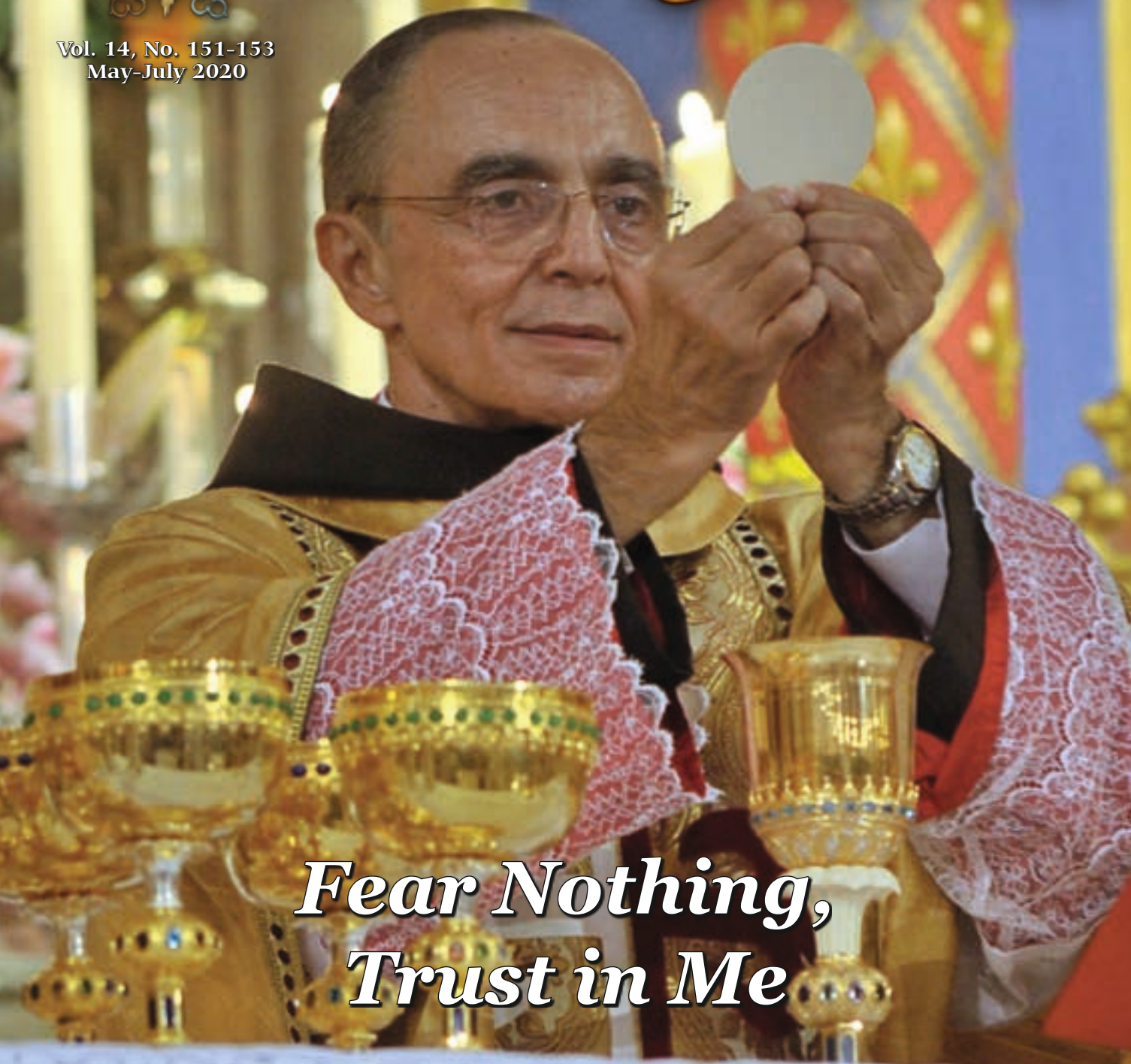




# HERALDS OF THE GOSPEL

Vol. 14, No. 151-153  
May-July 2020



*Fear Nothing,  
Trust in Me*

## *Sanctified by Mary's Word*

*One excellent way to become acquainted with Mary's spirit and her Immaculate Heart is to study the life of St. John the Baptist. Since he was sanctified in St. Elizabeth's womb by a word of Our Lady, we see that She, in a mysterious way, communicated her spirit to him there. And everything the Precursor accomplished in his life was a result of that initial grace received and constantly intensified through her prayers.*

*We can then see St. John the Baptist as the austere ascetic, the preacher of the Lamb of God that was to come, and as the hero who faces Herod and dies as a martyr, sublime in greatness and serenity. This is one of the facets of Our Lady's spirit.*

*Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira*



# HERALDS OF THE GOSPEL

Vol. 14, No. 151-153, May-July 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

<i>Our Readers Write</i> .....	4		<i>We Are God's Artillery!</i>	34
<i>The Eucharist, Heart of the Church (Editorial)</i> .....	5		<i>Highlights of Dona Lucilia's Intercession - Devastating Disaster, Prodigious Cure</i>	36
 <i>The Voice of the Popes – The Mystery of the Holy Eucharist</i> .....	6		<i>Heralds Worldwide</i>	40
 <i>Gospel Commentary – God's Kingdom, a Kingdom of Warfare!</i> .....	8		<i>Church and World Events</i>	43
 <i>Christ in Us Through the Holy Eucharist</i> .....	14		<i>Story for Children... The Lion and the Ant</i>	46
 <i>Jesus Is There: Why Doubt?</i> .....	18		<i>The Saints of Each Day</i>	48
 <i>Commentaries on the Hail Holy Queen – Divine Music of Marian Harmonies</i> .....	20		<i>A Palace or a Cave?</i>	50
 <i>Who is the "Author" of Devotion to Our Lady?</i> .....	28			
 <i>St. Boniface of Mainz – Father of the Germanic Peoples</i> .....	30			



## Heralds of the Gospel Magazine Online

Get access to the magazine content directly from your cell phone

Access: [catholicmagazine.news](http://catholicmagazine.news)





# OUR READERS WRITE

## ***I FEEL SUSTAINED BY WHAT YOU OFFER***

I am a teacher, married and with children; I have read your magazine for some time, because I find it very beautiful and edifying, with a presentation and, above all, content very difficult to find in the Catholic press today!

I very much appreciate the perspective of the articles, which always deal with an existential theme, that is, a vision of Christianity that cannot be reduced merely to the horizontal dimension, but which deals with the meaning of life and death and therefore proposes a Christianity based precisely on... Christ! It seems obvious, but today one often “forgets” Him to do things that may be good, but have no roots in the depth of one’s interior life.

Forgive me for the long introduction, which was only to say that I feel sustained by what you offer in the pages of the magazine: by the edifying stories and the lives of the Saints, presenting them in such a way that they do not seem very far away from us, but precisely emphasizing the hardships of their lives and the “solution” they found in prayer, in abandonment and in short ... in the true Faith.

I am writing precisely because I would like to ask how I can obtain all the lives of Saints already published in the magazine. I know there are books like Fr. Sicari’s, but what I really want are your articles! Where to find them? Can I receive them by e-mail or can I find them somewhere else?

Thank you for the good you do and keep forging ahead!

*Maria Cardone  
Bari – Italy*

## ***INSPIRING PHOTOS, INFORMATION AND DEVOTIONS***

Your magazines are first class. They are illustrated with beautiful photos, filled with members of the association demonstrating so much reverence, completed with informative and devotional sections, all so inspiring.

After reading them, I make sure to share each issue with members of my parish.

*Fabiola Bonome  
Upland (CA) – USA*

## ***YOUNG PEOPLE ALWAYS SMILING AND WELL DRESSED***

Regarding your magazines, all the articles are worthy of mention, because their authors seem to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, God the Father and God the Son. The hard work and dedication involved are noticeable; my thanks to all of you. This past February’s magazine seemed even more outstanding to me, with its simple and clear articles of a very religious nature, which have remained in my memory. I’ll read it again, for even deeper comprehension.

I admire all your initiatives in the education of so many young people and adults, always smiling and well dressed, with a dignified and compassionate demeanour. May this work last forever and spread to other countries.

*José Moreira Ribeiro  
Tomar – Portugal*

## ***“TWO GAZES MEET”***

Reading the *Heralds of the Gospel* magazine, I have experienced what wonderful ideas it conveys, encouraging us to follow the good path. It helps us to understand many things, small details that we sometimes overlook, for we do not stop and think or reflect on how great and beautiful it is

to serve God. And reading this magazine has awakened in my soul a strong desire to serve Him more and more.

It is also good to see how the *Heralds* are growing and spreading all over the world, always doing good to everyone for love of Christ, thus awakening the desire of many people to embrace the good and be like the *Heralds*, doing everything for love.

I remember an article in the magazine that caught my attention some time ago, entitled “Two Gazes Meet”... It showed how beautiful human communication is through the exchange of gazes; exemplified by the gazes of Our Lady and Jesus Christ, with such love that it cannot be described in words.

*Joice Priscila de Araújo  
Osasco – Brazil*

## ***“THANK YOU MSGR. JOÃO!”***

For me, this magazine is a real Catechism for the present time. We need to spread it even more! Thank you, *Heralds*! Thank you, Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias for this precious work, which we love so much, and which is done for the whole world.

*Ediberto Nascimento  
Italva – Brazil*

## ***MY SPIRITUAL LIFE HAS IMPROVED***

Thanks be to God for the great work of the *Heralds*. I feel blessed to receive the *Heralds of the Gospel* magazine.

Since I have been reading it my spiritual life has improved. The Lord has blessed me with so many good things. My prayers have never gone unanswered and I praise the Lord every day for His goodness. You are doing a great job producing the *Heralds of the Gospel* magazine. Keep up the good work.

*Theresa Logan  
Ajax (ON) – Canada*

## THE EUCHARIST, HEART OF THE CHURCH

**E**rected by Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church depends entirely on the life of its Divine Founder, in which humanity participates through the Sacraments. The vitality of the Mystical Body lies in the grace they transmit, especially through the Holy Eucharist.

A most ardent devotee of this Sacrament, Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira affirmed that it is thanks to the mysterious presence of Our Lord in the Sacred Species “that the history of the world unfolds, virtue increases and the Church grows, and grows even when she seems to be dwindling” (Conference, 3/4/1969). He was also convinced that if there were only “one priest to say Mass, one consecrated Host, and one believer with faith and devotion in relation to that Host” (Conversation, 4/10/1988), this would be sufficient to achieve not only a restoration of society, but to give rise to new wonders, superior to all those that previously existed.

Based on renowned theologians, Dr. Plinio explained that “the Sacrifice of the Mass has such an inestimable and infinite importance that, literally, if on a given day it ceased to be celebrated, God’s justice would fall upon the world and destroy everything” (Conference, 8/4/1971).

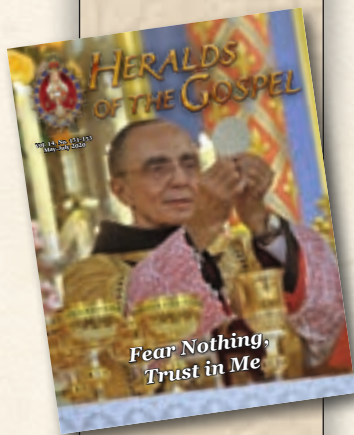
This certainty led him to the conclusion that the truly vital point in the struggle between good and evil “is that many Masses be celebrated, and that they be fittingly celebrated by the priests, and that the faithful participate in them, also fittingly” (Conversation, 22/8/1988). If there were widespread Eucharistic devotion in the world, society would be different, for everything depends, in the last analysis, on our love for God, which is demonstrated precisely in times of trial.

Today, as social discontent and concerns about climate change escalate, who is seeking to assess the state of our devotion to the Blessed Sacrament? Do we still hold Our Lord as the vital centre of our existence, or are we indifferently growing accustomed to a world without Jesus Christ and without supernatural life?

After posing this question, we might further ask: does He not have much to lament in our days? Let us remember that one of the first forewarnings of God’s punishment is His withdrawal from the midst of men, heeding their sad wish to live on a merely earthly plane...

If the power of the Eucharist is infinite and constitutes the true life of the Church, all events will gravitate around this Sacrament. Thus, no matter how small the number of its authentic devotees, the clock of God and of history will always depend on faithful, steadfast and fervent souls: those who ardently love the Holy Eucharist.

Therefore, are we not living, in these troubled times, the realization of the prophetic dream of St. John Bosco, who saw the salvation of the Church in the twofold devotion to the Eucharist and Mary? ✧



*Msgr. João  
Scognamiglio  
Clá Dias, EP,  
celebrating the  
Holy Mass in Our  
Lady of the Rosary  
Basilica, 3/4/2010*

Photo: Sérgio Miyazaki



# *The Mystery of the Holy Eucharist*



All the faithful should be aware that to participate in the Eucharistic Sacrifice is their chief duty and supreme dignity, with such earnestness and concentration that they may be united as closely as possible with the High Priest.

**T**he mystery of the most Holy Eucharist which Christ, the High Priest instituted, and which He commands to be continually renewed in the Church by His ministers, is the culmination and centre, as it were, of the Christian religion. We consider it opportune in speaking about the crowning act of the Sacred Liturgy, to delay for a little while and call your attention, Venerable Brethren, to this most important subject. [...]

## *True and proper sacrifice*

The august Sacrifice of the Altar, then, is no mere empty commemoration of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, but a true and proper act of sacrifice, whereby the High Priest by an unbloody immolation offers himself a most acceptable Victim to the Eternal Father, as He did upon the Cross. [...]

The Priest is the same, Jesus Christ, whose sacred Person His minister represents. Now the minister, by reason of the sacerdotal consecration which he has received, is made like to the High Priest and possesses the power of performing actions in virtue of Christ's very person. Wherefore in his priestly ac-

tivity he in a certain manner "lends his tongue, and gives his hand" to Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Likewise the Victim is the same, namely, our divine Redeemer in His human nature with His true Body and Blood. The manner, however, in which Christ is offered is different.

On the Cross He completely offered himself and all His sufferings to God, and the immolation of the Victim was brought about by the bloody death, which He underwent of His free will. But on the Altar, by reason of the glorified state of His human nature, "death shall have no more dominion over Him" (Rom 6:9), and so the shedding of His Blood is impossible; still, according to the plan of divine wisdom, the sacrifice of our Redeemer is shown forth in an admirable manner by external signs which are the symbols of His death.

For by the "transubstantiation" of bread into the Body of Christ and of wine into His Blood, His Body and Blood are both really present: now the Eucharistic Species under which He is present symbolize the actual separation of His Body and Blood. Thus the commemorative representation of His death, which

actually took place on Calvary, is repeated in every Sacrifice of the Altar, seeing that Jesus Christ is symbolically shown by separate symbols to be in a state of victimhood.

## *Praise, expiation, impetration and thanksgiving*

Moreover, the appointed ends are the same. The first of these is to give glory to the Heavenly Father. From His birth to His death, Jesus Christ burned with zeal for the divine glory; and the offering of His Blood upon the Cross rose to Heaven in an odour of sweetness. To perpetuate this praise, the members of the Mystical Body are united with their divine Head in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and with Him, together with the Angels and Archangels, they sing immortal praise to God and give all honour and glory to the Father Almighty.

The second end is duly to give thanks to God. Only the divine Redeemer, as the eternal Father's most beloved Son whose immense love He knew, could offer Him a worthy return of gratitude. This was His intention and desire at the Last Supper when He "gave thanks." He did not cease to do so when hanging upon

the Cross, nor does He fail to do so in the august Sacrifice of the Altar, which is an act of thanksgiving or a “Eucharistic” act; since this “is truly meet and just, right and availing unto salvation.”<sup>2</sup>

The third end proposed is that of expiation, propitiation and reconciliation. Certainly, no one was better fitted to make satisfaction to Almighty God for all the sins of men than was Christ. Therefore, He desired to be immolated upon the Cross “as a propitiation for our sins, not for ours only but also for those of the whole world” (1 Jn 2:2) and likewise He daily offers Himself upon our altars for our redemption, that we may be rescued from eternal damnation and admitted into the company of the elect. This He does, not for us only who are in this mortal life, but also “for all who rest in Christ, who have gone before us with the sign of Faith and repose in the sleep of peace;”<sup>3</sup> for whether we live, or whether we die “still we are not separated from the one and only Christ.”<sup>4</sup>

The fourth end, finally, is that of impetration. Man, being the prodigal son, has made bad use of and dissipated the goods which he received from his heavenly Father. Accordingly, he has been reduced to the utmost poverty and to extreme degradation. However, Christ on the Cross, “offering prayers and supplications with a loud cry and tears [...], has been heard for His reverence” (Heb 5:7). Likewise upon the altar He is our mediator with God in the same efficacious manner, so that we may be filled with every blessing and grace. [...]

