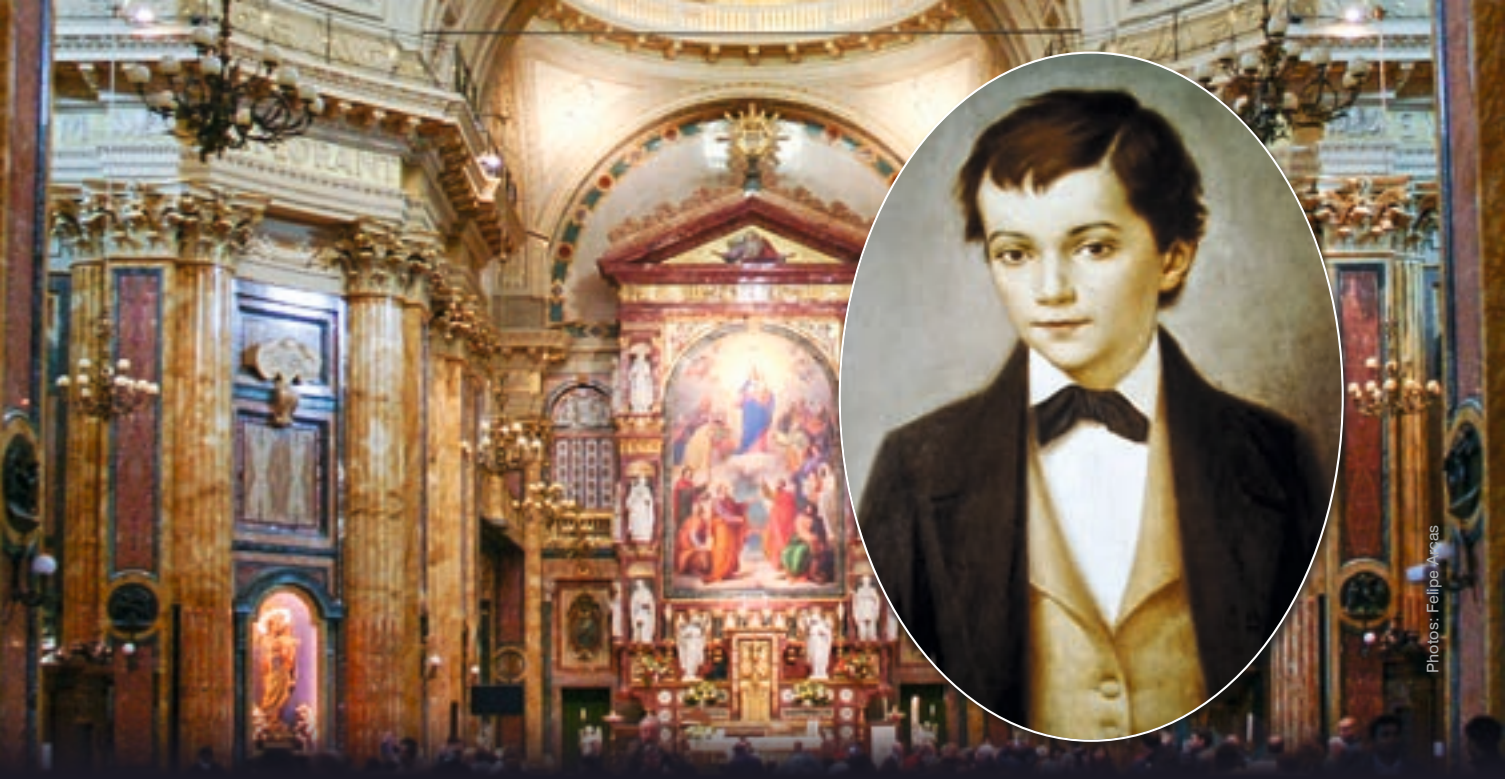
# HERALDS OF THE GOSPEL

Vol. 14, No. 149  
March 2020



*Outpouring of Marian Graces*





Photos: Felipe Azeas

## *Admirable Apostle of Seriousness*

*It was St. John Bosco himself who taught the birichini – a designation, in the region of Turin, for boys from modest families – for it is part of the splendid Salesian vocation to educate particularly the working class, providing basic occupational training. They were lads full of life and enthusiasm, but given to boisterousness, loud laughter, and uncouth manners.*

*In this setting, St. Dominic Savio proved to be an admirable apostle of seriousness. He manifested a wisdom superior to that of the other youths of his generation, and, in a measure*

*proportionate to a child's mentality, he had a profound comprehension of all that he should do. Accordingly, no gesture or word of his failed to reveal a capacity for reflection based on faith and deeply supernatural.*

*This is why he spread an atmosphere of composure, seriousness and calm around himself. Without impeding the boys from being authentic children, he showed them an effective way to resist the mania of constant jesting, ignorance, and the want of ceremony and good manners.*

*Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira*



# HERALDS OF THE GOSPEL

Vol. 14, No. 149, March 2020

## Editor:

Gustavo Adolfo Kralj

## Editorial Board:

Sr. Juliane Campos, EP;  
Severiano de Oliveira;  
Br. Guy de Ridder, EP

## Published by:

Virgin of Fatima Association  
P. O. Box 724  
Nobleton, ON L0G 1N0  
Phone: 1-800-674-3410  
Fax: 1-905-939-9778

www.virginfatima.org

E-mail: vfa@virginfatima.org  
Canadian Publications Mail,  
Sales Agreement No. 40035333

## United States:

Heralds of the Gospel Foundation  
P.O. Box 42359  
Houston, TX 77242  
Phone: 281-676-8526  
E-mail: hgmag@heraldsusa.org

## Typesetting:

Heralds of the Gospel graphic design team

## Printed in India

at Anaswara Offset Pvt. Ltd., Cochin

© 2020 Heralds of the Gospel. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce any article, with credit given to *Heralds of the Gospel Magazine*, a copy of which must be sent to the Heralds of the Gospel. The authors are responsible for the content of their articles.

To subscribe, contact the Heralds at any of the addresses listed above

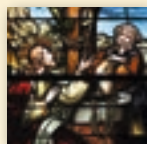
# CONTENTS

Our Readers Write ..... 4

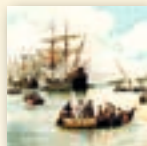
Irreversible Victory,  
Won by Unmatched Fidelity (Editorial) ..... 5



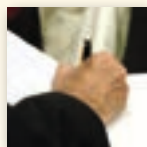
The Voice of the Popes –  
The Education and  
Discipline of the Clergy ..... 6



Gospel Commentary – The  
New Samaritan Woman  
and the Living Water  
of the Reign of Mary ..... 8



Great Victories  
and Heroic... Failures ..... 18



A Vanishing "Art"? ..... 22



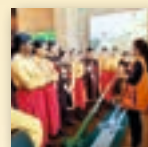
A Resounding  
Conversion ..... 24



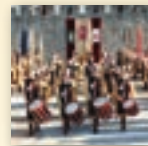
Virginal Father,  
Hero of Confidence ..... 26



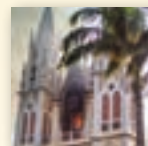
St. Agnes of Prague –  
Soul of Valour, Heart  
of Fire! ..... 30



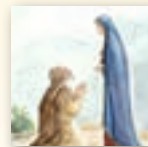
Heralds of the Gospel  
School – Discipline,  
Vitality and Joy ..... 34



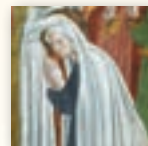
Heralds Worldwide ..... 38



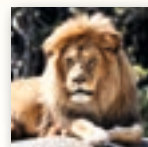
Church and World  
Events ..... 43



Story for Children...  
Sustained by the  
Promise ..... 46



The Saints of  
Each Day ..... 48



As Audacious and  
Bold as a Lion ..... 50





## OUR READERS WRITE

### ***A TIME OF SO MUCH "OPPOSITION AGAINST THE GOOD"***

Together with my thanks and sincere compliments for this laudable work that the Heralds carry out, of sowing the message of the Gospel, I unite my prayers to yours, that this institution may continue with the wonderful dissemination of clear doctrine that enlightens minds, moves hearts and strengthens weak wills. Many children of the Church find themselves disoriented by the burden of the breakdown of families and society itself. Confusion among the faithful is evident in the doctrinal, spiritual and disciplinary fields.

In the face of so much distress and disorientation, people today are left waiting for a word of hope and assurance. What a tremendous responsibility for the Pastors of the Church! On the other hand, our Mother the Church, Bride of Christ, continues to extend her maternal hands to us with her teachings and wants to nourish us with the Sacraments and with the witness of so many of our brothers and sisters who offer their lives as a testimony of fidelity.

*Heralds of the Gospel* magazine, with its doctrinal content so in tune with the orthodoxy of the Magisterium of the Church, offers us the patrimony of the Church Fathers, and gives us the living witness of many lay people, priests, and religious brother and sisters who work generously in the "Lord's vineyard". We can only thank God for the enormous good that this is doing for so many souls who hunger and thirst for sound doctrine and spiritual nourishment. Another aspect highlighted in the magazine is the exquisite care taken with

the Liturgy, for it is the celebration of the mystery of salvation.

In these times when there is so much "opposition against the good", I unite myself with you as you continue to serve our Holy Mother Church, which suffers greatly. And let us not forget that "doing good comes at a high cost," as the Lord warned us: "For My sake they will insult, persecute, imprison and kill you." But at the same time He promised us: "I am with you always, until the end of time." There are many people who accompany you with their prayers.

*Fr. Clemente Ortega  
Quinches – Peru*

### ***I LOVE ST. JOSEPH, DR. PLINIO AND DONA LUCILIA!***

I want to commend you for the beautiful work of the Heralds, because everything you do is wonderful! I mention especially the January 2020 magazine: it is impeccable! It is not enough to read it once; I have to reread it. I love St. Joseph, Dr. Plinio and Dona Lucilia! Congratulations, you have taught and guided me with me great expertise! God bless you all.

*Tania Regina Zanateli Borges  
Lauras – Brazil*

### ***THANK GOD FOR THE GREAT WORK OF THE HERALDS***

Very dear Heralds of the Gospel, I write to you on behalf of Sr. Maria Luisa of St. Teresa, who was chosen to be your "chaplain" for 2020. She is a humble sister of... eighty-three years, very simple and fervent, who will pray very much for you.

We read all of your magazines, passing them around to everyone in the community, and we give thanks to God for the great work that you are doing.

May the Lord continue to bless you with many vocations, for the

good of our Holy Mother Church! Count on our prayers! And we count on yours.

Warmest regards from our Mother and from the whole community.

*Sr. Maria José of the  
Most Blessed Trinity, OCD  
Monastery of St. Isabel and  
St. Anthony the Abbot – Discalced  
Carmelites – Ciudad Real – Spain*

### ***SOURCE OF EVANGELIZING MATERIAL***

*Heralds of the Gospel* magazine is an instrument of evangelization for all phases of life, for the articles attend the needs of both children and adults. As a person dedicated to catechetical activities, I use the magazine as a source of material: articles that fortify us and enrich us with the knowledge passed on to us from our Herald priests.

This blessed magazine brings the comfort of the Word to the sick in hospitals and to the imprisoned. While leafing through it in a doctor's office something always catches our attention, whether it be the quality of the printing or the content.

I thank our spiritual father, Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, and his mentor, Dr. Plinio, for their "yes" to God's call and their fidelity.

*Deoli dos Anjos Deserto  
Campo Grande – Brazil*

### ***MAGAZINES FULL OF PRECIOUS INSIGHTS***

Thank you, as always, for the magazines full of precious insights, especially those that illuminate our understanding on the virtues that lead to the attainment of eternal life, as a path through which we must pass. How much good it did me to know what the Lord wanted of me!

*Laura Salas Montes  
Santiago – Chile*



## IRREVERSIBLE VICTORY, WON BY UNMATCHED FIDELITY

**A**t first glance, Our Lady's life was wholly characterized by the incomprehensible from childhood: She wanted to remain entirely consecrated to God in the Temple, but had to return to the world; She had promised the Lord to remain a virgin, but She had to wed; although She was most holy, the Incarnation made of Her an element of terrible trial for St. Joseph, whose unparalleled sanctity was inferior only to that of his immaculate Spouse... Within this path of paradoxical and excruciating trials, along which Mary tread between the absurd and the unreasonable, was concealed God's incalculable predilection for a mission whose magnitude had no proportion with the created, but only with the Creator.

In fact, Divine Motherhood constitutes another paradox: God, though omnipotent, truly needed the Blessed Virgin. Not because of an absolute necessity, but because He willed it to be so, since part of Providence's governance is to submit the realization of His plans to the acceptance of the creatures chosen to carry them out. So God depended on Mary for Our Lord Jesus Christ to be who He was!

What would have happened if Our Lady had refused? It is impossible to calculate. We can only conjecture: all of history would have been ruined, and nothing good would have happened. From the barbarism that already reigned, humanity would have collapsed into degeneration; men would have slid from one ingratitude to another in relation to the Creator, in revolts ever bolder, and more deleterious and self-destructive. And while descending this ramp in constant acceleration, we should add God's growing wrath against humanity and the punishments that would ensue...

Therefore, Our Lady's "*fiat!*" was given at the moment of the most decisive crossroads in history, when either millennia of calamities or millennia of grace hung in the balance.

However, in order to obtain – as Co-Redemptrix and Universal Mediatrix – the new era of grace, She would have to carry alone the accumulated burden of several millennia of sins, ingratitude and infidelities, overcoming all the previous evil with the radiance of her immaculate holiness. Thus, remembering His promise, God would forgive man his first disobedience and would work an unheard-of mystery of mercy, of which the Incarnation would be only the first chapter: the foundation of the Church, the institution of the Sacraments, the presence of the Redeemer "to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20), the immortality of His Mystical Body, the guarantee of a faithful clergy...

No doubt, all these gifts were obtained by Christ on the Cross, but He became incarnate only because Mary faithfully contributed to the divine plan, suffering the unspeakable for our salvation. Only at the Last Judgement will we have an idea of how much these future graces have cost the Blessed Virgin...

Now, once purchased, this future becomes irreversible. And it is impossible to measure its magnitude because, of all the marvels God has stored up in Our Lady's Heart, the most beautiful part is still to come. All that the Most High has promised, He will accomplish in Mary and through Mary. Let us trust and hope, because neither has "the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor 2:9). ♦



*The Annunciation,  
by Fra Angelico -  
Prado Museum,  
Madrid*

Photo: Reproduction





# ***The Education and Discipline of the Clergy***

Those who feel the need to profess our most holy Religion will be the more easily led to embrace its doctrine, precepts and counsels, if they see piety and purity shining in the clergy, united with wisdom and good example.

**A**s “to instruct others in piety and the worship of the Lord, nothing is as effective as the life and example of those who have consecrated themselves to the divine ministry,”<sup>1</sup> and since the people usually tend to be of the same quality as their priests, you see clearly, Venerable Brothers, how much you must strive that the clergy shine for the seriousness of their morals, integrity of life, holiness and doctrine, and that ecclesiastical discipline may be maintained with all exactitude in accordance with the norms of the sacred canons, or, where it has grown lax, restored to its former splendour.

## ***The clergy should be models for the faithful***

Therefore, you are well aware that you must, as the Apostle commands, avoid imposing your hands upon any aspirant to the priesthood in haste.

Be careful to admit to sacred orders only those whom, through diligent investigation, you know to be worthy to honour your dioceses by their virtues and their culture; those who, fleeing from all that is forbidden to clerics, dedicate themselves to reading, exhortations and doctrine, so as to “set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Tm 4:12), to win the veneration of all and to inflame

the people in love for the Christian religion.

For, as our immortal predecessor Benedict XIV advises us with great wisdom, “it is certainly better to have a small number of good, suitable and useful priests than to have many of no value for the building up of the Body of Christ, which is the Church.”<sup>2</sup>

Neither should you disregard your duty to investigate with all diligence the customs and knowledge of those to whom the care and guidance of souls will be entrusted, so that, as faithful dispensers of the manifold grace of God, they may know how to continually nourish and help the people, administering to them the Sacraments, preaching the divine Word, giving them the example of good works; and they may know how to conform them

to the precepts, practices and teachings of Religion, in order to lead them along the paths of salvation.

You must clearly understand that if the parish priests ignore or neglect their mission, then the morals of the faithful are corrupted, Christian discipline grows slack, the practice of religious worship is dislodged and cast aside, and finally every vice and corruption is easily introduced into the Church.