### ***Salvation flows from the Head to the members***

In a certain sense, it can be said that on Calvary Christ built a font of purification and salvation which He filled with the Blood He shed; but if men do not bathe in it and there

wash away the stains of their iniquities, they can never be purified and saved.

The cooperation of the faithful is required so that sinners may be individually purified in the Blood of the Lamb. For although, speaking generally, Christ reconciled by His painful death the whole human race with the Father, He wished that all should approach and be drawn to His Cross, especially by means of the Sacraments and the Eucharistic Sacrifice, to obtain the salutary fruits produced by Him upon it.

Through this active and individual participation, the members of the Mystical Body not only become daily more like to their divine Head, but the life flowing from the Head is imparted to the members, so that we can each repeat the words of St. Paul, “With Christ I am nailed to the Cross: I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Gal 2:19-20).

We have already explained sufficiently and of set purpose on another occasion, that Jesus Christ when dying on the Cross, bestowed upon His Church, as a completely gratuitous gift, the immense treasure of the Redemption. But when it is a question of distributing this treasure, He not only commits the work of sanctification to His Immaculate Spouse, but also wishes that, to a certain extent, sanctity should derive from her activity.

### ***There may be no cessation of our hymn of praise and thanksgiving***

The august Sacrifice of the Altar is, as it were, the supreme instrument whereby the merits won by the divine Redeemer upon the Cross are distributed to the faithful: “as often as this commemorative sacrifice is offered, there is wrought the work of our Redemption.”<sup>5</sup>

This, however, so far from lessening the dignity of the actual sac-

rifice on Calvary, rather proclaims and renders more manifest its greatness and its necessity, as the Council of Trent declares.<sup>6</sup> Its daily immolation reminds us that there is no salvation except in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Gal 6:14) and that God himself wishes that there should be a continuation of this sacrifice “from the rising of the sun till the going down thereof” (Mal 1:11), so that there may be no cessation of the hymn of praise and thanksgiving which man owes to God, seeing that he required His help continually and has need of the Blood of the Redeemer to remit sin which challenges God’s justice.

It is, therefore, desirable, Venerable Brethren, that all the faithful should be aware that to participate in the Eucharistic Sacrifice is their chief duty and supreme dignity, and that not in an inert and negligent fashion, giving way to distractions and day-dreaming, but with such earnestness and concentration that they may be united as closely as possible with the High Priest, according to the Apostle, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:5). And together with Him and through Him let them make their oblation, and in union with Him let them offer up themselves.

Excerpts from: PIUS XII.  
*Mediator Dei*, 20/11/1947

<sup>1</sup> ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM. *In Ioannem*. Homily LXXXVI, n.4.

<sup>2</sup> ROMAN MISSAL. Preface.

<sup>3</sup> ROMAN MISSAL. Canon of the Mass.

<sup>4</sup> ST. AUGUSTINE. *De Trinitate*. L.XIII, c.19.

<sup>5</sup> ROMAN MISSAL. Secret of the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. COUNCIL OF TRENT. *Session XXII*, c.2 and can.4.

## GOSPEL

<sup>24</sup> Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying: “The Kingdom of Heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. <sup>25</sup> While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. <sup>26</sup> When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well. <sup>27</sup> The slaves of the householder came to him and said, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?’ <sup>28</sup> He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ His slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ <sup>29</sup> He replied, ‘No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. <sup>30</sup> Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, “First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn.””

<sup>31</sup> He proposed another parable to them. “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. <sup>32</sup> It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the ‘birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.”

<sup>33</sup> He spoke to them another parable. “The Kingdom of Heaven is like yeast that a

woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened.”

<sup>34</sup> All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables. He spoke to them only in parables, <sup>35</sup> to fulfill what had been said through the prophet: I will open my mouth in parables, I will announce what has lain hidden from the foundation of the world.

<sup>36</sup> Then, dismissing the crowds, He went into the house. His disciples approached Him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.” <sup>37</sup> He said in reply, “He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, <sup>38</sup> the field is the world, the good seed the children of the Kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, <sup>39</sup> and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are Angels. <sup>40</sup> Just as weeds are collected and burned up

with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send His Angels, and they will collect out of His Kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers. <sup>42</sup> They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. <sup>43</sup> Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear” (Mt 13:24-43).



Detail of an engraving by Jacob Matham and Abraham Bloemaert (c.1652)

Reproduction



# God's Kingdom, a Kingdom of Warfare!

The children of light, wary of the enemy who sows weeds around and within them, must above all trust in the power of grace, which makes the good plants grow and become stronger in the midst of combat.



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

## **I – PRUDENCE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST EVIL**

God reveals the mysteries of the Kingdom to the little ones, says the Gospel acclamation of this 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (cf. Mt 11:25), indicating to us the perspective from which we must analyse the three parables contained in it. In this context, the term “little ones” does not denote children, or persons of small importance or intelligence, but those who know how to recognize the infinite distance that exists between the condition of a creature and the omnipotence of God, and live in the joy of depending entirely on Him.

Those who have this disposition of soul easily understand the lofty principles which, in the passage of St. Matthew selected for this Liturgy, Our Lord transmits to us through simple figures, taken from the everyday reality of that time: weeds and wheat, mustard seeds and yeast.

The first parable, narrated to the crowd and later explained to the disciples, is sometimes the object of an absurd interpretation, fruit of insufficient study and meditation or, perhaps, of

the little attention given to the inspirations of grace. According to some, the Divine Master employed the image of the weeds uprooted from the field only at harvest time to demonstrate the futility of any fight against evil on the part of the good. However, what Jesus emphasizes in this passage is the need to be vigilant in the face of the enemy, who is relentless in the pursuit of our perdition, and to deal with him prudently, awaiting the most opportune moment to eradicate him, as will become clear in what follows.

When we consider the lesson of patience and prudence contained in this parable, the question often arises: why does God allow evil to exist alongside the good? Among other reasons, because this is an essential condition to the state of trial, for both men and Angels. This is what the perfect prayer taught by the Saviour suggests: when we pray the Our Father we ask for the grace to never succumb to temptations, but we do not beg for them to cease.

In addition to giving us the opportunity to acquire merits through resistance and persever-

*Frequently,  
the question  
arises: why  
does God  
allow evil  
to exist  
alongside  
the good?*



ance, temptations are an element indispensable for certain aspects of God’s grandeur to be manifest. He brought forth the universe out of nothing for His own glory, desiring to lead intelligent creatures – Angels and men – to participate in His infinite happiness. However, each one must first be put to the test, according to which the Creator will show His mercy and justice by granting the due reward or punishment – in other words, Heaven or hell – so clearly described in the final verses of today’s Gospel.

Thus, a picture begins to take form, highlighting the indispensable role of combat for the sanctification of the children of light. It is a struggle guided by the virtue of prudence, which indicates the shortest and most effective way, indeed, the wisest way, to reach the end.

Let us analyse each parable from this supernatural perspective.

## II – THREE LESSONS IN STRUGGLE AND CONFIDENCE IN THE POWER OF GRACE

As St. Matthew records at the beginning of his chapter 13, Our Lord told the parables about the Kingdom the same day He had argued with the scribes and Pharisees about the healing of a blind and dumb man (cf. Mt 12:22-45). On that occasion, He emphasized the gravity of sin against the Holy Spirit and prophesied the condemnation of that “evil and adulterous generation” (12:39). He also explained to the people His predilection for those who do the will of the Father, pointing to

the disciples and saying: “Here are my mother and my brothers!” (12:49).

Next, the Evangelist relates that Jesus “went out of the house and sat beside the sea” (13:1). In the meantime, such a crowd gathered that He had to get into a boat while the crowd stood on the shore, in the manner of an amphitheatre. The passage chosen for today’s Liturgy follows immediately upon the explanation of the parable of the sower (cf. Mt 13:4-23), contemplated the previous Sunday.

### *In this life, there is both good and bad seed*

<sup>24</sup> Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying: “The Kingdom of Heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. <sup>25</sup> While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off.”

At first sight, the account of Our Lord contained nothing new. The appearance of tares in the cultivation of wheat was commonplace, and everyone knew the similarity between the two plants. In proposing such an image as a figure of the Kingdom of Heaven, He wanted to draw the attention of his listeners to this great truth: there is always a higher lesson behind the common realities of life.

Let us underscore an important detail here: the weeds did not spring up spontaneously, but were sown by the enemy “all through the wheat,” which had also been planted in the soil by the

*The weeds did not spring up spontaneously, but were sown by the enemy*



Wheat harvesting, by François-Louis Français – Douai Charterhouse Museum (France)

Reproduction



owner of the field. There is, therefore, a close relationship between the devil and his followers, much inferior, however, to the union that is established between God and the elect. It is up to these to take the covenant offered by the Lord seriously, so as not to be devoured by the tares.

<sup>26</sup> “When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well. <sup>27</sup> The slaves of the householder came to him and said, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?’ <sup>28a</sup> He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’”

The scene set by Jesus dispels a certain optimistic outlook about our existence in this world. There is in society a mixture of good and bad seed that cannot be eliminated and very often only becomes noticeable when both have grown. And such is the profusion of weeds sown by the enemy that the good plants become a reduced portion in their midst.

Moreover, each one of us carries weed seeds within ourselves, whether they be bad inclinations, temptations or even uncertainties and afflictions which the devil exploits to disturb us, and which we must resist by not allowing them to dominate us.

***The fight: distinguishing characteristic of the Kingdom***

<sup>28b</sup> His slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ <sup>29</sup> He replied, ‘No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. <sup>30</sup> Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, “First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”

The slaves’ attitude represents the mistaken mentality of those who think that the ideal conditions for the growth of God’s children in the field of this world would consist of sweetness and delights, peace and the complete absence of adversaries. But “*militia est vita hominis super terram* – the life of man upon earth is a warfare” (Job 7:1). The Kingdom of God is a kingdom of constant struggle and combat! And the very

struggle between the weeds and the wheat within us will last until the moment when, like St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort on his deathbed, we can say: “Finally, I will sin no more!”<sup>31</sup>

By living in the midst of the weeds without making concessions to or letting themselves be influenced by them, the good evince the power of vigilance and prayer in the battle against the temptations and assaults of the enemy. Whenever we request it, grace is given to us in abundance; even to those who do not pray, God dispenses sufficient grace for salvation. If we are determined to practise virtue, we will not be shaken or harmed by any obstacle to this interior decision, but on the contrary, we will be strengthened by it.

It is interesting to note that at the time of the harvest, the wheat is distinguished without difficulty from the tares: the latter are pulled up first and destined for the fire, and only afterwards is the wheat gathered into the barn. The certainty of God’s infallible judgement, which will separate the good from the bad at the end of the world by granting to each the deserved reward or punishment, encourages us to have confidence. As long as we remain on the right path and strive to respond to grace, He will not allow evil to suffocate and destroy us.

After this parable, the Divine Master proposes two other metaphors of the Kingdom, one suited to capturing the attention of the male public and the second of greater interest to the women present there.

***The result attained by those who are faithful***

<sup>31</sup> He proposed another parable to them. “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. <sup>32</sup> It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the ‘birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.’”

Small, almost insignificant, the mustard seed is remarkable for the speed of its growth and the proportions it attains when placed in conditions suited to its development. It thus presents itself as a symbol of the Kingdom of God, both in its visible manifestation – the Holy Church – and in the discreet action of grace within hearts. From

*At the time of harvest, the wheat can be easily distinguished from the tares*



a small group of twelve Apostles, the Church expanded throughout the whole world; similarly, whoever is faithful to what he receives from Providence, as weak and lacking he may be in natural qualities, will become great in spirit, full of supernatural gifts, and capable of supporting and helping others.

It is worthwhile to focus on one detail: the mustard seed only sprouts and develops with such vigour because it is deposited in the earth. If, as soon as the stalk appeared, we were to remove it from the ground and place it on a clean cloth, it would wither completely and die in a few hours. In this regard, the comparison employed by Our Lord reminds us of the importance of avoiding environments that do not favour our sanctification. As promising as our vitality may be, it will be of no avail if we do not flee from near occasions of sin and seek to progress in union with God. On the contrary, if we have a close connection with the Creator and, consequently, a true aversion to all that leads us away from Him, we will continually receive the stimulus, the support and the strength to sustain us on our journey towards perfection.

<sup>33</sup> He spoke to them another parable. “The Kingdom of Heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened.”

This parable includes the same lesson as the previous one: from a seemingly small cause, a much greater effect emerges. The dough rises simply because it is leavened; the action of the yeast is all that it takes. This is how God acts in souls: when He calls someone of minimal value in the eyes of the world – just like a mustard seed or a measure of yeast – and the person corresponds to grace, the fruits of his apostolate, however great the difficulties faced, will be copious. Of course, human qualities and talents can help, but the most important part of a supernatural work is the intervention of Providence.

<sup>34</sup> All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables. He spoke to them only in parables, <sup>35</sup> to fulfill what had been said through the prophet: I will open my mouth in parables, I will an-

nounce what has lain hidden from the foundation of the world.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, being God, possessed a perfect and eternal knowledge of all things and, at the beginning of His public life, He revealed wonders hitherto hidden to men. By referring to this passage from Psalm 77 as a proclamation of the Redeemer’s manner of teaching, St. Matthew attests that He was the realization of the Messianic grandeur prophesied in the Old Testament.

*Two opposite paths, two eternal destinies*

<sup>36</sup> Then, dismissing the crowds, He went into the house. His disciples approached Him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.” <sup>37</sup> He said in reply, “He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, <sup>38</sup> the field is the world, the good seed the children of the Kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, <sup>39</sup> and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are Angels.”

At the end of the preaching, Our Lord returns to the house, where the disciples ask Him to explain the meaning of the parable of the weeds. In all naturalness He then clarifies, emphasizing the final destiny of the two forces that confront one another on the field of this world: the Kingdom of God is made up of the children of light, who will enjoy a happy eternity, but among them are also the wicked, who at the end of time will be plunged into hell together with the demons.

Jesus “sows good seed”: it is He who calls all men to benefit from His redeeming Blood and to tread the path of holiness, reserving special graces for them so that, even if they are weak, they may remain faithful throughout life.

On the other hand, there are those who “are the children of the evil one,” that is, those who have decided to forsake virtue and follow the path of sin. The one who thus leads them astray, making them into weeds, is satan himself.

<sup>40</sup> “Just as weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send His Angels, and they will collect out of His Kingdom all who cause others to sin and

*Jesus calls all men to benefit from His redeeming Blood and to tread the path of holiness*

all evildoers. <sup>42</sup>They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. <sup>43</sup>Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear.”

It will be the mission of the Angels to uproot from the Kingdom all that belongs to the devil, which means to extirpate not only those who embrace evil, but also “all who cause others to sin.” The expression “fiery furnace” suggests a pleonasm, but Our Lord uses it to reinforce the idea of the intensity of the flames of hell, which will not be extinguished for all eternity. It is an intelligent fire, nourished by God, capable of burning without consuming and in the exact measure determined by divine justice for each condemned person.

The “wailing and grinding of teeth” of the damned, whose bodies, reflecting the misfortune of the soul, will resurrect opaque, jet-black and foul-smelling, is in contrast to the happiness of the Blessed, who will resurrect shining with light and glory, resplendent as the sun.

### III – THE INSIGNIA OF OUR PASSAGE ON EARTH

Explained by Our Lord in the parable of the weeds and the wheat, warfare is the insignia of our passage on earth. Those who are aware of this truth live full of joy and are not disturbed when evildoers arise with destructive hatred, for they know that the vitality of the good comes from God Himself. Therefore, when we witness the weeds attacking the wheat, we must reject the least thought of distrust, sadness or discouragement. On the contrary, we must maintain the conviction of our advantage as God’s warriors in the face of those who have been planted by the enemy.

A great help in never forfeiting that hope lies in not losing sight, on our interior horizon, of the events that will close the history of humanity. We live in time, and the small episodes of daily life affect us, sometimes disturbing us, but all of this passes. On the day of Judgement, it will be our love for Him who sowed us and the bounty with which we give back to Him for the sap He infused into us and the care He gave us that will count.