## ***Not preaching themselves, but Christ crucified***

The Word of God, “living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb 4:12), was given to us for the salvation of souls. In order that it may not become fruitless through the fault of its ministers, never cease to encourage the sacred orators to weigh well the gravity of their function and to exercise most religiously the evangelical ministry, not with the arguments of human persuasion, nor with the ambitious and empty apparatus of profane eloquence, but through the manifestation of the spirit and virtue of God. Thus, by properly presenting the Word of truth, they may not preach themselves, but Christ crucified, with clarity, simplicity and purity of language, according to the doctrine of the Catholic Church and the Fathers.

*If the parish priests ignore or neglect their mission, then the morals of the faithful are corrupted and Christian discipline grows slack*



Let them thus announce to the people the dogmas and precepts of our most holy Religion, explain in detail the particular duties of each one, inspire in all a horror of sin and revive piety, so that the faithful, heartily reinvigorated by the Word of God, may flee from their vices, practise the virtues, escape eternal punishment and attain heavenly glory.

With prudence and pastoral solicitude, continuously urge all the clergy to reflect upon the ministry they have received from the Lord, so that they may exercise their respective duties with the utmost diligence, love above all the dignity of God's house, pray uninterruptedly and fervently with profound sentiments of piety and, according to the precept of the Church, recite the Canonical Hours of the breviary by which they implore for themselves the divine help necessary for the fulfilment of the grave duties of their office, and may placate God and garner His blessings for the Christian people.

***To provide a holy and religious formation to new clergy***

Venerable Brothers, you know well that only clerics who are very well trained and instructed can be excellent ministers of the Church, and that proper formation greatly influences the whole future life of clerics.

Apply all the energy of your episcopal zeal to this point: that young clerics from their earliest years be duly trained in piety, solid virtue, literature and the stricter disciplines, especially the sacred ones. This is why your greatest efforts should be placed in establishing seminaries according to the precepts of the Tridentine Fathers,<sup>3</sup> expanding the existing ones, if necessary, and supplying them with excellent rectors and teachers. Watch with utmost and continuous care, so that young clerics in them may receive a holy and religious education in the fear of God

and in ecclesiastical discipline. See that they are formed in the sacred sciences according to Catholic doctrine and free from any error, in the traditions of the Church, in the writings of the holy Fathers, and in sacred ceremonies and rites.

You will thus have energetic and diligent collaborators with an authentic priestly spirit and wisely instructed, who will have the strength to cultivate diligently the field of the Lord in times of calamity, and tenaciously wage His battles.

***Do not fail to warn and exhort to recollection***

Moreover, knowing how effective the pious institution of spiritual exer-



Blessed Pius IX – Museum of St. John Lateran, Rome

*Apply all the energy of your episcopal zeal to this point: that young clerics from their earliest years be duly trained*

cises is in maintaining the dignity and holiness of the ecclesiastical order, your episcopal zeal must show great concern for this salutary work. Do not fail to warn and exhort all those who are called to divine service to recollect themselves frequently in holy solitude in order to lay aside external cares and, by meditation on things eternal and divine, to purify themselves from the stains contracted from the dust of the world, to renew the ecclesiastical spirit and, stripped of the old man, to clothe with their works the new, who is created in justice and holiness.

Do not deplore that We have treated at length of the education and discipline of the clergy. For you are aware that many are those who, weary of the instability and inconsistency of their errors, feel the need to profess our most holy Religion and, with God's help, will be the more easily led to embrace its doctrine, precepts and counsel, if they see piety and purity shining in the clergy, united to wisdom and good example.

For the rest, dear brothers, We have no doubt that all of you, burning with charity for God and neighbour, and inflamed with supreme love for the Church, endowed with almost angelic virtues, armed with episcopal zeal and prudence, and united in the same desire to do His holy will, are followers in the footsteps of the Apostles and, as befits Bishops, imitate the model of all pastors, Jesus Christ, of whom you are ambassadors. ✧

Excerpt from: BLESSED PIUS IX.  
*Qui pluribus*, 9/11/1846

<sup>1</sup> COUNCIL OF TRENT. *Sessio XXII. De reformatione*, c.I.

<sup>2</sup> BENEDICT XIV. *Ubi primum*, n.1.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. COUNCIL OF TRENT. *Sessio XXIII. De reformatione*, c.XVIII.





Jesus and the Samaritan woman - Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Lille (France)

G.Freihalter (CC by-sa 3.0)

## GOSPEL

<sup>5</sup> Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from His journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.

<sup>7</sup> A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her,

"Give Me a drink." <sup>8</sup> His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to Him, "How can You, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans. <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew

the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water." <sup>11</sup> The woman said to Him, "Sir, You do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can You get this living water? <sup>12</sup> Are You greater

# ***The New Samaritan Woman and the Living Water of the Reign of Mary***

Through the virginal hands of Our Lady, torrents of unprecedented graces will be poured out on wayward humanity, inaugurating a time of splendour for the Holy Church unlike any other in history.



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

## **I – THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS IN THE MIDST OF YOU**

The Kingdom of God, cogitated by the Father from all eternity and longed for by the righteous of the Old Testament, became a reality very close to men when the Only-begotten Son, having taken on flesh in the virginal womb of Mary,

was born in the grotto of Bethlehem. That tiny Child represented the divine plan “to unite all things in Him, things in Heaven and things on earth” (Eph 1:10).

At the dawn of the New Testament, the Blessed Virgin had already revealed something of this Kingdom by exalting, in the *Magnificat*, the om-

than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?”<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”<sup>15</sup> The woman said to Him, “Sir, give

me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “Go call your husband and come back.”

<sup>17</sup> The woman answered and said to Him, “I do not have a husband.” Jesus answered her, “You are right in saying, ‘I do not have a husband.’”<sup>18</sup> For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your

husband. What you have said is true.”<sup>19</sup> The woman said to Him, “Sir, I can see that You are a prophet.”<sup>20</sup> Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem.”<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, “Believe Me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.”<sup>22</sup> You



*The Kingdom  
of God consists  
above all in  
the life of  
grace, infused  
into souls by  
Baptism*

nipotence of Him who casts down the proud from their thrones and lifts up the lowly (cf. Lk 1:52). Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, had in his song also praised this sublime plan of God, which began to be fulfilled in the child conceived by Elizabeth in old age (cf. Lk 1:68-79). The Precursor represented the boundary between the expectation and the realization of this marvel, as the Divine Master states: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force. For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John" (Mt 11:12-13).

The Evangelists describe many circumstances in which we see Our Lord Jesus Christ proclaiming the Kingdom and teaching about it. To the Pharisees, who one day asked Him when it would be established, He answered that it would not come in an overt manner, nor would it be limited to one or another place, and He added: "for behold, the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Lk 17:21). Indeed, it consists above all in the life of grace, infused into souls by Baptism as a seed of glory that will fully blossom in Heaven. In this sense, it is an invisible Kingdom, offered to all humanity through the Sacraments, although it also manifests itself visibly in the Holy Church as a hierarchical society, instituted by the Redeemer to distribute His graces.

One example of His untiring endeavours to lead every soul to participate in God's Kingdom is His conversation with the Samaritan woman, considered in the Liturgy for this 3rd Sunday of Lent.

## II – THE CONVERSATION THAT NOURISHED AND GAVE REPOSE TO JESUS

The Divine Master was in the first year of His public life, returning from Jerusalem to Galilee after the Passover celebrations. His visit to the Temple on that occasion had been marked by the expulsion of the moneychangers with a whip made from cords (cf. Jn 2:15) and other miracles, in view of which "many believed in His name" (Jn 2:23). Among these was even a member of the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus, who sought Jesus for a nocturnal conversation (cf. Jn 3:1-21).

From there, Our Lord and His followers had gone out to the open country of the region, where He remained in order to evangelize (cf. Jn 3:22). However, upon learning that the Pharisees had become aware "that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John" (Jn 4:1), the Master resolved to leave those lands and continue on His way.

Crossing Samaria, between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north, represented the greater part of the journey made by Galileans on their way to the annual festivities in the Holy City. However, in order to avoid the humiliations inflicted by the Samaritans upon pilgrims who passed through it, caravans often made a detour around the hostile territory.<sup>1</sup> In the passage of St. John selected for this Sunday's Liturgy, however, we see Our Lord and the disciples taking the shortest route, entering directly into the rival country.

### *Jesus sits down at Jacob's well*

<sup>5</sup> Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob

people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews.<sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship Him.<sup>24</sup> God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth."<sup>25</sup> The woman said

to Him, "I know that the Messiah is coming, the One called the Christ; when He comes, He will tell us everything."<sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am He, the One speaking with you."

<sup>27</sup> At that moment His disciples returned, and were amazed that He was talking with a woman, but still no one said, "What are you looking for?" or "Why are You talking with her?"<sup>28</sup> The

woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people,<sup>29</sup> "Come see a Man who told me everything I have done. Could He possibly be the Christ?"

<sup>30</sup> They went out of the town and came to Him.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, the disciples urged Him, "Rabbi, eat."<sup>32</sup> But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."<sup>33</sup> So



Gustavo Kraij

Jacob's Well - Nablus (West Bank)

had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from His journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.

Sychar was a modest village located near the famous Shechem, where Abram had built the

first altar in honour of the Lord upon reaching the land of Canaan (cf. Gn 12:7). Later Jacob, returning from Mesopotamia, camped outside the city (cf. Gn 33:18-19). Having acquired the lot on which he had pitched his tent, he later bequeathed it to his beloved son (cf. Gn 48:22).

At the time of Our Lord, the well, dug in the rock, was an important water supply for the inhabitants of Sychar, which is why it would have been very well preserved. Most likely there was a lid covering it and a parapet built around it to make the task of drawing water easier.

Let us imagine the poetic scene described by the Evangelist: at one of the hottest times of the day, the Saviour, tired from the journey, majestically sits at the edge of the well – thereby making it into an extraordinary relic.

#### *God's own initiative*

<sup>7</sup> A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." <sup>8</sup> His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.

Some commentators hypothesize that St. John remained with the Master while the other disciples had gone to procure a meal. This would explain the vivid details in the account of the Virgin Apostle, who was always closer to Jesus than the others.<sup>2</sup>

However, it is also plausible that Our Lord was alone when the woman arrived with her amphora. Surely she realized that He was a Jew, and believing He would despise her, did not even look at Him. Since this was a function proper to

*At the time of Our Lord, the well, dug in the rock, was an important water supply for the local inhabitants*

the disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought Him something to eat?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of the One who sent Me and to finish His work. <sup>35</sup> Do you not say, 'In four months the harvest will be here'? I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest. <sup>36</sup> The reaper is already receiving payment and gathering crops for eternal

life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> For here the saying is verified that 'One sows and another reaps.' <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the work, and you are sharing the fruits of their work."

<sup>39</sup> Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told

me everything I have done."

<sup>40</sup> When the Samaritans came to Him, they invited Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup> Many more began to believe in Him because of His word, <sup>42</sup> and they said to the woman, "We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world" (Jn 4:5-42).



*With her typically feminine perspicacity, the Samaritan woman soon sensed something mysterious in Jesus*

housewives, there was no lack of politeness on Jesus' part in letting her perform the task for herself. She needed water and had come to get it; but what was her surprise to hear that Man address her, asking her for a drink.

There is an analogy to be drawn between what we see in these first verses and a certain mode of Providence's action, allowing us to experience our weakness and dependence on God. When we face difficulties, dramas, trials or temptations, and we seek the solution in grace, through prayer, when we reach the "well" Our Lord is waiting for us, and it is He who takes the initiative to tell us: "I need your sacrifice, your effort, your faith. Give Me a drink."

The Evangelist, focussed on showing the beauty of the Saviour's initiative towards the Samaritan woman, does not indicate whether she really attended to Him by offering Him water. Similar is the story of each one of us: trials disappear, but the encounter with Our Lord marks us forever.

#### *Sublime method of apostolate*

<sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman said to Him, "How can You, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.

According to customs that were already well-established in the time of Our Lord, under no pretext should Jews interact with Samaritans because of profound religious conflicts. The inhabitants of Samaria had mixed with foreign communities deported from Assyria and, although they also worshipped the true God, they formed a dissident group apart from the Hebrew worship, refusing to acknowledge Jerusalem as the sacred religious centre.

With her typically feminine perspicacity, the Samaritan

woman soon sensed something mysterious in Jesus and reflected with wonder: "I do not understand; no Jew would ever act like this... This Man is different."

<sup>10</sup>Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water."

With His unsurpassed method of apostolate, Jesus continued the conversation by mentioning something likely to arouse the interest of His interlocutor: a living and flowing water of better quality than that reserved in the well. By means of this image, He sought to open the soul of the



Jesus and the Samaritan woman  
Metropolitan Cathedral of Salta (Argentina)

Gustavo Kralj

Samaritan woman to know the gift of God, and above all, the One who spoke to her.

Thus does the Most High proceed with us, even when we reject a grace: without ever giving up, He takes the initiative to visit us with new proposals, new promptings, new invitations, because no one wants our conversion and eternal happiness as much as He does.

The woman, filled with admiration for Our Lord, was all the more intrigued.

### *Faith leads to the desire to know*

<sup>11</sup> The woman said to Him, “Sir, You do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can You get this living water? <sup>12</sup> Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?”

There was no contempt in these questions, but an intuition full of faith. She understood little, but believed to such an extent that she wanted to penetrate the mystery, and so the problem arose: “Could this Man, in fact, be greater than Jacob?”

One detail worth highlighting is the way she addressed Jesus, calling Him “Sir”. Faith had progressed in her soul, and although she did not yet judge Him to be God, the Samaritan woman started to consider Him as someone superior. Still not certain as to whether or not He was a prophet, she raised these questions with great feminine aptitude, to lead Him to reveal more about Himself.

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

Gradually progressing in the conversation, Our Lord invites her in these verses to ascend from the material realm to a higher one.

Much more expressive than the prefigure of the rock struck by Moses, related in the Old Testament (cf. Ex 17:5-6), is the image used by the Divine Master to speak to the Samaritan woman about the effects of the grace He grants to humanity. If the Patriarch of Israel made water

spring forth in abundance from the stone to slake the thirst of the people, the Saviour promises to place a divine spring within each one: supernatural life, introduced, fortified and invigorated by the Sacraments. Flowing continuously, it calms evil inclinations, while also fostering joy, consolation and spiritual satisfaction.

### *An admonishment well received*

<sup>15</sup> The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

Although she was already beginning to glimpse a supernatural meaning in Our Lord's words, it was not yet clear to her that He spoke of spiritual water. With a practical sense characteristic of her gender, she soon thought of the immediate benefit that this offering would bring her. Obligated to spend hours every week carrying her pitcher to fill a small reservoir at home, she imagined that she had found in Jesus the answer to this need and, hopeful, she opened herself completely to His action.

This illustrates a wise tactic of the Divine Master in dealing with souls: to win their trust by means of a concrete and common fact of daily life, through which they place themselves in the hands of those who want to help them. When they take this step, it is the moment for correction.

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “Go call your husband and come back.” <sup>17</sup> The woman answered and said to Him, “I do not have a husband.” Jesus answered her, “You are right in saying, ‘I do not have a husband.’ <sup>18</sup> For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true.” <sup>19</sup> The woman said to Him, “Sir, I can see that you are a prophet.”

Of dissolute customs, the Samaritan woman's moral situation was a deplorable one, as is unfortunately very common in our days.

However, she was humble when admonished, immediately recognizing that she was not living well. If she had been proud, she would have taken offence and, dismissing Jesus' words as an absurd accusation, picked up her jar and left. In

*There was no contempt in these questions of the Samaritan woman, but an intuition full of faith*



*The Redeemer, however, never becomes discouraged when "pursuing" a soul*

her reaction, on the contrary, admiration was evident: "He penetrated the depths of my conscience and saw my whole life! He is truly a special man!" By her awe for the One who corrected her, this woman obtained forgiveness. Similarly, how many people are converted and saved by accepting the reprimands of a priest in the confessional!

***Adore the Father in spirit and truth***

<sup>20</sup> "Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem." <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, "Believe Me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship Him. <sup>24</sup> God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth."

From Jacob's well could be seen Mount Gerizim, where the Samaritans had once built a temple, as opposed to the one erected by the Jews on Mount Zion. Although that Samaritan construction had been destroyed in the invasion

of John Hyrcanus, the hill remained a reference point for the religious worship of the region's inhabitants.

In this contact with Jesus, the woman had already received sufficient, clear and irrefutable proof that He, a Jew, was a Man inspired by God and that, therefore, she and her co-religionists were mistaken. Even so, her reason was reluctant to accept this truth made manifest to her by grace, and so she presents to Our Lord the long-standing Samaritan objections to the supremacy of Jerusalem.