In the most arduous moments of the fight against evil, let us keep in mind that our prayer



Our Lord preaching  
Church of St. Martha, Sarasota (Florida)

Angels Ferreira

*When we witness the weeds attacking the wheat, we must reject the least thought of distrust, sadness or discouragement*

is always heard by Heaven. God may delay in responding, but He will never abandon us, especially when we ask Him to vanquish the weeds that have germinated within us. Let us remember that He is Integrity and will not break the covenant established with those who confide in the omnipotence of His forgiveness; He is Goodness and continually wants to do good to us; He is our Redeemer and has promised us a glorious resurrection, leaving us as a pledge the “leaven” that not even the Angels can receive: the Eucharist.

In short, today’s Liturgy opens a path of infinite mercy, goodness and forgiveness granted to us by God, provided we recognize our littleness and know how to praise Him not only with our lips but also with our actions, striving for His glory on this earth. ✧

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ABAD, SJ, Camilo María. Introducción general. In: ST. LOUIS-MARIE GRIGNION DE MONTFORT. *Obras*. Madrid: BAC, 1954, p.66.



# Christ in Us Through the Holy Eucharist

In Communion, Our Lord Jesus Christ comes into contact with us in a very special way: soul to soul! As a loving Father and infinitely powerful Physician, He wants to forgive and heal us.

**Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira**



**W**hen I was a boy, children were asked, in catechism classes, if they believed that Our Lord Jesus Christ was really present in the Holy Eucharist. They were supposed to give an answer that still echoes in my memory today. It was very beautiful, like all the responses from the catechism: “I believe that He is present, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.”

In order to receive Holy Communion well, we must remember the following truth: we do not see Our Lord Jesus Christ, but He is present in the Blessed Eucharist as He was in the House of Nazareth, in Bethany – with Martha and Mary – in the sacred arms of the Blessed Virgin or on the Cross.

And in Communion, this same Jesus enters within us.

### *“Caro Christi, caro Mariæ”*

What is the power of the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in us when we receive Communion?

Let us imagine Our Lord in the immaculate and most pure womb of

the Virgin Mary. Being God, from the very first moment of His Incarnation He possessed intelligence, maintained a direct, sublime and unfathomable communication with the Blessed Trinity, and continually received the worship of His Mother, who knew that the Redeemer was present within Her.

During the months of gestation, Our Lady transmitted to Him elements for the constitution of His Body, and made increasingly greater acts of adoration and love, because

*Our Lord is present  
in the Eucharist  
as He was in the  
arms of the Blessed  
Virgin or raised  
on the Cross*

She was aware of the process which He was undergoing. The Sacred Flesh and Blood of Jesus were the immaculate flesh and blood of Mary Most Holy.

“*Caro Christi, caro Mariæ,*” the theologians say: the Flesh of Jesus Christ is the flesh of Mary. The physical presence of Our Lord in the immaculate womb of the Blessed Virgin was so intimate that it established as it were an interpenetration of souls, just as there was an interpenetration of bodies. And this made His presence extraordinarily fruitful in sustaining even more that luminous and crystalline peak of holiness which was Our Lady.

### *Jesus Christ present within us*

Through the analogy with the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, we can then understand the Eucharistic presence within us.

Our Lord enters into us and, as long as the Sacred Species remain within us without being corrupted by

the process of digestion, He has an effect upon our whole being. And as we are composed of body and soul, He mysteriously enters into sanctifying contact with our soul. This is the extraordinary beatitude that each one of us receives at the moment of Communion!

In order to understand this action of Our Lord upon us during Communion, let us recall a very beautiful fact, narrated by the Gospel.

As Jesus walked along, a sick woman who wished to be healed, seeing the Divine Master surrounded by that a dense crowd trying to hear and see Him or to be freed from some illness, approached from behind and touched His sacred tunic. At that moment Jesus turned and asked, "Who touched Me?" The Gospel says that He felt power had gone forth from Him and passed on to someone else (cf. Mk 5:25-30).

In other words, He perceived that a force – in this case, of course, it was a vital force – had left Him and was transmitted to that woman who had been healed. Now, if a person with faith, touching His tunic, could be healed, what does it mean to receive Him entirely within us? It is a grace that cannot be fathomed.

### *Soul-to-soul contact*

Imagine a person who goes to someone else's house every day to talk. If the visitor is someone distinguished, noble, eminent or holy, he will honour that house. However, much more important than that will be the soul-to-soul relationship established between the two. In conversation, something of the talent, nobility, excellence, virtues or holiness of the visitor's soul is communicated to the host.

To an immensely greater degree, Holy Communion transmits these goods to us, because Our Lord has a much more intimate relationship with us than a visitor to our house.

Entering into our body and having this contact of soul is like interpenetration.

The Gospel tells us about the various attitudes of Our Lord. Those that touch me most are of two kinds. One is when He addresses the Eternal Father: His words are so beautiful, so humble. He is God, but also Man. And if we saw a man like us praying to the Father in that way, with that humility and, at the same time, with that intimacy, we would feel ourselves inserted into that beam of light, almost carried into the interior of the Most Holy Trinity.

For me, the prayers of Our Lord are more beautiful than His sermons and all that He did. It is natural, because speaking to the Eternal Father He would say more beautiful things than to men – to whom He made such admirable revelations that by the end of the world we will not have finished studying them.

Let us suppose, in addition to praying, that He looked at and addressed words to Our Lady – for me, this is the second most touching attitude. The last glance of the Re-

deemer at Her from the height of the Cross, what a wonderful thing! We will never understand the splendour of this exchange of gazes!

It is necessary, therefore, to consider who we are about to receive and the immense honour, the incalculable benefit granted to us by Him who thus enters into us and deigns to establish such a union with us.

### *Loving visit*

We should not only have the feeling of honour, but also of goodness. Our Lord, in the Holy Eucharist, remains alone for hours and hours,

*If a person with faith could be healed, what does it mean to receive Him entirely within us?*



Cure of the woman suffering a flow of blood – Almería Cathedral, Spain; previous page, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament – Church of Sts. Claudius and Andrew of the Burgundians, Rome

# The Supreme Devotion

Eucharistic piety occupied the primary place in Dr. Plinio's spirituality. The secret of this indefatigable fighter of the Holy Church was to be found in the Blessed Sacrament and on the beads of the Rosary.

Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP

Those who never had the opportunity to accompany Dr. Plinio as he approached the tabernacle or the monstrance could not say that they truly knew his love for Our Lord Jesus Christ. At these moments, invariably, his supernatural sensitivity was deeply touched by the Eucharistic presence.

In this regard, he commented in the 1990s, as he left one of the houses of his work, where he had participated in the opening of the Forty Hours' Adoration: "We look at Him, and He, as it were, looks at us. It is beyond doubt that we feel we are seen by the Blessed Sacrament and we have the impression that He says, 'I am here and therefore fear nothing, because everything will be resolved. I am King and I can do anything, I want every-

thing for your good, and I will arrange everything as long as you have confidence in Me.' That is how I interpret the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. It has a beauty, a blessing! It is a silence that speaks, something simply wonderful, incomparable!"

When entering churches or chapels where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, after bowing profoundly, Dr. Plinio would take a seat and immediately fix his gaze on the Sacred Host, remaining absorbed in prayer to the point of hardly blinking. In those circumstances, when it was necessary to give him an urgent message, or to ask him a brief question, he would, with a sign, ask those around him to wait a few moments. Only then would he listen, without turning his head or even taking his eyes

off the monstrance, and he would respond in the same position, in a low voice and with just a few words.

Once, when asked about this attitude, in which the relationship of intimacy with Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament seemed to be even more sensible than at the time of Communion itself, Dr. Plinio confirmed: he did not remember even once having approached the Blessed Sacrament to adore Him, without experiencing an irresistible attraction.

Such was Dr. Plinio's sensibility to the Eucharistic that he came to possess a true intuition of the proximity of the Blessed Sacrament, which was often witnessed in his car trips. When he passed in front of churches, he was able to say whether or not Our Lord was present there in the Bless-

locked up in a tabernacle, isolated, in a chapel where only the lamp of the Blessed Sacrament burns. Many times, people pass in front of the church and no one stops to pray. And He is there, waiting for someone who wishes to receive Communion. The Redeemer, then, gives Himself to anyone, enters his body and makes contact with his soul to do him good.

St. Peter said of Our Lord this phrase which I find very beautiful, of astonishing simplicity and depth: "Per-

*The Eucharist Jesus remains alone for hours and hours in the tabernacle, waiting for someone who wishes to receive Communion*

*transivit benefaciendo* – He went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). Wherever He went, the most sinful people were received with goodness. Thus, during Communion we must have the confidence that He is not a severe Judge, but a loving Father and an infinitely powerful Doctor, eager to forgive us.

***"My Mother, prepare me to receive Communion"***

Before receiving Holy Communion, we should bear these considera-





**Dr. Plinio did not remember even once having approached the Blessed Sacrament to adore Him, without experiencing an irresistible attraction**

Receiving Communion during a Mass in the 1980s, accompanied by Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP

ed Sacrament, and in the affirmative case he would remove his hat as a sign of respect.

The enormous respect shown by Dr. Plinio to the Eucharist was also reflected in certain details concerning the care he took when preparing for Communion, the sacred moment, the central point and the apex of his day.

Even the time chosen for Communion was part of these habits: it was after his siesta, at the end of the period dedicated to prayer, a mo-

ment in which he felt in the best possible state of mind. In fact, he himself stated that the preparation for the solemn act of Communion began from the time of awakening in the morning, and the recollection of it extended throughout the remaining hours of the day. In this regard, he commented: “Such a serious action as that of receiving Our Lord Jesus Christ into our souls should mark the whole day for us, in the manner of our First Communion, whose re-

membrance should not diminish with time, but grow.”

Adoration of the Holy Eucharist was Dr. Plinio’s supreme devotion. ✧

Taken, with minor adaptations, from: CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio.

*O dom de sabedoria na mente, vida e obra de Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira [The Gift of Wisdom in the Thought, Life and Work of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira].*

Città del Vaticano-São Paulo: LEV; Lumen Sapientiae, 2016, v.V, p.300-315

tions in mind in order to receive the Blessed Sacrament worthily.

Those who prepare themselves for Communion in union with Her, asking Her for the necessary graces, will act in keeping with the condition of a slave of Our Lady, according to the spirituality of St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort.

This is how I prepare myself, saying to the Blessed Virgin: “My Mother, prepare me for this Communion, placing in my soul every good dispos-

*In Communion,  
Jesus comes to us,  
not as a severe  
Judge, but as  
a Father eager  
to forgive us*

ition, every good thought, every good impetus, so that I may be conscious of the immense honour I will receive. Because Thou hast prayed, thy Son will come to me.

In union with Our Lady, everything is obtained. ✧

Taken, with minor adaptations, from: *Dr. Plinio.*

São Paulo. Year XIII. N.144 (Mar., 2010); p.16-18



Francisco Leazaros

# Jesus Is There: Why Doubt?

Let us approach the Eucharist and ask for the Blessed Virgin's intercession so as to adore Her Divine Son as He ought to be adored. Let us love Him as She did when She bore Him in her virginal womb.



**Ir. Luciana Niday Kawahira, EP**

"Ah... But I don't believe this story!"

"Well, I'm telling you the honest truth! Come with me and you'll see!"

Heading to the town square, the two friends were able to watch the extraordinary event that took place there.

### **Challenged by an unbeliever**

We are in Rimini, in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, during a troubled time, when heresies provoked divisions and hostilities. A certain man named Bonvillo dared to deny, before St. Anthony of Padua, the real presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ under the species of bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Altar.

Without a moment's hesitation, the Blessed preacher posed this question to the unbeliever with whom he was arguing: "If your donkey worshipped the true Body of Christ under the Eucharistic Species, would you believe the truth about the Sacrament of God?"

A donkey? Some of our contemporaries might think this to be utter foolishness; to choose such an animal to be arbiter in a theological dispute... But in those days, men believed in God, even though many did not respect Him, and even offended Him. Most importantly, they would all pay attention to a holy wonderworker, like the one present there.

Intrigued, the man replied: "I will not feed my donkey for two days, and

on the third day I myself will bring it to the public square. On one side I will place some tasty oats for it, and on the other you will stand with the Host that you say is the Body of Christ. If the donkey ignores the oats and kneels before the Host, I too will gladly confess with my mouth and heart the truth of the Eucharistic Sacrament."<sup>1</sup>

### **The donkey kneels in adoration**

Full of wisdom and discernment, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, St. Anthony accepted the proposal!

For two days the donkey was left unfed, and on the third day it was brought before a large crowd.

With the coveted oats on one side of the square, and on the other the pledge of our Redemption in the hands of St. Anthony, the animal solemnly approached the adorable Body of Jesus and knelt at the preacher's feet. And this sign of

*Another miracle had been performed in the history of the Church, proving the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist!*

adoration of the Sacred Species only ended when the priest ordered the animal to get up.

Another miracle had been performed in the history of the Church, proving the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist! Thanks to this prodigy, the heretic was converted, and the crowd that had witnessed it was filled with reverential fear, astonished to see a crude beast manifesting such respect and adoration to the Blessed Sacrament.

### *Mystery that surpasses our reason*

“What you do not grasp, what you do not see, courageous faith confirms, beyond the natural order.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, St. Thomas Aquinas describes, with poetic verse, this mystery which transcends our reason, bringing man closer to the supernatural and helping him to participate in heavenly joy already on this earth.

Nevertheless, to have faith in such a mystery we must, before all else, approach this Sacrament, benefiting from its effects. Although we do not see Him with the eyes of the body, it is certain that when we come into contact with Jesus in the Eucharist He will help us to see Him in some way with the eyes of the soul.

Let us allow ourselves to be assumed by the presence of the One who loves us infinitely and desires solely our good. Grace will make us understand how accessible He is and that for this love to be manifested depends on us.

### *God wishes to be respected!*

If every man likes to be treated well, what can be said about the Creator of the universe, who humbly hides himself under the Eucharistic Species? If we render filial respect to those who engendered us,

should we not have even greater respect for Him who created us, drawing us out of nothing?

Out of love, God has made himself food that takes possession of and transforms us into divine tabernacles. He has given us divine life and the joy of His presence in the Holy Eucharist. In return, He desires to be loved and respected in this august Sacrament.

The first step for us to give Him all the due honour, glory and adoration is to believe that Jesus is as present there as He was long ago when He walked the streets of Jerusalem and Capernaum, preaching, pardoning and performing miracles.

*How many churches have been erected to worship Him! How many miracles, cures and deliverances worked through His Real Presence!*

How many churches have been erected to worship Him! How many hymns, songs and prayers of devotion to His Eucharistic mystery have been composed over the centuries! How many miracles, cures and deliverances worked through His Real Presence! How many, many silent, profound and life-changing graces are infused through the reception and adoration of the “Bread of Angels”!

In the face of so many benefits, why doubt?

Let us ask the intercession of Mary Most Holy to adore her Divine Son as He ought to be adored. Let us love Him as She did when She bore Him in her virginal womb. Let us desire to be, like the Mother of God, pure tabernacles in which God’s presence becomes especially perceptible in times of difficulty and trial. Finally, let us be a living monsternace in which Christ will be respected, glorified and adored by those who approach us. ✧

<sup>1</sup> GARDINI. Nova vida de S. Antônio de Pádua. Pádua: Mensageiro de Santo Antônio, 1929, p.30.

<sup>2</sup> Passage taken from the sequence *Lauda Sion*, for the Mass of Corpus Christi.



Leandro Souza

Eucharistic Adoration in Turris Eburnea House, Caieiras (SP); previous page: St. Anthony of Padua and the miracle of the donkey - Mother of God Convent - Lisbon - Portugal

# Divine Music of Marian Harmonies

The Reign of Mary will be the reign of the clemency, love and sweetness of Our Lady. Commenting on the Hail Holy Queen, Msgr. João unveils something of that historical era in which the spirit of the Mother of God will be present in every creature.



Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP

Moved by her prophetic charism, the Church has long discerned the divine designs regarding the Marian era<sup>1</sup> at whose threshold humanity finds itself. And, over the centuries, she has nourished in her children hope in these glorious days, expressed in both supplications and expiatory sacrifices.

Furthermore, aware that the human vocabulary is not capable of describing the excellent qualities of Our Lady, the Church has employed the most diverse liturgical and artistic means to help her children to mystically grasp the Mother of God's grandeur.

And, *pari passu*, she has sought to develop a theological terminology which – despite the limitations of the clouded knowledge characteristic of the state of trial – serves as an instrument to put into words the “intuitions” concerning His faithful Spouse that the Paraclete has whispered into souls.

## Archetypal supplication to Our Lady

Among these Marian prayers, the *Salve Regina* represented for Dr.

Plinio Correa de Oliveira, the archetypal petition to Our Lady, and the masterpiece of the Church's prophetic discernment and theological zeal concerning her role in salvation history. Through this prayer, he had penetrated into the mysteries of the Sovereign Queen, and still desired to recite it when his warrior and innocent soul was about to leave this valley of tears in order to contemplate the beatific light in the eyes of his Lady and Mother:

“Above these abysses of death, beyond which is a God whom I adore, there is a bridge – which is the light

of my soul and everything in my life – whose size and value I can better measure the more carefully I gauge the depth of the abyss. [...] The smile above the darkness of the impasse and the bridge cast over the abyss is devotion to Our Lady. Therefore, at the hour of death we must say: *Salve Regina, Mater misericordiae...* And our soul will be received into Heaven.”<sup>2</sup>

The *Salve Regina* resembles a piece of music: there are passages in *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, in *allegro* and *adagio*, depending on the meaning of each phrase. It is the “composition” that contains all the melodies of the relations between the Blessed Trinity and Our Lady. It could even be called “divine music” for it sums up God's infinite longings regarding His Daughter, Mother and Spouse.

In praying it with piety, the faithful unite themselves with the desires of the Creator and enter into the mysterious bonds that unite Him to Her. In the Heart of Mary, in turn, this prayer resounds as praise and a request made by the Most High, even when pronounced by a miserable sinner. God, as it were, lends His voice

*For Dr. Plinio,  
the Salve Regina  
represented the  
archetypal petition  
to Our Lady, and he  
desired to recite it  
at the hour of death*



Leandro Souza

Our Lady Help of Christians - Turris Eburnea House, Mairiporã (SP)

to the suppliant, so that he may interact with His beloved. This is the power of the *Salve Regina!*

***Divine grandeur contained in a creature***

The Marian titles contained in this prayer have a sublimity that touches on God. As Daughter of the Eternal Father, Our Lady inherits an eminent participation in all His attributes, causing Her to touch the divine essence; as Mother of the Son, She governs His inheritance and benefits from it as Queen-Mother; as Spouse of the Holy Spirit, She shares in His goods and has full rights over them.

In this way, Mary lives of the treasure of the Trinity and contains the divine grandeur within herself, in the proportion of a creature, as if God had chosen among men a “miniature” of Himself. In other words, since it is not possible for Him to generate a new Divine Person consubstantial with the Trinity, the Creator formed Her with the purpose of making Her a “god” for Himself.

Now, at times, meditation on Our Lady’s invocations does not originate

*Our Lady participates in this royalty in a “sui generis” manner: God entrusts to Her the sceptre of His power*

from their most universal and transcendent perspective, that is, from God and His attributes, but from that which is most immediate and concrete: man and His needs. Although legitimate, this viewpoint ends up constituting an obstacle to understanding the magnificence of her bond with the Most Holy Trinity, from which flows her connection with humanity.

Without wishing to make an exhaustive analysis of the invocations of this inspired and beautiful prayer, the Author will present below his reflections on some of them. As the reader will be able to verify, these

considerations offer a foretaste of the splendid glory that Mary will radiate throughout the earth in the days of her reign, and of the relationship, overflowing with goodness, forgiveness and affection, that She will establish with men.

According to St. Louis de Montfort,<sup>3</sup> in this intimate and maternal relationship the Virgin will enlighten them with her light, nourish them with her milk, guide them with her spirit, support them with her arm and keep them under her protection. She shall be the vital sap that shall lead every one of her children and slaves of love toward union with the Sacred Heart of her Divine Son.

***Queen of men, Angels and the divine will***

Queen and Mother: two outstanding titles of the Blessed Virgin! All the qualities for which Our Lady is praised in the *Salve Regina* derive from this singular union between royalty and motherhood.

“*Hail Holy Queen!*” Mary bears the insignia of royal power in their plenitude: her majesty is supreme, far

surpassing that of any monarch; her authority is sovereign, not dependent on human acclamation; her empire is absolute, exercised over Heaven and earth, the angelic powers and human beings. She does what She wishes, when She wishes and how She wishes.



Dr. Plinio in the early 1980s

Fernán Lecaros

*Dr. Plinio understood very well that to invoke Our Lady's royalty means to invoke her supplicant omnipotence*

It is, therefore, a royalty that emanates from divine royalty.

Now, God is the prototype and the substance of royalty: King of His will, of His plans, of His possibles; in a word, King of Himself ever since forever. His royalty consists in the absolute governance of the Good, which is His own essence.

By a very special predilection, Our Lady participates in this royalty in a *sui generis* manner. It is as if God gave Himself entirely to Her and entrusted to Her the sceptre of His power, so that She might govern creation, history and – oh, unfathomable mystery! – Himself. In this regard, it can be affirmed that, by a sublime mystery, Mary is Queen even of the divine will, enjoying an omnipotent audience before the throne of the Most High.<sup>4</sup> Everything is under her feet, and the Trinity is pleased to be ruled by His Daughter, Mother and Spouse.

This supposes on Our Lady's part an intimate union with the Three Divine Persons, which makes Her incapable of doing anything contrary to Their designs. In God and in Mary, there pulsates just one Heart and one will. It is as if the Almighty had read in the Immaculate Heart this sentence: "Apart from Me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). The Creator has submitted Himself in such a way to the Virgin that, so to speak, without Her, He can do nothing.<sup>5</sup>

Such a bold statement must be understood *cum grano salis*, for God alone is the Being par excellence,<sup>6</sup> Pure Act,<sup>7</sup> from which all things proceed, and by whom everything is sustained in the order of being. With this caveat, it seems that the ineffable crux of Sacred Slavery to Jesus through Mary can be found here. What the Lord, by reason of His justice, could refuse to anyone who approached Him directly, will always be granted if the supplication comes from the Heart of His Most Holy Mother.

### ***"Save me, Holy Queen!"***

This is the splendour of the royalty and power of Our Lady. Thus, there is no more beautiful or efficacious invocation when having recourse to Her. Dr. Plinio, while still a boy, well understood this when he recited the *Salve Regina* in a time of trial.<sup>8</sup> Judging, due to his young age, that the Latin salutation *salve* had the same meaning as the verb *to save*, he turned to Mary, Help of Christians with a cry full of filial confidence: "Save me, Holy Queen!" And She came to his aid!

Likewise, for each one of us it will be enough to cry "Save me, Holy Queen!", and She will immediately extend her sceptre and move the will of the Father. This appeal resounds in her ears as if it were said: "Oh, Thou who art the Queen of the divine decisions and who rule the Heart of God, save me!"

The maternal heartstrings of Mary cannot resist those who in this way have recourse to her intercession. To invoke her royalty means, therefore, to invoke her supplicant omnipotence before the Lord. Nevertheless, it is necessary that the request be made with entire confidence and the certainty that She will save us.

### ***The ultimate embodiment of divine mercy***

The expression "*Mother of mercy*", in turn, evokes the mother's unique mission in family life. The father must represent steadfast goodness united to justice, and it behoves the mother to reduce this justice to small proportions, to tiny limits, almost making it disappear. She must make mercy, pardon and forbearance shine to an unimaginable degree. Harmony in the domestic environment is, properly speaking, the fruit of maternal tenderness.

Now, Our Lady stands out as the Mother of all mothers. To designate her as the "Mother of mercy" seems,

to a certain extent, a redundancy. However, this title can be understood if we consider that the ordinary meaning of the word *mother* falls far short of her motherhood, which only has proportion with God Himself. In Mary, the limits of mercy are exhausted, so to speak: She is the ultimate embodiment of this divine attribute in a creature.

Her maternal forgiveness does not mean, however, tolerance for sin and vice, as many erroneously imagine. Conceived in fullness of grace and without any trace of original sin, Our Lady has a very clear notion of the offence that our faults represent against God and against the order established by Him in the universe. Consequently, her rejection and hatred for sin and for every kind of evil is perfect: *“Perfecto odio oderam illos”* (Ps 138:22).

In what, then, does her mercy consist? Precisely in obtaining greater and superabundant graces so that the repentant sinner may overcome his evil inclinations and seek with all the strength of his soul the highest degree of sanctity to which he is called. And this is where her forgiveness becomes manifest, because She disregards the requisite need of merits to obtain such benefits by copiously applying to each sinner the infinite merits of her Divine Son’s Redemption, of which She is the universal Mediatrix and generous Distributor.

***“Our life”: essence of the Secret of Mary***

In continuation, this prayer refers to three important titles of Our Lady: *“our life, our sweetness and our hope.”* Is there any connection between these invocations and the prior ones? Or, are they merely literary adornments? If examined carefully, it can be seen that they are the result or practical application of the first invocations and the fruits of mercy.

To claim that something is a person’s “life” means that their existence

would be meaningless if deprived of the element under consideration. Thus it could be said that the reform of the Cistercian Order undertaken by St. Bernard of Clairvaux was his life, because in it he found the purpose for which God had created him. In a similar way, for a Knight Templar the defence of the Church and of the Holy Places against the fury of the infidels was his life, that is, the object of his joys and hopes in the midst of the sufferings and vexations of earthly reality. The same definition could be applied to St. Elizabeth of Hungary, who made the service of the sick her joy and her life.

For an analogous but more exalted reason, calling Our Lady “our life” constitutes one of the deepest aspects of devotion to her, certainly related to the very essence of the Secret of Mary.<sup>9</sup> Why?

As we reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation, especially the gestation period of the Child Jesus in His Mother’s most pure womb, an extraordinary fact calls our attention: the God-Man wanted His life, for nine months, to be a participation in Mary’s life, sustained by, and dependent upon Her. Something of His human life was subject to the existence of Our Lady.

Therefore, it will be up to future theology, in its speculative dynamism and eagerness to know the ultimate truth about the mysteries of God, to raise the question: if Christ wanted to depend on her life in time – to the point that the Child Jesus, with all propriety, could exclaim in Mary’s virgin womb: “My Mother, life of my life!” –, would not something of His divine and eternal life depend on Her



Timothy Ring

Our Lady Help of Christians - Sacred Heart of Jesus Shrine, São Paulo

*The maternal forgiveness of Mary Most Holy does not, however, mean tolerance for sin and vice, as many erroneously imagine*

also? And, as the question is not posed in an absolute sense, in what way and with what nuances? Would this dependence not obey a sublime criterion that would govern the relationship of the Incarnate Word with creatures? In fact, although there is in Him a duality of natures, divine and human, the unity of Person is preserved by the hypostatic union in the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity. Thus, the Child whose life the Virgin sustained in her womb was God Himself.

*Mutatis mutandis*, a phenomenon similar to that which happened to Jesus during His gestation should take place in those whom Our Lady introduces into her Secret: She will sustain them with her existence and feed them with her virtues.<sup>10</sup> Through this maternal bond, Mary will become the life of her children on the salvific and supernatural plane, and they will no longer be able to think, desire or act without Her. To participate in the life of the Blessed Virgin in this way constitutes the highest degree of union with God and the deepest yearning of souls who aspire to perfection: “My Mother, give me the grace to live within Thee as the Child Jesus lived for nine months. Be the reason for my existence and the life of my life. Amen.”

***Vessel of the sweetness of the Heart of Jesus***

Our Lady is also “our sweetness” when we humbly turn to Her. This sweetness is manifested in the affability, condescension and kindness with which Mary welcomes us, even when we are in the worst and most regrettable state of soul. With even greater solicitude than the father in the parable of the prodigal son (cf.



Our Lady of Humility, by Fra Angelico - National Art Museum of Catalonia, Barcelona

*“Our life, our sweetness and our hope...” Is there any connection between these invocations and the prior ones?*

Lk 15:11-32), She goes out to meet her son who is injured and ragged, embraces and kisses him, anoints his wounds with balsam, clothes him with the best tunic and holds a great feast to celebrate the recovery of that fruit of her womb that had been lost.

As Mother of God and ours, She envelops us with affection, softening the hardships and sufferings of this valley of tears, and imparts to our hearts renewed courage for the battles that still await us. Our Lady manifests herself as “our sweetness”, both when She removes obstacles from our paths and leads us through the paradisiacal gardens of interior consolations, and when She allows us to pass through spiritual aridity, setbacks and even failures, like unto her Divine Son on the Cross. In every circumstance She obtains for us the graces, virtues and strength necessary to be the warriors and heroes of her glorious Reign.

How bitter is the life of those who embark on the path of sin and reject the tenderness of this Mother, whose Immaculate Heart is the vessel of the sweetness of the Sacred Heart of Jesus!

***Hope full of joy and confidence***

The triad of praises to Mary Most Holy ends with the invocation “our hope”. This virtue refers above all to future glory (cf. Rom 5:2), but it also embraces the spiritual and temporal interests of the present life. As St. Thomas teaches,<sup>11</sup> it is through this virtue that evils are avoided and good is sought, for one only hopes for the good that one desires and loves. Moreover, hope brings with it a foretaste of the joy of soul in possessing the good desired,<sup>12</sup> and for this reason the Apostle exhorts: “Rejoice in your hope” (Rom 12:12).

The *Salve Regina* does not, however, allude to just any hope, but to “our hope”: to Her who, as Supplicant Omnipotence and merciful Mother of sinners, is incapable of refusing her



help, for never has it been known that anyone who fled to her protection, implored her help or sought her intercession was left unaided.

What good would a life without sweetness be? Surely, it would be a nightmare. And sweetness without hope? No doubt it would be nothing more than an ephemeral joy, which would soon turn to bitterness. On the contrary, hope fills the soul with joy and makes confidence blossom. This is the hope that the Morning Star transmits to her children and slaves, offering a foretaste of the joy of the Sun of Justice, Christ Our Lord.

### *Grandeur that welcomes, elevates and ennobles*

After extolling the grandeur of Our Lady, the *Salve Regina* then unites the two extremes of the spiritual realm and turns to the lowliness, shortcomings and weakness of men: “*To Thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; To Thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us.*”

Could there be a more appropriate attitude of soul than this? Faced with the sublimity of Mary’s graces and gifts, who could be self-complacent? The only reasonable attitude consists in contemplating Her from the misery and insignificance of a banished child of Eve, that is, admiring Her with a humble heart. It is the example that She herself gives us in the canticle of the *Magnificat*, in prophesying that all generations would proclaim Her Blessed because God had looked upon “the humility of His handmaid” (Lk 1:48).

However, before becoming little, one must appreciate the grandeur of the Blessed Virgin, because this perspective balances the consideration of our wretchedness and weaknesses. Far from neglecting her weak and destitute children, She welcomes them, lifts them up and ennobles

them, not only out of care and compassion, but also for the pleasure She experiences in seeing them in need of her support. She rejoices in their lowliness, because in this way She can truly be the Mother of each one.

God Himself wished to become the Son of Mary, fragile and tiny in her arms, so that Our Lady could fully exercise her motherhood over Him. And, after adorning her soul with all the virtues and crowning them with the gift of Divine Motherhood, it pleased Him to assume the human



The return of the prodigal son – St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Green Bay (USA)

*Even if we are in the worst state of soul, Mary welcomes us with even greater solicitude than the father in the parable*

condition of a child, so that His filial relationship with Our Lady would be perfect and He could, from an inferior position in the order of nature, contemplate the grandeur of His Mother. This is a paradoxical situation in which the Eternal Word inverts the roles, as if saying: “She is so beautiful, so holy, so similar to Me that I, Almighty God, cannot resist taking on flesh in order to be Her Son, and therefore, in some way, inferior to Her.

In this adorable act of submission of the Redeemer to Our Lady, all men are included, for in abandoning Himself to her care, Jesus gave each one to Her as her own child. And as the Man-God is the exemplary cause of human action, His way of relating to His Mother became the paradigm for her children and slaves.

This passage from the *Salve Regina* seems to suggest to the faithful two important graces to be implored: on the one hand, the possibility of penetrating, understanding and loving the Secret of Mary; on the other, the ability to annihilate oneself and make oneself little in order to participate more intimately in it. Our failures, wretchedness and faults should not constitute a factor of spiritual discouragement and despondency. On the contrary, Providence uses them as instruments to “empty” the soul of itself and “fill it” with the Blessed Virgin, as St. Louis de Montfort explains.<sup>13</sup>

Not finding a more appropriate term to express Our Lady’s maternal concern for her erring children in the face of the Supreme Judge, the Church called her “our Advocate”. This Advocate, however, is not content to defend the little worms and miserable sinners,<sup>14</sup> but takes up their cause as her own. Thus, when they come before the eternal court, God no longer sees their weaknesses: in their place, He contemplates only Mary!

Like Queen Esther before King Ahasuerus (cf. Est 5:1-8), it is enough for Our Lady to appear before the

divine throne for the Most High to grant Her absolutely everything. Her mere existence is a guarantee of victory in the most impossible causes. Let us therefore turn to our invincible Advocate, full of confidence and with a contrite heart!