The Redeemer, however, never becomes discouraged when "pursuing" a soul. Confirming and accentuating the mystical impressions that filled the soul of His interlocutor, He did not hesitate to refute the error to which she adhered due to her ancestral ties.

On the other hand, these verses refer to universal salvation, contrary to Jewish concepts, which despised all Gentile peoples. The adoration of God cannot be restricted to one or another place, nor can it be limited to external manifestations, but must be a constant disposition of soul by which, always and in any place in the world, one worships the Lord.

***The reward of humility***

<sup>25</sup> The woman said to Him, "I know that the Messiah is coming, the One called the Christ; when He comes, He will tell us everything." <sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am He, the One speaking with you."



## **MARY, QUEEN OF ALL HEARTS SHRINE APOSTOLATE**

***BECOME A COORDINATOR OF A SHRINE OF  
THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY***

HOW TO CONTACT US:

CANADA

PHONE: 1-800-674-3410

FAX: 1-905-939-9778

shrine@heralds.ca

UNITED STATES

PHONE: 281-676-8526

shrine@heraldsusa.org

Faith is transmitted *ex auditu*, that is, it enters the soul through the sense of hearing, as St. Paul teaches (cf. Rom 10:17). Attentive and docile to the preaching of Our Lord, the woman progressed in faith and reached an apex: realizing that He was not simply a prophet, she began to probe as to whether Jesus was the Christ whose advent the Samaritans also awaited.

Therefore, seeing the faith that He Himself had infused and cultivated in that soul strengthened, the Divine Master revealed Himself as the Messiah to that foreigner, before doing so to the Jews. This is the reward of humility!

### *To do apostolate one must abandon sin*

<sup>27</sup> At that moment His disciples returned, and were amazed that He was talking with a woman, but still no one said, "What are you looking for?" or "Why are You talking with her?"

Certainly touched by the Holy Spirit, the disciples remained respectfully silent, for they discerned that something more sublime than what was readily apparent was happening there. They must have analysed and observed that the Sacred Heart of Jesus was filled with esteem for that Samaritan woman, applying this example to themselves: if such was the love shown to a foreigner, what treasures of esteem and affection must He harbour in relation to those who already belonged to Him!

<sup>28</sup> The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people,  
<sup>29</sup> "Come see a Man who told me everything I have done. Could He possibly be the Christ?" <sup>30</sup> They went out of the town and came to Him.

Filled with enthusiasm, she ran to evangelize her fellow citizens. No longer concerned with water, she did not even take the amphora with her. This is a small detail, but symbolic of an authentic conversion. She was totally forgiven, with her soul transfigured; in her complete detachment from herself, she forgot all her old interests.

We can imagine our Lord Jesus Christ full of joy, even moved, to see the readiness with which



Detail of Jesus and the Samaritan woman in stained glass  
Church of Saint-Sulpice de Fougères (France)

G069 (CC by-sa 3.0)

this woman abandoned everything, letting herself be docilely led by Him.

### *Jesus' sustenance is saving souls*

<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, the disciples urged Him, "Rabbi, eat." <sup>32</sup> But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." <sup>33</sup> So the disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought Him something to eat?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of the One who sent Me and to finish His work."

The disciples, with their affection, solicitude and dedication, brought Our Lord various provisions purchased in the city. Excellent food, obtained with considerable eagerness to serve the Master well. But He did not wish to take anything, and perhaps He did not even pay the slightest attention to the food, remaining oblivious to what was going on around Him, with His gaze scanning the infinite.

When they insisted that He should try something, He claimed to already have an unknown food, and He explained to them what His sustenance was: to please the Father, that is, to save souls, to elevate and divinize them, in order to satisfy and glorify Him. This constitutes Jesus' sole insatiable desire.

<sup>35</sup> "Do you not say, 'In four months the harvest will be here'? I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest.

<sup>36</sup> The reaper is already receiving payment

*Touched by  
the Holy  
Spirit, the  
disciples  
remained  
respectfully  
silent*



and gathering crops for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together.<sup>37</sup> For here the saying is verified that 'One sows and another reaps.'<sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the work, and you are sharing the fruits of their work."

These words have a wide scope, indicative of the great movement in Israel, and later throughout the world, of multitudes attracted by Our Lord. And He repeats this invitation throughout history, saying to each generation: "Look up and see, the fields are ripe for the harvest!"

At another time, however, He will lament the scarce number of labourers for the abundant harvest of the Father (cf. Mt 9:37). All the baptized are called to win more sons and daughters for the Kingdom of God, whether through their apostolic activities, or their prayers and sacrifices, advancing the works of the good by the irresistible yet discreet power of virtue and prayer!

As we see in the verses that follow, those who dedicate themselves to the sanctification of their neighbour are, in the end, providing Jesus' sustenance.

***The Samaritan woman gave Our Lord true food***

<sup>39</sup> Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me everything I have done."

<sup>40a</sup> When the Samaritans came to Him...

Let us imagine Our Lord contemplating the city when, suddenly, His gaze lit up: a crowd ap-



Holy Family (detail) – Museum of St. Catherine of Siena Monastery, Quito

peared on the horizon, rushing towards Him. They were the Samaritans whom the woman had drawn by speaking of the wonders she had experienced: "I have found the Christ, the Saviour! Behold, the Messiah has already appeared in Israel! His face and His gestures are sublime; His voice is enchanting; what He said left me speechless!"

She, instead of indulging in a misguided reverie, half idleness and half egoistic pleasure-seeking, she had entered the fray, obtaining splendid results. The disciples had purchased delicious

delicacies, but they did not give Jesus the satisfaction provided by this woman. From her the Redeemer received the food for which he longed: the conversion of many souls, and this constitutes a joy proper to Heaven, a joy at the level of God.

***Jesus is known, loved and honoured by the Samaritans***

<sup>40b</sup> ... they invited Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.

<sup>41</sup> Many more began to believe in Him because of His word, <sup>42</sup> and they said to the woman, "We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world."

It is worth remembering that Our Lord had sat by the well because He was exhausted; however, He complied with the request of those Samaritans and entered the town, staying there for two days. The good dispositions of these people of simple but profound faith provided repose for Him.

Similar to the diffusion of light over a beautiful open landscape, the arrival of Jesus in the welcoming city must have been peaceful and, at the

*The disciples had purchased delicious delicacies, but they did not give Jesus the satisfaction provided by this woman*

same time, captivating. We can conjecture that He was invited to visit several houses where He was welcomed with enthusiastic delight; and that when walking through the streets, the children frolicked joyfully around Him, while a sizeable crowd accompanied His every step, closely noting His every gesture. His divine goodness, the mutual trust between Him and that people – manifested sometimes in preaching to a large crowd, at others in private conversations – imbued everything!

St. John concludes his narration by noting the gratitude of the inhabitants of Sychar, who went to the woman to speak of Jesus. Rising above the narrow Jewish concepts, which depicted the Messiah as merely a national liberator, they believe that He is “the Saviour of the world”. The Samaritan woman on whom Our Lord had fixed His gaze of kindness and pardon had returned His love with love, leading many others, like her, to benefit from God’s gift.

### III – THE NEW WATER OFFERED BY THE HANDS OF MARY

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, St. Augustine uses brilliant language in commenting on this Gospel. He considers the Samaritan woman as “an image of the Church not yet justified, but already on the way to justification,” for she would be constituted especially by those “not belonging to the Jewish race.”<sup>3</sup>

If the Doctor of Hippo lived in our century and analysed present events as he did those preceding his time, perhaps he would affirm that today a new Samaritan exists, formed by a generation of weak nature and inconstant will, much inferior to the one who met with Our Lord at Jacob’s well. Born in the midst of absurd and ridiculous idolatrous



Our Lord Jesus Christ with the Eucharist  
Museum of Religious Art, Puebla (Mexico)

cults, which would even provoke derision from the pagans of antiquity, the new Samaritan was converted and baptized, but allowed herself to be deceived by the devil and is being dragged through a long process of decadence which increasingly debilitates and destabilizes her.

Nevertheless, today Providence invites this second Samaritan woman to make use of a new, living and abundant water, drawn from the well – which seemed to be dry – by the most pure and virginal hands of Our Lady: the unprecedented graces of

the Reign of her Immaculate Heart.

When this torrent of Marian graces descends upon humanity, the Holy Church, so persecuted in our days, will not only be restored, but will acquire unsurpassed splendour and an exuberance from which will blossom extraordinary flowers and fruits until the end of the world.

In the prospect of the bright future that awaits, let us ask: “Come, O Lord, do not delay! Humanity is entirely spent; men have turned their backs on Thine Incarnate Law, Jesus Christ, and have built an atheistic, relativistic and egalitarian world, on the verge of worshipping the devil. Convert the new Samaritan woman, make holy this generation of broken minds and nerves. Manifest Thine omnipotence by inaugurating as soon as possible the historic era in which the Holy Church will reign triumphantly, and for this end, make us Thine instruments.” ✧

<sup>1</sup> Cf. FILLION, Louis-Claude. *Vida de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo. Infancia y Bautismo*. Madrid: Rialp, 2000, v.I, p.352.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Idem, p.354.

<sup>3</sup> ST. AUGUSTINE. In Ioannis Evangelium. Tractatus XV, n.10. In: *Obras Completas*. Madrid: BAC, 1955, v.XIII, p.412.

*The Holy Church, so persecuted in our days, will not only be restored, but will acquire an unsurpassed splendour*





# Great Victories and Heroic... Failures



Sr. Mariana Quimas, EP

Men of grandiose desires are the stones with which Providence builds the wonders of history. Often, however, they are asked to accept defeats in the struggle for the glory of God.

**I**n medieval Europe, the wonders of Prester John were told, of whose existence no one dared doubt. He lived in a mysterious kingdom of unknown lo-

cation – a Christian one, despite being lost somewhere in the Orient.

There was no sovereign on earth like Prester John! Seven kings served him, as well as sixty dukes, three hundred counts and innumerable noblemen. He had a king-abbot as cook, a king-bishop as waiter, and an archbishop as butler. His kingdom was the place where dreams came true. There flowed underground rivers of precious and mysterious stones, among them one that gave sight to the blind and made people invisible. There were no robberies or murders; everyone spoke the truth and vice did not exist. It was an earthly paradise, which no European had yet discovered!<sup>1</sup>

For contemporary humanity, this amounts to surreal legend, impossible and childish. However, in the Middle Ages it awakened the ambition of heroes. Those were times when people were drawn by the marvellous, moved by great desires and set out on dangerous journeys to achieve their dreams, without any guarantee of success or of even returning to their homeland.

How many of these men with great souls found their graves in the ocean bed? Yet they still marked history.

The Portuguese people in particular – of diminutive territory but immense heart, and a soul big enough to occupy continents and oceans – distinguished itself from its cradle for daring and risky adventures across “uncharted waters”.<sup>2</sup>

## *Born from the five wounds of Christ*

The Portuguese nation was born amidst challenges, legendary feats and prodigious victories.

Who would have thought that the Infante Dom Afonso Henriques would win the Battle of Ourique in 1139, with only one soldier for every hundred adversaries? No one. However, this did not cause his Lusitanian people, who considered such a move more reckless than daring, to try and dissuade him from engaging in combat.

Grateful for their zeal for country and for his person, that Infante who would soon be acclaimed the first king of Portugal, with a cheerful, serene and resolute countenance, thus decided to initiate the battle, “confiding in none other than the supreme God who ruled Heaven.”<sup>3</sup>

Whence came such certainty of victory? One night, Christ had ap-

peared to him and guaranteed his success in that battle and in all the others he undertook. This miracle raised the morale of his armies and, despite an overwhelming disproportion in numbers, the impossible happened. As a reminder of this fact is the five shields that to this day can be seen on the Portuguese flag, representing the five wounds of Him who granted the victory in Ourique.

Temerity? Imprudence? Folly? Perhaps to men of little soul, this Portuguese hero's action was unconceivable, but not so for magnanimous spirits, for they know that the course of history is not determined by self-serving individuals, but by those who strive for more transcendent aspirations.

### *Prince Henry the Navigator*

Two centuries later, Prince Henry the Navigator, son of King John I of Portugal, enthused by the figure of Prester John, took as his life's mission the search for this mythical sovereign, becoming the "father of navigation".

The seamen who sailed the oceans under the command of Henry the Navigator felt a powerful driving force that always impelled them: "Go still further."<sup>74</sup> Without fear of sea monsters, or of what was then thought to be the "edge of the world," our Infante was the first to sail around the west coast of Africa beyond Cape Bojador and the Sahara, at that time an unimaginable feat.

His broad horizons seemed to have no limits, and his perseverance in the face of misfortune was admirable. He wanted to catechize Africans and extend the Kingdom of Christ, although not everyone understood this intention, and it was always necessary to insist "that they not quarrel with the people in those regions, but form alliances and engage in commerce, because

their intention was to make them Christians."<sup>75</sup>

### *Acts of mediocrity that mark history...*

It is undeniable that the lives of the most memorable personages are continuously intertwined with those of the mediocre... Many of these disappear in the shadows of time, but the names of others go down in history, to highlight with their narrow vision the great horizons of generous souls.

So it was with a certain Gonçalo de Sintra, who seems to have been unable to see anything beyond his own person through his lens. He set sail for Guinea, under orders

*His broad horizons  
seemed to have  
no limits, and his  
perseverance in the  
face of misfortune  
was admirable*

from Prince Henry not to stop anywhere until reaching his destination. Claiming, however, that certain orders should not be taken too seriously, he decided to disembark on one of the islands near Cape Blanc, because he wanted to perform some unparalleled feat: "I will never leave here, until I do something so remarkable that nothing like it will ever again be seen."<sup>76</sup>

His companions tried in vain to persuade him that the "remarkable feat" to be undertaken was to obey the orders received... However, this proud man spent the whole night wandering along the beach in search of natives with whom to fight, until he was sur-

prised by a group of two hundred of them and was never found again. He who had so longed for worldly glories garnered nothing more than that the deserted beach on which he had thrown away his life would thenceforth bear his name...

### *Did he find the kingdom of Prester John?*

In contrast, the title earned by Prince Henry is an undeniably bright point in history. He did not reach, as he had hoped, the legendary land of Prester John, but his effort, courage and brio opened the way for new and daring ventures that made Portugal one of the most glorious kingdoms on earth.

In fact, some claim that his sailors did indeed reach what was called the "Authentic Island", located 1,500 miles west of Africa: Brazil!<sup>77</sup> Perhaps, then, Prince Henry really had achieved his goal...

### *Portuguese flag unfurled in India*

If we advance a few years in time, we cross paths with Afonso de Albuquerque. When he was young, Lisbon served as a hub for all those interested in seafaring knowledge. The exploits of Prince Henry the Navigator, the enigmas and mysteries of the seas, the new sea routes and the news of the caravels, which day by day carried the red Cross of Christ imprinted on sails further south, were the common conversation in the streets of Portugal.

In 1503, Vasco da Gama returned from India, and four years later Afonso de Albuquerque left for this new Portuguese domain as commander of a fleet of five ships. "Slave to an ideal, to live and work only for it [...]: to see the flag of Portugal triumphantly unfurled throughout the world, and the only treasure to which he aspired was the glory of carrying it himself."<sup>78</sup>



It was not a merely commercial expedition: "The greatest of her captains were authentic crusaders and their ultimate ideal was the liberation of Jerusalem."<sup>9</sup>

God did not grant Albuquerque the accomplishment of this last feat, although he eventually became Governor of India. His many conquests had undermined his health, shortening the days of his life. Tireless in his pursuits, unrelenting in adversity, and immense in his ideal, perhaps the famous verse of Camões was dedicated to Albuquerque: "You, who diligently seek repose in this world of stormy seas, do not expect to find any rest other than Christ Jesus crucified."<sup>10</sup>

To the sorrow of the entire Orient, the day arrived when he who had victoriously traversed the entire coast of the Indian Ocean, from Arabia to China, left this earth. "Heaven must be at war," they said, "since God has sent for him!"<sup>11</sup> As Albuquerque's eyes closed, an overseas empire was beginning to be descried on the horizon of the Portuguese, hitherto unimaginable for the small piece of land called Portugal.

### *Dom Sebastian the Desired*

No sooner had the brave Albuquerque expired than "a joyful cry arose in the air. The mournful litanies were immediately transformed into the *Te Deum*. The bells of the churches rang, and the people cheered. The Lord had answered their prayers! He sent to them their prince, the Desired, the future of a beloved dynasty threatened with extinction."<sup>12</sup>

Dom Sebastian had been born, who perhaps would have been more aptly titled the "desirous" than the "desired".