**“Caro Christi, caro Mariæ”:  
the apex of Sacred Slavery**

Among the Marian sublimities that the *Salve Regina* expresses is the acclamation “and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.” The mutual slavery of love that existed between Jesus and Mary was so ingrained that both possessed not only the same spirit and the same Heart, but even the same flesh: “Caro Christi, caro Mariæ”.<sup>15</sup>

By virtue of this union, Our Lady experienced in her Heart the unspeakable sorrows suffered by Jesus Christ in His Sacred Body during the Passion. It is a regime of Sacred Slavery<sup>16</sup> brought to such a height of perfection that no words are sufficient to express it; more sublime and grandiose than this is only the eternal perichoresis of the Three Divine Persons.

Now, precisely as a result of this loving slavery, Our Lady has become the

Co-Redemptrix of the human race. By decree of the Eternal Father, She had to consent to each suffering of her Divine Son, aware that beforehand the Saviour had already consented to her sufferings. Thus an

*By virtue of this union, Our Lady experienced in her Heart the unspeakable sorrows suffered by Jesus Christ during the Passion*



The meeting of Christ and His most Holy Mother on the way to Calvary – Fine Arts Museum of Salamanca (Spain)

inevitable question arises, which can only be understood from the perspective of Sacred Slavery... Who suffered more: Mary seeing the Passion of her Son, or Jesus contemplating the sufferings of His Mother?

The very grace of exchange of hearts, of which many Saints and Doctors treat, seems to fall short of this sublime mystery of Sacred Slavery revealed by the *Salve Regina* in referring to Jesus as the blessed fruit of Mary’s virginal womb. In fact, in addition to being God’s Daughter, Mother, Spouse and Slave, She is His Mistress, for from the moment the Word chose Her as His Mother, He also became her Slave. In this act, the core of the redemptive vocation is revealed: to be a slave. It could even be said that,

without the slavery of the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity to the Father and to Mary, Redemption would not be possible.

On the other hand, through the bond of slavery with her Divine Son, Our Lady became the channel through which the essence of Trinitarian life, a mutual slavery of love, is communicated to men. In this way it becomes evident that the pinnacles of grandeur are revealed by the pinnacles of slavery!

<sup>1</sup> In his work, Msgr. João expounds at length on the Reign of Mary, the historic era prophesied by St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort.

<sup>2</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plínio. *Conférence*. São Paulo, April 14, 1974.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ST. LOUIS-MARIE GRIGNION DE MONTFORT. *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la Sainte Vierge*, n.48.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Idem, n.27; 76.

<sup>5</sup> In this regard, St. Anselm says: “God created all things, and

Mary engendered God. God, who created all things, made Himself through Mary. And in this way He remade all that He had made. He, who could make all things out of nothing, did not want to remake what had been ruined without Mary [...]. God begot Him outside of whom nothing exists, and Mary gave birth to Him without whom nothing subsists. Truly the Lord is with Thee, for He wanted every creature to recognize that they owe to Thee, along with Him, such a

great benefit!” (ST. ANSELM OF CANTERBURY. *Oratio VII*).

<sup>6</sup> The Angelic Doctor explains that, as God is the “*ipsum esse subsistens*”, the very concepts of existence and essence are identified in Him, as the Lord declared to Moses: “I am Who am” (Ex 3:14) [DR]. All creatures have being by participation in the divine Being (cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Summa Theologiæ*. I, q.3, a.4; q.4, a.2; *Summa contra gentiles*. L.I, c.22; *De po-*

*tentia*, q.7, a.2; *Scriptum super Sententiis*. L.I, d.8, q.4, a.1-2; q.5, a.2).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Summa Theologiæ*. I, q.3, a.7; *Summa contra gentiles*. L.I, c.16; 18; *Scriptum super Sententiis*. L.I, d.8, q.4, a.1.

<sup>8</sup> For more details on the extraordinary grace Dr. Plínio received, see: CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. *O dom de sabedoria na mente, vida e obra de [The Gift of Wisdom in the Mind, Life and Work of] Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira*. Città del

Francisco Lecaros

**“O clemens, o pia, o  
dulcis Virgo Maria!”**

There is so much sublimity encompassed in the final triad of acclamations of the *Salve Regina* that it could be said that the faithful devotee had been swept up to the contemplation of the pinnacles of Our Lady’s holiness. If God had then said to him: “Behold my Paradise!”, from that enthusiastic heart, the perfect phrase would spring forth: “O clemens, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!”

What wonders might St. Bernard have glimpsed when, in an ecstasy, he completed our prayer with this brief sentence? Surely something that neither the great Moses nor the fiery Elijah ever saw: the splendour of Mary Most Holy’s soul, in which he recognized the face of God Himself! Fascinated by its light, he found only this triple exclamation to express the immense grace received: “O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria!”

Everything had been said. And in the ardent and combative heart of the Mellifluous Doctor, the Reign of Mary had already been founded. ✧

Taken, with minor adaptations, from: *Maria Santissima! O Paraíso de Deus revelado aos homens. [Mary Most Holy! God’s Paradise Revealed to Men]*. São Paulo: Arautos do Evangelho, 2020, v.III, p.129-149



Gustavo Kraijl

**Our Lady of Mercy,  
by Lippo Memmi – Santa Maria Cathedral, Orvieto (Italy)**

Vaticano-São Paulo: LEV; Lumen Sapientiae, 2016, v.I, p.336-348.

<sup>9</sup> In his writings, St. Louis de Montfort refers to the slavery of love to Mary, which he recommended as a secret revealed by the Most High as a sure way to holiness (cf. ST. LOUIS-MARIE GRIGNION DE MONTFORT. *Le secret de Marie*, n.1). More than pious practices, this secret consists in doing everything with Mary, in Mary, by Mary and for Mary; its main fruit

is to establish the very life of the Blessed Virgin in the soul; and fidelity to it is an extremely rich source of new graces (cf. Idem, n.28; 53; 55).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. ST. LOUIS-MARIE GRIGNION DE MONTFORT. *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la Sainte Vierge*, n.206.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Summa Theologiae*. I-II, q.40, a.7; II-II, q.20, a.3.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Summa Theologiae*. I-II,

q.40, a.8; *Scriptum super Sententias*. L.III, d.26, q.1, a.3.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. ST. LOUIS-MARIE GRIGNION DE MONTFORT, op. cit., n.78-82.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. ST. LOUIS-MARIE GRIGNION DE MONTFORT. *L’amour de la Sagesse Éternelle*, n.226.

<sup>15</sup> From the Latin: “The Flesh of Christ is the flesh of Mary.”

<sup>16</sup> Editor’s Note: the Author alludes to the slavery of love recommended by St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort in the

*Treatise on True Devotion to Mary*, of which Our Lord Jesus Christ gave us a sublime example by taking on flesh in the virginal womb of Mary and being submissive to Her for thirty years (cf. ST. LOUIS-MARIE GRIGNION DE MONTFORT. *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la Sainte Vierge*, n.18).

# Who is the “Author” of Devotion to Our Lady?

If St. Paul claims that there is “one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,” why resort to the intercession of the Virgin Mary? Would it not be more appropriate to have recourse directly to Our Lord?



Fr. Alex Barbosa de Brito, EP

**T**hroughout the centuries, there has been much discussion over the cult paid to Our Lady, which has contributed not only to establishing the doctrinal basis for such piety, but also to enkindling the fervour of Mary’s true children. However, although devotion to the heavenly Queen has been approved by the Paraclete Spirit in the dogmas and teachings of the Church, doubts still arise in our days regarding its necessity and origin.

## *Is Christ not the sole Mediator?*

Indeed, how many of us would know how to confidently reply if someone were to ask: who is the “author” of this devotion?

Could it have been St. Peter, as the first Pope, who endeavoured to glorify Her because he knew her role as Mother of the Church? Or did it happen, perhaps, that St. John, seized by transports of filial love, decided to propagate the grandeur of her Immaculate Heart throughout the world?

Yet, there is no indication that the Apostles had been great proponents of devotion to Mary Most Holy. To this can be added that addressing Our

Lord directly would seem to be more in keeping with the Sacred Scriptures. After all, if St. Paul affirms that there is “one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tm 2:5), why have recourse to the intercession of the Virgin Mary?

## *He received human nature from Her*

In view of this, it should be noted that many of the statements Jesus made regarding himself, He also attributed to others. For example, He says that He is “the Light of the world” (Jn 8:12), but grants His disciples the same title (cf. Mt 5:14); He portrays himself as “the Good Shepherd” (Jn 10:11), but entrusts the care of His flock to Peter (cf. Jn 21:15-17).

Something similar applies with regard to His mediation: one can attribute to others – eminently to the Blessed Virgin – in a derived and secondary manner, that which is primarily and perfectly ascribable to the Redeemer. In this sense, the Apostle claims to complete in his flesh what is lacking in the Passion of the Lord (cf. Col 1:24), without the merit of the latter being in any way deficient.

Moreover, St. Paul does not simply affirm that the Eternal Word of

the Father, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, is the Mediator between God and humanity, but the “man Christ Jesus”. It was by virtue of the Incarnation in Mary’s virginal womb that the Son assumed this role, and therefore, in Jesus’ own mediation, Our Lady’s collaboration is present, for it was from Her that He received His human nature.

## *“Has done great things for me...”*

Yet the question remains: who is the “author” of devotion to Our Lady?

Leafing through Holy Scriptures we find a summarized chronology of salvation history, which can clarify something in this regard: “In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets” (Heb 1:1), “But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman” (Gal 4:4).

When He entered into the world, He received a body (cf. Heb 10:5): “the Word became flesh” (Jn 1:14), becoming in everything like us, “yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). This work began when “the Angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a Virgin betrothed to a man whose name was



Reproduction

**Each one of us was placed in Our Lady's arms and begotten as her child by the work of the Holy Spirit**

Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints, by Raffaello Sanzio  
Metropolitan Museum of New York

Joseph, of the house of David” (Lk 1:26-27a).

“The Virgin’s name was Mary” (Lk 1:27b), and her cousin Elizabeth bore witness to Her when she exclaimed, full of the Holy Spirit: “Blessed art Thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb” (Lk 1:42).

Very well... But who is, ultimately, the “author” of devotion to this blessed Virgin? If we still have any doubt, let us ask Our Lady herself and She will answer as She did in the Visitation: “All generations will call me blessed; for He who is mighty has done great things for me” (Lk 1:48-49). The sublime and ineffable role that God has bestowed on Her in Heaven and on earth is the cause of the great devotion of Christians to the Mother of God.

### ***We were placed in Our Lady's arms***

If we continue to peruse the New Testament, we will find Jesus performing His first miracle, even before His time had come (cf. Jn 2:4-5), in order to fulfil a request from His

Mother. And, as it was for Her that He initiated His public life, it was also through Her that He wished to conclude His communication with men. Being crucified on the wood, as He made His testament of love, Our Lord left us Mary as His greatest legacy: “Behold your Mother” (Jn 19:27).

After being taken down from the Cross, the same Body that the Blessed Virgin had, years before, laid in the manger (cf. Lk 2:7) now rested lifeless in her embrace. His spirit had been given up into the hands of the Father (cf. Lk 23:46) and the Body was placed in His Mother’s arms. What Body? The Body of Christ, the Church (cf. Col 1:18), which is us (cf. 1 Cor 12:27).

Each one of us was placed in Our Lady’s arms and begotten as her child by the work of the Holy Spirit. St. Bernard of Clairvaux even affirms: “God wished to grant us nothing except by Mary.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, if Christ the Lord is the source of living water (cf. Jn 4:14), the Blessed Virgin is the aqueduct by which all the goods that flow from this sacred spring reach us.

### ***Let us persevere with Her in prayer***

After such considerations, is it still necessary to inquire as to the origin of devotion to Our Lady? God is the Author, with a capital “A”, of this great and indispensable devotion!

Therefore, let us not be afraid to persevere in prayer “with Mary, the Mother of Jesus” (Acts 1:14), as the Apostles did after the Ascension. Let us imitate the Christians of the first centuries who, as loving children, prayed for Our Lady’s help in their difficulties: “We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God: despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and Blessed Virgin.”<sup>2</sup> ✧

<sup>1</sup> ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX. En la Vigilia de Navidad. Sermón III, n.10. In: *Obras Completas*. 2.ed. Madrid: BAC, 2005, v.III, p.159.

<sup>2</sup> Antiphon *Sub tuum praesidium*, the oldest known prayer to the Blessed Virgin, sung by the Church in the Liturgy of the Hours.

ST. BONIFACE OF MAINZ

# *Father of the Germanic Peoples*

The little Winfrid discovered in the Benedictine cloister the secret to overcoming self, barbarism and hell. From his apostolic zeal, crowned by martyrdom, the Germanic people would be born to Christ.



**Sr. Maria Teresa Matos, EP**



Reproduction

**S**uperb military parades, exquisitely organized cities, succulent sausages, forests notable for the impeccable regularity of their arrangement: these are some of the indisputable charms of Germany.

They radiate an innocence in battle array, which captivates, impresses and arouses admiration. These and countless other aspects – authentic fruits of a civilized people fond of discipline – have flourished under the blessings of the Holy Church, in the ardour of courageous souls that have marked history.

We will undertake in these lines to contemplate one of them: the providential man whose mission it was to Christianize the peoples beyond the Rhine and to offer his life in holocaust for them.

A medieval biographer wrote of this tireless apostle: “All the inhabitants of Germania may call the holy

Bishop Boniface their father, because he begot them for Christ by the words of holy preaching, confirmed them by his example, and finally gave his life for them, which is the greatest proof of love.”<sup>1</sup>

### *A Benedictine at five years of age*

Let us now go back to the end of the seventh century, when the sublime, disciplined and highly elevated life of the Benedictine Order was spreading throughout Europe. Their abbeys, true refineries of heroes, formed men and women in a regime of equilibrium and sacrality, conducive to ordering the tendencies of nature towards lofty ideals.

Souls who were sanctified within them, in fidelity to their founder, their charism and their rule, were apt for the most daring journeys and deeds, the greatest advances in art and thought, the most formidable sufferings and martyrdoms,

for God’s glory and the benefit of others.

England too, recently Christianized by St. Augustine of Canterbury, had been captivated by Benedictine graces. And it was there that, around the year 680, a boy was born who was quick to become enthused for this way of life. At only five years of age, Winfrid, of an Anglo-Saxon family, asked to enter an abbey. His father resisted, judging him to be still too young, but two years later allowed him to enter the monastery of Nursling.

Educated in the wise rule of “*ora et labora*”, the little one learned Latin, metrics, poetry and exegesis. While yet a youth, he became a teacher of Latin Grammar, composed several poems in that language and wrote some treatises.

### *He becomes a sacral man*

Along with his brilliant education, his soul was honed in the virtues

proper to a religious. Through obedience he gained dominion over his own will; through chastity he emulated the Angels; through humility he learned to want the most – not for himself, but for God’s glory; through prayer and contemplation he soared to Heaven, carrying out all his activities with his mind set on the highest supernatural planes.

He thus became a sacral man who was not content to possess the sublimity of grace within himself, but wished to conquer the whole earth for God. A sign of the authenticity of his longings was his willingness to overcome every obstacle and to face all interior and exterior challenges.

Winfrid was ordained a priest in the year 710, when he was probably thirty years old. When the Council of Wessex was convened, he received a sensitive mission from the Archbishop of Canterbury, which was crowned with such success that his fame soon began to spread. Perceiving this, he asked his abbot’s permission to be a missionary, thus renouncing all worldly prestige.

### *The first mission fails*

The gaze of the holy priest turned to an uncultivated but vibrant people. And, having previously entrusted himself to several religious communities that agreed to pray for the outcome of his undertaking, in the year 716 he landed on the coasts of Frisia, near present-day Utrecht.

After a few months of assisting Bishop St. Willibrord in his apostolate, he was forced to return to his homeland, without having obtained much success. But Winfrid’s soul, tempered by the austerities of the cloister, was dauntless in the face of failures. Taking this setback as a challenge, he decided to better prepare himself and wait for a propitious occasion to return to the task.

Aiming to equip himself with the most powerful means, which neither

hell nor Heaven could resist, he went to Rome in 718 to request letters of support from Pope Gregory II. Noting the capacity of this priest, the Pontiff kept him for a time in his service, and in the following year, with a letter dated May 15, 719, sent him to Germania with the aim of bringing the Word of God to the peoples still immersed in the darkness of idolatry. In order to consecrate this mandate, he gave him the name of Boniface.

### *Felling the sacred oak*

Upon reaching the heart of the German territory, Boniface beheld the immense labour ahead of him. The small Christian community there was in such decadence that its members took part in cults and banquets in honour of the god Thor.

He tirelessly set out to draw them to the true religion and, as a first measure, asked for help from his dear monks in England, many of whom, heeding his appeal, hastened to those lands which were savage and uncharted for them. Thanks to these monks, the regions of Hesse and Thuringia became the field of constant preaching and missions.

At a certain moment, the Saint decided to cut down the “sacred” oak of Thor, to demonstrate to those souls the powerlessness of idols and to uproot the false religion from within them.

Standing on the mountain of Gudenberg in Geismar, west of Fritzlar, this oak was the symbol of Germanic paganism. But Boniface, audaciously defying the rage of the barbarians, took an axe and began to strike the symbolic tree. The heavens showed themselves to be in favour of his enterprise: at that moment an impetuous wind began to blow and knocked it down, breaking it into four pieces.

Seeing this manifestation of the true God, a jealous God who judges with justice, a great number of pagans converted to the Catholic Faith. A chapel dedicated to St. Peter was erected on the site where the oak had once stood.

### *Bishop and organizer of a spiritual army*

After Boniface had completed three years of fruitful apostolate, Gregory II called him to Rome to be-



Reproduction

**He had to demonstrate to those souls the powerlessness of idols and to uproot the false religion from within them!**

St. Boniface fells the Sacred Oak - Lithograph of Heinrich Maria Von Hess; on previous page, stained glass in the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Alphonsus, Montevideo

stow on him the dignity of the episcopate, which he had repeatedly declined. The Pontiff declared that he did this “so that he could, with greater conviction, correct and lead back to the path of truth those who had gone astray; so that he might feel supported by the highest authority of apostolic dignity and be the better received in the office of preaching, the more he demonstrated this to be the motive of his ordination to the apostolic prelatore.”<sup>2</sup>

The same unpretentiousness that had led the Saint to so earnestly refuse this honour now impelled him to bow before the will of the Vicar of Christ. On November 30, 722, the Supreme Pontiff ordained him Bishop of Germania, a vast diocese which included the entire region beyond the Rhine River.

Enjoying the esteem of the Pope and counting on the valuable support of Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charlemagne, Boniface endeavoured to conquer more souls for the flock of Christ. In addition to Hesse and Thuringia, Bavaria and other parts of the Germanic territory also benefitted from his zeal.

The venerable bishop founded the Monastery of St. Michael of Ordhuff, establishing his residence there. And, knowing how efficacious the example of religious life was in civilizing these peoples, he built numerous monasteries. From 740 to 778, twenty-nine were built in Bavaria.

At the head of this spiritual army he placed his faithful Anglo-Saxon collaborators, who had responded to his call at the beginning of the mission and had persevered with him. Worthy of special mention among them is St. Lullus, who would later succeed him in the Episcopal See, and the Abbess St. Leoba.

### **Reform of the Frankish Church**

Boniface’s zeal knew no limits and went beyond the already enormous boundaries of his diocese. At the request of Carloman, son of Charles Martel, he travelled to Austria and convoked the synod that would go down in history under the name *Concilium Germanicum*.

Moral laxity was great in those regions inhabited by the Franks, still governed by the Merovingian dynasty. By means of this Council and other Synods convoked later, the holy bishop restructured the dioceses, gathered all the monasteries under the Benedictine rule and charism and obtained a partial restitution of the Church’s property, used by Charles Martel in his constant wars. With the help of the counts, he also forbade the still extant pagan customs.

In order to complete and safeguard these reforms, he convoked

the General Council of the French Empire in the year 747, at which the unity of the Faith was established, and he concluded it with a letter of submission and fidelity to the See of Peter.

### **Foundation of the Abbey of Fulda**

Over the years Boniface had been nurturing the desire to build a monastery in which his remains would rest and in some way perpetuate his presence among those people, his children.

With the help of St. Sturm, from a noble family in Bavaria, and educated by Boniface from an early age, he chose a quiet place in the middle of the forest, in the present state of Hesse. Having been gladly granted the property by the royal authority, the disciple and seven other monks took possession of the place and, on January 12, 744, they began to erect with their own hands the famous Abbey of Fulda, alternating the work with prayers and singing of Psalms.

This is what St. Boniface wrote to Pope St. Zacharius about the new foundation: “A savage place, in the wilderness of a vast silence, among the peoples entrusted to our preaching. When we built the monastery, we placed monks there who live according to the rule of the Patriarch St. Benedict, in strict observance, eating no meat and drinking no wine or beer, and without servants, content with the work of their own hands.”<sup>3</sup>

And a little further on, he adds: “In this place, with Your Holiness’ consent, I intend to be laid to rest after death. For it is known that around this place dwell four peoples, to whom, helped by the grace of God, we proclaimed the doc-



**“In this place, with Your Holiness’ consent, I intend to be laid to rest after death”**

Fulda Cathedral (Germany), constructed over the abbatial church founded by St. Boniface

Ansgar Korieng (CC by-sa 3.0)



trine of Christ; through your intercession, may I be of service to them as long as I am alive or sound. Indeed, I desire, through your prayers and by the grace of God, to persevere in communion with the Roman Church and in your service among the Germanic peoples, to whom I have been sent, and to obey your command.”<sup>4</sup>

During the lifetime of its first abbot, Fulda came to house four hundred monks, constituting a font of sacrality and virtue from which germinated many of the Germanic splendors of the Middle Ages.

**“This is the day we have longed for!”**

Approaching his eighth decade of life, St. Boniface did not feel satiated by his love for God. His heart burned with a desire for new conquests for the Holy Church.

Leaving St. Lullus as his successor in the Archdiocese of Mainz, St. Boniface decided to once again face the challenge with which he had begun his mission: the conversion of Frisia. “I wish to accomplish the purpose of this journey; I cannot in any way renounce the desire to depart. The day of my end is near and the time of my death is approaching; leaving the mortal body, I will ascend to the eternal reward. But you, most beloved son, [...] tirelessly summon the people from the abyss of error, finish the construction of the basilica already begun at Fulda and



Reproduction

**“This is the day we have longed for, the time of our end has come; have courage in the Lord!”**

Martyrdom of St. Boniface - Engraving from the book: *Neerlands heiligen in vroeger eeuwen*, vol. III

in it bury my body grown old by many years of life,”<sup>5</sup> he wrote to his successor.

In the spring of 754 he departed for Frisia, accompanied by about fifty monks, to evangelize people even more savage than those with whom he had lived until then.

After some months of arduous but fruitful apostolate, the Saint decided to gather all the converts in the city of Dokkum, in present-day Holland, in order to administer to them the

Sacrament of Confirmation. It was the year 755. At the appointed time, the men of God witnessed the arrival of a ferocious troop of bandits instead of the Christians.

The faithful bishop was in his tent, reading a book. As he saw the bestial horde advancing, he arose with courage and said: “This is the day we have longed for, the time of our end has come; have courage in the Lord. Be strong, do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the immortal spirit; rejoice in the Lord and set the anchor of your hope in God, who will soon give you the recompense of the eternal reward and a place in the heavenly Kingdom with the citizens of Heaven, who are the Angels.”<sup>6</sup> Using the book to defend himself, he was struck on the head and appeared before his Lord to receive the much-deserved reward.

Upon learning of the event the Christians of Frisia hastened to collect the precious relics of the martyrs: St. Boniface and the fifty-two who victoriously ascended with him to Heaven. The body of the father of the Germanic peoples was transferred to Fulda Abbey, not without opposition from the faithful of the Diocese of Utrecht and Mainz, who wished to keep him with them.

Thus culminated the glorious epic of that boy who, in the silence and discipline of the Benedictine cloister, discovered the secret to overcoming self, barbarism and hell. ✧

<sup>1</sup> OTLOH. *Vitæ Bonifatii*. Liber I. In: LEVISON, Wilhelmus (Ed.). *Vitæ Sancti Bonifatii Archiepiscopi Moguntini*. Hannoveræ-Lipsiæ: Impen-

sis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1905, p.158.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, p.127.

<sup>3</sup> ST. BONIFACE OF MAINZ. *Epistola* 86. In: TANGL, Michael (Ed.). *Epistolæ Selectæ*.

*S. Bonifatii et Lulli epistolæ*. Berolini: Weidmannos, 1916, t. I, p.193.

<sup>4</sup> Idem, p.193-194.

<sup>5</sup> WILLIBALD. *Vita Bonifatii*. In: LEVISON, Wilhelmus

(Ed.). *Vitæ Sancti Bonifatii Archiepiscopi Moguntini*. Hannoveræ-Lipsiæ: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1905, p.46.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, p.49-50.

# We Are God's Artillery!

What would happen if the bullets of our imaginary warrior could move themselves towards the target? What thoughts would fill the “mind” of these curious munitions?



Sr. Eduarda Batista Dias, EP

Let us imagine a platoon made up of the most highly-skilled soldiers ever known to military history. In it we would find men of different origins and unequalled abilities: one would have the title of best marksman, another would be the most skilled in infiltrating enemy positions, and yet a third would prove invincible in hand-to-hand combat...

All would share in common the scars of the struggle, physiognomies matured by risk, victories and, above all, failures – elements that form the personality of a true fighter. And, naturally, standing at the

lead of this unit of soldiers would be the “best among the best” – the commander.

If we had the honour to talk with each one of them, we would undoubtedly discover a universe of tactics and strategies learned in the heat of combat. We might consider this unit to be indestructible on any battlefield to which they were summoned, given the excellent formation and character of its members.

Now, these soldiers, despite their excellent training, would never advance into combat without adequate arms. To do so would be reckless, for every soldier, no matter how well-

trained, needs weapons and ammunition to succeed.

## *Ammunition... with a will of its own?*

Let us now imagine a fearless fighter who, carrying a rifle, accurately aims at a certain target and discharges his weapon. When the projectile exits the muzzle, it does nothing other than obey the will of the operator, speeding towards the target without the least deviation.

However, what would happen if, by some absurdity, the bullets of our good warrior thought and moved on their own? What cogitations would fill the “mind” of such munitions? We could raise several hypotheses in this regard...

Maybe some daring bullets, at the moment of being launched, would enthusiastically consider the honour they might obtain if, by hitting the target, they managed with their impact to decide the outcome of the battle! Others, of a nature more inclined to admiration, would feel immense joy in serving an experienced artilleryman, and would blindly trust in his infallible aim.

But it is also possible that a certain type of ammunition would end up questioning the



Reproduction

**Despite their excellent training, these soldiers would never advance into combat without adequate arms**

Engraving of the taking of a fortification during the siege of Rome, June of 1849  
Napoleonic Museum, Rome

soldier's wise aim, and would decide to deviate from the route he set to hit another "more suitable" target, according to its own ill-advised criteria... Other bullets, full of fear and insecurity, would perhaps give up along the route towards their goal. Still others would think that their objective was too distant and undefined and, at the very moment of the rifle's firing, they might say: "Ah, it would be better to fall to the

ground as soon as exiting the rifle, so as not to run the risk of making it only halfway..."

What a great defeat would be suffered by the soldier who had ammunition like the latter at his disposal...

***We are weapons of the heavenly host!***

This simple metaphor could well be applied to the individual situation of each person.

Since the expulsion of our first parents from terrestrial Paradise, human life has become a constant warfare (cf. Job 7:1): the children of light battle against the children of darkness, and the race of the Virgin against the race of the serpent. It is a fight, not only to win eternal happiness, but also for the definitive triumph of God in history, that is, for the establishment of that which we so eagerly beseech in the Our Father: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

Our Lady, the Angels and the Saints in Heaven, who make up the Church Triumphant, need to unite with us, the Church Militant, to



Reproduction

**In this fierce war, we who live on earth are God's artillery!**

"At the foot of the cannon", scene from the siege of Belchite, during the Spanish Civil War, by Augusto Ferrer-Dalmau

make the cause of the good triumph in time. And if they guide us in this glorious battle, we must be docile instruments in their hands. How?

First of all, through watchfulness! Like the "bullets" of the metaphor, we are endowed with reason and will. What is our reaction to God's designs, often manifested so clearly to us? How often does Our Lady, or our faithful Guardian Angels, await our obedience to the counsels and inspirations they whisper in the depths of our souls?

Let us be attentive so as to hear them and, in the manner of ever-faithful "bullets", let us obey without the least hesitation! Even if we do not understand the reason for the orders received or feel the desire to flee because of the sacrifices demanded, grace will never fail us. Sooner or later everything will become clear to us, if not in this life, certainly in the joys of eternity.

***"Love is strong as death"***

This is precisely how the Saints acted during their earthly existence: through the practice of the virtue of

charity, they abandoned themselves into the hands of the Supreme Marksman. They knew that true victory can only be won when the human will, with the help of grace, is conformed to God's: "Nothing should be done that is not in accord with God's plans, obeys His orders and follows the bidding of His grace. [...] We were born to obey His determinations."<sup>1</sup>

If, however, our fragile will is weakened by past failures and faults, let us not

allow ourselves to be discouraged. There is a supreme remedy for our weakness: love!<sup>2</sup> It "is strong as death [...] Its flashes are flashes of fire, a most vehement flame" (Sgs 8:6).

From within our nothingness, let us lift our eyes with awe to Him who is our most loving Father, our affectionate Guide, our eternal Hope. Then, we will see how He mercifully gazes upon us, and how ready He is to restore us completely!

Let us love Him with all our hearts, and soon the Angels will carry us on their wings, the Saints will take us by the hand, and all our criteria, our self-will, and our non-compliance will be consumed by the most pure flames of this transforming love! ✧

<sup>1</sup> LEHODEY, *El santo abandono*, apud ROYO MARÍN, OP, Antonio. *Teología de la perfección cristiana*. 6.ed. Madrid: BAC, 1988, p.769.

<sup>2</sup> Lehoday affirms that it is proper of love to unite our will to that of God. This degree of conformity is a very sublime exercise of pure love and can only be found in souls that live from it (Idem, p.770).

# Devastating Disaster, Prodigious Cure

After the accident, I realized that my situation was very grave and that, barring a miracle, I would die. Therefore, I promised Dona Lucilia that if she helped me, I would testify for her beatification and propagate devotion to her. This is what I am doing on these pages.



**Sr. Ana Lúcia Iamasaki, EP**

**I**n perusing the Gospel narrative, at a certain point we come upon a particularly moving episode: having pity on ten lepers, Our Lord cures them, but only one returns to express his gratitude for such a great gift. This fact elicits a paternal reproach from the Divine Master: “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?” (Lk 17: 17).

Gratitude is a duty of justice, but it is also said to be the rarest of virtues. A very special effort is required on our part in order to never neglect it.

Taking the example of that man who did not fail to seek Jesus out to

thank Him, I wish to register here my affectionate and filial gratitude to Dona Lucilia Corrêa de Oliveira for the immense favour that I received through her intercession, and I hope that these lines will be of spiritual benefit to those who read them.

### *An apparently irremediable disaster*

It was around two o'clock in the afternoon, on March 31, 2014, when I was involved in a serious accident while travelling from Joinville to São Paulo in Brazil, along autoroute 101. The driver of the car I was in had to brake suddenly because of an

unsignalized problem on the road ahead. The car behind us was unable to stop in time, colliding with the rear of our vehicle on the side where I was seated.

Everything happened very quickly. I realized that blood was flowing from my mouth and I wanted to move, but was unable even to lift my neck. I realized that my situation was very grave and that, barring a miracle, I would die. Therefore, I promised Dona Lucilia that if she helped me, I would testify for her beatification and propagate devotion to her. I also asked that she grant me at least a few more minutes of life so that I



Sr. Ana Lúcia in the ICU ward of the hospital

*When I awoke, I found myself in the ICU; given the seriousness of the accident, the media were requesting information*



The state of the vehicle after the accident

could receive the Anointing of the Sick. Thanks be to God I had gone to Confession before setting out on the trip.

As I prayed, I heard the passers-by on the highway shouting that the car would catch fire, because oil or some other combustible fluid had spilled out onto the road. I asked the sisters who were with me – thanks to Our Lady none of them were seriously injured – to remove me from the vehicle. But as they were unable to do so, we had to wait for the emergency personnel.

When the ambulance arrived, they immediately removed me from the vehicle. Due to the gravity of my condition, they called the helicopter and I was airlifted to the hospital in Joinville.

Some sisters and a Herald priest were awaiting me there. The priest immediately gave me the Anointing of the Sick, after which I was taken to emergency department where my injuries were assessed. My fourth and fifth cervical vertebrae were fractured and the spinal cord damaged; I was quadriplegic and had little hope of survival.