King from the age of three, with a contemplative, but not passive spirit, by the age of six his primary amusement was to sail in a little boat during storms. Obviously, his masters

did not share his taste in pastimes, but seeing the dismay and queasiness on their faces only added to the little sovereign's diversion.

On the other hand, the very young monarch was often found in tears before a crucifix. "I was asking God," he said, "that just as He has given other princes victories, empires and monarchies, that He only grant me to be His captain."<sup>13</sup> Faith and action, contemplation and courage: these were the pillars of the personality of the Desired.

### *"When I am the right age"*

One of his dreams had always been to regain dominion over Africa, once Portuguese by the merit of Prince Henry, but lost by the misfortune of his successors.

"When I am grown, I shall to go and conquer Africa,"<sup>14</sup> read one of the phrases found in the young boy's notebooks. He wanted to establish a Portuguese empire throughout the whole world, so that it would become entirely Christian.

One day he was asked, "What is the King of Portugal thinking about?" To which he, "with his head always erect, and gaze resolute [...], answered with a firm, serene, confident and passionate voice: 'I am thinking of taking Africa when I am the right age!'"<sup>15</sup>

The "right age" was reached at 22. His plan, despite the general protests of everyone around him, was to place himself at the head of the expedition and to personally command the perilous battle. No one could stop him.

The success of the undertaking was far from certain. The Portuguese fleet was at a terrible disadvantage, because Portugal, no longer that of yesteryear, lacked both the men and the infrastructure for such a daring initiative. However, Dom Sebastian wanted to lead it to a successful conclusion! And if there were two things he knew how to do, one was to believe, and the other, to desire.

Messages continuously arrived for the brave Lusitanian king from everywhere. "Don't go!" or "Go later!" the nobles and counsellors around him said, to which he serenely replied: "He who does not risk danger, never achieves great things!"<sup>16</sup>

### *He will return on a foggy morning*

Dom Sebastian eventually departed... and never returned. O what perplexity! God very often subjects great successes to the fulfilment of great desires; in other cases, he allows beautiful "Christian feats"<sup>17</sup> to result in harsh defeats.

When the survivors of the battle once again set foot on Portuguese soil, they were assailed by numerous and anxious questions: "And what about the army? The armada? Who died? And the king? Is he alive or dead?" They limited themselves to replying that "Some say that that he was saved..."<sup>18</sup> The desired one had died: he had sacrificed himself for his desires.

After Dom Sebastian's death, one last hope still beat in Lusitanian hearts: "Dom Sebastian will come, he will return on a foggy morning..."<sup>19</sup> He had not ceased to be the Desired one.

### *Failure: the price of great victories*

One might ask: why did God not protect Dom Sebastian, just as He had once been the shield of Dom Afonso Henriques, fulfilled the dreams of Prince Henry and worked wonders through Afonso de Albuquerque? The answer is simple, but painful.

Men of grandiose desires are the raw stones with which the Most High builds the wonders of history, for these desires are placed in their souls by Him alone. However, quite often these chosen souls are asked not only for the courage to advance

*Chosen souls are  
often asked not  
only for the courage  
to advance and  
fight, but also  
for the strength  
to face failures*

Vasco da Gama sets sail for India,  
by Roque Gameiro - National Library  
of Portugal, Lisbon; first page:  
Monument to the Discoveries, Lisbon



Reproduction

and fight, but also for the strength to face failures for the love of Christ, as a price to pay for greater and future victories.

So it was with Our Lord, whose apparent “defeat” on Calvary bought the Redemption of mankind and the absolute triumph over evil; so it will be with many who are called to follow in a special way the steps of the Supreme Hero.

***All those dreams were  
not just illusions!***

Over the course of this article, we have glimpsed some traces of the admirable line of souls that ennobled the heroic history of Portugal.

God allowed Dom Alfonso Henriques to see the victory with his own

eyes; to Prince Henry He granted complete success, although this was not clear to him in his lifetime; He favoured Afonso de Albuquerque with the honour of seeing almost all of his wishes fulfilled; however, to Dom Sebastião He granted perhaps the highest of these missions.

He did not see the accomplishment of his aspirations, and passed on to the next life desiring them. However, by his death, he became the inspiration of a desire in his people: “Dom Sebastian will come, he will return on a foggy morning...” His name has come to evoke the image of the Portuguese ideal, the archetypal figure of the Portuguese hero.

There is no lack of heroes in Portugal who fought for the expansion of its borders. However, of Dom Sebastian one could say he was martyred for the expansion of the souls of an entire nation!

So, what happened after all with the legendary kingdom of Prester John, so sought by our heroes? Was it a mere illusion?

By no means! For those who have great souls and true faith, this yearning of the Portuguese people translates into something incomparably more sublime: the hope of the coming of a far superior kingdom, also prophesied to this nation, in which Mary Most Holy will triumph over the face of the earth, reigning within all hearts. ✧

<sup>1</sup> Cf. SANCEAU, Elaine. *Os portugueses na Etiópia*. 2.ed. Porto: Civilização, 1961, p.5-6.

<sup>2</sup> CAMÕES, Luís Vaz de. *Os Lusíadas*, c.I, n.1.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, c.III, n.43.

<sup>4</sup> SANCEAU, Elaine. *Descobrimientos henriquinos*. 2.ed. Porto: Civilização, 1962, p.190.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, p.102.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, p.82-83.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. SANCEAU, Elaine. *Dom Henrique, o Navegador*. 6.ed. Porto: Civilização, 1949, p.332.

<sup>8</sup> SANCEAU, Elaine. *O sonho da Índia*. Coimbra: Tenacitas, 2008, p.12; 19.

<sup>9</sup> Idem, p.21.

<sup>10</sup> CAMÕES, Luís Vaz de. *Sonnetos*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, p.118.

<sup>11</sup> SANCEAU, *O sonho da Índia*, op. cit., p.293.

<sup>12</sup> SANCEAU, Elaine. *Castelos em África*. Porto: Civilização, 1961, p.348.

<sup>13</sup> QUEIROZ VELOSO, José Maria. *História de Portugal*, apud SANCEAU, *Castelos em África*, op. cit., p.353.

<sup>14</sup> SANCEAU, *Castelos em África*, op. cit., p.352.

<sup>15</sup> FIGUEIREDO, Antero de. *Dom Sebastião, rei de Portugal*. 6.ed. Lisboa: Bertrand, 1925, p.99.

<sup>16</sup> Idem, p.253.

<sup>17</sup> CAMÕES, *Os Lusíadas*, c.VII, n.14.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. FIGUEIREDO, op. cit., p.410.

<sup>19</sup> Idem, p.427.



# A Vanishing “Art”?

Among other advantages, handwriting facilitates the flow of ideas, enhances reading ability and develops memory. With its disappearance, newer generations run the risk of losing all these benefits.



Fr. Fernando Néstor Gioia, EP

**D**uring one of my trips to Brazil, while driving in the area of Our Lady of the Rosary Basilica, I came across a small store that sold religious books and articles. They had some beautiful postcards depicting the splendour of the church's interior, and I picked up several with the intention of choosing a few. However, when I turned them over I noticed the space on the reverse side, destined to include a handwritten message...

Immediately I thought about how long it had been since I had sent a postcard or handwritten letter. I had abandoned the charming custom of composing some lines using paper and pen because the computer had become my constant resource for all writing and communication needs.

I started to mull over the subject in my mind. I recalled when I was a boy and we used fountain pens for our school work, staining our smocks of course, not to mention our notebooks! In those bygone days, each student had his own inkwell, a little porcelain pot fitted into his desk which, to avoid a disaster, had to be stored in a safe place after class.

Decades passed, and all this became a quaint collection of “anecdotes”... Nowadays it is increasingly rare to find anyone who uses good old-fashioned script for their daily communications. And the question that must be asked is: do the new generations stand to lose anything because of this?

## *Cries of alarm on the death of handwriting*

The topic seemed to me to be of the utmost importance, especially as someone involved in the education of young people and children, and I decided to study it further. I then began to come upon statements that left me pensive: “Handwriting makes people

unique”; “Pen and paper demand a reflective frame of mind”; “The decline of penmanship is a cultural emergency.”

I was particularly struck by the “cry” featured in one of Germany's leading newspapers, *Bild*. Its June 27, 2012 front page bore a handwritten headline in bold letters: “Warning! Handwriting is Vanishing.” In the columns of text below it, all in cursive script, it was explained, to my astonishment, that “one in three adults has not written anything by hand in the last six months.”

That was not the only press report to alert me to the problem. American journalists Claire Sudath and Raina Kelley<sup>1</sup>, some years earlier, had published studies on this subject which are still cited, in the famous *Time* and *Newsweek*. To this can be added any number of articles by psychologists, neurologists, journalists and writers, appearing in publications in Spain, Italy and many other countries.

## *Writing enhances cognitive and motor skills*

I continued my research and found that the use of pen and paper holds

*Decades passed,  
and all  
this became  
a quaint  
collection of  
“anecdotes”...*

far more advantages than might at first be imagined.

According to journalists from Madrid's *ABC* newspaper, scholars recognize that handwriting "fosters a better mastery of spelling, facilitates the flow of ideas, enhances reading ability and develops memory."<sup>2</sup> Such benefits stem mainly from the fact that, by taking more of our time, script allows us to reflect on what we are writing.

But the list of advantages does not stop there. "Neuroimaging studies show that the brain becomes more active when writing than when typing. In the first case, it is necessary to make a mental representation of the letters, which involves the integration of the visual and motor areas of the brain. In addition, areas related to the spelling, sound and meaning of words are activated."<sup>3</sup>

The greater effort made when writing by hand is therefore rewarded with an improvement in cognitive and motor skills. It also enhances the ability to meditate, to formulate ideas and to organize them, something that the new generations are in danger of losing, and that should serve as a stimulus for us to make more use of paper and ink.

It is no wonder that the countries most advanced in terms of information technology, such as England and France, are once again requiring the use of penmanship so that students improve their spelling skills.

### *Language of the soul which makes people unique*

Prof. Guillermo Jaim Etcheverry, of the University of Buenos Aires, analyses the issue from an interesting perspective. For him, it is clear that "computers have become an appendage of our being, and we need to take warning that they favour binary thought, while handwritten expression is rich, diverse, individual, and differentiates us from others."<sup>4</sup>

"The fact that the letters are joined together," he adds, "allows the thought

*While computer favour binary thought, handwritten expression is rich, diverse, individual, and differentiates us from others*



A student of the Heralds of the Gospel School engaged in school work

to flow in harmony from mind to paper." Moreover, writing by hand obliges one "to compose the sentence mentally before transcribing it."<sup>5</sup>

For this reason, "children must be educated to understand that writing responds to their inner voice and represents an inalienable exercise," for handwriting has the quality "of being a language of the soul, which makes people unique."<sup>6</sup>

### *Let us fight to reverse this tendency*

The concern expressed by educators, writers, essayists and literati about the disappearance of penned script is therefore well-founded. We could also mention recent studies that relate the absence of handwriting skills to many learning disorders that affect academic performance.

"As handwriting is used less, we run the risk that the brain will start to function in a different way," warns Argentine neurologist León Benasayag. For "writing organizes the brain structures that prompt the memorization of words and syntax. Subsequently, thought will be structured based on this data."<sup>7</sup>

Could it be that in a few years' time, a handwritten letter will be considered an "artifact", produced by a method of communication that has become extinct? There is no way to know. But it is up to us educators, with the indispensable help of parents, to fight to reverse this tendency. ✧

<sup>1</sup> Cf. SUDDATH, Claire. *Mourning the Death of Handwriting*. In: [www.time.com](http://www.time.com); KELLEY, Raina. The Writing on the Wall. In: *Newsweek*. New York. Vol. 150. N.20 (Nov. 12, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> QUIJADA, P.; TRILLO, M. *Los riesgos de dejar de escribir a mano*. In: <http://www.abc.es>.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, ibidem.

<sup>4</sup> JAIM ETCHEVERRY, Guillermo. *Escrito a mano*. In: [www.lanacion.com.ar](http://www.lanacion.com.ar).

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

<sup>6</sup> JAIM ETCHEVERRY, Guillermo. *La escritura re-*

*sponde a una voz interior*. In: [www.diariomardeajo.com.ar](http://www.diariomardeajo.com.ar).

<sup>7</sup> ABEL, Ana María. *Escribir a mano*. In: [historico.elpais.com.uy](http://historico.elpais.com.uy).



# A Resounding Conversion

Determined to abandon a life of sin, Brentano unloaded in the confessional the heavy burden that oppressed him. After sacramental absolution, his countenance reflected the happiness of a soul in which God's grace once again dwelt.



Fr. Francisco de Araújo, EP

**A**t the age of thirty-eight, Clemens Brentano was a poet of great prominence in German literary circles. By worldly standards, he had everything needed to be a happy man: good health, a comfortable financial situation, a carefree life, and a wide circle of friends. In short, every licit or illicit pleasure was readily available to him. Nevertheless, happiness did not dwell in his soul.

## *Two great disappointments*

Brentano had received little religious formation in his childhood and soon embraced customs contrary to the Commandments of God's Law. As a result, the light of faith gradually diminished in him. However, at a certain point, the voice of conscience stirred up a salutary restlessness within him. He then revealed his situation to some of his best "friends" in the hope of receiving encouragement for a change of life.

He had a tremendous disappointment: in response, they only offered him contempt and mockery.

This was his sorry state when, in 1816, he befriended the poetess Luise Hensel. Daughter of a Lutheran pastor, she was only eighteen years old, but she had become accustomed to examining the sublime horizons of the

Gospel with a clear gaze and was in the midst of a conversion to Catholicism. Thus, when she came into contact with the brilliant Catholic writer, her soul was enkindled with the desire to be instructed by him in the doctrine of the Holy Church.

She, too, suffered a terrible disappointment: of the Catholic religion, Brentano knew as little as she did, or perhaps less...

## *"Go to confession! Go to confession!"*

Clemens Brentano's soul still harboured sufficient vestiges of faith to arouse in him remorse for his bad life and, perhaps, a longing for his lost innocence. This is why he liked to talk to the young poetess, whose uprightness and resolute character greatly pleased him.

Despite the great difference in age between the two, he decided one day to disclose to her, confidentially, his pitiful moral state. He was hoping to receive some words of encouragement from her, but to his surprise, he received the following reply:

— Why tell this to me, an inexperienced girl and, moreover, a Lutheran? You are a Catholic, and as such you have the happiness of being able to confess. Go, then, and unburden your heart at the confessor's feet!

Stunned by such an unexpected response, Brentano reflected: "My friends ridicule me in my misfortune, and the daughter of a Lutheran pastor gives me this good advice!"

— There is no other recourse — the young woman insisted. — If I were Catholic and had the Sacrament of Penance at my disposal, how happy I would be!

Brentano was convinced that it was the only solution for his problem, but he needed to undergo an arduous struggle to make that decision. And Luise helped him, often repeating:

— Go to confession! Go to confession!

## *Sincere and radical conversion*

In the end, he came out victorious: he took the firm resolution to break definitively with his life of sin.

In February 1817, after careful preparation, he sought out the Cistercian priest John Ambrose Taube, to whom he made a general confession, laying at his feet the heavy burden that had oppressed his soul for so many years. After giving him sacramental absolution, the confessor stood up and embraced the penitent, whose radiant countenance reflected the happiness of a soul in which God's grace dwelt once again.

The following day, he received the Holy Eucharist. He had never felt so happy!

The news of Brentano's conversion was received with hostility in the anti-Catholic intellectual circles of Germany. Nevertheless, following the example of the Bedouins who calmly continue on their way while the dogs bark, he merely took the opportunity to prove that his was a radical conversion. The romantic poet was dead; from now on all his talent would be applied to the service of the Church.

He took on the life of a penitent, with daily Mass and regular reception of the Sacraments. In addition, he distributed to the needy the considerable proceeds from the sale of his works.

Even greater was his concern for the good of souls, and he missed no opportunity to do apostolate. He was especially involved in the conversion of Luise Hensel and, later, of the painter Emilie Linder. And he spared no effort to promote the rebirth of the religious spirit in his homeland.

### *Disciple and secretary of a Blessed*

However, the great work of his life was the transcribing and arrangement of the narrations of the supernatural revelations received by Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, the famous stigmatist nun who lived in a poor residence in Dülmen, Germany.

He visited her for the first time on September 24, 1818. For him, this encounter was a touching surprise. Catherine Emmerich, on the other hand, had been long awaiting him, for she knew that this man of letters had a mission to accomplish with her.

She welcomed him as if meeting once again with an old acquaintance and invited him to return every day. Besides instructing him in important points of Catholic doctrine, the saintly seer guided him in his spiritual life,



Clemens Brentano painted by Emilie Linder around the year 1837

*The saintly seer guided him in his spiritual life, daily increasing Brentano's enthusiasm and admiration for it*



Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, as depicted in an old German print

daily increasing Brentano's enthusiasm and admiration for it. "Now I see, understand, feel and know what the Church is,"<sup>1</sup> he said in a letter to Luise Hensel.

A few months later, he moved to Dülmen, taking up lodging in a miserable little hotel where he lived until the death of his teacher. He took daily notes of the accounts of her visions. Back in his hotel room, he then read these notes and completed from memory several details that he had not had time to transcribe and, finally, rewrote everything. The next day, he would present to the seer his completed work. She approved some passages and corrected others. Brentano would then revise the text as many times as was necessary to meet her approval.

After Catherine Emmerich's death, Brentano dedicated the rest of his life to the enormous task of arranging and publishing that great body of manuscripts. He was unable to finish the work, publishing only the first volume: *The Sorrowful Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. The second volume – *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary* – was at the printing press when he died on July 28, 1842. The precious records then passed into the hands of other literati, including Luise Hensel, who took on the task of completing their publication.

Thus, it is above all to Clemens Brentano that we owe the publication of the visions and revelations of Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, which have done and will continue to do so much good *in universo orbe*. ✧

<sup>1</sup> DIRHEIMER, G. *Anne-Catherine Emmerich, la visionnaire stigmatisée de Dülmen et Clément Brentano son secrétaire. Etude sur l'authenticité des visions*. In: [www.livres-mystiques.com](http://www.livres-mystiques.com).





Daniel Letellier

# Virginal Father, Hero of Confidence

St. Joseph received a greater and more extraordinary mission than any other man on earth. He was spouse of the Virgin Mother, the One who would give birth to the God-Man and Redeemer of the world.



Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

**C**hosen by the Blessed Trinity to be the Mother of the Incarnate Word, Our Lady is the most perfect of all mere creatures. Even if we were to consider, in their ensemble, all the qualities of the Angels, Saints and men who have existed, exist and will exist until the end of the world, we would still not have even a pale idea of Mary's heavenly perfections, which shone before God's eyes from the first moment of her Immaculate Conception.

In order to fulfil the eternal designs of Divine Providence with regard to the Redemption of humanity, it was necessary that, at a certain moment, this sublime creature should enter into a legitimate marriage. In this way, She could miraculously conceive and give birth to the Son of the Most High without detriment to her reputation.

## *The sole man worthy of Jesus and Mary*

Now, between husband and wife there should be some proportional-

ity; one cannot be far superior to the other. Therefore, a man was needed who, for his love of God, justice, purity, wisdom – in short, for all his qualities, would be on a par with that august Bride.

Furthermore, since it was also fitting that the father be proportional to the son, this man would have to bear the honour of being the adoptive father of the Word made flesh, in all worthiness.

A man then arose for this sublime mission. The Eternal Father had created his soul with all the adornments and predicates that would place him entirely at the level of his calling. This man, chosen among all to be in proportion to Our Lady and Our Lord Jesus Christ, was St. Joseph.

He was qualified for this glory, this unimaginable pinnacle of being spouse of the Virgin Mother and foster father of the Child Jesus. As legitimate spouse of Our Lady, St. Joseph had full rights over the Fruit of her immaculate womb, although this Fruit had been conceived by the Holy

Spirit. That is to say, with the exception of the Divine Maternity itself, one cannot conceive of a more extraordinary vocation! It is an inconceivable grandeur.

For example, let us imagine the moments when St. Joseph carried the Child Jesus in his arms, or of those times when he saw Him engaged in the activities of daily life in the Holy House of Nazareth, or of the hours when he contemplated Him immersed in conversation with the Eternal Father...

Let us consider how pure his lips must have been, and how unfathomable his humility would have been to talk to the Divine Infant, answer His questions, or give Him advice when asked. A simple human being, formed and moulded by the hands of the Creator, teaching God!

Let us also consider the uplifting and respectful treatment between St. Joseph and Our Lady, when she knelt before him to serve him. He sees that creature who is Heaven's Heaven inclined before him, and ac-

cepts her services. As if this were not enough, his Spouse also consults him, exchanges opinions and adheres to his orders.

In a word, he was the man who had enough wisdom and purity to govern God and the Virgin Mary. We thus reach the conclusion that the grandeur of St. Joseph is something simply unimaginable!

### *Perfections of a prince and a worker*

In order to trace the true moral profile of the head of the Holy Family, it would be necessary to know how to interpret the Divine Face of the Holy Shroud of Turin and, by way of supposition, to deduce something of the personality of the one who was the educator of the countenance present there, and the spouse of His Mother.

Married to Her who is called the Mirror of Justice, and foster father of the Lion of Judah, St. Joseph needed to be a model of wisdom, chastity and strength: a steadfast man, full of intelligence and discretion, capable of taking care of God's Secret. A fiery

soul, zealous and contemplative, but also imbued with affection.

He descended from the most august dynasty in the world, that of David. The Jews recognized in St. Joseph the man entitled to the royal throne if the legitimate monarchy was restored in the Holy Land.<sup>1</sup> This right Our Lord Jesus Christ inherited from His lawful father, and so He was acclaimed as "the son of David," when He entered Jerusalem.

In other words, He was not just any descendant of the prophet-king, but the first-born claimant to the throne. And St. Joseph was the man through

*The problem seems to be solved: both will remain inviolate. What happiness! His hope lives on*

whom this dignity was transferred to the Son of God Himself.

Providence wished to ennoble the working class by also making Jesus' foster father a manual labourer, who practised the trade of carpenter. In this way, St. Joseph united the two extremes of the social scale in the inner harmony of his holiness and his person. He was at his peak as prince of the house of David, but he was an impoverished prince who derived from his craftsmanship the sustenance for the Holy Family.

As a labourer, he knew how to be humble and to show due respect for those in a position of superiority. As a prince, he also knew the mission with which he was endowed, and he fulfilled it magnificently, contributing to the preservation, defence and earthly glorification of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was into his hands the Eternal Father entrusted this treasure – the greatest that ever was or will be in the history of the universe!

And such hands could only be those of an authentic leader and guide, a man of great prudence and



Gustavo Krejci

Espousal of Our Lady and St. Joseph by Fra Angelico – Predella of the Annunciation, Diocesan Museum of Cortona (Italy); previous page, statue of St. Joseph – private collection of Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias



profound discernment, as well as of sublime affection, so as to surround the Son of God made Man with every necessary care, filled with adoration and reverence.

At the same time, he was a man ready to perspicaciously and steadfastly confront any challenge that might arise: whether it be of a spiritual and interior nature, or originating from the persecutions of Our Lord's adversaries.

### *Hero of confidence*

Let us consider, for example, the tremendous ordeal that befell him at the very beginning of his marriage with Mary Most Holy.

In the Old Testament, the greatest blessing to which any Jew could aspire was to be counted among the ancestors of the Messiah. In view of this, the immense majority of the chosen people sought to marry and have children, and it was not unusual to consider sterility as a sign of contempt and disgrace.

But St. Joseph, moved by grace, did not wish to marry in order to preserve his virginity. He lived his tranquil life as a chaste and pure man when, unexpectedly, he received a summons: all the direct descendants of David had to appear before a Virgin called Mary, so that a husband might be chosen for Her.

Obedient, the holy man appeared beside his relatives, trusting in the voice of grace that had caused him to embrace virginity. In his heart, he had the certainty that another would be the chosen one.

At that time, everyone travelled with the support of a staff, and so each man there had his own.

The priest presiding over the ceremony determined that the one upon whose staff a flower bloomed would be the one to be united with Mary.

St. Joseph looks at his staff... and sees a flower appear on it! All his

hopes for virginity have suddenly vanished. What will happen now?

He confides. It is a miracle that obliges him to wed Mary. Meanwhile, in the depths of his soul he wishes to remain a virgin! Serene and courageous, he accepts the divine disposition.

He speaks privately with the young lady and discovers that She, too, has taken a vow of virginity. The problem seems to be solved: both will remain inviolate. What happiness! His hope lives on.

As the days pass, he realizes the incomparable treasure contained in the soul of this Virgin who has been confided to him. He reflects: "I will protect her magnanimously. I am here to defend Her in the splendour of her personality against all manner of attacks."

### *But then the unthinkable happens...*

But at a certain moment the unthinkable occurs: he notices that the

*But at a certain  
moment the  
unthinkable occurs  
and St. Joseph  
undergoes a  
terrible ordeal*

Virgin is expecting a Child. Perplexity pervades St. Joseph's soul.

He could not comprehend what was happening after so many miracles... The blossoming of the staff, the delight with which the two had communicated their mutual desire for perpetual virginity, the joy of soul that they then felt: "Of course! God has put us on the same path. He has

made a promise to us and is fulfilling His promise."

St. Joseph went through an unspeakable ordeal, and so did Our Lady, since She perceived the full extent of her husband's suffering. His anguish was all the more intense for knowing clearly that a betrayal on the part of that incomparable Virgin was impossible.

Now, by Jewish law, if a wife were to transgress, her husband was obliged to expel her from his home. But St. Joseph was certain that Mary had committed no sin.

Not wanting to commit any injustice towards such a holy Virgin, and not being able to cover up this irremediable situation, St. Joseph decided to leave the house of Nazareth unnoticed. Before undertaking the long journey that awaited him, he decided to rest to gather his strength.

At dawn he would leave, carrying only his staff, some food and the burden of a great enigma, heavier than Mount Everest: "How did this happen? My God, my God... I trust in Thy promise!"

Despite the affliction, his soul was so confident and so serene that he slept. And upon falling asleep, he was visited by a dream that held a recompense. God communicated to him that the Child in Mary's virginal womb was the Incarnate Word, Son of the Divine Holy Spirit.

When St. Joseph awoke, peace reigned in his soul. And Our Lady, seeing the luminous countenance of her spouse, knew that his trial had ended.

Because he was a hero of confidence, St. Joseph received a greater and more extraordinary mission than that of any other man on this earth. He was the spouse of the Virgin Mother, of the One who would give birth to the God-Man and Redeemer of the world. Thus, the promise of virginity that had been made to him flourished. Everything was fulfilled in an unimaginable manner.

### **Model knight in the protection of the King of kings**

Nevertheless, obstacles had not vanished from the paths along which St. Joseph would tread. Sufficient proof of this can be seen in the rejection he encountered at the inns of Bethlehem when he sought shelter for Our Lady, who was about to give birth to the Infant-God, or likewise in the flight to Egypt.

A “flight to Egypt”... To 20th-century man, these three words mean something relatively commonplace: take a plane from Jerusalem and arrive a short while later in Egypt.

It was not so at the time when St. Joseph, receiving the warning that the cruel Herod was seeking to kill the newborn King of the Jews, was forced to take the Mother and Child and leave with them for the land of the pharaohs.

Ahead of them was a long and uncertain journey through deserts where all sorts of dangers were lurking, including those posed by wild animals, thieves and brigands. The latter were capable not only of stealing from and killing travellers, but also of taking them into captivity for trade in the slave markets.

And St. Joseph, with his fiery heart, his foresight and virile strength, faced all of these obstacles, leading Our Lady on a small donkey, bearing the Child Jesus, the God who wanted to be weak in the arms and hands of the Glorious Patriarch.

The vocation of Godfrey of Bouillon is often admired and praised – that victorious warrior who, in the First Crusade, commanded the Catholic troops in the conquest of Jerusalem. This is a beautiful feat! He is the crusader par excellence.

However, to defend Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself signifies much more than to retake the Holy Sepul-



St. Joseph's dream  
Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph, New York

*Despite the affliction, his soul was so confident and so serene that he slept. And upon falling asleep, he dreamed...*

chre! And it was with this that St. Joseph was gloriously entrusted, becoming the model knight in the protection of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

***In the ranks of the Saints, the first below Our Lady***

Alongside all the glories that have been showered upon him, St. Joseph received an invaluable reward, while

yet on this earth: he is the patron of a good death.

In fact, it could be said that he had a death to cause envy, for he died in the arms of Our Lady and Our Lord, who surrounded him with all their affection and consolation at his last hour. It is impossible to imagine a more perfect death, with both of them physically present.

On one side was Our Lord, pouring out increasingly greater graces upon His virginal father as the soul of St. Joseph continued to grow in holiness in the final throes of his agony. On the other was Our Lady, whose smile, full of esteem, sought to strengthen his confidence:

— My husband! Remember that everything will be fulfilled. Courage! Let us forge ahead!

Upon entering Heaven, he saw the fulfilment of all the promises, the perfect accomplishment of a calling that had involved unspeakable perplexities and incomparable glories.

And St. Joseph, spouse of the Virgin Mary, foster father of Jesus and declared Patron of the Church, occupies such an eminent place in Heaven that he receives the cult of protodulia. That is, below Our Lady – who merits the devotion of hyperdulia – he is the first to be venerated in the vast hierarchy of Saints.

It is the sublime reward earned by this man who practised the virtue of confidence in the loftiest degree. ✧

Taken with slight adaptations from: *Dr. Plinio*. São Paulo. Year II. N.12 (Mar., 1999); p.13-17

<sup>1</sup> Cf. CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. *São José: quem o conhece?...* [St. Joseph: Who Knows Him? ...] São Paulo: Lumen Sapientiae, 2017, p.50.



## ***Soul of Valour, Heart of Fire!***

Spiritual daughter of St. Clare of Assisi, St. Agnes of Prague shone since childhood for her heroic determination to obey heavenly inspirations, cost what it may.



**Sr. Gabriela Victoria Silva, EP**

**A**t the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, King Ottokar I of Bohemia and his wife Constance had their first daughter, whom they named Agnes.

She came into the world with blood ties to the most eminent royal and princely families of Central Europe. However, more than the brilliance of earthly nobility, the glory of belonging to a dazzling spiritual lineage hovered over her: “On her father’s side she descended from the distinguished line of Saints Ludmila and Wenceslas; St. Hedwig of Silesia was her great aunt, while St. Elizabeth of Thuringia was her cousin and St. Margaret of Hungary her niece.”<sup>1</sup>

### ***Promised in marriage at three years of age***

From her childhood, she cherished in her heart the ardent desire to consecrate her virginity to God. But to reach this goal set by a discreet inner voice, a great obstacle had to be overcome: in keeping with the custom of the time, she had been promised in marriage, at the age of three, to the Polish prince Boleslaw, son of Henry I of Silesia and St. Hedwig.

In order to receive an education befitting a queen, she was sent with

her elder sister, Anne, to the Cistercian monastery of Trzebnica, in present-day Poland, of which St. Gertrude was abbess.<sup>2</sup> The latter taught her the fundamental truths of the Faith and guided her first steps in the spiritual life, marking the heart of the illustrious princess for the rest of her life. However, this splendid formation was intended to prepare her for a marriage which Agnes felt was contrary to the inspirations God had placed in her soul.

The certainty that Agnes had been called by Providence to follow other paths would soon be confirmed by events: at the age of six she returned to Bohemia, for her future husband had died prematurely.

### ***Redoubled fidelity in face of another obstacle***

Once again in her homeland, the pious little girl moved to a Premonstratensian abbey in Doksany, founded by her grandfather St. Wenceslas. There she learned to read and write and acquired such a love for prayer that she far preferred it to entertaining herself with the amusements typical of her young age.

However, the waves of tribulation soon battered her soul again:

at the age of nine, she was promised in marriage to Henry VII, King of Sicily and Germany, son of Emperor Frederick II. She was then forced to travel to Vienna, where she was to learn German and familiarize herself with Germanic customs.

The worldly brilliance of the Austrian court might well have dazzled her and caused her to change her mind, but exactly the opposite happened: “Agnes was not at ease there. She distributed many alms, mortified herself with frequent fasts, and consecrated herself totally to the Mother of God, desiring to keep her virginity intact.”<sup>3</sup>

Docile to that inner voice that inspired her desire to give herself entirely to God, and steadfast in her wish to do the will of the Most High in everything, the young girl confidently implored Him to arrange things so that she could follow her vocation, although everything seemed to be moving in the opposite direction. During this period, she suffered unspeakably with heroic fidelity, having the Divine Redeemer as her only confidant.

Agnes’ dilemma would once again come to an unexpected end: Duke Leopold of Austria, into whose care



In centre, St. Agnes of Prague, Cathedral of St. Vitus; on either side, frescoes of St. Francis and St. Clare, by Simone Martini, Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi, Assisi (Italy)

she was entrusted in Vienna, intended to marry his own daughter to the one pledged to Agnes... The duke's plans were successful, and so she was able to return to the royal court of Prague.

### *Unshakeable faith and spirit of sacrifice*

The journey of a good soldier of Christ is not limited to two or three isolated battles; their life consists of a daily struggle, until the last moment of existence. This can be clearly appreciated in the story of our small but glorious combatant.

The joy that inundated her heart did not last long. New marriage proposals arrived in Prague, first from Henry III of England and then from Emperor Frederick II, who had been widowed. Despite the objections of Agnes, her brother, King Wenceslaus – who after his father's death had as-

*The journey of  
a good soldier of  
Christ is not limited  
to two or three  
isolated battles;  
their life consists  
of a daily struggle*

sumed power – promised the princess' hand to the emperor.

Having become a strong lady under the effect of the continuous trials, Agnes did not give up fighting to be the bride of Christ. Determined to overcome any obstacle that arose, she undertook new efforts to take to its final consequences the vocation that grace so clearly whispered in her soul.

She began by intensifying her prayers and penances. She often awoke before dawn to visit, barefoot and poorly clothed, some churches in the city in the company of other devout maidens. As her feet were left bleeding from the walk, upon her return to the palace she would wash them, put on her shoes and sumptuous robes of a princess, while wearing underneath them a coarse hair shirt and metal cilice.

Thus clothed, she began the day's activities, without revealing the mortifications she had performed, alternating the obligations of court with her characteristic visits to the sick. In all these activities her intention was, in addition to praising God, to obtain from Him the answer to her entreaty.

### *She preferred the King of Heaven...*

One day, when she was about twenty-eight years old, she learned that Emperor Frederick II had sent an ambassador to Prague to escort her to Germany. And as her brother, King Wenceslaus, remained deaf to her objections, Agnes decided to appeal to the Pope.

She wrote to His Holiness to beg him to prevent the marriage, arguing that she had never consented to marry and that she felt an ardent call to a religious vocation. This gesture adds special splendour to the pages of St. Agnes' life, evincing her filial trust in him who represented the supreme spiritual power on earth.

Pope Gregory IX had just established peace with the emperor and, knowing him well enough to imagine what his reaction might be, he sent a legate to Prague to support the princess and wrote her a missive.

St. Agnes showed the papal letter to her brother who, alarmed, finally



yielded. Although he feared the wrath of the German Emperor, Wenceslaus did not want to displease the Roman Pontiff or force his sister to do something against the will of the Most High.

Nevertheless, unexpected was the reaction of Frederick II. When he realized that the decision did not come from a political manoeuvre by the King of Bohemia, but from a holy desire of the princess, the emperor annulled his pledge with words that deserve a special place in the firmament of history: "If she had left me for a mortal man, I would have unleashed the full weight of my vengeance; but I cannot feel offended that she preferred the King of Heaven."<sup>4</sup>

Her gesture impressed Christendom of that time, and the news of Agnes' refusal of worldly goods and glories for love of Jesus spread through the courts of Europe, inciting great admiration. Free from any earthly commitment, she could now live according to the ideal that God had inspired in her.

### *Contagious generosity*

At that time, some nobles brought news to Prague of the apostolate and lifestyle of the *Poverello* and his faithful disciple, Clare. Upon hearing these reports, Agnes was seized with the desire to imitate her.

She began by ridding herself of jewels, adornments and sumptuous dresses and helped the poor of the region with the proceeds from their sale. She wanted to use all her possessions in the service of the Church.

With the help of the king, her brother, she built a monastery for the Franciscans, another for the Poor Clares, and a hospital for the poor. The hospital's administration was entrusted to a sodality which she herself founded and which would later give rise to the Canons Regular of the Holy Cross of the Red Star.

The Bohemian people wanted to help with the construction costs. Although the king and princess refused all offers, if often happened that, at the end of the work day, the labourers would steal away without charging for their services, so that they might selflessly contribute to the building of the hospital.

### *In the footsteps of St. Clare of Assisi*

However, Agnes longed to follow more closely the one who would be her spiritual mother, her best friend, the confidante of her virtues and the "angel" of her vocation, St. Clare of Assisi.

Accompanied by five young ladies from the leading families of Prague, she then entered the monastery she herself had built on the banks of the Moldava River, to which the founder had sent five of her nuns. On that occasion, St. Clare wrote a remarkable letter to her, in which she praised her reputation for virtue and congratulated her for preferring "a spouse of nobler lineage,"<sup>5</sup> renouncing all the glories of the world.

Agnes' example attracted numerous young maidens to the cloisters and greatly increased the number of Clarist convents in Europe. She professed her vows on Pentecost and, by determination of Pope Gregory IX, she had to assume – not without reluctance, given her great humility – the office of abbess of the monastery, which she carried out faithfully for forty years.

Although St. Clare did not personally meet her noble disciple, the correspondence they exchanged bears witness to how united they were in the same ideal of holiness. So deep was the friendship formed between the two, fruit of true love for God, that the Saint of Assisi thus began the last of her letters to Agnes: "To her who is the half of my soul and the special shrine of my love."<sup>6</sup>

### *Exemplary religious, favoured with mystical gifts*

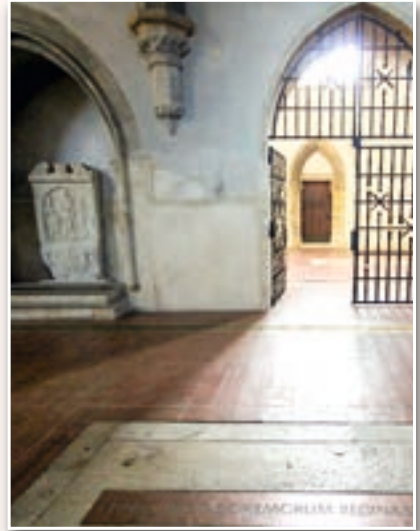
A worthy daughter of St. Francis and St. Clare, she sought to excel in the practice of humility and charity, the foundations of true poverty. She had such a profound Eucharistic devotion that she enkindled other monasteries of the Order with this fervour, "later culminating in the desire for daily Communion."<sup>7</sup>

She was happy to be alone to spend time in prayer and contemplation, and in those moments it was common for her to enter into ecstasy. To everyone she gave an example of the apostolate based on the interior life: "She did not speak excessively with the sisters, but when she addressed them, her words were burning with love for Christ and the desire for Paradise, so much so that she could hardly hold back her tears."<sup>8</sup>

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ was the focal point of her piety, and in the Holy Cross she found the strength to bear the infirmities that often afflicted her. She faced all her misfortunes with the same resolution with which, in her childhood, she had overcome the difficulties that arose to fulfilling her vocation.

On one occasion, certain of the proximity of her death, she wanted to receive Viaticum. However, an inner voice assured her that all her family members would precede her into eternity. In fact, "during her long life she saw her father die, several relatives, and her brothers and sisters, among them Wenceslaus himself, whom she had managed to reconcile with his rebellious son, Premysl Ottokar, in her own monastery."<sup>9</sup>

In another circumstance, during vespers, she mystically saw this nephew, then King Ottokar II, being slain in battle. And she also endured with serene confidence the death of St. Clare, her spiritual mother.



At left, the exterior of the Convent of St. Agnes, in Prague;  
at right, the Saint's tomb, inside the church of the Holy Saviour, belonging to the same convent

### *Charity that crosses the threshold of eternity*

Always supported by grace, the holy abbess of Prague gave sage advice, avoiding conflicts and encouraging the fidelity of her kingdom to the true Religion. However, after the death of Ottokar II, foreign armies invaded Bohemia, disrupting the good order and sowing violence.

In those moments of chaos, at the doors of the Clarist monasteries, whose pantries were woefully empty, countless dying people arrived in search of help. Many perished from hunger or the plague.

It was in the midst of the troubled and unstable scenario of war that Agnes, already venerated as a Saint, passed away. In her last moments, while everything was collapsing around her, she preserved the endur-

*With the help of the king, she built a monastery for the Franciscans, another for the Poor Clares, and a hospital*

ing patience that characterized her. And when God called her to Himself, she left without offering any resistance to Heaven, where her virginal heart had reposed since childhood.

Before leaving this life, Agnes exhorted her sisters to love their heaven-

ly Spouse unreservedly and “to follow Him in humility and poverty, remaining – after the example of Saints Francis and Clare – always submissive to His Vicar and the See of Rome.”<sup>10</sup> It was March 2, 1282.

Agnes of Prague was canonized by Pope John Paul II on November 12, 1989. Days later, the Velvet Revolution began, bringing about the liberation of Czechoslovakia from the Communist yoke. Many attributed this to the intercession of St. Agnes for the people she had favoured so much during her earthly pilgrimage.

Her ardent and tireless love, which disregarded the obstacles of the world to be faithful to the voice of God, now crosses the threshold of eternity reaffirming the sublime truth that “love never ends” (1 Cor 13:8). ✧

<sup>1</sup> ST. JOHN PAUL II. *Letter to the Archbishop of Prague on the occasion of the celebration of the VII Centenary of the death of Blessed Agnes of Bohemia*, 2/2/1982.

<sup>2</sup> St. Gertrude was the daughter of St. Hedwig and, therefore, a relative of St. Agnes. Accord-

ing to some authors consulted, Hedwig also lived in the monastery at that time and strongly influenced the formation of her grandniece.

<sup>3</sup> ST. JOHN PAUL II, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup> BUTLER, Alban. *Lives of the Saints*. Westminster (MD):

Christian Classics, 1990, v.I, p.463.

<sup>5</sup> ST. CLARE OF ASSISI. First letter to Agnes of Prague. In: *Fontes Franciscanas*. 2.ed. Braga: Editorial Franciscana, 1996, v.II, p.87.

<sup>6</sup> ST. CLARE OF ASSISI. Fourth letter to Agnes of

Prague. In: *Fontes Franciscanas*, op. cit., p.107.

<sup>7</sup> ST. JOHN PAUL II, op. cit.

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

<sup>9</sup> Idem, ibidem.

<sup>10</sup> Idem, ibidem.



## *Discipline, Vitality and Joy*

Without discipline and effort, it is not possible to achieve academic excellence. But only in an ambience of friendship, vitality and joy is it possible to help students grow integrally as persons, both spiritually and intellectually.



**Sr. Suzana Lopes, EP**

**E**arly in the morning, a hub of activity on one of the streets of the Jardim Planalto district in the Serra da Cantareira draws the attention of passers-by. Uniformed girls, joyful and high-spirited, leave their parents' cars and pass through the gates, greeting one another enthusiastically. Classes are about to begin at the Mount Carmel branch of the Heralds of the Gospel School.

At eight-twenty on the dot, conversations between students are left off and, gathered in the courtyard, they sing the Creed. Then, all participate in the procession to the classrooms, as instruments join the youthful voices raised in song.

Thus begins the day not only in Mount Carmel but in all other branches of the Heralds of the Gospel School located throughout various states of Brazil. In contrast to the agitation, haste and unhealthy obsession with pragmatism so prevalent in today's world, these schools aim to create an environment full of vitality that favours an excellent academic, religious and cultural formation, imbued with Christian sweetness and joy.

In these troubled times of ours, in which various sectors of society are on the verge of chaos, this is the kind of formation that many parents wish to give their children. Among them is Luciana Calistro, from Curitiba (State of Paraná), who affirms: "At school, the ideal way for students to learn the truth is within a beautiful and just environment. The school should be an 'oasis' in the midst of a relativistic society that has lost the notion of beauty, art or culture. We, parents of Herald students, are so blessed to have our children studying in an oasis like this."

***"There was a tremendous turnaround"***

This happy alliance between discipline and joy, between behaviour and learning, yields surprising results. This is what Andréia Cristina de Mello, from Maringá (Paraná State), mother of a student at the Mount Carmel branch, tells us:

"My daughter, before attending the Heralds of the Gospel School, had little interest in studying. She wanted to be alone on the internet, watching television or playing with the children out on the street. She received sever-

al poor grades and even failed a year because of this lack of application to her schoolwork. She did not study for tests, she did not complete assignments, she was always disobedient... And on top of this, she had little respect for her family.

"After she entered the Heralds of the Gospel School, there was a tremendous turnaround. I have watched her make beautiful progress: she now takes an interest in her studies, is getting excellent grades, respects her family, and has become much more affectionate... I am very proud of her.

"For what she has learned and is learning at school, I have no words to express my gratitude to the Heralds of the Gospel. I also thank Our Lady for everything that She is giving us through this institution."

In the same line, Maria Verônica Lima, from Recife (Pernambuco State), mother of a student at the school, comments:

"It is an honour for us to have a daughter studying at such an excellent school. Her intellect, writing skills, admiration for beauty and cultural knowledge have all developed... I know that there is no other school to compare with this one. I have al-



Photos: Maria Luiza B. de Albuquerque, Hécia Chala

**Pedagogical activities** – The classroom study of course material is supplemented by field trips that help pupils to discover and strengthen their own skills. In the photos: students of the Mount Carmel campus (photo 1); Physical Education integrated with Biology (photo 2) and Language Arts (photo 4) in this same campus, and of Natural Sciences in the Brasília campus (photo 3); visits to the Catavento Museum, in São Paulo (photo 5), to the City of Bees, in the city of Embu (photo 6) and to the Zoology Museum of the University of São Paulo (photo 7).

ways found its teaching method very interesting, and I especially appreciate what she has gained in the formation of her personality.”

### *“Like an extension of our family”*

Following the orientations given in the Law on Guidelines and Standards (LDB), the National Curricular Guidelines (DCN) and the proposals provided in the Common National Curricular Standards (BNCC), Her-

alds of the Gospel School seeks not only to prepare students for a professional future, but also to enrich them in an integral way, as persons, in an environment combining education, respect and union, which invites them to grow spiritually and intellectually.

Very happy with the formation that his daughter receives at the Heralds of the Gospel School, William Ferreira, from Brasília, declares: “Today, my daughter is an obedient,

determined, God-fearing girl, with an exemplary formation given by the teachers and Herald sisters. I can only thank God for her being in the Heralds of the Gospel School.”

Patricia Marques, from Brasília, also recognizes the assistance her daughter has received through this integral education: “We are experiencing something wonderful, both spiritually and academically. Today I speak of the Heralds as an extension



of my family, because I share with them my most important mission, which is to care for the moral, cultural and religious growth of my daughter.”

And she adds: “Today she is a happy, peaceful child, without the idleness, and the bad influences of television and internet that used to be part of her everyday life. While my husband and I are at work, the Heralds of the Gospel have the mission of caring for and watching over her.”

### ***“My daughters discovered their own abilities”***

In the classroom, students acquire such advanced communication skills that their own parents are surprised by their children’s progress, as Marta Borges, mother of a student at the school in Brasília tells us: “In school presentations she used to be very shy. I see that now she has lost her fear of public speaking, and this has done her a world of good.”

Amazed at the improvement in her two daughters, Stéfany and Monique, students of Heralds of the Gospel School for four years, Fabiana Verderio, from Maringá (Paraná), explains: “The school is having a good impact on their education. Stéfany, my eldest daughter, for example, had great difficulty in adapting to a state school here in the city. Her grades were very low, and she had a lot of dif-

ficulty assimilating the material. From the moment she started studying at the Heralds of the Gospel School she has progressed tremendously.”

And she points out one of the main reasons for this change: “Both she and Monique have discovered various skills they have, which they never imagined they had, both artistic and musical... They are very creative and have discovered that they really have a lot of potential.”

### ***“They will leave the school prepared for life”***

In expressing her gratitude for the formation the school has provided, Fabiana stresses the moral growth that she has observed with her daughters at home: “We see that they are very organized, helpful and disciplined. They have great respect for people, and I receive a lot of praise for them. The school is working wonders in their lives! I am very pleased with the education they are receiving: a thorough formation, academic as well as spiritual and moral.

And she concludes: “They are going to leave there truly prepared for life. The atmosphere is healthy, with a great deal of mutual respect and collaboration between students and teachers. I can only be thankful they have had the opportunity to attend this school.”

Juliana Santa Rosa, mother of students at the Heralds School in Recife (Pernambuco), comments: “With each step my daughters take, I see that the work at the school is done with discipline and competence. And the teachers are very well qualified. The school has only added important values to their lives: discipline, respect for others, unity, family, love... This is priceless!”

And Geovana de Oliveira, also the mother of a student from the Maringá (Paraná) branch, adds: “The Heralds of the Gospel School provides a very good preparation for the job market, as well as for life. It offers instruction based on Catholic doctrine, which emphasizes good morals and respect for others.”

### ***“I return to Cuiabá overjoyed”***

Each year an interdisciplinary school fair is carried out, in which students present what they have learned in a way that builds on individual skills and aptitudes.

The theme of the most recent fair was the great explorers’ navigations. Through models, exhibits and theatrical presentations, the students transmitted to parents and teachers some of the knowledge acquired during the year. One of the plays, for example, invited them to “travel back in time” on board a boat designed by the students.



Photos: Maria Luiza B. de Albuquerque

**Report card distribution** – At the end of the year, the students with the highest achievements are rewarded, and at each trimester, at the time of report card distribution, parents have the opportunity to talk with the teaching staff about students’ progress and analyse their academic results.



Photos: Maria Luíza B. de Albuquerque

**Academic fair –** For both Primary and Secondary School students, the academic fair is an opportunity to put acquired skills to work, focussing on a concrete theme from a multidisciplinary approach. Photos show Primary School pupils presenting their display on the universe and the planets, and Secondary School students portraying different aspects of the great explorations in their exhibits.

After participating in the interdisciplinary fair of the Mount Carmel branch, Maria Cecília Custodio, from Cuiabá (Mato Grosso State), mother of a student and a former student of the school (who is currently specializing in Mathematics at University), had this to say: “Today I had the pleasant experience of attending the presentation of the pupils here at the Heralds of the Gospel School. I was impressed! Thanks to Our Lady I always accompanied the fairs and presentations at the school where my daughter was enrolled previously, but I saw her today for the first time with a real mastery of the subject matter, being resourceful and explaining everything... She knew what she was talking about. I was so happy!”

As a consequence, she declared: “I return to Cuiabá overjoyed and, above all, comforted to know that the burden of the distance that separates us is recompensed by Our Lady. My

daughter is in a good place, where she is learning more than she was in excellent schools in Cuiabá. I am truly impressed.”

*“We learn the true meaning of the word conviviality”*

To effectively strengthen the skills and aptitudes of students, the solid basis for a comprehensive formation, a relaxed environment imbued with affection is necessary, as teacher Geni Cortez from the Mount Carmel branch testifies: “Here the joy and fellowship is noticeable. And this joy can be perceived in all of the children, from the first to the last year.”

When this happens, the beneficiaries are not only the students, but also the teaching staff. Teacher Rita de Cássia Lopes, the educational director who has accompanied the school since its foundation in 2005, declares: “Learning is two-directional: it passes not only from teacher to student but also from student to

teacher. We learn the true meaning of the word conviviality. All of these thoughts can be summed up in one expression: ‘To live is to be together, to look upon and to love one another.’ And above all, ‘to love one another.’”

She concludes: “As there is much affection here, this conviviality yields better results in learning; the students feel encouraged to achieve more in their studies.”

However, this would not be possible without the salutary influence of the Catholic Faith, the source of all true blessings, sweetness and joy. That is why Jesica Burigo, a teacher at the school in Brasília, adds: “A parent places a child in a school like this because they want their child to be a person with Christian values, a true Catholic. I have a deep feeling of gratitude and joy for the opportunity to be there, receiving so many blessings and learning so much from the students.” ✧





Stephany Jami

## ***Fidelity that Leads to Victory***

**W**here two or more are gathered in My name, there I am in the midst of them” (Mt 18:20), Jesus said to His disciples. Thus, when those who profess the same Faith come together to praise God and the Most Holy Virgin, they draw down divine grace upon themselves and invite the active presence of their Guardian Angels.

This was the experience of the participants in the 6th Congress of Heralds of the Gospel Cooperators, who gathered on January 25 and 26, at Tabor House, in Caieiras, Greater São Paulo.

### ***Queen of Victories and Mother of Good Success***

The event began with the solemn entrance of the statue of Our Lady of Good Success into the auditorium, accompanied by a cortege of sisters. Matins of the Office of the Immaculate Conception was then sung, asking the Most Holy Virgin for special graces to obtain the victory of Christ in hearts.

Talks, plays inspired by the Acts of the Apostles and study circles made the realities of two thousand years ago come to life for participants, taking lessons from them for today. The programme unfolded in an atmosphere of much joy and piety; it included the daily recitation of the Rosary, morning and evening Mass and many other acts of devotion.

### ***A family that grows day by day***

There are co-operators of the Heralds of the Gospel from all corners of Brazil and from various different countries. But this diversity does not prevent them from feeling closely united by the same charism.

Each year, this family of souls grows in number and, above all, in faith. The co-operators know that perseverance on the good path, even at the cost of their own life, is what will lead them to victory. This was the example given by the Apostles and, in an even more sublime way, by Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother. ✧



Photos: Leandro Souza

**Office of the Immaculate Conception** – A statue of the Mother of Good Success, a copy of the one venerated in the convent of the Conceptionists of Quito, Ecuador, was object of special devotion during the congress. In the photos, a group of sisters sings the Office of the Immaculate Conception, accompanied by all those present.





Photos: Stephen Nami

**The Holy Rosary** – In Fatima, Our Lady asked the three shepherd children to pray the Rosary every day. There is no more fitting devotion by which to make reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary today, especially when prayed as a group and with a soul full of faith.



Photos: David Ayuso

**Acts of the Apostles** – In narrating the persecutions suffered by the Apostles for the sake of the Gospel and highlighting the portentous supernatural help that led them to conquer the world for Christ, the Acts of the Apostles carry important lessons for us today. The stories this book contains were the subject matter for the plays presented.



Photos: Stephen Nami

**Taking topics further** – The teachings imparted in an interesting talk, or through a well-constructed stage play, invite reflection and stimulate the exchange of ideas and opinions with others, which took place both during the break periods between presentations, and in the lively study circles which were part of the congress programme.





Photos: Leandro de Souza / Lucila Vu / Maria Luiza Brito

## ***Hundreds of Youths Fortify Their Faith***

**W**ith great enthusiasm, during the last week in January, the traditional vacation courses were held in the houses of Tabor and Mount Carmel, both located on the Serra da Cantareira, Greater São Paulo.

During these days, the young people from all over Brazil and abroad gathered to fortify their faith, participating with fervour in the Holy Mass and praying their Rosary and other prayers as a group. By means of de-

bates, talks and stage plays portraying key moments in Church History, they were invited to give witness to Christ during these troubled days, in which innocence must struggle so as not to completely disappear from the face of the earth.

The above photos offer a sampling of scenes from the courses organized by both the masculine and feminine sectors. ✧





1



2



3



4



5



6

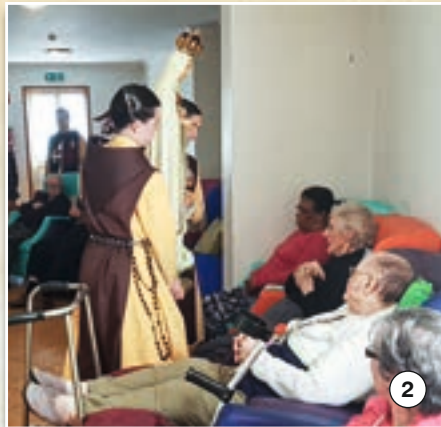
Photos: Santiago Canals / Urbano Ngoca

## Collaborating in Pastoral Ministry in Parishes

**B**ishop António Juliasso Ferreira Sandramo, Auxiliary of the Maputo diocese, decided to commemorate the last day of the year by celebrating the Holy Mass in the community of St. Peter and St. Paul, in Matola (photos 1 and 2), which the Parish of Our Lady of the Assumption has confided to the pastoral care of the Heralds of the Gospel. Hundreds of the faithful participated in the Eucharist, celebrated by Fr. Santiago Canals Coma, EP. To the Herald

priests have also been entrusted the communities of St. Joseph (photos 3 and 4), and St. Isidore (photo 6), of the same main parish. There, beyond celebrating Sunday Masses, they carry out numerous Baptisms and weddings, and administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Additionally, they are ready to lend their assistance whenever necessary at the Our Lady of Carmel community, under the responsibility of the Carmelite Fathers, (photo 5). ✧





Photos: Maria Angelica Iamasaki

**Portugal** – On Christmas Eve, young people from the feminine sector of the Heralds of the Gospel made visits to homes and social centres in the cities of Porto and Braga. In photos: Freamunde Nursing Home (photo 1), Freamunde Day Centre (photo 2) and Raimonda Parochial Social Centre (photo 3).



Photos: Daniel Gomes e John Konikara

## Visit from the Founder of Hope Ranch

Fr. Hans Stapel, one of the founders of Hope Ranch, visited the Marian Contemplation House, located in Cotia (SP), on January 20, to express his gratitude for the concert performed by a musical ensemble of the Heralds of the Gospel (photo 4) in this therapeutic community in the municipality of Guaratinguetá. This same community was honoured,

on May 5, 2007, to receive a visit from Pope Benedict XVI. Fr. Hans was accompanied by Fr. Christian Heim (photo 1), rector of the Hope Shrine. Both celebrated the Eucharist in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima (photo 2), and then lunched and conversed at length with the youth that reside in this House of Formation (photo 3). ✧





## CHURCH AND WORLD EVENTS .....

### ***CNN to pay damages to young American Catholic***

On January 18, 2019, Nick Sandmann, a young Catholic student from Kentucky was victim of an international media “lynching”. Major news outlets published a biased video in which he apparently harassed a native Indian, Nathan Phillips, on the day of the pro-life march in Washington.

However, for eye witnesses, the reality was very different: the young man was smiling to defuse the provocative behaviour of the Indian ac-

tivist who, the next day, accompanied by twenty other demonstrators, attempted to interrupt the evening Mass in the National Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.

Sandmann had attended the march with other students from Covington Catholic High School. Soon after the news was published, the boy was so violently criticized that his school decided to cancel classes for fear of aggression. Even Bishop Roger Foys, head of the Covington diocese, publicly condemned Sandmann’s alleged attitude, although he later recanted, acknowledging that he had made a premature statement. Sandmann even received death threats.

In the face of this monumental injustice, the young man’s family filed a lawsuit against *CNN* for libel and emotional damages, demanding 275 million dollars as compensation. The powerful broadcaster was forced to acknowledge the seriousness of its accusations and the absence of journal-

istic ethical standards. The amount of the compensation to be paid by the network has not been revealed.

### ***Millions of faithful venerate the Divine Shepherdess in Venezuela***

On January 14, the feast of the Divine Shepherdess was commemorated in the Venezuelan city of Barquisimeto. More than four million faithful gathered to participate in the procession, the 164<sup>th</sup> in the history of the shrine, considered one of the most visited in the world.

The statue is taken from its niche, in the Church of Santa Rosa, and carried on a bier to the Metropolitan Cathedral. Each year, several different confraternities vie for the honour of making Our Lady’s dress, which varies for each procession. The devotees of Our Lady complete the 7.5 kilometre route in seven hours, stopping in front of parish churches along the way. Numerous faithful make

## ***Slovakian Redemptorists open year of popular missions***

**O**n January 11, a year of popular missions, promoted by the Redemptorists, began in Slovakia. The week-long missions will take place in twenty-seven cities and various communities, in order to “draw the members of the parish closer to Christ and to help them to guide their lives in accordance with Him.”

In addition to home visits, these missions will include talks and conversations with priests on topics related to the spiritual life. Besides the daily celebration of the Eucharist, with the availability of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, catechesis for men and women will be provided, along with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and novenas to Our Lady of Perpetual Help.



**Mass in the parish of St. Martin, in the village of Radatice**

Photos: redemptoristi.sk



part of the journey on their knees or dressed as Nazarenes as a sign of penance.

### ***Jubilee year for the “Virgen del Valle” begins***

On December 8, solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the Argentine city of Catamarca celebrated the beginning of the jubilee year commemorating the four hundredth anniversary of *Madre del Valle*, Patroness of the province of Catamarca and of the Argentine Northwest, with Holy Mass and a procession.

The programme began with the recitation of the Rosary and the Angelus at 5:30 a.m., followed by a first Mass, which concluded with the recitation of the hour of Lauds. Throughout the day, priests were available to administer the Sacrament of Confession.

### ***Record number of pilgrims in the Holy Land***

According to the pilgrims office of the Franciscan Custody, in 2019 the Holy Land had the largest influx of visitors in its history: six hundred and thirty thousand pilgrims. Of the thirteen thousand registered groups, the majority were composed of Ital-

ians, Poles and Spaniards, but there is also a representation from regions as remote as Polynesia.

According to data from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 4.5 million tourists entered the country this year.

### ***Faithful rescue tabernacle from church in Puerto Rico***

On January 7, a magnitude 6.4 earthquake in the city of Guayanilla destroyed the Parish of the Immaculate Conception in Puerto Rico. However, as soon as it was possible, several faithful made their way through the rubble to rescue the tabernacle, which was removed intact early in the morning. A few minutes later, a second seismic tremor destroyed what remained of the church.

Among the rescuers was the parish priest, Fr. Orlando Rivera. The group carried the tabernacle in procession from the ruins of the church to the parish house.

### ***Plans to erect an enormous Christ the Redeemer in India***

Indian Catholics are planning to erect a statue of Our Lord over forty

metres high, slightly less than the famous Christ the Redeemer of Rio de Janeiro. Despite opposition from some nationalist groups, the project's creators declare that they will complete the construction at the chosen location, on a hill in the State of Karnataka.

Opponents claim that the site is dedicated to a pagan deity, but Fr. Cyril Victor Joseph explained that the monument will only supplant a cross that has existed for decades in the same place. Though a minority, Catholics are acknowledged in the country for their numerous charitable works.

### ***Marian devotion could become Heritage of Humanity***

Particularly popular in Brazil and Portugal, but known worldwide, devotion to Our Lady of Nazareth may be designated as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The proposal was raised at a congress, the International Meeting of Communities Devoted to Our Lady of Nazareth, held between January 24 and 26 in Portugal.

The organizers support their request by stating that this invocation “is not only one of the oldest Portuguese Marian traditions, but also

## ***Fire Destroys Cathedral of Malabo***

**O**n January 15, a large blaze destroyed Malabo Cathedral, called by many the “Notre-Dame of Equatorial Guinea”. Neo-Gothic in style and dedicated to St. Elizabeth, it was closed to the public for restoration and was severely damaged by the fire that destroyed the interior and the roof, culminating in its collapse.

The construction of this beautiful temple, considered a majestic treasure of Spanish colonial architecture, began in 1897 and was financed by donations from the faithful, businesses and the Spanish government, being consecrated in 1916. The cause of the fire is still unknown.



www.oeilcatirque.com

## Poles Commemorate Day of the Kings with Parades

**I**n Poland, Epiphany was commemorated by more than one million three hundred thousand Catholics with parades in honour of the three Kings. These parades were held in 872 cities throughout the country. The largest of them, with ninety thousand participants, took place in Warsaw. In Swidnik, an outdoor stage play for children depicting the life of Herod was performed, focussing on the difference between good and evil.

This form of devotion began twelve years ago and is growing in popularity. This is confirmed by the fact that last year the celebrations were held in 750 cities.



episkopat.pl

A scene from the parade in Warsaw

an appellation that has spread to all Portuguese-speaking countries, being established with particular fervour in Brazil. The *Círio de Nazaré*, one of the largest processions in the world, held annually in the Brazilian city of Belém and declared by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2013, clearly demonstrates this.

### Cardinal Müller participates in Catholic youth congress

The city of Phoenix, Arizona hosted the SLS20 (Student Leader-

ship Summit), an event organized by FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students), which ran from December 30 to January 3, with the participation of more than nine thousand Catholic university students.

Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, participated in the congress. He warned at the Mass he presided over on January 1: "We cannot escape the deadly poison of the rattlesnake, if we strike friendship with it, but only if we prudently keep our distance and have the antidote ready

at hand. The poison paralyzing the Church is the opinion that we should adapt to the spirit of the age; that we should relativize God's Commandments, and reinterpret the doctrine of Faith."

The prelate explained that there are many who wish to build a "civil religion": "They do not hold revealed Faith to be true, but they would like to use it for building the new religion of world-unity." He also lamented that there are those who desire "a Catholicism without dogmas, without Sacraments, and without an infallible Magisterium."

**GAUDIUM PRESS**  
The first Catholic news agency of Brazil

• Portuguese • Spanish • English



• News • Opinion • Videos • Images

News from Brazil and around the world

Sign up for free at  
**en.gaudiumpress.org**

- ✓ 30 days with the Pope
- ✓ World
- ✓ Opinion
- ✓ Rome
- ✓ Spirituality



## ***Sustained by the Promise***

The dreaded moment had come for Nicodemus. Would he vote in favour of the Prophet's death? Or would he face the risk of dying with Him? Once again, the Pharisee tried to shirk his responsibility...



**Sr. Lucia Nga Thi Vu, EP**

**H**ave you heard the latest news? He just cured a man blind from birth! – one man called out to an acquaintance he came upon while crossing the street.

— No, that's not the latest! Half an hour ago, He restored a leper to full health! – put in another.

Through the bustling crowd, amidst this general hubbub of enthusiastic exclamations, a man of mature age with deep-set eyes, a very straight nose and shoulder-length greying hair made his way in long strides. To many observant passers-by, his face was a familiar sight, for he was frequently to be seen walking this very route. It was the illustrious Nicodemus!

At last ascending the Temple staircase and entering the chamber where the Sanhedrin was gathered, he began to repeat to the other Pharisees the news being bellowed up and down the streets.

— And that is the reason why we meet here! It is necessary to finish with this talk of “miracles”! – declared a master of the Law, stroking his long white beard.

— Might this Nazarene not be a prophet... or even the Messiah? – a younger man ventured to ask.

— Of course not! – interrupted his neighbour. – He is nothing but an imposter, who dares to defy our authority.

While the Sanhedrin erupted in discussion, Nicodemus watched and listened. Whether He was the Messiah or not, this Jesus intrigued and captivated him. He thought, “How I would like to talk with Him! If I say I am a ruler of the people, He will probably agree to speak to me. But if the other Pharisees find out, I will surely be expelled from the Sanhedrin...”

After the meeting, Nicodemus returned home and had his dinner. He overheard two servants talking as they arranged a platter of dates and other sweet fruits for his desert:

— I could not believe my eyes! And the most incredible part is that

the woman was cured on the spot! You have no idea how many teas the Pharisees have been prescribing her for years, to no avail! She had seen every doctor in the region...

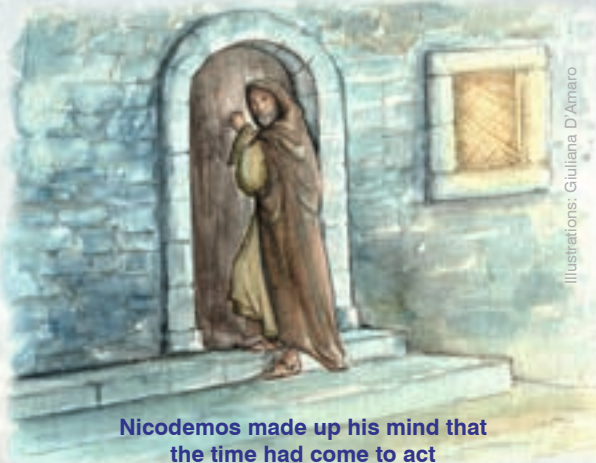
— That's amazing! There is something so kind about this Jesus, and at the same time, so awe-inspiring... When I saw Him entering a house the other day, I confess I was moved to tears.

As he listened intently, Nicodemus made up his mind that the time had come to act. When he finished eating, he covered himself with his cloak and, without saying a word to anyone, he slipped out under the cover of night.

While talking with Jesus, he felt like a different man! The words of the Master were so full of wisdom and mystery, and there was a sacredness in His very presence. His teaching held such authority that there could be no doubt: He was someone sent by God, whether the Sanhedrin liked it or not!

On the following day, while the Pharisee was on his way to the routine meeting with the most illustrious doctors of the Law, a friend of his fell into step with him and said:

— So tell me, Nicodemus: what is your opin-



**Nicodemus made up his mind that the time had come to act**

Illustrations: Giuliana D'Amico





ion about this Prophet that is going about stirring up the people?

— Well, I have heard many conflicting reports. Which is normal... after all, no one can please everyone.

— That is true... I know that the Sanhedrin has declared war against Him. But someone should approach this Man to find out what He really wants. With money and a little pressure, He could easily be brought under control. Have you ever met up with Him?

Nicodemus turned in the direction of a noisy ruckus behind them, gaining time to think about his answer. He did not want to lie, but he also did not want to commit himself to the Nazarene to the point of creating trouble for himself. Let Jesus live His own life, and he would continue to live his.

— It's hard not to meet up with Him, isn't it? He is always on the streets and in the synagogues, teaching... But let's talk later. Right now, I'm late.

The months passed, and the great Feast of Tabernacles arrived. The Pharisees had become even more enraged against Jesus and planned His death. Taking advantage of His visit to the Tem-

ple, they attempted to arrest Him, but without success.

Torn between his admiration for Jesus and his own interests, Nicodemus tried to find a way of defending Him before the Sanhedrin without risking his own position.

— But does our Law allow us to condemn a man before hearing him and knowing what he has done? – he asked with a nonchalant air.

He hoped he had found a happy medium that would allow him to protect Jesus without openly taking His side. Everyone, however, began to ridicule him in a threatening tone. Nicodemus, unsure of himself, fell silent.

One afternoon in the week before Passover, he received an urgent summons to the Sanhedrin. Caiaphas, the high priest, announced to them that one of Jesus' disciples had betrayed Him. The judgement would be that very night; all were to be present to condemn Him.

The dreaded moment had come for Nicodemus... Would he vote in favour of the Prophet's death? Or face the risk of dying with Him? Once again, he tried to shirk his responsibility: he returned home and decided not to appear at the tribunal. That way, he would have no part in the condemnation, but would also avoid testifying in His defence.

The next day, as he was taking some refreshment, Nicodemus heard the

cries of an approaching multitude. From a window, he saw a Man completely covered with wounds, carrying a heavy cross while the crowd mocked and insulted Him. It was Jesus. Just then He lifted His eyes and gave the Pharisee a look filled with goodness.

— I have killed Him! Soon He will be crucified because of me! Wretched man that I am! Could I have done anything worse? – Nicodemus groaned, and then wept at length.

Finally, he took a mixture of myrrh and aloes, and set out towards Calvary. As he walked, he felt overwhelmed with despair and remorse. But deep in his soul, he could still hear the echo of that promise he had heard in his youth: "My son, when you fall, do not be discouraged. Trust that there will always be a fatherly hand extended to help you."

He was not far from his destination when, at three in the afternoon, he felt the ground shake. The sky darkened as if it were night, indicating that Jesus had just died...

When Nicodemus reached Calvary, now almost deserted, the Body of Jesus was still nailed to the Cross. Standing near Him was Mary, His Mother. Feeling like a traitor, and lacking the courage to approach Her, he stopped at a certain distance, not knowing what to do. Then Our Lady called his name.

Falling on his knees before the Blessed Virgin, his eyes still wet with tears, Nicodemus heard Her say: "My son, what you did was indeed wrong. But you have a Mother who forgives you and wants to help you." The promise had been fulfilled yet again! Strengthened by Mary's gaze, Nicodemus arose, now ready to face any sacrifice to serve Jesus. ✨



**At three in the afternoon, Nicodemus felt the ground shake...**



# THE SAINTS OF EACH DAY

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

**St. Leo Luke**, abbot (†c. 900). He shone in the hermetic and monastic life, following the observance of the eastern monks in the hill country of Calabria.

**2. St. Chad**, Bishop (†672). He exercised his episcopal ministry in York, England, and later in Lichfield, where he built the cathedral, flanked by a monastery, to which he withdrew to pray.

**3. St. Anselm of Nonantola**, abbot (†803). He renounced the Duchy of Friuli to enter a monastery. He founded a hospital for pilgrims and a monastery in Nonantola, Italy, of which he later became abbot.

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

**Blessed Zoltan Lajos Mesz-lényi**, Bishop and martyr (†1951). Auxiliary Bishop of Esztergom, Hungary, he was deported to the concentration camp of Kistarcsa, where he died after eight months of unspeakable torture.

**5. St. Lucius I**, Pope (†254). Soon after ascending the pontifical throne, he was exiled by the Emperor Valerian. When he was able to return, he energetically fought against the Novatian heretics.

**6. St. Chrodegang**, Bishop (†766). He established that the clergy of the Diocese of Metz follow cloistered observance and an irreproachable rule of life. He was also distinguished by his promotion of liturgical chant.

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

**St. John Baptist Nam Chong-Sam**, martyr (†1866). Korean no-

ble and royal chamberlain who converted to Christianity and fell out of favour with the court. He was arrested, tortured and beheaded.

## 8. 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent.

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

**St. Humphrey**, Bishop (†871). He worked to unite and comfort his people after the destruction of Therouanne, France, by Norman invaders.

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

**St. Dominic Savio**, layman (†1857). Disciple of St. John Bosco at the Oratory of Turin. He died at fifteen years of age after having advanced swiftly along the path of sanctity.

**10. Blessed Jean-Joseph Lataste**, priest (†1869). French Dominican, founder of the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of Bethany.

**11. St. Constantine**, king and martyr (†sixth century). After committing murders and sacrilege, he converted to Christianity. He abandoned the throne of Cornwall to withdraw to an Irish monastery. After being ordained priest, he left on mission to Scotland, where he received the palm of martyrdom.

**12. St. Louis Orione**, priest (†1940). A student and spiritual disciple of St. John Bosco who went on to found the Little Work of Divine Providence. He died in San Remo, Italy.

**13. Blessed Françoise Tréhet**, virgin and martyr (†1794). Religious from the Congregation of Charity, she was guillotined

in Ernée during the French Revolution.

**14. Blessed Eve of Mont-Cornillon**, virgin (†c. 1265). Religious from the convent of Mont-Cornillon, in the vicinity of Liège, Belgium. She worked ardently, together with St. Juliana, to obtain from Urban IV the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi.

## 15. 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent.

**St. Louise de Marillac**, widow (†1660). She founded the Institute of the Daughters of Charity with St. Vincent de Paul.

**16. Blessed John Sordi**, Bishop and martyr (†1181). Noble from Cremona, he became a Benedictine religious and was exiled for his fidelity to the Pope. He was elected Bishop of Mantua and later of Vicenza. He died defending the liberty of the Church, killed by a hired assassin.

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

**St. Gabriel Lalemant**, priest and martyr (†1649). French Jesuit, missionary assistant of St. Jean de Brébeuf in Canada, alongside whom he heroically suffered martyrdom. (In Canada, Feast on September 26 together with the other North American Martyrs.)

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

**Blessed Celestina of the Mother of God**, virgin (†1925). Founded the Congregation of the Poor Daughters of St. Joseph Calasanz in Florence, Italy.

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





**St. Frances of Rome offers herself as an oblate to Our Lady, who has her receive Communion from St. Peter and consecrate herself in his hands - Monastery of Tor de' Specchi, Rome**

**Blessed Marcel Callo**, martyr (†1945). Young French layman sent to a concentration camp in Mauthausen, Austria for his membership in Catholic Associations. He died of exhaustion due to forced labour.

**20. Blessed Francisco of Jesus Mary and Joseph Palau y Quer**, priest (†1872). Religious of the Discalced Carmelite Order. He suffered violent persecutions during the exercise of his priestly ministry and, due to false accusations, was exiled to the Island of Ibiza. Providence favoured him with abundant mystical gifts and visions of future events in the Church.

**21. Holy Martyrs of Alexandria** (†339). They received the palm of martyrdom on Good Friday, when Arians and pagans invaded the churches where they were praying.

**22. 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent**, also called *Lætare* Sunday.

**St. Benvenuto Scotivoli**, Bishop (†1282). Franciscan, contemporary of St. Bonaventure, he was appointed Bishop of Osimo, Italy by Pope Urban IV.

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

**Blessed Peter O'Higgins**, priest and martyr (†1642). Dominican priest hanged without a trial in Ireland for refusing to deny the Catholic Faith.

**24. Blessed Diego José of Cádiz**, priest (†1801). Priest of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin of Andalusia, an intrepid defender of Church liberty.

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

**St. Dimas**. Having professed his faith in Our Lord at the supreme hour of the Passion, he merited to be recognized by the Church as "the good thief".

**26. St. Bercharius**, abbot (†685). He was stabbed on Holy Thursday by a monk whom he had reprimanded several times for his bad conduct. He died on Easter Sunday, after pardoning his assassin.

**27. Blessed Panacea De' Muzzi**, virgin and martyr (†1383). Italian shepherdess, she was murdered by her stepmother inside the church at fifteen years of age, while she prayed.

**28. Blessed Renée-Marie Feilla-treau**, martyr (†1794). Catholic laywoman guillotined during the French Revolution.

**29. 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent.**

**Blessed Berthold**, monk (†c. 1188). After leaving his military career, he became a religious and was elected prior of the Carmelites in Palestine.

**30. St. Julio Alvarez**, priest and martyr (†1927). Pastor of Mechoacanejo, Mexico, he was shot to death during the religious persecution in the country.

**31. St. Benjamin**, deacon and martyr (†c. 420). He was tortured and killed during the reign of Varahran V for persisting in preaching the Word of God in Persia.



# *As Audacious and Bold as a Lion*

Strong and majestic, a symbol of Jesus Christ, the lion could well characterize the steadfastness and combativeness that today's Catholics must have in defence of the Faith and Christian principles.



**Lorena Mello**

**W**hile some admire the agility and diversity of aquatic creatures, and others are spellbound by the multitude of birds that fill the air or enjoy lavishing tender care on domestic pets, there are those of a more adventurous leaning who are particularly fascinated by the contemplation of wild animals...

Although tastes vary in this matter and, within the feline family, the tiger triumphs for size, the vast majority of people – if not to say all – are enthused by the lion. Exalted for centuries by various civilizations, the figure of the lion surpasses the other inhabitants of the jungle in beauty, strength and majesty.

Of imposing bearing and elegant proportions, its mane looks like a

royal adornment, forming a kind of halo around the head. With its defiant gaze, it “pulverizes” its prey even before seizing it, evoking the idea of a vitality of spirit that transmits vitality to the body. It has a dominating gait, but when walking its four paws move in perfectly fluid succession, blending strength and grace. It appears to be in harmony with all of nature, constituting a masterpiece of the animal kingdom.

It is interesting to note that this is the only feline with gregarious habits. Within the pride, each has its specific function: while the female is in charge of hunting and caring for the young, the male demarcates the territory and defends the pride, making its loud roar resound over a radius of up to eight kilometres!

Because it is lighter and more agile, the female is a more successful hunter. The male lion's mane renders it highly visible to prey, always on the outlook for the threat of predators. With excellent night vision, six times more sensitive than that of the human eye, these cats usually hunt in packs, and their attack is fast and decisive. Once the goal has been attained and the meal is over, they majestically withdraw to rest with the serenity that follows a successful campaign.

It is not without reason, therefore, that the king of the beasts is depicted on shields and coats of arms, symbolizing strength, bravery and nobility. Even Sacred Scripture speaks of this intrepid animal to represent the triumph of Christ: “Weep not; lo, the



Reproduction



Stefan Vogt



Alexis Fotos

With its defiant gaze, the lion “pulverizes” its prey even before seizing it



Ivan Sinyako | Dreamstime.com



Ijaz Bhatti | Dreamstime.com



Mogens Holle | Dreamstime.com



Tracyevansphotography | Dreamstime.com

**How beautiful and glorious it is to resemble one of these felines in the struggle for the cause of God and of Our Lady!**

Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that He can open the scroll and its seven seals” (Rv 5:5).

In the Old Testament, God identifies Himself with this noble creature to illustrate His invincible zeal in defence of those who are His own: “As a lion or a young lion growls over his prey, and when a band of shepherds is called forth against him is not terrified by their shouting or daunted at their noise, so the Lord of hosts

will come down to fight upon Mount Zion and upon its hill” (Is 31:4).

*Christianus alter Christus.* If Jesus is the Lion of Judah, those who form His Mystical Body should strive to follow and imitate Him. Armed with faith and courage, full of zeal for the Most High, they have nothing to fear in this undertaking. In the face of any difficulty, however arduous and complicated it may be, “the righteous are bold as a lion” (cf. Pr 28:1).

How beautiful and glorious it is to resemble one of these felines in the struggle for the cause of God and of Our Lady! We know, however, how weak and inconstant we are... Sensing our own lack of strength for this fierce battle, let us pray confidently, asking for the grace of steadfastness in our resolution to defend and exalt the truth of Christ before the world. When we least expect it, God will transform us into fearless warriors under the command of the Lion of Judah! ✧



Statue of St. Joseph  
Private collection of  
Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias

*St. Joseph has already been proclaimed Patron of the Universal Church, but he has not yet shown to humanity the strength of his arm. “Tempus faciendi!” The days are at hand in which, under the protection of the virginal father of Jesus, God’s chosen ones will perform great feats in order to establish the Reign of Christ on earth, the Reign of peace and of purity and, why not say, as well, the Reign of Mary and Joseph.*

CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio.

São José: quem o conhece?...

[St. Joseph: Who Knows Him?...]

São Paulo: Lumen Sapientiæ, 2017, p. 27.