When I awoke, I found myself in the ICU. It was then that the head nurse asked me when a family member could be expected to be arriving in Joinville, since, given the seriousness of the accident, the media were requesting information.

### ***Dona Lucilia and the prayers of the founder***

I did not know what Our Lady wanted of me until one of the sisters came to visit me, bringing news that Msgr. João desired that I live. He was praying insistently for me and had affirmed that I would come out of that tragic situation well. The sister also commented that after the helicopter had taken off, they had seen a beautiful rainbow at the site of the accident,



Dona Lucilia Corrêa de Oliveira photographed by Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, shortly before her death

*In the long periods of solitude and pain, it encouraged me to look at a picture of Dona Lucilia that was with me*

imparting a sense of hope amidst that disaster.

All of this brought me great encouragement, even though on several occasions my death seemed imminent. One of the first days in the ICU, for example, I was doing respiratory physiotherapy when my oxygen levels dropped and I began to feel shortness of breath. I lost consciousness, and when I came to some hours later I could no longer speak, for I had received a tracheotomy in order to breathe.

Two days after being admitted, I underwent a very delicate surgical intervention on the neck.<sup>1</sup> The surgeon who performed the procedure later commented that he had done what he could as a doctor, but he did not see much hope for survival. I remember that when this physician came to see me, he asked me what I wanted, and I replied, only by moving my lips, for I could not speak, that I wanted a cure. Then he said to me, afflicted: “Ah, but only our Father in Heaven can do that for you.”

What most gave me strength to fight for survival was the thought that Msgr. João was praying for me and very much desired that I live. I believe that I would have died from this accident, but his prayers, always including my cure in the intentions of his Masses,

and especially his desire, as the founder, changed God’s plans in my regard. Thus, in the long periods of solitude and pain, it encouraged me to look at the picture of Dona Lucilia that was with me in the hospital during the almost three months that I spent there, and to recall Msgr. João’s words when he put my intention in his Masses: “That Sr. Ana Lúcia live, live and live!”

After some days, a Herald priest, who is also a physician, travelled from São Paulo to visit me in the ICU and verify my condition. He had the goodness to call Msgr. João, so that he could say a few words to me: “Salve Maria, my little daughter! Do not worry, you are going to be fine, you are going to live, and you are going to walk again. I already see you walking.”

***“Your daughter is the most critical patient in the ICU”***

It would be much too lengthy to relate everything that transpired with me during this time. Suffice it

to say that I have documented and kept all the examinations and medical progress reports in a dossier of approximately five hundred pages...

Due to episodes of atelectasis, my lungs almost closed several times and I could not breathe; a thoracic drain was inserted; I had two episodes of pneumonia; needed to receive a blood transfusion; had a nasal and vesical catheter; and I underwent a gastrostomy, for I was unable to swallow even my own saliva.

I was conscious practically the entire time and, as my bed was facing the nurse's station, I could hear the information being transmitted at each shift change. I fully understood that the outlook was very grave, to such a degree that one nurse said to my mother: "Your daughter is the most critical patient we have in the ICU."

One of the doctors who followed my case commented to a priest that had visited me: "This one here, if she survives, is going to remain in this state..." My situation worsened daily, increasing the certainty that I could only survive with a miracle.

Nevertheless, Msgr. João maintained an unbreakable faith in my cure. Despite the worrisome news that reached him about my condition, he persisted in affirming: "She is going to live and will be perfectly fine." And he continued to pray: "For the cure of Ana Lúcia."

### *A dream foretelling the inexplicable improvement*

As the Church allows the re-administering of the Anointing of the Sick whenever there is danger of death, I received the Sacrament on more than one occasion during those weeks, until my situation began to stabilize somewhat and I was discharged from the ICU. All of the



Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP

*Despite the worrisome news that reached him, he maintained an unbreakable faith in my cure*

Heralds were very happy and surprised with the news, but when they told Msgr. João he was not surprised, and exclaimed: "I said she will recover from this."

In the hospital room, there were still serious incidents, especially regarding my respiration, for my oxygen levels frequently dropped. When I was lying down, there was no position in which I did not experience pain. I was also unable to withstand being seated for any length of time, and to transfer me from the bed to the chair, or vice-versa, necessitated

the nursing team to carry out a complicated manoeuvre.

One Saturday morning, a doctor that had followed my case, but who had not visited me for some time, came to my room to relate to me a dream he had in which I spoke and moved... which he thought I could no longer do. How surprised he was upon entering the room to see me move my hands and hear me pronounce some words, although with a voice distorted due to the tracheotomy that had been performed. Taken with emotion, he said to my sister as he left: "This is a miracle. God really does exist!"

Gradually, without a clinical explanation, I began to improve and my life was virtually no longer at risk. I gradually began to move my upper limbs. One day, one of the professionals who was assisting me came to see me and said: "Ana, you are quadriplegic, and if some day you are able to control your own wheelchair and have some independence, you should be happy." I then replied: "I am not quadriplegic, and with the grace that Dona Lucilia will grant me and the prayers of my founder, I am going to walk!"

Having said this, I began to move my leg... The nurse technicians who were in my room began to weep with joy and they went out into the corridors of the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the hospi-



tal proclaiming what had happened. The doctor was flabbergasted and she exclaimed: “How is it that you, a quadriplegic, are moving your leg? Ana, what Saint did you pray to?” I pointed to the photo of Dona Lucilia and told her that from the moment of the accident I had asked her for a miracle, promising that I would give my testimony for her beatification. I also commented that she herself could give her deposition as a physician, to which she replied: “Let’s go to Rome together, and I will speak to the Pope!”

***My case rekindled the faith in many hearts***

From that day on, many employees of the hospital came to my room to ask for prayers. On one occasion a lady, referring to the photo of Dona Lucilia, confided: “I look at her and feel I must ask for a grace.” And a nurse technician told me: “Ana, you are our miracle. Your case is the most spoken-of in the hospital.”

This professional felt so attracted by the story of Dona Lucilia that she asked her for the grace of having another child, for she only had one and due to health problems she was unable to conceive again. Some months later, I was able to speak with her by phone, and she informed me that she had received the grace and would soon be giving birth to another child.

One of the nursing aides from the night shift, a Catholic, albeit fallen

away from the Church, commented: “I don’t know exactly why you suffered this accident, but I think it could have been to help people’s faith grow. Many people here in this hospital have lost their faith and say that miracles no longer happen; now, several people are converting.”

The nurse that had received me when I arrived at emergency always brought his nursing students to visit me, telling them what a miracle it was that I was alive and describing the unexpected developments in my case.

Finally, on June 11, I took my first steps in the hospital corridor, with two physiotherapists assisting me. This scene was witnessed by doctors, nurses, nursing technicians and patients who were present.

Today I lead a normal life, with only a few sequelae regarding strength in my upper and lower limbs on my left side. I continue with physiotherapy once a week, but I am independent, without a walker or any type of aid, and I am responsible for one of the houses belonging to the Society of Apostolic Life Regina Virginum in São Paulo.

In summary, I have experienced the maternal protection of Dona Lucilia countless times in my life, but after this accident I was confirmed in my certainty that, confiding in her goodness and intercession, one is never abandoned and there is no such thing as a situation with-

out a solution, no matter how terrible the calamities we may experience. For, as Dr. Plinio once said, Dona Lucilia has “an overflowing love, not only for the two children she had, but also for the children she did not have. She seemed to be made to have thousands of children”...<sup>2</sup> ✧

<sup>1</sup> Halo cervical traction was implemented immediately to reduce the fracture-dislocation of the fourth and fifth cervical vertebrae. The surgical procedure, done by accessing the anterior of the neck, consisted in spinal decompression (corpectomy) and the immobilization of the third to sixth cervical vertebrae by means of a plate (arthrodesis).

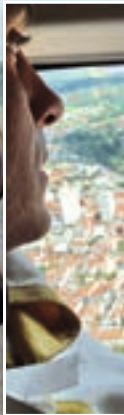
<sup>2</sup> CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. *Dona Lucilia*. Città del Vaticano-Nobleton: LEV; Heralds of the Gospel, Nobleton, 2013, p.615.

*Confiding in her goodness and intercession, one is never abandoned and there is no such thing as a situation without a solution*

Below, scenes of the community life at St. Hildegard, the house for which Sr. Ana Lúcia is responsible



Photos: Maria Luíza B. de Albuquerque



## ***Blessing from the Air... and From the Sea!***

**I**t took place in many of the cities where the Herads are active, from Asunción, Paraguay, to Lisbon, Portugal; from the Western Brazilian city of Campo Grande to Maputo in Africa, covering São Paulo, Ponta Grossa, Forta-

leza, San José (Costa Rica) and San Salvador (El Salvador). By helicopter, boat and small plane, Herald priests and deacons reverently transported the Blessed Sacrament or carried a statue of Our Lady with filial love, praying, sing-



São Paulo



Ponta Grossa



Maputo



San José

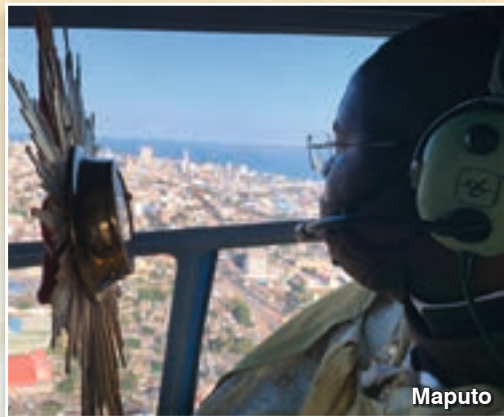




São Paulo



Fortaleza



Maputo

ing, or reciting the Holy Rosary. Their goal was always the same: to demonstrate faith and confidence in Divine Providence and to beseech Our Lord Jesus Christ, through His most Holy Mother, to protect and bless the faithful during the difficult days they are living.

We are undergoing times of great change. Faced with the panorama unfolding before our eyes, human strength and planning are of little value. But why are we troubled? Did not Jesus in the Gospel tell us that even the hairs of our head are numbered (cf. Lk 12:7), and that not one of them falls without divine permission (cf. Lk 21:18)? As we approach

the fulfilment of the promises of Fatima, and feel our human powerlessness before disease, the forces of nature and even the vicissitudes of the global economy, the time has come for us to raise our eyes to Heaven. More than ever, we need to ask Jesus and Mary to bestow upon us their blessing and to protect us in every situation, however complex.

It was in this spirit that the Heralds of the Gospel made their aerial and maritime processional voyages. And it is likewise from this perspective that that we seek to carry out each of our day-to-day duties during this period of pandemic and confinement. ✧



San Salvador



Lisbon



Campo Grande



Lisbon



Fortaleza

Photos: Arazatos do Evangelho

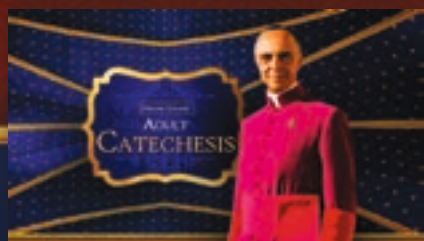
# RECONQUEST

CATHOLIC FORMATION

“Knowledge and Faith  
are two wings that  
carry us to sanctity”

Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP  
Founder of the Heralds of the Gospel

This is why the **Heralds of the Gospel** are offering **Reconquest**, a platform of online courses for you and your family.



**New courses** each month,  
and the **first are already available**

- ✓ Catholic Marriage
- ✓ Catechism for Adults
- ✓ Liturgical Latin
- ✓ Consecration to Our Lady
- ✓ The Path of Holiness
- ✓ Coming Closer to Our Lady



**Access the link now  
and sign up**

[WWW.RECONQUISTA.ARAUTOS.ORG](http://WWW.RECONQUISTA.ARAUTOS.ORG)



## CHURCH AND WORLD EVENTS.....



### *Trappists resume production of the best beer in the world*

In the Belgian city of Vleteren, the monks of Saint-Sixtus Abbey have resumed the production of Westvleteren 12 beer, considered one of the best in the world. The production of this beer had been interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and is one of the main sources of funding for the monastery, which is why they decided to continue it.

One of the religious of Saint-Sixtus, Brother Godfried, explains that it is a Benedictine tradition for

monks to support themselves with the fruit of their work. “Essentially, that means we have to live off our brewery,” the Trappist concludes.

The historic beer was first made in 1839, when King Leopold I granted the monks permission to do so. Nevertheless, it was only sold to the public later, in 1878.

The nineteen monks of Saint-Sixtus Abbey produce about five thousand barrels of the beverage each year, which is sold in small quantities at the door of the monastery. The reason for the limited production is to safeguard against the work in the brewery disrupting their life of piety, because one of the mottos of these monks is “we do not live to make beer, we make beer to live.”

### *American physicians defend reopening of churches*

At the end of May, the Catholic Medical Association’s website published a study prepared by experts from renowned hospitals and universities in the United States which ad-

vocate the reopening of churches in the country.

According to these professionals, churches can be reopened “as safely as other essential services.” Dr. Anushree Shirali, a nephrologist at Yale University, even claims that Masses can be considered safer than many of these services.

The authors of the study (Yale, Columbia, UCLA and Mayo Clinic graduates) question the idea that churches pose a greater risk for the spread of the virus and emphasize that they should be considered essential partners in rebuilding society after the pandemic. “There are reasons to believe that churches can do an even better job of protecting people than other institutions in society,” the paper says.

An immunobiologist at Yale, where he is involved in clinical research on the virus, Dr. Andrew Wang says he finds no clear scientific reason why a restaurant where food is prepared for more than a thousand people should be considered

## ***Pandemic Delays Reconstruction of Notre-Dame Cathedral***

Circumstances prompted by the pandemic have led the French government to temporarily interrupt reconstruction work on Notre-Dame Cathedral, initially planned to be completed within five years. At present, there is no new forecast for the reopening of this historic monument of Christianity.

Meanwhile, investigations into the cause of the mysterious fire on April 15, 2019 have yet to reach any concrete conclusions. In an interview with *Marianne* magazine, the president of the French Association of Heritage Architects, Rémi Desalbres, states that “the hypotheses about the origin of the fire suggest a cigarette butt or an electrical short circuit. However, for most experts, particularly architects who specialize in historic monuments, these hypotheses are not very convincing.”



**Notre-Dame Cathedral during the devastating fire of 15/4/2019**

GodeiroParis (CC BY-SA 4.0)

safer than allowing Catholics to attend Mass.

Doctors have also argued that in the midst of this pandemic, the Sacraments and the ministry of the Church are of vital importance. According to them, in addition to the effects of the virus on physical well-being, there are also the psychological consequences of “stress and anxiety” caused by the economic shutdown and uncertainty about the future. Therefore, Dr. Wang concludes by expressing his wish that “the Church may help in this global crisis, as in all the other global crises before it.”



Reproduction

### ***Communion in the mouth is safer from a medical standpoint***

After the return of public Masses in Italy on May 18, the President of the Association of Italian Catholic Physicians, Dr. Filippo Maria Boscia, expressed his satisfaction with the

measure and expressed his opinion on the most appropriate way, from a public health standpoint, to administer Communion.

According to Prof. Boscia, a highly recognized professional in his country, the hands are the part of the body most exposed to viruses. For this reason, he argues that “Communion in the mouth is safer,” since “Communion in the hands is definitely more contagious.”

To this opinion he adds a comment on other practices that have been employed in the distribution of the Blessed Sacrament: “I have read news on the use of tweezers and about a proposal to distribute consecrated Hosts in small envelopes. After the Spanish flu we continued to practise Communion on the tongue, and everything was fine. I believe we are crossing the line of common sense. Some things should not be pursued. Healthcare is certainly important, but it should not lead to exaggeration and extravagance.”

### ***The Eucharist is just as necessary as material bread***

On May 6, *AsiaNews* agency published a letter written by a missionary of the Pontifical Institute of

Foreign Missions (PIME) in the Philippines, Fr. Stefano Mosca. In the document, aimed at contributing to the debate in Italy, the priest draws attention to the importance of access to the Sacraments, especially during the period of isolation occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to him, the Catholic community on the island of Mindanao, where he has been active for the past fourteen years, already shows signs of collapse. Although the State is careful to send some assistance that partially alleviates the nutritional needs of the population, the same does not happen with spiritual necessities, says the priest: “Who is concerned about distributing the Eucharist in the streets of the villages, so that the soul is also nourished, and not only the body?”

After pointing out that the greatest mistake of government authorities was to have forgotten that man “is not just a stomach,” Fr. Mosca concludes that the real crisis of the present day is that of “a Christian life obliged by the present circumstances to remain ‘on hold’, hoping that it will not be entirely extinguished.”



## **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](mailto:shrine@heralds.ca)

### **UNITED STATES**

PHONE: 281-676-8526

[shrine@heraldsusa.org](mailto:shrine@heraldsusa.org)

## ***Basilica of Minneapolis Damaged During Protests***

**T**he protests that hit the city of Minneapolis have also affected the historic Basilica of St. Mary. Rioters entered the sacred building and threw incendiary material into the pews, seriously damaging some of them. Fortunately, the fire was controlled before becoming more extensive.

The Basilica of St. Mary was dedicated in 1914 as a pro-cathedral for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Pope Pius XI designated it a minor basilica in 1926, the first church in the country to receive this title.



en.wikipedia.org



Photos: Reproduction

Above, photos published on social networks show the pews damaged by the fire; featured photo, the main façade of the cathedral

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

• Portuguese • Spanish • English



• *News* • *Opinion* • *Videos* • *Images*

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

News from Brazil and around the world

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



# *The Lion and the Ant*

Illustrations: Giuliana D'Amaro



Lucy halted in awe before the king of the animals. His presence was imposing and majestic. Nevertheless, she decided to make a request... How could an ant win the good graces of the lion?



**Denise María Ruiz Reyes**

**O**ne day, little Lucy took a walk through her home territory to visit the different fortresses existing in it. Enchanted, she entered each of those marvellous constructions to better contemplate the immense work of her ancestors. Lucy was proud to belong to a dynasty of ants living in that region for many years.

She was nearing the end of her journey, when she suddenly heard:

“Silence, please!”

Curious to know what was happening, she entered a large chamber to find a crowd of little ants, having a class with the master ant.

“Today we will learn about the lion king!” continued the teacher. “He is the supreme animal. We must regard him with fear and respect, honour him and venerate him. But, at the same time, we must be very careful with him, because, if we upset him in the slightest way, we will be putting our lives at risk. With his strength, a single gesture from him would be enough to do away with us ants, leaving no remains to even tell the tale.”

Lucy went on her way thoughtfully, wondering what this “supreme animal” must be like...

A few weeks later, she went for a stroll in the forest. She walked along,

cheerful and spritely, thinking about what might be the best food to gather that day. Soon, her beady eyes were drawn to something she had never seen before: a cherry tree! Those shiny, red fruits looked like something from Heaven. She was wonderstruck!

As she headed eagerly toward the tree, Lucy suddenly felt the earth tremble. Then there came such a loud roar that she imagined it must certainly be announcing the end of the world:

“Roaaarr!”

“What can that be?” asked the little ant, in alarm.

Coming to a halt, she soon saw who had made that sound: it was none other than the lion! His fur was golden and shiny, and a huge mane wreathed his head. His long tail swayed menacingly... But what scared our little ant the most was the size of his paws! He would be able to destroy the strongest ant fortress with just one touch!

There was no denying, however, how imposing and majestic his presence was. As the king of the animals stood atop an elevation, the sun made the perfect backdrop behind him, casting its final rays of the day and tinting the sky with lovely colours.

Despite her fear, Lucy could not contain an exclamation! The words of the master ant still echoed in her ears: "The lion is not to be played with! Never dare to approach him, let alone speak to him, if you want to live." But Lucy was bold ...

In a mixture of fear and admiration, she drew close to the lion, for she wanted to make a request. She would ask him to pick a cherry for her, from that tree, far too tall for her to climb. Would the king of the animals be willing?

If coming near him was already taking a great risk, surely it was madness to ask him for this favour. But our little ant felt so drawn by his greatness and majesty that she forgot all the lessons of prudence that she had been taught from the cradle!

Without stopping to think, she walked right up to the lion and greeted him, but... the king of the animals ignored her completely. Then, looking steadily at him, she addressed him with determination.

"O king of animals, don't you even notice me, your little sister, so industrious, so productive, so steadfast in her labour? Why do you treat me with such disdain?"

The lion, restraining himself, replied:

"Oh, lowly ant, if only you knew the vast horizons I see! If only you were aware of the expanses that my sights were made to encompass! And now you come before me, wanting me to turn my attention away from such superior realms to look upon such a tiny and trifling creature as yourself?"

Cleverly, the ant replied:

"O lion, how I am honoured to be in your shadow, or, rather, to be protected by the light of your strength. God created you to represent majesty in the attack and majesty in defence! And you cannot imagine how much admiration you inspire in us. We frail little ants venerate you, O lion!"

At that, he exclaimed:

"My goodness!!! I never thought that such an insignificant insect could entertain such a sublime line of thought!"

But Lucy was not finished yet. Taking a deep breath, she continued:



**"I am so small and powerless... Will you not cast a glance at your little sister and help her?"**

"I am so small and powerless that I need to make an enormous effort to get around.

The distance you cover in one leap would be a long journey for me. Yet, I feel fortunate to contemplate your greatness.

Can you not cast a downward glance at this poor insignificant insect, as you said a moment ago, and deign to help your little sister?"

"What is it that you want, little ant?"

"O venerable king, in my travels, I have come across many different fruits. However, none of them compares to the one I saw today: the cherry. How I wish I could have a fruit from yonder cherry tree, yet I am too small to pluck one for myself. Would you be so kind as to pick a cherry for me? Just one, and I would be forever grateful to know that in your might, you were capable of helping the least of all animals."

"Is that all you want, little ant?" replied the lion, with kind and majestic nod of his head.

He strolled over to the cherry tree, selected a beautiful branch, laden with fruit, and broke it off with his mighty paws. Then, knowing it would be impossible for Lucy to carry it, he took it himself to the ant "fortress," which was nothing but an insignificant mound of earth to him.

Arriving there, he carefully deposited the cherry branch at the main entrance, and, in a knightly gesture, bowed to the ant. More than those delectable cherries, she had won the lion's friendship, giving us humans a lesson on how to attain, with fear, admiration and humility, the benevolence of God. ✧



# THE SAINTS OF EACH DAY

- 1. Sts. Justino Orona and Atilano Cruz**, priests and martyrs (†1928). Mexican priests assassinated during the persecutions against the Church.
- 2. Blessed Peter of Luxembourg**, bishop (†1387). Appointed bishop at a young age, he stood out for his humility, penance and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- 3. St. Thomas, Apostle.**  
**St. Raymond Gayrard**, layman (†1118). After being widowed, he dedicated himself to works of charity, founded a hospital and was accepted as a canon of St. Saturnin Basilica in Toulouse, France.
- 4. St. Elizabeth**, queen (†1336 Estremoz - Portugal).  
**Blessed Pier Georgio Frassati**, layman (†1925). Young Italian from a wealthy family who joined the ranks of Catholic lay associations where he tirelessly carried out works of charity.
- 5. 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.**  
**St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria**, priest (†1539 Cremona - Italy).  
**Blesseds George Nichols and Richard Yaxley**, priests, **Thomas Belson**, seminarian, and **Humphrey Pritchard**, martyrs (†1589). Killed in England during the persecutions of Elizabeth I.
- 6. St. Maria Goretti**, virgin and martyr (†1902 Nettuno - Italy).  
**Blessed Maria Teresa Ledochowska**, virgin (†1922). Austrian noblewoman, foundress of the Missionaries Sisters of St. Peter Claver, dedicated to helping the missions in Africa.
- 7. Blessed Maria Romero Meneses**, virgin (†1977). Nicaraguan Salesian nun sent to Costa Rica where she worked in the formation of youth for forty-six years.
- 8. Sts. Augustine Zhao Rong, priest, and companions**, martyrs (†seventeenth to twentieth century China).  
**Blessed Mancius Araki**, martyr (†1626). He died in prison in Shimabara, Japan for having sheltered a priest, Blessed Francis Pacheco, in his home.
- 9. St. Pauline of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus**, virgin (†1942 São Paulo).  
**Blessed Jane Scopelli**, virgin (†1491). Carmelite religious, she founded a monastery in Reggio Emilia, Italy, of which she was prioress. She stood out for her great devotion to Our Lady and her austere penance.
- 10. St. Apollonius of Sardis**, martyr (†century unknown). He suffered the martyrdom of crucifixion in Iconium in present-day Turkey.
- 11. St. Benedict**, abbot (†547 Monte Cassino - Italy).  
**St. Abundius**, priest and martyr (†854). Killed in Cordoba during the persecution by the Moors. His body was left to be devoured by dogs and wild animals.
- 12. 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.**  
**St. Peter Khanh**, priest and martyr (†1842). Recognized as a priest when he entered a customs house; he was arrested, tortured and beheaded in Nghê An, Vietnam.
- 13. St. Henry**, emperor (†1024 Grone - Germany).  
**Blessed Ferdinand Mary Baccilieri**, priest (†1893). Founded the Congregation of the Servants of Mary in Galeazza, Italy.
- 14. St. Camillus de Lellis**, priest (†1614 Rome).  
**St. Francis Solano**, priest (†1610). Franciscan missionary, he preached the Gospel in the remotest corners of South America.
- 15. St. Bonaventure**, bishop and Doctor of the Church (†1274 Lyon - France).  
**Blessed Anne-Marie Javouhey**, virgin († 1851). Founded the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny.
- 16. Our Lady of Mount Carmel.**  
**St. Athenogenes**, martyr (†c. 305). He was burned alive after bequeathing to his disciples a hymn on the divinity of the Holy Spirit.
- 17. Blessed Ignatius de Azevedo**, priest, and **thirty-nine companions**, martyrs (†1570 Canary Islands - Spain).  
**Blesseds Therese of St. Augustine and fifteen companions**, virgins and martyrs (†1794). Religious from the Carmel of Compiègne; guillotined during the French Revolution.
- 18. St. Arnulf**, bishop (†640). Bishop of Metz and counsellor of King Dagobert, he renounced his office to lead a hermetic life in the Vosges Mountains.
- 19. 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.**  
**St. Epaphras**, disciple of St. Paul. He preached the Gospel in Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis.
- 20. St. Elijah the Tishbite**, prophet.  
**St. Apollinaris**, bishop and martyr (†c. second century Ravenna - Italy).  
**St. Aurelius of Carthage**, bishop (†c. 430). Intimate friend of St. Augustine; he was elected Bishop



of Carthage and safeguarded his flock from pagan customs.

**21. St. Lawrence of Brindisi**, priest and Doctor of the Church (†1619 Lisbon).

**St. Alberico Crescitelli**, priest and martyr (†1900). Foreign Missions priest subjected to brutal torture and finally quartered by adherents of the Yihetuan sect in China, during the Boxer Rebellion.

**22. St. Mary Madgalene.**

**St. Philip Evans** and **St. John Lloyd**, priests and martyrs (†1679). Hanged during the reign of Charles II of England for exercising the priestly ministry in their country.

**23. St. Bridget**, religious (†1373 Rome).

**Blessed Basil Hopko**, bishop and martyr (†1976). Auxiliary Bishop of Presov, Slovakia, he was arrested and tortured for practising his pastoral ministry. He died as a consequence of a serious illness contracted while in prison.

**24. St. Charbel Makhlof**, priest (†1898 Annaya - Lebanon).

**St. Kinga**, religious (†1293). Daughter of the King of Hungary, she married the Prince of Krakow, Poland. They both lived in perfect chastity. After the death of her spouse, she became a Clarist religious in the monastery she had founded in Stary Sacz.

**25. St. James the Greater**, Apostle.

**Blesseds Rodolfo Acquaviva**, **Afonso Pacheco**, **Pedro Berna**, **Antonio Francisco**, priests, and **Francisco Aranha**, religious, martyrs (†1583). Jesuit mission-

aries in India; killed out of hatred for the Cross.

**26. 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

**St. Joachim** and **St. Anne**, parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

**St. George Preca**, priest (†1962). Dedicated himself to the catechetical formation of youth and founded the Society of Christian Doctrine on the Island of Malta.

**27. St. Felix** and **St. Lilio**, martyrs (†852). Married couple beheaded by Moors in Cordoba, Spain, for professing the Catholic Faith.

**28. St. Victor I**, Pope (†c. 200). Of African origin, he established that Easter day be celebrated throughout the whole Church on the Sunday following the Jewish Passover.

**29. St. Martha.**



Sérgio Hollman

**St. Henry, emperor**  
Church of St. Catherine, Thannenkirch (France)

**Blesseds Louis Bertran**, **Mancius of the Holy Cross** and **Peter of the Holy Mother of God**, martyrs (†1627). Spanish missionaries burned alive in Omura, Japan.

**30. St. Peter Chrysologus**, bishop and Doctor of the Church (†c. 450 Imola - Italy).

**Blessed Zosimus Izquierdo Gil**, priest and martyr (†1936). Priest shot to death during the Spanish Civil War. While in prison, he heard the Confessions of inmates and prayed the Rosary with them.

**31. St. Ignatius of Loyola**, priest (†1556 Rome).

**St. Fabius**, martyr (†303-304). Christian condemned to death in Caesarea of Mauretania, present-day Algeria, for refusing to carry the flag of the governor in a pagan ceremony.

# A Palace or a Cave?

In moments of fervour, we feel that we are called to sparkle like precious gems, resplendent with sanctity. However, at a certain moment, God allows these lights to fade...



**Ir. Angelis Ferreira, EP**

**S**ea, rocks and sun... Such disparate elements, but they form such a beautiful combination! Together, they create harmonious scenes conducive to well-being and to filling the admiring soul with joy.

The famous Island of Capri, located off the southern coast of the Italian Peninsula, is home to the Blue Grotto, where a spectacular phenomenon takes place. As the seawater that bathes its rocky interior is illuminated by the light of the sun, a brilliant blue fills the entire cave. During the day, the walls do not appear to be made of rough stone, but rather carved from an enormous sapphire!

Now, if we had the opportunity to visit this cave at nightfall, we would realize that, in fact, those rocks were never sapphires, nor was that enchanting light inherent to the cave. We would sadly discover that the fabulous setting which had seemed to come straight out of a fairy tale was gradually being converted into a gloomy dwelling place for bats...

Perhaps a barely visible blue vein playing on the surface of the water would remind us that the moon was shining outside; nothing more... Even the cold night wind would howl inhospitably in the cave, whereas, when the sun was shining, a discreet murmur had accompanied the fresh and gentle breeze.

Something similar happens to the soul in a state of grace. By the action of the Life-giving Spirit, the coarse stones within are flooded by supernatural light. However, unlike what happens in that cave – whose walls never, in fact, become sapphires – grace makes us truly participants in the divine life.

In moments of fervour, we feel that we are called to sparkle like precious gems, resplendent with sanctity. Everything is covered with brilliance, with colours and with charm. The light breeze is refreshing, the water reaches the ideal temperature and the sun's heat is not a source of torment.



The Blue Grotto, by Carl Friedrich Seiffert (1860) - Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin

At a certain moment, however, God allows these lights to fade and the devil whispers in our ear: “Do you see how it was all lies? Everything you thought was true is nothing but a fleeting illusion! This is the reality: cold, ugliness, bats and darkness.”

Was such a marvel, then, merely imagination? Would the Most High have invited us to the sublimities of

the supernatural without giving us the capacity to arrive at eternal joy? Will our miseries and shortcomings forever drag us down to what is most vile?

Whom should we believe? The God of Truth, or the father of lies? The answer could not be more obvious.

However, if the onslaught of hell is unrelenting, threatening to

undermine our hope, let us not hesitate: we must kneel down, join our hands and lift up our hearts, confiding in Her who is the Mother of Mercy. Our Lady knows and loves the plans of her Divine Son for us, and She herself will fulfil the promise to transform the dark and rough grotto of our souls into a stupendous palace, full of light and glory! ✧



Reproduction

## *Reborn in the Heart of Mary*

**T**he Paraclete was united to Mary in such an intimate and profound way that they formed, so to speak, one single spirit; the Comforter accomplished everything through His Spouse and begot all graces within Her. But it was necessary that Our Lady be introduced, as it were, into the bosom of the Most Holy Trinity so that, from then on, She would act with the strength and intensity of the Three Divine Persons, for the benefit of the Church. This would only be possible through the Holy Spirit, since the bond between them communicated to Her all the rights of her mystical Spouse, allowing Her to operate in His name and with His very power.

The spiritual espousals effected at the Annunciation already conferred this gift to the Virgin, but, in view of Jesus' mission, it remained hidden in her Heart. At Pentecost, the divine force pulsing there blossomed, and was spread to the Apostolic College. All of them then began to participate in the gifts, virtues and charisms of Our Lady's soul. In short, they became a continuation of Her for the world. And, as they were reborn in the Heart of Mary by the action of the Holy Spirit, their mission was forever linked to Her.

Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP