



# HEROES OF THE GOSPEL

Vol. 15, No. 164  
June 2021

*Martyr of Heroic  
Innocence*



# ***A Marian Soul from His Mother's Womb***

**S**t. John the Baptist is a soul so ardently Marian that, even in his mother's womb, he rendered Our Lady a pronounced act of devotion. He is the apostle, the faithful disciple, the perfect devotee of the Blessed Virgin, who hears her voice, discerns in Her the first echoes of the voice of the Lamb of God whom he is to announce, and he trembles for sheer joy.

Therefore, we should venerate in St. John the Baptist the model of a true and perfect devotee of Our Lady, asking him to make us perfect devotees of Her. And let us have the ears of our soul attuned so that, when we hear the voice of Mary Most Holy, we also tremble with jubilation, such that a request from Her never finds us reluctant, unhappy, annoyed, unwilling to attend Her. On the contrary, may her voice make us tremble with joy, even when She speaks an austere word of renunciation, sacrifice and suffering.

*Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira*

St. John the Baptist as a child -  
Parish of St. John the Baptist,  
Figueiró dos Vinhos (Portugal)



**Editor:**

Mario Luiz Valerio Kühl

**Editorial Board:**

Severiano Antonio de Oliveira;  
Silvia Gabriela Panez;  
Marcos Aurelio Chacaliaza C.

**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

**Printed in India**

at Anaswara Offset Pvt. Ltd., Cochin

© 2021 Heralds of the Gospel. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce any article, with credit given to *Heralds of the Gospel Magazine*, a copy of which must be sent to the Heralds of the Gospel. The authors are responsible for the content of their articles.

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

# CONTENTS

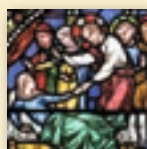
*Our Readers Write* ..... 4

*The Innocence and Heroism of Virtue (Editorial)* ..... 5



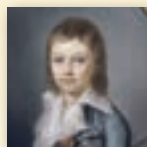
*The Voice of the Popes – Heavenly Token of Salvation*

..... 6



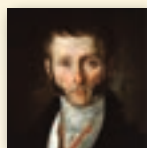
*Gospel Commentary – “Just Have Faith!”*

..... 8



*Shrouded in the Mists of History... a Martyr King!*

..... 18



*Consensus or Conviction?*

..... 22



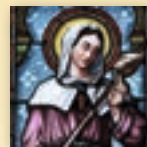
*Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament*

..... 24



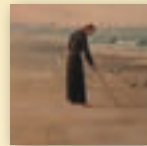
*Meditations of a Boy on the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

..... 26



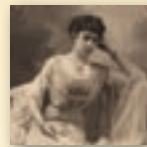
*St. Germaine Cousin – “The Saint that We Needed”*

..... 30



*The “Poem to the Virgin”: Golden Tribute of Brazil’s Apostle*

..... 34



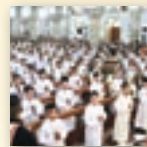
*Assistance, Protection and Security*

..... 38



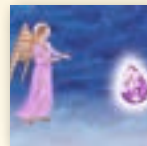
*Heralds Worldwide*

..... 42



*Church and World Events*

..... 44



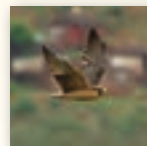
*Story for Children... – From Stones to Stars...*

..... 46



*The Saints of Each Day*

..... 48



*Defier of the Sky*

..... 50



## Heralds of the Gospel Magazine Online

Get access to the magazine content directly from your cell phone

Access: catholicmagazine.news







## OUR READERS WRITE

### **THE CATHOLIC FAITH IS MILITANT**

Reading last March's article, *Guarantee of Holy Church's Triumph*, we see how Christians today, after years and years of conscious work by the enemies of the Church, have forgotten what it means to live the Catholic Faith as a combat, as a battlefield. The weapons, of which St. Paul speaks, have been laid down in favour of a insipid pacifism that corrupts everything.

To fight for the honour of God? This is for Taliban radicals, they now say. Everything is peace, mercy and solidarity. Where are the martyrs, ready to die for Christ? Where are the Saints – many not canonized – who fought to the point of giving their lives for the evangelization, now called proselytism?

The enemy has succeeded in making the faithful believe that “there is no enemy,” and the rest is a consequence! Let us fight for the honour and glory of Our Lord and His Holy Church.

*Silvia María Manzanares*  
*Via [revistacatolica.org](http://revistacatolica.org)*

### **A COMPLETE PUBLICATION THAT IS ENTERTAINING TO READ**

Dear friends of *Heralds of the Gospel* magazine, if you only knew how much apostolate your magazine does... I assure you that you cannot measure its full extent.

There are many of us who each month, from far and wide – in my case, in a rural area in southern Chile – feel supported in our formation, but also in our enthusiasm, and – why not add – salutary entertainment. Always relevant and diversified, whether it

be the words of the Popes, the Gospels commentaries by Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, reflections on spiritual themes, Christian fellowship, simple day-to-day observations or the realities of our world, as well as theology and philosophy.

What more could one ask for in a single publication? I will go on to say, not as a mere compliment, but from the heart: nowadays, despite the availability of so much information on the internet and in the most varied publications, one cannot find such a complete publication. Complete and, at the same time, entertaining to read.

I ask the Blessed Virgin to one day allow you to see, as a stimulus to your daily work, all the apostolate you are doing. Thank you very much for everything. Keep it up: never stop growing and improving! With all my esteem in Christ.

*Francisco Javier Donoso*  
*Pichidegua – Chile*

### **ONLY A DIVINE INTERVENTION CAN CHANGE THIS STATE OF THINGS**

Regarding the excellent article – *Fall of Symbolic Buildings: Harbinger of New Eras?* – published in the April issue of the magazine, I was touched by Daniel-Rops' quote, according to which “The crises that shake human societies always begin as spiritual crises; political events and social upheavals merely translate into events an imbalance whose cause is much deeper.”

It is really clear that this is happening in our society today. Current events point to a society that is soft and only concerned with its immediate well-being. I believe that only a divine intervention can change this state of things.

*Juliano Bongiovanni Passos*  
*São Paulo – Brazil*

### **CLARITY AND TRUTH**

Thank you for your helpful writings. They are so edifying. The *Gospel commentary* article in the Feb. 2021 edition: *Unfathomable Divine Plans and Faulty Human Criteria* was most valuable in sorting out today's confusion, and it gives hope.

Thank you for your clarity and for speaking the truth!

*Anna Maria Di Ponio*  
*Windsor – Canada*

### **A LIGHT THAT ILLUMINATES US, FROM BEGINNING TO END**

*Heralds of the Gospel* magazine helps me so much in my spiritual life! Each commentary is more inspiring than the last, as the letters show. I agree with all of them. It is worth reading the entire magazine because it is a light that illuminates us from beginning to end. May the Virgin of Fatima bless you.

*Maria Carvalho*  
*Simão Dias – Brazil*

### **A RICH AND CATECHETICAL MAGAZINE**

*Heralds of the Gospel* magazine is part of my conversion story.

Since the magazine's foundation I became a subscriber, at twenty years of age. The images, always carefully selected to lead us to admire the beautiful, take us back to the beauty that is the heavenly dwelling place. I really enjoy reading the *Gospel Commentary*, always written by the most reverend Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, founder of the *Heralds of the Gospel*.

What splendid articles, so well written and selected for us, the readers of this rich and catechetical magazine!

*Maria Aparecida Tavares*  
*Mará – Brazil*



## THE INNOCENCE AND HEROISM OF VIRTUE

When we observe a child contentedly amusing himself with a toy or gazing up at the stars, we immediately feel some chords of our springtime innocence echo deep within our soul, chords that are at odds with the cacophonous, prosaic and selfish world in which we live. As St. Thomas Aquinas states, wholesome recreational activity, so typical of early childhood, is, like metaphysics, essentially unpretentious, contemplative and free of concrete interests. The child enjoys, so to speak, a co-naturality with Heaven.

Sins against chastity – the “angelic virtue” – are the ones most at odds with this primal innocence. Indeed, they obliterate the focus of contemplation, dull the intelligence and corrode true love. Nevertheless, since impurity acts largely upon the senses, it has a vehement force of penetration. It is not without reason that the Revolution makes use of it to systematically corrupt youth. And what a massacre of innocence we have witnessed!

However, impurity is not a recent sin. History tells, for example, how ancient peoples perverted childhood in the most abominable ways, committing sins which, according to the Bible, cry out to Heaven for vengeance. With the Incarnation, Our Lord Jesus Christ brought a new paradigm of innocence, whose apex was himself, God made a Child in a virginal womb.

The Redeemer not only protected the little ones, but drew them particularly close to himself, holding them up a model of perfection: “Let the children come to Me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the Kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it” (Mk 10:14-15). And He went further, anathematizing those who scandalize them: “it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Mt 18:6).

Following in the footsteps of the Divine Master, the Church also has the mission to protect the most vulnerable, to safeguard life from conception, to care for orphans, instruct the uneducated, catechize and baptize pagan peoples and, of course, to protect the innocent from scandal. To accomplishment this, the virtue of temperance, proper to moderating concupiscence, is not enough. Equally necessary is the virtue of fortitude, whose principal act is to resist, that is, to stand firm in the face of danger.

Contrary to what certain superficial views indicate, innocence is intrinsically linked to combativeness, and examples of this are the adolescent Tarcisius, holy martyr of the Eucharist; the three little shepherds of Fatima, who bravely resisted the machinations of the civil power; and the heroic example of Louis XVII, recounted in these pages. Paul Claudel rightly exclaimed: “Youth is not made for pleasure, but for heroism!”

A seeming innocence which lacks the weapons of fortitude is but a childish sentiment, incapable of discernment (cf. 1 Cor 14:20); combat without innocence is foolhardiness, for it will be devoid of the strength that comes with a pure heart.

In this context, it can be affirmed that the Church, more than ever, has the duty to be a shield which protects the innocent and a sword against the evil which so gravely threatens them. ✧



*Louis XVII,  
by Alexander  
Kucharsky -  
Palace of Versailles  
(France)*

Photo: Reproduction



# Heavenly Token of Salvation

The many evils that beset the world  
require that we seek help from the only One who can remove them.  
We must place all our hopes in the Sacred Heart;  
we must pray to Him for salvation.

**T**wenty-five years ago, on the approach of the solemnities of the second centenary of the Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque's reception of the Divine command to propagate the worship of the Sacred Heart, many letters from all parts, not merely from private persons but also from Bishops were sent to Pius IX, urging him to consecrate the whole human race to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

It was thought best at the time to postpone the matter in order that a well-considered decision might be arrived at. [...] Now, owing to certain new and additional reasons, We consider that the plan is ripe for fulfillment.

## *Supreme Lord of all things*

This world-wide and solemn testimony of allegiance and piety is especially appropriate to Jesus Christ, Head and Supreme Lord of our race. [...]

For He who is the Only-begotten Son of God the Father, consubstantial with Him, as "the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance" (Heb 1:3), has everything in common with the Father, and therefore sovereign power over all things. For which the Son of God thus speaks of Himself through the

prophet: "But I am appointed King by Him over Sion, His holy mountain... The Lord said to Me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me and I will give Thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps 2:6-8).

By these words, He declares His power received from God over the whole Church, signified by Mount Sion, and over the rest of the world to its utmost parts. The words, "Thou art my Son," clearly indicate the foundation of this sovereign power, for by the very fact that He is the Son of the King of all, He is also the heir of all His Father's power. Hence the words "I will give Thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance," which are similar to those used by Paul the Apostle, "whom He hath appointed heir of all things" (Heb 1: 2).

But we should now give most special consideration to the declarations made by Jesus Christ, not through the Apostles or the Prophets but by His own words. To the Roman Governor who asked Him, "Art Thou a king then?" He answered unhesitatingly, "Thou sayest that I am a King" (Jn 18:37). And the greatness of this power and the boundlessness of His kingdom is still more clearly declared in these words to the Apostles: "All

power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth" (Mt 28:18). [...]

But this is not all. Christ reigns not only by natural right as the Son of God, but also by acquired right. For He snatched us "from the power of darkness" (Col 1:13), and "gave Himself for the redemption of all" (1 Tim 2:6). Therefore not only Catholics, and those who have duly received Christian baptism, but also all men, individually and collectively, have become to Him "a purchased people" (1 Pt 2:9).

Therefore, St. Augustine rightly comments: "You ask what price He paid? See what He gave and you will understand how much He paid. The price was the Blood of Christ. What could cost so much but the whole world, and all its people? The great price He paid was paid for all."<sup>1</sup> [...]

## *"My child, give Me thy heart"*

To this twofold ground of His power and domination He graciously allows us to add our voluntary consecration. Jesus Christ, our God and our Redeemer, possesses all things fully and perfectly; we, on the other hand, are so poor and needy that we have nothing of our own to offer Him as a gift. But yet, in His infinite goodness and love, He in no way objects to our giving and consecrating to Him what is already His, as if it were real-





Sacred Heart of Jesus - Basilica of Our Lady of Luján (Argentina)

ly our own. Indeed, He not only accepts such an offering, but positively desires and requests it: “My child, give Me your heart.”

We are thus able to be pleasing to Him by the good will and the affection of our soul. For by consecrating ourselves to Him, we not only openly and joyfully acknowledge and accept His authority over us, but we also testify that if what we offer Him were really our own, we would still offer it with our whole heart. [...]

### *Reason of hope for nations*

Such an act of consecration, since it can establish or strengthen the bonds which naturally connect public affairs with God, gives to States a hope of better things.

In these latter times [...] the authority of sacred and divine law is

*He not only accepts that we consecrate to Him what is already His, but He desires and requests it: “My child, give Me your heart”*

utterly disregarded, with a view to the exclusion of religion from having any part in public life. This policy ultimately attempts to extinguish the Christian Faith in the people, and, if it were possible, to banish God Himself from the earth.

With men’s minds dominated by such insolent pride, what wonder is it that the greater part of the human race has fallen into such profound disturbances and is buffeted by waves that spare no one from anxiety and peril?

When religion is discarded, it necessarily follows that the surest foundations of the public welfare must give way, whilst God, to inflict on His enemies their deserved punishment, has left them the prey to their own evil desires, so that they give themselves up to their passions and finally wear themselves out by excess of liberty.

### *Salvation is found in no other name*

Hence that abundance of evils which have long taken hold of the world, and which oblige us to seek the aid of Him by whose strength alone they can be driven away. Who can He be but Jesus Christ the Only-begotten Son of God? “For there is no other name under Heaven given to men whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). We must have recourse to Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. [...]

When the Church, in the days immediately succeeding her institution, was oppressed beneath the yoke of the Caesars, a young Emperor saw in the heavens a cross, which announced and brought about the glorious victory that soon followed. And today, behold another blessed and heavenly token is offered to our sight – the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with a cross rising from it and shining with dazzling splendour amidst flames of love.

In that Sacred Heart all our hopes should be placed, and from it the salvation of men is to be confidently besought. ✧

Excerpts from: LEO XIII.  
*Annum Sacrum*, 25/5/1899

<sup>1</sup> ST. AUGUSTINE. *Enarrationes in Psalmos*. Psalmo 95, n.5.



Our Lord resuscitates the daughter of Jairus - Cathedral de Le Mans (France)



## ✠ GOSPEL ✠

<sup>21</sup> When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around Him, and He stayed close to the sea. <sup>22</sup> One of the synagogue officials, named Jairus, came forward. Seeing Him he fell at His feet <sup>23</sup> and pleaded earnestly with Him, saying, “My daughter is at the point of death. Please, come lay Your hands on her that she may get well and live.” <sup>24</sup> He went off with him, and a large

crowd followed Him and pressed upon Him.

<sup>25</sup> There was a woman afflicted with haemorrhages for twelve years. <sup>26</sup> She had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet she was not helped but only grew worse. <sup>27</sup> She had heard about Jesus and came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak. <sup>28</sup> She said, “If I but touch His clothes, I

shall be cured.” <sup>29</sup> Immediately her flow of blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. <sup>30</sup> Jesus, aware at once that power had gone out from Him, turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who has touched My clothes?” <sup>31</sup> But His disciples said to Jesus, “You see how the crowd is pressing upon You, and yet You ask, ‘Who touched Me?’” <sup>32</sup> And He looked around to see who had



## ***“Just Have Faith!”***

In performing the miraculous cure of the woman with haemorrhages and the resurrection of Jairus' daughter, Jesus teaches that great graces are granted to those who have more faith.



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

### **I – THE ACCOUNT OF ST. MARK**

Mark the Evangelist stands out for the simplicity of his descriptions. His commentaries are sparse and forthright; He elaborates his narratives concisely, with little recourse to literary technique, as we have observed in previous articles. However, in the verses selected for the Lit-

urgy of the Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, these characteristics do not prevent him from describing Jesus' marvellous deeds vividly and eloquently. He surprises us with a wealth of detail that makes the scenes truly captivating, and almost dispenses with the need for further commentary. Notwithstanding, the profundity of the

done it. <sup>33</sup> The woman, realizing what had happened to her, approached in fear and trembling. She fell down before Jesus and told Him the whole truth. <sup>34</sup> He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction."

<sup>35</sup> While He was still speaking, people from the synagogue official's house arrived and said, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher any longer?" Disregarding the message that was reported, <sup>36</sup> Jesus said

to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid; just have faith."

<sup>37</sup> He did not allow anyone to accompany Him inside except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. <sup>38</sup> When they arrived at the house of the synagogue official, He caught sight of a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. <sup>39</sup> So He went in and said to them, "Why this commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep." <sup>40</sup> And they ridiculed Him. Then He put them all

out. He took along the child's father and mother and those who were with Him and entered the room where the child was.

<sup>41</sup> He took the child by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise!" <sup>42</sup> The girl, a child of twelve, arose immediately and walked around. At that they were utterly astounded. <sup>43</sup> He gave strict orders that no one should know this and said that she should be given something to eat (Mk 5:21-43).

*While St. John's writings reveal a distinct concern with emphasizing the divinity of the Saviour, we notice the harmoniously opposite intention in the narratives of St. Mark*

Word of God always enables the highlighting of certain aspects that can touch the soul.

In setting out, it is important to consider that this passage sets Our Lord Jesus Christ's humanity in high relief. While St. John's writings reveal a distinct concern with emphasizing the divinity of the Saviour, without losing sight of the human side, we notice the harmoniously opposite intention in the narratives of St. Mark. We know that the former composed his Gospel motivated by the struggle against the gnostic heresies of his time. What reason prompted this disciple of St. Peter to follow the opposite path? Let us consider the sacred text.

## II – HARMONY BETWEEN DIVINITY AND HUMANITY IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

<sup>21</sup> When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around Him, and He stayed close to the sea.

Christ had just expelled a Legion of demons from the possessed man of Gerasa (cf. Mk 5:1-16), in an extraordinary manifestation of power. One of them, the mouthpiece of the impure spirits, begged Jesus not to send them out of that region, but to order them to enter a herd of swine that was feeding nearby. When He gave them leave, the animals immediately rushed into the

sea and were drowned. After counselling the exorcized man to return to his friends and proclaim everything that the Lord had done for him (cf. Mk 5:19), the Teacher set out to cross the Sea of Galilee. Before reaching the other shore, news of His arrival had spread, for at that time, although virtually only verbal communication existed, news spread like wildfire. When He alighted from the boat, the beach was full of people wishing to see Him and to drink in His doctrine.

### *A synagogue official untouched by pharisaic prejudice*

<sup>22</sup> One of the synagogue officials, named Jairus, came forward. Seeing Him he fell at His feet <sup>23</sup> and pleaded earnestly with Him, saying, "My daughter is at the point of death. Please, come lay Your hands on her that she may get well and live." <sup>24</sup> He went off with him, and a large crowd followed Him and pressed upon Him.

Having the status of synagogue official, Jairus surely had titles and a good social position. However, aware that his knowledge was as nothing compared with the wisdom of Our Lord, for whom he fostered true admiration, he sought Jesus in order to beseech Him to cure his dying daughter. When he saw Jesus, he knelt before



Jesus preaching at Lake Tiberias, by Joseph Alfred Bellet du Poisat -  
Municipal Museum of Bourg-en-Bresse (France)



Him – proof of complete submission – and, acknowledging His strength and power, entreated Him to lay His hands on the girl. It was customary for priests to lay their hands on the sick when praying for them, a practice also adopted by Jesus on various occasions (cf. Mk 6:5; 8:23, 25; etc.). Because of his faith, Our Lord chose to heed his request.

As He set off toward Jairus' house, the Divine Physician was followed by a large crowd that "pressed upon Him," for everyone was eager to approach Him, to hear His words or to make requests.

***A woman who was living a slow death***

<sup>25</sup> There was a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years. <sup>26</sup> She had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet she was not helped but only grew worse.

Blood is the sign of life and, naturally, a gradual loss of blood signifies the waning of life. This woman had spent all that she had on many treatments, but the doctors had not succeeded in curing her; instead, they had reduced her to penury. She had knocked on every door to no avail, and we can easily imagine the sufferings she endured due to the meagre resources of the time! But, despite these failures, she kept her spirits up and her hope alive.

***Faith and constancy to obtain the cure***

<sup>27</sup> She had heard about Jesus and came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak. <sup>28</sup> She said, "If I but touch His clothes, I shall be cured."

<sup>29</sup> Immediately her flow of blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.

This verse typifies Jesus' great fame among the people; it was widely held that it was enough to touch His garment or to fall under His shadow to be healed – undoubtedly, a resounding glory!

Encouraged by the reports she had heard about Our Lord, this woman of robust faith



The haemorrhaging woman is healed - Fine Arts Museum, Seville (Spain)

thought to herself: "Here is the solution!", and she decided to touch the Divine Redeemer's cloak, fully convinced that this alone would resolve her problem. She could have reasoned that a cry from afar would have served; but the faith that God planted in her soul made her aware that this grace required her to "touch His clothes." In this way, it would be obvious that her health had come from Our Lord, eliminating any suspicion that it had been granted by the intervention of an Angel or any other factor.

Now, the poor woman feared to present herself before the Messiah, not only due to timidity, but because she knew that the circumstances did not favour voicing her request, since this illness had made her legally impure (cf. Lv 15:25). Let us bear in mind that women, at that time, and particularly among the Israelites, were relegated to an inferior plane on the social scale. It would be inappropriate for a daughter of the Chosen People to adopt an attitude such

*The woman afflicted with haemorrhages had knocked on every door to no avail, and we can easily imagine the sufferings she must have endured*

*Our Lord  
made His  
working of  
miracles  
conditional on  
the faith – at  
times strong,  
at others  
weak –  
that He found  
in souls*

as that of the Canaanite woman (cf. Mk 7:24-30; Mt 15:21-28) – a pagan, exempt from Jewish customs – who came to Him crying out dramatically to implore His aid. But faith urged the sick woman on. And so, despite the pressing multitude, she gradually drew closer until she noticed, perhaps after several attempts, an opening through which she extended her arm and managed to touch the hem of Jesus' garment. Instantly, she was cured.

This passage teaches us that, at times, to obtain a special grace we must persevere despite the difficulties; enduring jostling, contempt, and even rejection.

*Human question, with divine intention*

<sup>30</sup> Jesus, aware at once that power had gone out from Him, turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who has touched My clothes?" <sup>31</sup> But His disciples said to Jesus, "You see how the crowd is pressing upon You, and yet You ask, 'Who touched Me?'" <sup>32</sup> And He looked around to see who had done it.

At first sight, Mark's expression is somewhat puzzling: "aware at once that power had gone out from Him." In fact, on account of His divine, infallible, and ever-present knowledge, Jesus was cognizant of everything. How can it be explained that He perceived something of which He could not have been ignorant? In His humanity, by experiential

knowledge, He confirmed that which He had seen from all eternity, as God. The Evangelist highlights this detail to transmit a clear vision of Our Lord's human side, after having made His divinity evident by the instantaneousness of the cure.

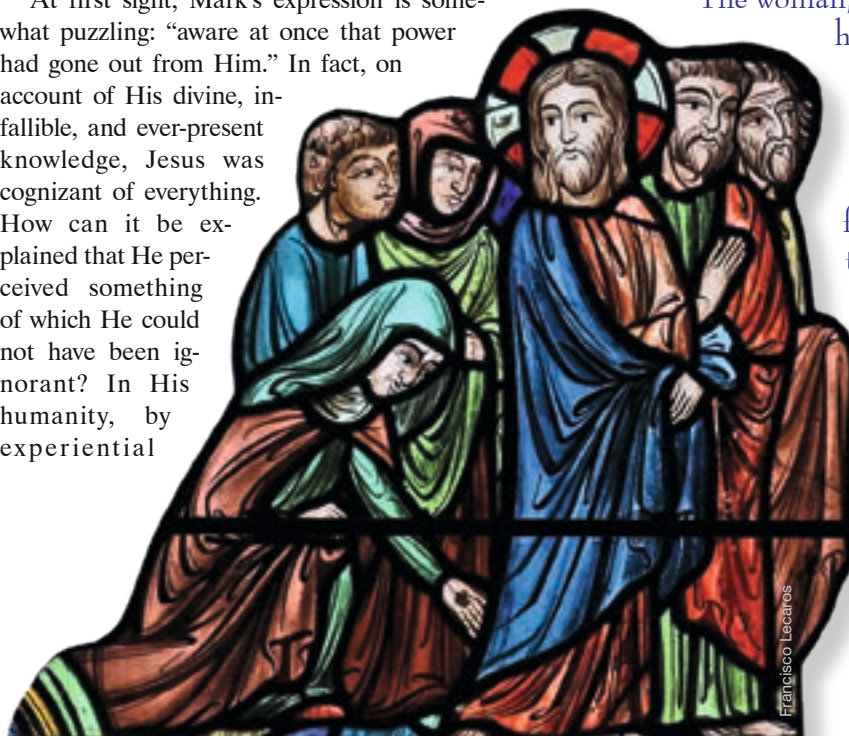
He could have let the woman depart, yet He chose to ask who had touched Him, in order to heighten the attention of the Apostles and to invite the woman to give testimony, as St. Jerome affirms: "Did the Lord by chance not know who had touched Him? Why then did He seek her? Clearly He knew, but He wanted her to declare herself. [...] If He had not pronounced the question [...], no one would have known that He had performed a miracle. [...] For this reason He asked the question, so that the woman would publicly acknowledge Him and God would be glorified."<sup>31</sup> The God-Man thus demonstrated that He had worked the cure, preventing the devil from planting in the mind of the beneficiary the idea that the occurrence had been mere coincidence or the result of psychological power, as the rationalists maintain in analysing such episodes.

*Faith and love win divine life*

<sup>33</sup> The woman, realizing what had happened to her, approached in fear and trembling. She fell down before Jesus and told Him the whole truth.

<sup>34</sup> He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction."

Instead of withdrawing quickly to escape an em-



The cure of the haemorrhaging woman - Notre-Dame Cathedral, Coutances (France)



barrassing situation, the woman chose to accuse herself, perhaps fearing to lose the health that had been restored to her, if she did not do so. Accordingly, she knelt before Jesus, trembling, but confiding in His mercy, and related what had happened. Her praiseworthy conduct shows that she was a humble person, with an upright conscience even tending to scrupulosity, for she believed she had stolen something from Our Lord and wished to return it, without, however, the benefit being taken from her.

The Saviour's reply prompts the conjecture that He looked upon her with great benevolence and kindness. He called her "daughter," which means that she came to enjoy His divine nature. Indeed, at that instant she had such enthusiasm and admiration—even adoration—for the Son of God, that sanctifying grace was infused in her. For, as St. Thomas Aquinas teaches,<sup>2</sup> when the rational creature directs himself to the due end, he is already justified. Supernatural life is introduced into those who are captivated and enchanted by something superior to the point of loving it more than themselves. St. John Chrysostom comments: "for her faith had made her truly a daughter."<sup>3</sup> What glory she received with this title from the lips of Our Lord Jesus Christ!

At the same time, the words "your faith has saved you" denote that her cure was also due to this virtue. It is faith that unites us to God, and that is why those who possess it to an eminent degree attain power from on high. Undeniably, Jesus could have cured her solely by His omnipotent will. But He made His working of miracles conditional on the faith—at times strong, at others weak—that He found in souls.<sup>4</sup> When faith was lacking, He normally did not perform a miracle (cf. Mk 6:5). It is not related, for example, that any of the Pharisees who approached Our Lord were cured...



Resurrection of Jairus' daughter - Church of Our Lady of Consolation, New York

*Our Lord urges the afflicted father to grow in confidence*

<sup>35</sup> While He was still speaking, people from the synagogue official's house arrived and said, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher any longer?" Disregarding the message that was reported, <sup>36</sup> Jesus said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid; just have faith."

<sup>37</sup> He did not allow anyone to accompany Him inside except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James.

It is easy to image Jairus' shock when he heard of his daughter's death, especially since this was an epoch in which the sense of family was much stronger than it is today and the paternal role was exercised vigorously. As provisions for the burial had already been made, the servants sought to deter the Master, fearing that the arrival of Jesus, accompanied by the multitude, would provoke a major upheaval in those tragic circumstances.

But with a care and concern suited to inspiring the customs of the *Ancien Régime*, Jesus fortified the confidence of Jairus. The counsel, "Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole" – according to St. Augustine – "was not to upbraid him for want of belief, but to encourage him to a yet stronger faith."<sup>5</sup> The girl was dead! Her joints had stiffened, her body had become cold, ready to be embalmed, wrapped in cloths and entombed in a grotto. However, although the daughter was no longer able to practise an act of faith, her father did so, expressing his faith by bringing the request to the Divine Master. It is likely that even on his way home, in Christ's company, he interiorly reaffirmed, and with growing fervour, the

*It is often through the belief of third parties that the connection is made between Christ's omnipotence and the realization of a miracle*

*Those without faith are an obstacle for the effects of grace and they negatively affect the Communion of Saints*

certainty of his daughter's resurrection. The faith of this synagogue official, as well as that of the three Apostles whom Jesus chose to accompany Him, made His intervention entirely viable, for it was frequently through the belief of third parties that the connection between the omnipotence of Christ and the realization of the miracle was established. If Jairus had deemed that his daughter's death made the Saviour's presence unnecessary, the favour of her resurrection would not have been attained.

We should have this same faith, especially during life's most difficult moments. Given the importance of this virtue, it is the one the devil most assails, seeking to diminish, weaken, and undermine it, in order to keep us from obtaining what we need. Following the teaching of the Divine Master in this Liturgy, "just have faith." Let us believe in His mercy above and beyond the apparent reality, remembering that when we implore some favour that is useful for our salvation, for the good of our neighbour and the glory of the Holy Church, God has more interest in giving than we have in receiving it. Actually, our desire was preceded by His, from all eternity.

***Only those with faith witness the miracle***

<sup>38</sup>When they arrived at the house of the synagogue official, He caught sight of a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. <sup>39</sup>So He went in and said to them, "Why this commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep."

<sup>40</sup>And they ridiculed Him. Then He put them all out. He took along the child's

father and mother and those who were with Him and entered the room where the child was.



Resurrection of Jairus' daughter - St. Peter's Church, Bordeaux (France)

The entourage stopped at the door of the house amid a commotion characteristic of the demonstrative ways of the middle-eastern people. Some wept, others wailed; there was a general uproar. Jesus' first concern was to calm everyone, affirming that the girl was only sleeping. In fact, "to men she was dead, who were unable to raise her up; but to God she was asleep, in whose purpose both the soul was living, and the flesh was resting, to rise again."<sup>36</sup> For Him, as God, death is no more than simple sleep, which can be instantaneously interrupted by His power, since it will be He who will personally resurrect all of humanity on the last day.

With Jairus' daughter we can symbolically contemplate ourselves in the tomb, deteriorated by the passage of time, awaiting the moment in which, at the order of the Supreme Judge and by His power, our body will unite with our soul in a state corresponding with that of the latter.

However, the incredulous onlookers thought that Jesus was mistaken, for they knew that the body of the girl was lifeless. Then they began to scoff at Him, revealing how feigned and egoistic their weeping had been; had it been authentic, they would have continued crying, without becoming vexed at His words.

For this reason, Jesus ordered everyone to leave, except the father, mother, and His three disciples – the only ones in that place with faith. Those without faith impede the flow of grace and negatively affect the Communion of Saints. This signifies that sceptics obstruct spiritual progress within their own circles. We should exercise a prudent vigilance in dealing with such persons, so as not to lose graces by their harm-



ful influence. We further see in this scene how God respects family ties, for He resurrects the girl, primarily for the sake of her parents. We can assume that both she and they were saved and rejoice today in Heaven.

***Our Lord emphasizes His humanity through a great miracle***

<sup>41</sup> He took the child by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum,” which means, “Little girl, I say to you, arise!”

<sup>42</sup> The girl, a child of twelve, arose immediately and walked around. At that they were utterly astounded.

Once again, St. Mark juxtaposes the Lord’s divine and human aspects. He projects His humanity, in relating that Jesus chose to go to the house of Jairus, to take the hand of the child and order her to rise. Was this journey, this gesture or those words necessary? No, for He is God, and He could have prevented the death or worked the resurrection at a distance. But He acted in this way to clearly show that it was His work, and so that the girl, upon awakening, would feel that she was in His hands. In this way, He showed himself to be Man, even in performing miracles, and in the efficacy of His word He emphasizes His divinity.

***Further solicitude of the God-Man***

<sup>43</sup> He gave strict orders that no one should know this and said that she should be given something to eat.

Jesus prohibited the occurrence from being spread about, for the time was not ripe for such a portentous sign to become known. It is beautiful that the evangelical narrative relates His concern that the girl be fed, something that the parents, shaken by the event, would likely have overlooked. Such care shows how the tenderness of all mothers the world over, combined, would not equal His solicitude for one person. But, as God, could He

not simply have eliminated the child’s hunger? For, what is easier: to miraculously satisfy an appetite or to restore a life?

But He wanted the parents to give her something to eat, for two reasons. Firstly, to prove that their daughter was actually alive, as St. Jerome affirms: “each time that He raised someone from the dead, He ordered that they be given something to eat, so that it not be thought that the resurrection was a phantasmagoria.”<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, in order to show His love for natural order. It was entirely appropriate that the parents feed their daughter, who had just suffered a mortal illness. Undoubtedly, her health was now better than before the sickness, but a good meal was advisable to restore her energy.

**III – THE DIVINE LIFE SHOULD ALSO SHINE IN OUR HUMANITY**

In perusing this rich Gospel – the most detailed narrative among the synoptic recordings of this episode – we behold the perfect harmony between the human and the divine in Our Lord Jesus Christ. As St. Thomas Aquinas explains, “Christ came to save the world, not only by Divine power, but also through the mystery of His Incarnation. Consequently in healing the sick He frequently not only made use of His Divine

*Jesus wanted the parents to give her something to eat, to prove that their daughter was actually alive, and to show His love for natural order*



Resurrection of Jairus' daughter -  
Museum of the Royal Escorial Monastery (Spain)

*Jesus is  
always  
willing to  
cure us,  
not only of  
physical ills,  
but especially  
of moral ones,  
restoring  
innocence  
to our soul*

power, healing by way of command, but also by applying something pertaining to His human nature.”<sup>8</sup>

With this rich kaleidoscope of manifestations of both natures in the Divine Person of Jesus, we should attentively consider His interaction with men throughout His earthly life, in order to contemplate Him in all His grandeur.

With the same keenness, we should strive to understand what happens around us. Because our faith is feeble, we tend to see reality through a strictly human prism, undervaluing the supernatural vision. But human existence is always subject to the influence of the invisible world and, therefore, our tendencies are connected to the action of a devil or an Angel. Thus, just as it is unthinkable to consider Our Lord merely as a Man, ignoring the hypostatic union, it is also a grave error to overlook that, by Baptism, each Christian, while being a mere creature, ascends to a participation in the divine life.

This means that our decision-making is marked either by grace, or by its absence. We should know how to distinguish by which of these factors we are being influenced. Is it by Angels or devils? Grace or disordered natural instincts? Virtue or vice? With this approach we will see everything, not in two dimensions, but from the perspective of eternity.

### ***Human love of infinite magnitude***

As a consequence of original and actual sin, the gates of Heaven were closed to us and we merited eternal death. Nevertheless, the Word, having be-



Christ gives His blessing - Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (Russia)

come Incarnate, humanly experienced sentiments of boundless compassion for us.

On how many occasions, watching a loved one leave this world, have we not desired to die in their place? Well, Our Lord Jesus Christ so loved us that He gave himself up for us and redeemed us by His sacrifice, opening for us the way to true life.

Meditating on this marvel brings us enormous profit, for we are often assailed by afflictions, temptations, and fear, and at times even fall lamentably into trans-

gression; but if Our Lord cures, resurrects, and pardons, He has the power to alleviate our problems and raise us from any fall. What do we need to do? “Just have faith.”

### ***The haemorrhaging woman, figure of the sinner who still has faith***

In this sense, the haemorrhaging woman, who “only grew worse,” is the image of one who, deprived of the vital stream of grace and supernatural energy after committing a grave fault, runs after false solutions and seeks happiness where it cannot be found, forming bad friendships and opting for those relationships that deviate from the right path.

The more they strive to satisfy their desires, the more attenuated they become and the more distanced from that which they erroneously seek. The vividness of the intelligence diminishes, along with the strength of the will; the dynamism of the soul fades away. The virtues and gifts have been lost by sin; the soul retains only a vestige of hope and a “sinew” of faith. As new transgres-

<sup>1</sup> ST. JEROME. *Commentarius in Evangelium secundum Marcum*, Homilia III (5,30-43). In: *Obras Completas*, vol. I:

*Obras Homiléticas*. Madrid: BAC, 1999, p.853.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q.89, a.6.

<sup>3</sup> ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM. Homilia XXXI, n.2. In: *Obras*, vol. I: *Homilías sobre el Evangelio de San Mateo* (1-

45). (Ed.2). Madrid: BAC, 2007, v.I, p.619.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, op. cit., III, q.43, a.2, ad 1.



sions are committed, these remnants are also gradually extinguished.

To avoid coming to such a pass, it is indispensable, if we fall, that we repent and implore: “Lord, I deserve every chastisement and perhaps even hell. But I beg pardon for my crimes with ardent faith in Thy power.”

Let us confide in Jesus who is always willing to cure us, not only of physical ills, but especially of moral ones, restoring innocence to our soul, as He restored health to the haemorrhaging woman. He is far more concerned with reviving the soul than the body; indeed, He did not bequeath to the Church something in the form of an automated teller to cure diseases, at which the sick kneel and arise healed. But He did institute the Sacrament of Penance, which Old Testament personages did not have at their disposal. At that time, no one could turn to a priest to accuse themselves of their faults and be absolved, with the certainty of being cleansed of all

guilt. What a great gift the Divine Redeemer has placed within our reach!

### ***We have the Eucharist!***

Following the example of the protagonists of the Gospel for this Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, let us approach Our Lord so that He may pour out His blessings upon us. In the Sacrament of the Eucharist, we do more than take the hand which lifted the girl from her deathbed or touch the cloak by which the woman’s health was restored: each one of us receives Jesus in Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

Since He gives himself entirely to us, can He not cure our miseries, solve our spiritual problems and, even supply our material needs? Let us beseech Jesus, through the intercession of Mary, for a faith greater than that of the haemorrhaging woman and of Jairus, so that we can profit from all the treasures which, in His mercy, He desires to grant us! ✧

*In the Sacrament of the Eucharist, we do more than take the hand which lifted the girl from her deathbed or touch the cloak by which the woman’s health was restored: each one of us receives Jesus in Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity*



Eucharistic adoration in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, Caieiras (Brazil)

<sup>5</sup>ST. AUGUSTINE. De consensu evangelistarum, lib.II, c.28, n.66. In: Obras, vol. XXIX.

Madrid: BAC, 1992, p.377.

<sup>6</sup>ST. BEDE. In Marci Evangelium Expositio, lib.II, c.5: ML 92, 182.

<sup>7</sup>ST. JEROME. Adversus Jovinianum, lib. II, c.17. In: Obras Completas, vol. VIII: Trata-

dos apoloéticos. Madrid: BAC, 2009, p.339; 341.

<sup>8</sup>ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, op. cit., III, q.44, a.3, ad 2.

# *Shrouded in the Mists of History... a Martyr King!*

Like the King of the Universe, who was born in a cold grotto and died crucified by the world's leaders, Louis XVII began his reign in prison and bore the heavy yoke of revolutionary hatred until his death.



**Sr. Patricia Victoria Villegas, EP**

**P**aris, January 21, 1793. The beating of drums are heard throughout the capital, followed by the roar of a crowd thirsty for blood. Suddenly there is an astonishing silence, which takes over the square as the criminal reaches the scaffold.

The criminal? Yes. What law had he broken? The law imposed on the nation by “liberty, equality and fraternity”: the monarchy is “oppressive” and must therefore be exterminated. The defendant’s “crime” was to be King of France, which justified his being treated like the worst of outlaws!

In the square, the silence is sustained for a few more moments because, incredible as it may seem, remnants of respect for hierarchy and love for nobility still throb in the hearts of the French people thronged there. Months before, they had enthusiastically acclaimed King Louis XVI, whom they now watch being put to death, soon to appear before the just judgement of God.

A final drum roll ensues, and the implacable blade of the guillotine descends on the neck of the unfortunate monarch.

## *The “best wine” of the French royalty*

For some, the news of the king’s death caused terror and consternation; for others, it was the occasion for dancing and singing, which quickly culminated in veritable orgies, typical of the vile spirit that the French Revolution propagated among its adherents.

Nevertheless, the hand of God, who had so lovingly guided the Church’s first-born daughter down the centuries – from the Baptism of Clovis, through the reign of the great Charles and rejoicing in the virtue of St. Louis IX, until that terrible day – had not been withdrawn from her. The “best wine” of her royalty, a little boy, was reserved for France and for all of history.

Yes, a child who, in his prison, bitterly mourned his father’s death, embraced by his mother, thenceforth a poor widow. Upon this young boy of just seven years of age descended the mantle of the Most Christian Kings, which in turn would grow in dignity as it covered an innocent child crowned by sorrow and martyrdom.

The Dauphin Louis-Charles, born on March 27, 1785, son of the illustrious Princess of Austria and Queen of France, Marie Antoinette, and King Louis XVI, was already acclaimed as Louis XVII by all the nations of Europe and by the French who remained loyal to the monarchy.

## *A reign marked by fidelity amid tragedy*

“Vive le Roi! Vive Louis XVII!”, was the cry that echoed among the Catholic troops of the Vendée and the army of the Duke of Condé. However, like the King of the Universe, who was born in a cold grotto persecuted by the rulers of the world, little Louis XVII lived the first days of his reign in a prison, bearing the heavy yoke of revolutionary hatred and indignation.

The architects of the Revolution knew that through this child passed the golden thread of the royalty of France, whose almost legendary monarchy had imbued the ages of Christendom with its perfume. And they knew, therefore, that the story of the little monarch would define the future of Europe and Christian Civilization.





Marie Antoinette with her children Marie-Thérèse, Louis-Charles (on her lap) and Louis-Joseph, by Élisabeth Vigée-Le Brun - Palace of Versailles (France)

Wishing to overthrow any sound tradition, to bring to ruin the order established by the Church in customs, and to implant chaos and equality in souls and peoples, they used Machiavellian means to plot the mysterious disappearance of this young king. To do so, they began by separating him from the only one who could support him, sustain him and advise him in those dramatic circumstances: his mother.

During the most sublime tragedy in human history, the Passion of Our Lord, there occurred a poignant and heart-breaking scene: Jesus' meeting with Mary and their solemn farewell on Calvary. After entrusting Her to the Apostle John, the Divine Redeemer expired, physically separating himself from Her who, of all creatures, was the most beloved of His Sacred Heart.

Who can imagine the sorrows that this separation caused the Immaculate Heart of Mary? No one! For no mother ever loved a child as the Blessed Virgin loved hers, who was God himself!

*It was necessary for an innocent child to suffer for the people. Thus, snatched from maternal affection and care, Louis XVII began his calvary*

A future century would see another mother who, within due proportion, suffered sorrows similar to those of Our Lady when, in the prison of the Tower of the Temple, her beloved son, the dauphin of France, was snatched from her arms.

Weeping, threats, cries and lamentations... Nothing moved the hardened hearts of those revolutionaries. Seeing all her efforts come to naught, Marie Antoinette, whose abundant golden hair had become white due to the terrible anguish of

her imprisonment, finally understood that this torment was permitted by God for reasons she could not comprehend.

Recalling the supreme martyrdom that He himself had embraced for the love of men, she armed herself with the courage that had strengthened the Blessed Virgin to remain standing before her dying Son, and with holy heroism she said to the little one desperately clinging to her: "No, my son, it is necessary to obey; it is necessary!"<sup>1</sup> Her motherly heart pierced with sorrow, she released hand of the boy, who finally accepted the cruel suffering which the elevated condition of king required of him in that hour.

It was, in fact, necessary for an innocent child to suffer for the sin of his people. Thus, snatched away from the affection and care of his mother, Louis XVII began his sorrowful calvary.

### *Cruel and slow martyrdom, endured with sanctity*

Taken to a separate area of the Temple Tower, the dauphin was placed in the hands of Simon the cobbler, a "faithful patriot", given to drunkenness and the most depraved customs. He was to be the "tutor" of Louis XVII, who was only eight years old.

Taking advantage of the child's puerile naivety, the shoemaker taught him revolutionary songs and often caused him to become drunk so that he would insult the crown and sign documents that favoured the new French "government".<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult to describe in a few lines the pitiable condition to which Simon's ill-treatment reduced the little king... His health was shattered; his physiognomy, once sweet and smiling, was stamped with sadness, his cheeks hollow and pale. His limbs appeared elongated and disproportionate, his back curved, and his bearing downcast.<sup>3</sup>

However, young Louis' personality remained steadfast. In moments of sobriety, he vigorously opposed Simon's suggestions, and was accordingly punished with furious insults, slaps, kicks and even more violent aggressions, such as being grabbed and shaken in the air until his whole body was dislocated.<sup>4</sup>

The depraved shoemaker's wrath was so unbridled that, one day, realizing that there was no way he could force the boy to say "Long live the Republic!", he had to be restrained by an acquaintance who was present, to prevent him from killing the little one with blows...

However, in the face of such horror, the dauphin constantly showed signs of virtue and patience. A moving example occurred in relation to the fact narrated above. History tells us that "on the following day, when [the same acquaintance] returned [to Simon's quarters], he was surprised to be presented with an apple by Louis XVII, who told him that he had saved the dessert of the previous day to offer to him in gratitude for having saved his life."<sup>5</sup>

In fact, though exhausted by torture and imprisonment, the young king never lost his nobility of soul and blood; on the contrary, suffering only refined these qualities in his heart.

In several other circumstances Louis XVII shone before God by his pious dispositions. On one occasion, Simon caught him praying in the early hours of the morning, kneeling on his straw mattress; the next day, seeing the little one again at prayer, the brutish cobbler surprised him from behind with a basin of icy water which completely drenched him and his bed. On another occasion, the child showed signs of profound self-detachment when, on being questioned as to what he would do if the Vendéans restored the throne of France, he replied, "I would pardon you."<sup>6</sup> The greatest proof of his virtue, however, is undoubtedly found in the fact that "he never [formulated] the slightest reproach, [nor] the slightest accusation against those who had tortured him."<sup>7</sup>

This young king was an authentic martyr in body and, above all, in soul. His fidelity to God and to France, amid so many torments, marked history forever.

*New and even  
more harrowing ordeals...*

As the Revolution always deceives its agents, a change of powers brought Simon himself to the guillotine. The little dauphin, almost destroyed by so much ill-treatment and with his health completely ruined, was then

thrown into a prison cell and forgotten there like one buried alive. For six long months, he was left alone, watched only by the prison guards. He had already fought, with the same heroism of his forefathers, the sinful and satanic influence of Simon; now he had to face even crueller adversaries: abandonment, solitude and fear.

Thus began a new "unceasing martyrdom, of heart and spirit, profound and harrowing, utterly unspeakable, piteous to everyone, but which only God could have known. By all appearances, he must have felt entirely abandoned by the Angels and by his own, and handed over, defenceless, to the hatred, the barbarous cruelty and the insulting vulgarity of his enemies who sought only to destroy him and, in him, France, of which he was the incarnation."<sup>8</sup>

Who can possibly penetrate into the enormous inner struggles that this young soul waged in his solitude? The time spent in prison seemed an eternity to him... Dreadful spectres tormented his tender heart and anguish took hold of his being, once so full of strength and courage. His short life resembled the worst of nightmares: far from the respect, pomp and honours to which he was entitled, without the least occupation that could distract him, without a single word to cheer him and, above all, without someone to support him in that harsh situation. His days passed like years, and months like decades...

Meanwhile, while the Revolution was spreading terror throughout France, the blood of this king, victim of his own people, was presented to God as an offering of sweet and irresistible odour.

*The scorn of the nation,  
he bore the sins of his  
people unto death*

Months passed, and the leadership of the government took yet an-



*In lucid moments,  
the dauphin  
vigorously opposed  
Simon's suggestions  
and was punished  
with furious insults,  
slaps and kicks*

Simon the shoemaker and Louis XVII in the Temple in 1794, by Jean-Louis Prieur



other turn. Those responsible for the dauphin – now less radical and hateful – seeing his frightful state, began procedures for his recovery. However, the boy's health had deteriorated to such an extent that the efforts of the doctors were useless, serving only to prolong his agony...

There is a poignant phrase of Scripture, applied to the Divine Wounded One: "But I am a worm, and no man; scorned by men, and despised by the people" (Ps 22:6). Like Our Lord Jesus Christ, the body of this King of France was covered with ulcers; unrecognizable, he could not move without pain. Having become, like Christ, the scorn of his nation, he also bore the sins of his people. Out of love for his own people, he had to drink to the last drop the chalice destined for him.

In June 1795, the final hour came for the little martyr. Lying in bed, with violent pains wracking his entire body, his physiognomy suddenly became placid and serene. One of those accompanying him, holding his hand, said to him, "I hope that you will not have to suffer any more..." And he received this reply, full of unction: "Oh! I suffer still, but much less. The music is so beautiful!" Surprised and filled with compassion, the attendant asked him from which direction the music came, to which he replied, "From above! And I can distinguish the timbre of my mother's voice among the others!"<sup>9</sup>

Some time later, the jailers changed their shift. When the new guard approached him, realizing that the boy was in the last moments of his existence, he asked him how he felt.



Louis XVII, by Alexander Kucharsky -  
Palace of Versailles (France)

*The young king  
never lost his  
nobility of soul and  
of blood; on the  
contrary, suffering  
only refined these  
qualities in his heart*

The poor little orphan, insisting on what he had said before, replied: "Do you think my sister is listening to the music? It would do her such good if she could hear this music!"<sup>10</sup> In the face of such innocence and nobility of soul, a respectful silence suffused the hearts of those who accompanied him.

After a few more moments, with his eyes bright and wide open, the

young king, with the look of one in ecstasy, raised himself with great difficulty and said: "I have something to say..."<sup>11</sup> However, his strength left him, and men were not worthy to hear the last words conceived by his virginal heart; they remained like a precious secret which God wished to reserve for himself. Very calmly, the child laid his head back again, and delivered his soul to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the One who, more than a hundred years before, had granted to the sovereigns of France the privilege of His friendship, His love, and His predilection. It was June 8, 1795.

*At last, Heaven welcomed him!*

Surely, the little martyr king could soon find consolation and repose from all his torments in the arms of Our Lady! To this son of so many sorrows, to this heir of so many treasures, to this warrior who embodied in himself the most beautiful and daring heroism of his lineage, Mary Most Holy, Mother of Mercy, could not fail to open, with tenderness, the gates of Paradise!

Although he has not been beatified by the Church, Louis XVII deserves all our admiration, our enthusiasm and our enchantment, for he left a sublime example for future centuries. By accepting with heroic grandeur sufferings far beyond his strength, and by enduring for the nation's benefit the torments that same nation inflicted upon him, he taught us to act like other Christs when the winds of tragedy assail the gates of our souls! ✧

<sup>1</sup> ESCANDE, OP, Renaud (Dir.). *O livro negro da Revolução Francesa*. Lisboa: Alêtheia, 2010, p.134.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Idem, p.137.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. BEAUCHESNE, Alcide de. *Louis XVII, sa vie, son agonie, sa mort. Captivité de la famille royale au Temple*. 8.ed. Paris: Hachette, 1871, v.II., p.163.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. ESCANDE, op. cit., p.137-138.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, p.138.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, p.136.

<sup>7</sup> Idem, p.143.

<sup>8</sup> Idem, p.141.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. BEAUCHESNE, op. cit., p.324-325.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Idem, p.325. A reference to Marie-Thérèse Charlotte, the *Madame Royale*, the older sister of Louis XVII and, like him, a prisoner in one of the sections of the Temple Tower.

<sup>11</sup> Idem, *ibidem*.



## Consensus or Conviction?

Devoid of any true principle, he was a man who always took the winning side, faithful to his perennial party, that of the majority... Is this a character from the past, or could he be from our days?

Vinícius Niero Lima



Many spoke out in that parliament; some shouted, others uttered empty words – everyone at the same time, without order or respect. In a corner, one man was analysing the scene: while the majority vied to have their say, he kept silent, attentive to the attitude of those around him. He was a gaunt figure, with a cold look in his eyes, and an aquiline nose. His appearance boasted no aesthetic quality; everything about him was angular and sombre-looking.

Then a vote began: “Yes,” said the more daring; “No,” demurred others. The scrawny man was waiting for the decisive moment, for he did not like to manifest his opinion before he had properly calculated what would be most profitable for him. At a certain point, the one who, hours before, had written a speech in favour of “No,” was called. “The good calculator had counted the votes and ascertained that he would end up in the minority, the only party to which he will never

belong; rising to the rostrum with his silent step, he muttered, ‘Death.’”<sup>1</sup>

As soon as he pronounced his vote, all eyes turned towards him. His friends felt the stab wound they had just received, without understanding the game he was playing; his enemies gave him a cynical smile of approval. In truth, this was someone who, “by reason of his subtle reserve, his audacious lack of character, his complete absence of convictions,”<sup>2</sup> always placed himself, “calmly and without danger, on the winning side, in his perennial party, that of the majority.”<sup>3</sup>

Joseph Fouché<sup>4</sup> had just become a regicide.

### *His ideal: to be free of convictions*

It was January 16, 1793. For a moment the fate of Louis XVI passed through the tainted hands of that man, whose ideal was to be free of the slightest conviction. And he chose to sentence him to death. Consequently, a few days later, the in-

clement and intolerant blade of the guillotine would cut off the head of the King of France.

When Fouché left the parliament, the atmosphere was gloomy. After having committed such a horrendous crime, the deputy with the angular physiognomy walked calmly through the streets of Paris which seethed with a riotous population.

Perhaps, under the assaults of a guilty conscience, he sought to justify himself along the way, thinking: “Though long invested with a hidden and formidable power, I have used it only to calm passions, dissolve parties and prevent revolts – I, who have tried so hard to moderate and soften power, to reconcile or fuse the contrary elements and opposing interests that divide France.”<sup>5</sup>

In fact, it is always the deceitful banner of consensus that flutters when, faced with the necessity to make a firm decision based on true principles, one capitulates before the petty majority, out of fear or self-interest.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ZWEIG, Stefan. *Joseph Fouché. Retrato de um homem político*. Rio de Janeiro: Guanabara, 1942, p.33.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, p.30.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, p.37.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Fouché was an influential and discreet politician during the French Revolution, and he came out of it un-

scathed; he eventually became Minister of Police during the Directory and the Napoleonic period.

<sup>5</sup> FOUCHE, Joseph. *Memórias sobre Fouché*. São Paulo: José Olympio, 1946, p.11.

<sup>6</sup> Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Margaret



***In the spirit of consensus,  
convictions are renounced***

But why remember this historical fact, which played out over two centuries ago? Does it hold some lesson for our times?

In a world of instability, insecurity and therefore of uncertainty, like the one in which we live, if our convictions about what is good, about the Church and about God are not rock solid, they will falter in the face of the psychological pressure or even the open persecution offered by those who seek to disfigure or destroy any presence of the supernatural on earth. For the instinct of sociability impels every man to want to “get along” with others, even if this means reneging acquired principles.

A paradigmatic example of this reality is found in the Passion of Our Lord: the same people who greeted Him with hosannas on Palm Sunday, a few days later – in a spirit of consensus – cried “Crucify Him”, committing the worst sin in history, the deicide.

How, then, can we acquire firm convictions, capable of overcoming any challenge? Upon what should they be based?

***Unshakeable convictions  
are only born of faith***

In explaining the definition of faith contained in the Letter to the Hebrews – “faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not” (11:1) – St. Thomas Aquinas notes that the term *evidence* is used here with a view to indicating its effect: by evidence the intellect is induced to adhere to a truth of faith, which is not verified by the senses. “Hence another reading has *conviction*, because to

wit, the intellect of the believer is convinced by Divine authority, so as to assent to what it sees not.”<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, when conviction comes from faith, it becomes strong, casting out all doubt: “For when we describe it as *evidence*, we distinguish it from opinion, suspicion, and doubt, which do not make the intellect adhere to anything firmly.”<sup>8</sup>

The Angelic Doctor does not, however, stop at mere intellectual elucubrations. He goes on to say that “it belongs to faith not only that the heart should believe, but also that external words and deeds should bear witness to the inward faith.”<sup>9</sup>

Thus, when conviction is the fruit of faith, it tends to express itself in concrete attitudes, so that the more the soul is strengthened in this virtue, the greater is the will’s adhesion to principles. And since the virtues are sisters, charity, aided by the certainties of faith, is purified, so that acts of

love become more steadfast and profound.

***Woe to the contemporary  
“Fouchés”!***

In the light of this doctrine, some questions arise for each one of us. Faced with the persecution that the true Church suffers in so many quarters, on whose side will I stand? If I am asked to deny my Christian principles in favour of the general opinion, what will I answer? Will I be counted among the followers of the unanimous consensus?

May God grant that we remain always steadfast in faith, unwavering in hope and ardent in charity (cf. Col 1:23), lest we discover that the strong convictions we thought we had are, in reality, the paltry fruit of a corrupt consensus. Towards the latter, let us never surrender our intelligence or our will, like infamous contemporary “Fouchés”. ✧



**The banner of consensus always flutters where, faced with the necessity to make a firm decision, one capitulates to the self-serving majority**

German engraving representing the execution of Louis XVI; previous page, portrait of Joseph Fouché - Palace of Versailles (France)

Thatcher, notes: “To me consensus seems to be the process of abandoning all beliefs, principles, values and policies in search of something in which no-one believes, but to which

no-one objects – the process of avoiding the very issues that have to be solved, merely because you cannot get agreement on the way ahead. What great cause would have been

fought and won under the banner ‘I stand for consensus?’” (THATCHER, Margaret. *Speech at Monash University*, Oct. 6, 1981. In: [www.margaretthatcher.org](http://www.margaretthatcher.org)).

<sup>7</sup> ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Summa Theologiae*. II-II, q.4, a.1.

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

<sup>9</sup> Idem, q.12, a.1, ad 2.

# Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament

In considering Mary's life, we tend to think of her presence in Bethlehem, Nazareth or Calvary, leaving aside the period in which, deprived of the human presence of Jesus, She remained in His company through the consecrated Species.



Fr. Rafael Ramón Ibarguren Schindler, EP

**I**n founding the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in 1856, St. Peter Julian Eymard brought the cult of the Eucharist to the highest degree through its perpetual and solemn exposition. This is the originality of his foundation.

His zeal impelled him to strive and work hard to establish Perpetual Adoration in the very place where Christ instituted the Divine Sacrament, the Upper Room. But despite

his efforts, he was unable to achieve this symbolic and ingenious goal.

As could not be otherwise, this Saint was also a great devotee of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who inspired him to found his providential congregation. He wrote, for the benefit of his spiritual children, a brief Marian-Eucharistic meditation, summarized by one of his disciples, which will be of interest to all faithful adorers of the Eucharist.

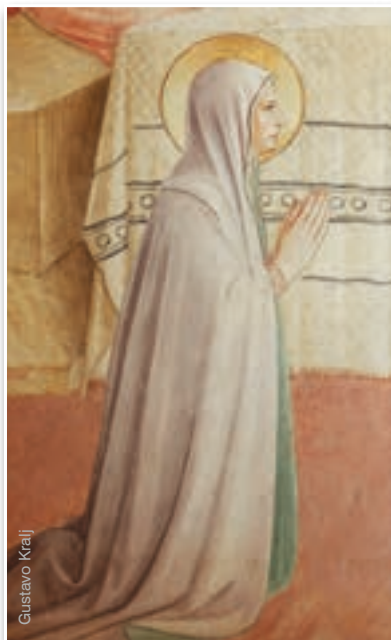
## *Model for Eucharistic souls*

“Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament is the new name for something

very old’ [...]. All the mysteries of the life of the Mother of God are rightly venerated. Contemplative souls have an example in the life of Mary at Nazareth, just as desolate hearts find consolation in the Sorrowful Virgin. There is a grace in all the actions of the Blessed Virgin that sweetly leads us to honour and imitate them, each according to our own vocation.

“Now, Mary lived more than fifteen years after the Ascension of her Divine Son. What occupations filled those long days of exile, and what grace marked this important period of our Mother’s life? The Book of the Acts of the Apostles answers us very clearly. In it we read that the first Christians lived in peace, in union and in the most ardent charity [...], persevering in the breaking of bread (cf. Acts 2:42).

“To live of the Eucharist and for the Eucharist, to gather around the tabernacle to sing hymns and spiritual songs: this is the distinctive character of the early Church. The Holy Spirit recorded this in the sublime ecclesiastical history written by St. Luke; it was also the summary of the last years of the Blessed Virgin, who reen countered in the adorable Host the blessed Fruit of her womb, and in the life of union with Our Lord in



*Mary is called Mother  
of the Church, for  
from its beginning  
She provided it with  
example, strength  
and instruction,  
and continues this  
mission in Heaven!*

The Last Supper (detail), by Fra Angelico  
San Marco Museum, Florence (Italy)



the tabernacle, the happy times of Bethlehem and Nazareth. Oh, yes! It is Mary above all who persevered in the breaking of the bread.

“O Eucharistic souls, who wish to live for the Blessed Sacrament, who have made the Eucharist the centre of your lives and its service your only labour, Mary is your model; her life is your grace. Persevere, as She did, in the breaking of the bread.”<sup>1</sup>

### *Living with Jesus in the consecrated Species*

In fact, when we consider Mary’s life, we tend to think of her presence in Bethlehem, at Nazareth or on Calvary, leaving aside the period when, deprived of the human presence of Jesus – as She was until the Ascension – She remained in His company through the consecrated Species which beat uninterruptedly in her Heart, and which was renewed at each Communion.

A pious ancient author, Bernardine of Paris,<sup>2</sup> affirms that Jesus, in instituting the Eucharist, had in mind especially His Mother, so that the most exalted of His works might be received by the noblest of His creatures.

Only Mary Most Holy preserved complete faith while Jesus was in the tomb. After the Resurrection, She encouraged the disciples, kept them united and hopeful, facilitated the coming of the Holy Spirit, instructed the Apostles with her testimony, her counsels and her accounts of the life of her Divine Son.

Who other than She could have narrated to St. Luke the episodes of Jesus’ childhood recounted in his Gospel? And how many confidences did St. John receive from Her whom Christ on the Cross entrusted to his care? Mary is rightly called Mother of the Church, because from its very beginning She provide it with example, strength and instruction, and in Heaven She continues to exercise this mission to this day!



Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament  
Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome

*“O souls, who have  
made the Eucharist  
the centre of  
your lives,  
Mary is your  
model; her life  
is your grace”*

### *Ever growing fervour under Mary’s protection*

The Church is always growing in holiness over the course of history, since the sins of her members cannot disfigure her in her substance. Christ “loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the Church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish” (Eph 5:25-27). Through the power of the Eucharist and under Mary’s protection, let it not be thought that the Church merely “survives” the various crises she has to undergo. She is constantly renewed and making progress!

The spreading of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is one aspect of this continuous progress. While it is true that various churches have been closed recently, and some have even been desecrated, it is no less true that Eucharistic fervour and thirst have been intensified in diverse places.

For example, in many chapels of the Heralds of the Gospel, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament has been taking place uninterruptedly for years.

### *The eternal reward for adorers of the Eucharistic Jesus*

Such a refulgent reality does not shine before the eyes of the paganized world, but rather before the throne of the Most High. How many benefits these acts of adoration produce, and how many misfortunes they avert! Prayer at the feet of the Blessed Sacrament obtains remarkable graces.

The many hours that St. Peter Julian Eymard spent close to the Blessed Sacrament – at the altar, near the tabernacle or before the monstrance – earned him the reward of seeing without veils the God he adored hidden in the Eucharist, and of contemplating Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, his Mother. For to enjoy this heavenly company forever is the marvellous eternal destiny of the adorers of all ages.✠

*Transcribed, with abridgements,  
from the message written to the  
World Federation of the Eucharistic  
Works of the Church,  
of which the author is a  
member of the executive council*

<sup>1</sup> TESNIÈRE, SSS, Albert. *Le prêtre de l'Eucharistie ou Le Bienheureux Pierre-Julien Eymard*. 9.ed. Lille: Desclée de Brouwer, 1926, p.166-168.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. BERNARDINE OF PARIS. *La Communion de Marie, Mère de Dieu*. Paris: Jacques Lecoffre, 1860, p.18.

# ***Meditations of a Boy on the Sacred Heart of Jesus***

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was kindled within little Plinio from an early age. He felt especially attracted by the nobility and goodness of the Sacred Heart, as he would later explain.

**Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira**



**I** remember with emotion that Our Lady arranged things in such a way that I resided near a church so full of blessings as the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> There I attended Sunday Mass with my parents from the earliest times I can remember.

This shrine exercised an effect on me which I now see was a supernatural action; but I imagined that those feelings arose from the visual aspects of the building, whose composition of colours and forms seemed to my eyes so dignified and appropriate that for me it was the expression of sanctity itself.

***“Would you like a place here inside?”***

It was not difficult for me to perceive that Our Lord Jesus Christ, specifically in making His Heart visible to men, was the infinite source from which all good emanated. In Him were realized all possible perfections

and marvels of soul, in a way that I could never have imagined! And as I discerned the good spirit in everything in that church, I thought: “This ambience is a reflection of Him! The harmony I find here is God himself. He is this to a supreme, extraordinary, perfect and infinite degree.”

Sometimes I would stand before the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at a side altar of the church. I saw Him standing very nobly, with a smile that had a slight air of sadness, but immensely inviting, touching His Heart with His hand and looking at those below, as if saying: “Would you like a place here inside? Will you not accept Me? Look, what a treasure! This is for you!”

I looked and thought: “I know it’s a statue and not a man, but the people who built the church want God to be seen like this, and so they represented Our Lord in this way. But God, seen like that, is complete! I realize that He is indeed like this.

“What a physiognomy! The beauty that I hear people speak of is worth nothing! If one day I wanted to analyse the idea of beauty, I would come here to look at His physiognomy, for only He is beautiful! This is the standard: beauty of soul rather than of body. But what a body! And behind it, what a soul! ... What a marvel!”

“Since this image coincides in an entirely satisfactory manner with the atmosphere of the church and with what I have been taught about Our Lord, by looking at His physiognomy, His hands, His garments, His hair and His demeanour, I will have an overall idea of Him, which I can enhance and perfect if I examine each point – above all His divine eyes and His Sacred Heart.

***Our Lord alive, welcoming and affable***

I then began to make a psychological analysis of Him and discerned



His character. Today I see how much I “archetypified” the statue because of my innocence, for it was in fact far from being what grace made me see. In an attitude of respect and adoration, I composed the highest of ideas that my child’s mind could form. Consequently, when much later I saw the Holy Shroud, I exclaimed, “It is Him!”

I could say that what I saw in childhood represented Our Lord even more faithfully than the Holy Shroud itself, which is easily understood, for the latter depicts Him in death and a victim, while in the image of the Sacred Heart He presented himself to me alive, welcoming and affable. I saw in Him something of an unfathomable goodness, and this idea was enhanced by the impression made on me by the red colour of His Heart.

I was also enchanted by Our Lord’s appearance of cleanliness and good manners, expressed in the form of His face and even more in His body, which seemed to emit light. His tunic gave me the idea of a perpetually immaculate person, without any stain on His soul or His clothes. And there was a discreet golden border on His garment that seemed to me indispensable to His loftiness. Without gold, He would not have revered His own grandeur as He should. His awareness of His own majesty delighted me.

I said to myself: “How He stands with distinction! How the manner of holding the Heart is that of a polite person! How the position of His head is like that of someone who has received a good education! How neatly His beard is arranged, without any pretentiousness! What supreme natural aristocracy in His hair! One has the impression that He does not even think of it, but there is not a curl, nor a strand, that are not entirely in their proper place, to give a perfect idea of himself!

“Many people have lived in surroundings more distinguished than those He frequented. But... true distinction is what He has! The others are all insignificant compared to Him!”

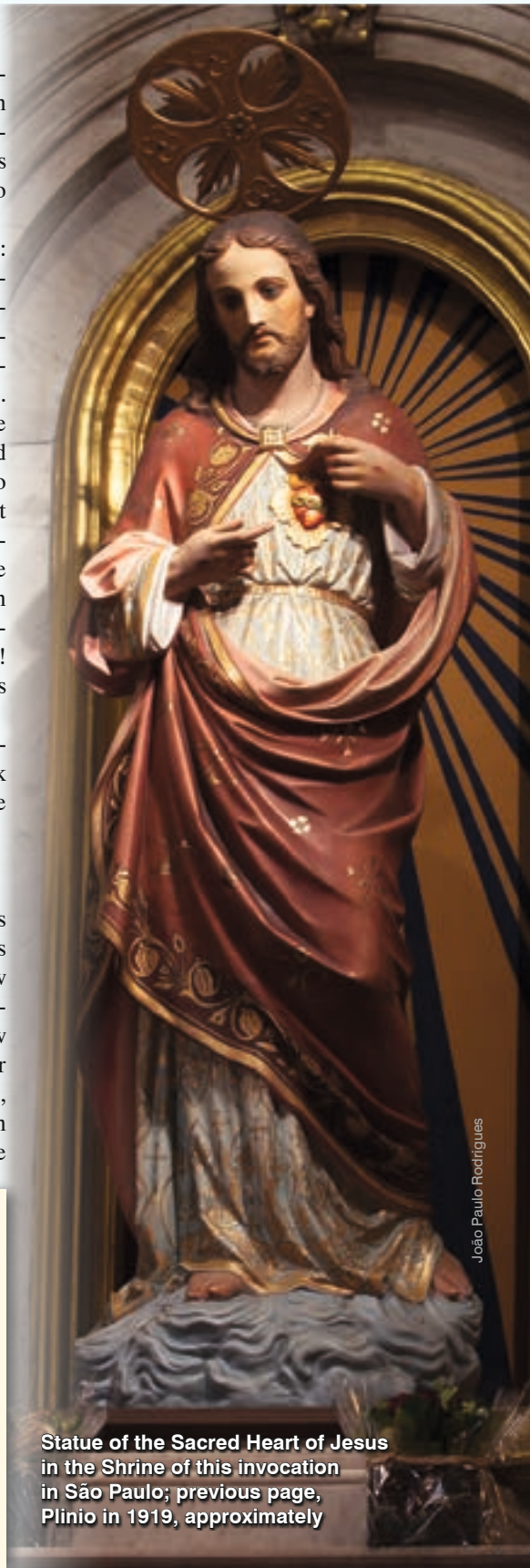
And I came to the conclusion: “How He is a friend of universal order! How coherent He is with that order! He loves all things in their proper order and in the most beautiful aspect they can render of themselves. And with how much affection! He loves this rose which has been placed on His altar, just as He loves me who am also at His feet. He is consonant with all that is upright! The Catholic Church is holy because she is like Him; she is a hyphen between Him and us; she is the very halo that encircles His head, and for this I love her! His influence, His mentality and His presence are in this environment.

These graces were of such profundity and scope that I do not think it was possible, at that age, to have known more about Him than I did.

*“Here is Plinio...”*

I had the impression that He was looking at me, not with the glass eyes of a lifeless statue, but somehow communicating to that statue a certain expression. I did not know how to define this look, nor did I bother to do so, because, on the other hand, I thought it was perhaps an illusion on my part, in view of the distance

*“How He is a friend  
of universal order!  
He loves all things in  
their proper order and  
in the most beautiful  
aspect they can render  
of themselves”*



João Paulo Rodrigues

Statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Shrine of this invocation in São Paulo; previous page, Plinio in 1919, approximately

between Him and men. How could He ever manifest himself in that way to me?

At any rate, it seemed to me that He was doing with me what I was doing with Him: analysing. And I imagined that He looked at me thinking: “Here is that Plinio, the child number ‘one trillion five hundred million and so on’, whom I like and in whom I am pleased to appreciate these particular good aspects; from whom I expect this particular thing. He is a good child, to whom I deign to look upon with compassion and with the intention of helping him. Since he is here, I have something to tell him, of which he should take advantage.”

I already considered this to be much more than I deserved, and so, faced with His attitude, I reflected: “He is a Shepherd and a King who has undertaken to govern me, and He absolutely wants my docility to His directions. He will give me advice and orders, preparing the way for me to turn to Him.”

I reflected: “First of all, I feel lifted up above myself, for seeing His grandeur. From whence a certain light is shed upon my thoughts and my vision, which makes me ecstatic, because something in me is made to admire that which is greater than I. When I leave my normal occupations as a boy and I see something much greater than myself, I have the impression of fleeing from the good to the excellent! There I stand on my tiptoes and rejoice. That is: I see Him as He is and I adore Him.

“I notice that, as I contemplate Him, He makes me, so to speak, ‘touch with my hands’ His thought, His desires and His feelings. And this communicates to me an uprightness and a holiness in my thought, in my desires and my feelings, like a de-



Detail of a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus - Church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, Sabará (Brazil)

*I thought:  
“What intransigence!  
It is enough to  
commit a fault  
for Him to  
show His  
wounded Heart...”*

licious drink that I take and which pleases me enormously, but which at the same time corrects me. In other words, by adoring Him, I see that my distorted and reprehensible aspects are rectified and, in this way, He heals me of illnesses of whose existence I was unaware.”

### *Interior words from the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

His seriousness impressed me greatly, and I perceived that He wanted to manifest it in the way He held His Heart, surrounded by thorns and with a flame in the centre of which was a cross. This Heart, removed from the breast and exposed, gave me the idea of a certain violence, which was accentuated by the red colour, although it was very beautiful. This re-

minded me of the Passion that He had suffered, and the impact of these symbols was for me tantamount to a question He was asking me: “Do you realize that in each one of your bad actions you have wounded my Heart? See how good I am. Weigh the evil you have done.”

And I thought: “What intransigence! It is enough to commit a fault for Him to show His wounded Heart... How much purity and wisdom! He is showing what I have done... His hands are wounded, and I have a part in it. His feet, appearing under His garment, are also wounded... My faults have contributed to these wounds. I feel that in me there are unsuppressed potential faults, from which I am still not free, for I have not yet rejected them.

“I am also clearly seeing all that is bad in me... If I do not pay attention to this, I am lost, for I do not know how far I may fall...” And I concluded: “How the things of man touch the infinite! How beautiful life is, considering that every little fact has a relationship with Heaven! How big everything is!”

That was His first “message” to me.

The second, however, was manifested like this: “Nevertheless, my son, I do not say this to you to condemn you, but to forgive you, because there is in Me a wellspring of affection softer than velvet, gentler than any sea breeze and capable of inundating you entirely, to your innermost being.”

And I continued reflecting: “How immense is His sweetness! I would not be able to measure His grandeur if I did not understand the dimension of this sweetness! I feel that He does not wish to demand anything from me, nor to punish me, nor to take revenge by placing



His wounded but victorious foot on my foolish and sinful head. No! He wants to tell me that He is ready to pay good for evil, because in spite of everything, He pities me considering my littleness.”

That correction was delightful, but I realized that it would be difficult for me to maintain that interior attitude and that, at a certain moment, I would have to suffer and struggle very much. But as a child, I thought: “Well, the time has not yet come! And this is so good that I will leave that problem for later.” I was more interested in fixing my attention on what God was showing me, than in deducing for myself the future consequences that would result from this.

### *Desiring the “consecratio mundi”*

However, my desire went even further: I wanted to live in Him! And I reflected: “If I could study, pray, converse, in short, do everything that a child does, at the feet of the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, it would be for me an explosion of joy, because I feel that He would pervade everything in and around me, including my friends.”

One might think that I wished to remain there praying, abandoning the games, the eating, the nice bed and the comforts. It was not so! My idea was this: “How good it would be if He could preside over my whole life!”

I would like to sneak an éclair in and say to Him, “Lord, here is this treat, so in tune with You. I will unite myself to You by eating it and thinking of You. Bless this éclair!” I would eat it at His feet and be overjoyed! Then I would say: “Lord, I’ve brought another one... It is coffee-flavoured, my favourite kind of éclair!”

And if I couldn’t stay, I would say goodbye to Him like this: “Lord, I thank You for the good company You have been!” And I don’t think

there would be anything bad in that. Ultimately, this was the desire for the *consecratio mundi* and the sacralization of the temporal order.

### *“The joy of my life”*

Today I realize that my attitude at those moments was one of true prayer, though not vocal.

I thought about many things, delighted to see that they were

*The Catholic Church  
is holy because she  
is like Him; she is a  
hyphen between Him  
and us, she is the very  
halo of His head, and  
for this I love her!*

good and relating them implicitly to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which was, therefore, a deeply religious meditation.

In those hours of silence, I had a very intense peace and contentment in sensing my virtue and my union with Him. And that was the joy of my life! If someone were to claim, with proofs, that the Sacred Heart of Jesus did not exist, I might well have had a convulsion and died. For if He were not true, I would disintegrate and would no longer be myself! ✧

Taken, with slight adaptations,  
from: *Notas Autobiográficas*  
[Autobiographical Notes].  
São Paulo: Retornarei,  
2008, v.I, p.502-518

<sup>1</sup> Present-day Shrine of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, located in the Campos Elíseos neighbourhood of São Paulo.



Main altar in the Shrine of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, São Paulo



ST. GERMAINE COUSIN

## ***“The Saint that We Needed”***

The perfectly intact body decades after death, the continuous miracles and the fervent devotion of the faithful demonstrated the zeal of the Most High in defending a cause that was His alone!



**Sr. Maria Teresa Matos, EP**

**T**he tall, slender windows, large towers and half-walled façade lent a fortress-like appearance to the small medieval church of St. Mary Magdalene in the French village of Pibrac.

The village was no more than a few kilometres from the large, developed city of Toulouse, which dominated the south of France and had acquired great fame over the centuries. Among the innumerable feats recorded in its history was the departure for the First Crusade of its count, the ambitious Raymond IV; it had witnessed the countless blows struck in its vicinity by the sword of Simon of Montfort in the fight against the Cathar heresy; and more recently it had also been the scene of bloody battles between the Catholics and the Protestant Huguenots.

However, these episodes – among many others – had little effect on the simple, country life of the inhabitants of Pibrac. They were completely

absorbed with the care of their livestock, how the weather conditions affected the plantations and, at times, the outbreak of war. A dignified and pious existence based on honest work was all they longed for. Until one afternoon in 1644, an event changed the routine of the village and later made it known to the farthest corners of the Catholic world.

### ***An extraordinary discovery***

Guillaume Cassé is toiling with all his might to remove a thick stone slab from the floor of the church in Pibrac. A pious parishioner has died, and her relatives want to lay the body to rest within the sacred enclosure, there to await the final resurrection. After numerous blows and a great deal of effort, the gravedigger once again wields the pickaxe, penetrating deeply and detaching the stone.

Suddenly, he gives a shout of amazement, drawing everyone who hears it running to the spot. Peering into the opening, they behold a sight that is both prodigious and startling:

the body of a maiden lying there in perfect condition. She seems so alive that everyone notices the red mark left on her face by Guillaume’s pickaxe. What a miracle!

The news soon spreads through the village and the people flock to the church to see for themselves. Who was this Saint born in their midst, but whose virtue had gone unnoticed? Finally, some of the older and more knowledgeable villagers recognize her: it is Germaine Cousin, the poor, scrofulous shepherdess who had died over forty years earlier.

Even without knowing much about how she had lived or what she had done, the people lifted her out of the tomb and began to venerate her in a lateral area of the church. They had not the slightest doubt that such peace, serenity and joy could only emanate from a body whose soul was very close to God and the Blessed Virgin.

But, after all, who was this captivating and yet unknown young woman?



## *Contemplation amid suffering*

History does not reliably record the name of Germaine's parents, but it is known that she belonged to the Cousin family, owners of a farm in Pibrac.

In addition to an atrophied right arm, which was noticeably deformed on her angelic body, Germaine suffered from a terrible disease, scrofula. In those days, this malady was incurable; since it was also contagious, the girl's physical sufferings were accompanied by the contempt and inhumane treatment of her stepmother.

Among the humiliations the latter inflicted on her was the prohibition of her ever coming near the family table and being forced to sleep in a corner of the corridor or even in the stable, from where she had to leave early in the morning to spend the day in the fields tending the flock. This was the only job for which she was judged capable, besides which it served to keep her away from the house. Whether it was winter or summer, she always wore the same clothes, and was given only a piece of bread to eat.

All day long, Germaine led the flock through the forest of Bouconne or the meadows near the village, taking care that no sheep strayed or was attacked by wolves. Whoever met her at those moments could have no idea how much she suffered. Always cheerful, noble and generous, the little shepherdess did not spend her hours of solitude dwelling upon the sorrows and difficulties of life. Separated from the agitation of the world, from the ebullience of the passions and from human ambitions, she took the opportunity to contemplate the marvels of creation that so well reflected God and His Mother, to whom

the young girl devoted special affection.

However, not infrequently the days ended in beatings and punishments from her stepmother, who vented her bad temper on the innocent girl.

### *She never missed an opportunity to be with Jesus and Mary*

If the inhabitants of Pibrac saw little of Germaine and knew almost nothing of her duties, there was one place they were sure to find her daily: the parish church. When she heard the bells calling the faithful to God, she would entrust the flock to some acquaintance – and when she could not find anyone to help her, she would leave the sheep to her heavenly companions – and head straight for the celebration of the Eucharist.

Even without a formal education, she discerned the infinite value of the Blessed Sacrament, and she would let nothing replace that hour of intimacy with her Divine Model, present there Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. And she rejoiced to be able to receive Him on all the feast days.

The hour of the Angelus, which sounded in the belfry, was also sacred in the routine of the little shepherdess. Wherever she was, she would interrupt whatever she was doing, get

down on her knees and recite the prayer, venerating the supreme moment when Mary said “yes” and the plan of God was fulfilled in history. She did not even hesitate, on one occasion, to drop to her knees in the middle of the river when she heard the bell ringing as she crossed it, or to soil herself in the mud because she was passing through a marshy place.

Another strong element of Germaine's piety was the recitation of the Rosary, through which she grew in intimacy with Her who is God's Paradise. From this union she drew the strength to face her difficult life with courage, confidence and a supernatural spirit, and to make of it an instrument of combat for God himself.

If, by opening a door handle, the Blessed Virgin gave more glory to God than a martyr in his torments, how much could the illnesses, labours, isolation and ill-treatment that Germaine suffered be worth, united to the merits of Mary?

This was the reason for the constant serenity and joy that the young girl communicated, bringing her self-forgetfulness to the point of heroism. On one occasion, noticing her even weaker and more wasted than usual, they learned that that week she had deprived herself of her sole piece of bread, giving it to a poor



**Always cheerful, noble and generous, the little shepherdess did not spend her hours of solitude dwelling upon the sorrows and difficulties of life**

Home of Germaine Cousin, in Pibrac (France); previous page,  
St. Germaine - Church of St. Bartholomew, Laàs (France)

man, famished with hunger, whom she had met on the road.

### *The current calmed*

Although the people of Pibrac paid her no heed, her family despised her, and no one recognized her virtues, there is no doubt that many people felt deep in their soul that this little shepherd girl represented something superior, more of Heaven than earth. There was no lack of witnesses to this effect in her canonization process, and there are even accounts of miraculous events that occurred with the little girl.

For example, on one occasion she approached the Courbet River, which she always crossed to get to church. However, on that day the rain had been heavy and the current was strong. Without hesitating, Germaine advanced towards the water, which subsided and allowed her to pass in peace.

There were also those who attested to a miracle similar to the one that occurred with St. Elizabeth of Hungary: in the middle of winter, Germaine left home carrying leftovers of bread for the poor, hidden in her apron. Perceiving the quantity that the young girl was carrying, her furious stepmother ran after her and forcibly opened the apron, causing a great profusion of flowers to fall to the ground...

### *Unnoticed to the eyes of men, but precious before God*

In suffering and oblivion, with her health growing weaker and weaker, the shepherdess reached the age of twenty-two.

One morning, probably in the year 1601, the flock did not go out to pasture. What had happened? They entered the stable and saw that Germaine's soul had ascended into eternity as serenely as she had lived; only

her body remained lying among the sheep. And by them alone would it have been venerated, if the Most High had not deigned to reveal to history the greatness of that soul hidden from human eyes, "but in God's sight chosen and precious" (1 Pt 2:4).

Not a single word from Germaine's lips was ever recorded, but she taught the whole world how true worth, glory and success are those obtained before God. Her intact body, the countless miracles and the constant devotion of the faithful demonstrate the zeal of the Most High in defending a cause that was His alone!

In a century beset by the errors of pseudo-reformers and constant wars against the Holy Church, Germaine's existence may well be considered reparation to the Divine Heart. Her faith in the Real Presence in the Eucharist and her ardent devotion to Mary reinforced the points most under attack from heretics; her unconditional

submission and self-abasement stood in opposition to the rebellion against papal authority.

Watering these virtues with the continuous offering of her sufferings, Germaine not only presented atonement to God for human offences, but also attenuated the evils that these same outrages brought upon the world.

### *A long wait for glorification*

After the discovery of Germaine's body, Fr. Sounilhac, the parish priest of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene in Pibrac, ordered it to be placed in a simple sarcophagus and left in the side nave of the church, as the people were inseparable from the one they already considered their Saint. But soon the miracles began and Germaine's fame spread beyond the confines of the town...

Fearful of transgressing the prohibition of Rome to render official cult to a deceased person before ecclesiastical approval, the parish priest transferred the body to the sacristy. However, he continued to receive the thousands of pilgrims and to carefully record the miracles obtained, before a notary.

However, the authorities did not share the same haste and enthusiasm as Germaine's devotees in promoting her glorification.

Only in 1661 did Canon Dufour, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Toulouse, make his way to Pibrac in order to learn more about this supernatural reality. He opened the coffin and immediately verified the miracle; he had the stone under which Germaine had been originally buried lifted to check the properties of the soil; and of the dead parishioner who had taken her place, he found only dust...

There could not be the slightest doubt: this incorrupt body



**Suspicious that Germaine was carrying bread to the poor, her stepmother opened her apron, only to find flowers...**

St. Germaine - Our Lady of the Assumption Church, Caussade (France)



was the work of God. He sealed the sepulchre with thick padlocks, had it placed out of the reach of the faithful and took his leave, recalling the norms of Rome and promising to set up a commission to prepare the diocesan process for canonization.

In 1680 the Commanders of the Order of Malta, under whose care that church had been placed, were desirous of seeing the miracle. Amazed, they certified that the shepherd girl's body was "whole, still appearing to be of flesh, with flexibility in all its members when held and moved."<sup>1</sup>

### *At long last, the canonization!*

In the meantime, thirty-five years had passed since the Vicar's visit, and there had been no news from him... The people, receiving ever-increasing favours from the holy shepherdess, did not give up. They sent the mayor of Pibrac, Jacques de Lespinnasse, to ask Archbishop Colbert of Toulouse to do something for the recognition of Germaine Cousin's glory.

After some years of delay, the prelate acceded and commissioned Fr. Morel to begin the process. In 1700, with a solemn Mass attended by a crowd of devotees, the priest opened the sepulchre again and contemplated the miracle. He then listened to the numerous accounts of miracles obtained through the humble shepherdess, heard the opinions of doctors and experts and, finally, also heard the testimony of Françoise Pères, a seventy-seven-year-old woman who, as a girl, had witnessed the discovery of the body and heard the accounts of those who had known Germaine and had attested to the holiness of her life.

With everything archived, Fr. Morel sent the dossier to Rome through a Capuchin priest. Decades passed and no answer was received...



**She taught the whole world how true worth, glory and success are those obtained before God**

St. Germaine - Parish of St. Nicholas, Châteaubriant (France)

What had happened? Only much later did it become known that the material was lost and never reached its destination. Many more battles had to be fought before Gregory XVI resumed the process in the 19th century and Pius IX concluded it with the solemn canonization in 1867.

### *Example for our days*

In the long period before the Saint's earthly glorification, God did not tire of revealing to the world, through ceaseless miracles, the valour of her generous and self-sacrificing soul. And the wicked understood this well. When the French Revolution exploded, the *Comité de Salut Publique* ordered this virginal and luminous body be cast into a pit of lime.

Why did the Revolution, which called itself the defender of the rights

of the people, not make an idol of that poor, sick and excluded shepherdess? Because, first of all, Germaine had fought and won in a much more sublime field than that of social issues: before the Heart of God!

It is in this sense that Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira comments on her, proposing her as a model for us: "The Catholic of our days must be proud, combative, aware of his importance, not forgetting, however, to represent before his age, the virtues of St. Germaine Cousin. Often rejected, frowned upon, isolated and persecuted, he sees the most unjustified enmities forming around him, while the most solid friendships crumble. He has to fight openly against the powers of his time, rowing against the rising tide of the vices and deviations of his era. Not infrequently he becomes the object of contempt, if not hatred. [...] Nevertheless, when God's glory is touched, we must defend it like lions. And in matters that concern only self-love or personal claims, we must be as meek as lambs. Then we will have imitated in our own way the virtues of St. Germaine, both bowing our heads in the face of humiliations and defending God's glory like warriors."<sup>2</sup>

Thus we can conclude how timely, even for our troubled 21st century, is the exclamation from the lips of Pope Gregory XVI when he saw the documents for the beatification of the shepherdess of Pibrac: "This is the Saint we needed."<sup>3</sup> ✧

<sup>1</sup> RICHOMME, Agnès. *Sainte Germaine de Pibrac*. Paris: Fleurus, 1967, [n.p.].

<sup>2</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. St. Germaine Cousin. In: *Dr. Plinio*. São Paulo. Year XIII. N.147. (June, 2010); p.14-15.

<sup>3</sup> VEUILLOT, Louis. *Sainte Germaine Cousin*. 3.ed. Paris: Victor Lecoffre, 1904, p.173.

# The “Poem to the Virgin”: Golden Tribute of Brazil’s Apostle

Surrounded by a thousand dangers, the young missionary deepened his devotion to Our Lady. And he promised to write the Mother of God’s life in verse, if She would preserve his purity.

Francisco de Assis Silveira



Timothy Ring

**T**he origin of the *Poem to the Virgin* is linked to one of the heroic episodes in the history of the Brazilian nation, displaying the spirit of faith, confidence in Providence, spiritual fortitude and refined diplomatic tact of St. Joseph Anchieta, an admirable man of God.

## *Perilous embassy to the Tamoios*

From the first years of the foundation of Piratininga in the captaincy of São Vicente, the Tamoio Indians had been harassing the Portuguese settlements, in union with the Tupis of the wildlands. The attacks had become almost incessant in 1559, when the Tamoios allied themselves with the French settled in Rio de Janeiro. Defeated by the Governor-General Mem de Sá in 1560, they incited the natives to a general insurrection, which threatened to completely destroy the Portuguese

colonization of the region and, with it, the Catholic Faith.

Fr. Manoel da Nóbrega and Brother Joseph Anchieta,<sup>1</sup> setting out as peace ambassadors in May 1563, arrived on the beaches of Iperoig, now Ubatuba. There they spent months of continuous uncertainty between life and death in the midst of the Tamoios, without succeeding in establishing an

accord. In the meantime, Fr. Nóbrega was called to São Vicente, where his presence was urgently needed.

However much it pained him to see the venerable superior leave at such a juncture, Anchieta preferred the common good to his own, willingly offering to stay among the enemy until it pleased God to soften their hearts and bring them to a settlement.

## *A promise to the Blessed Virgin*

Alone in the midst of a lawless people, Brother Joseph passed through this entire period like a lily among thorns. Daily life with the natives, which for anyone else would have been disastrous, served to strengthen and give new lustre to his virtue.

For a young man in the prime of life, it was very trying to be surrounded by a thousand occasions of sin, countless dangers and scandals of all kinds; and, what is more, deprived

*When he felt  
exhausted, the young  
Jesuit would take a  
walk on the beach,  
composing on the sand,  
in Latin verses, the life  
of the Blessed Virgin*



of the Sacraments, without a good book to read or a spiritual director to support him. He therefore redoubled his vigilance over himself, promptly stifling the slightest movement of nature that could undermine virtue.

He intensified his devotion to the Blessed Virgin, entrusting to Her in a special way the care of his heart and his purity. And he promised to commit the Mother of God's life to verse, if She would guide him through the situation in which he found himself, without any stain that would tarnish the pure lily of his chastity.

### *Engraved in the sand and in his memory*

When he felt exhausted, the young Jesuit would take a walk on the beach, and there he would fulfil his promise, composing on the sand, in Latin verses, the life of the Blessed Virgin.

Whoever reads the touching allegories, symbols and figures taken from the Sacred Scriptures and the Holy Fathers, with which the poem is filled, does not know what to admire more: the author's pious inspiration, or his genius, erudition and doctrine, which he left thus consigned for the praise of the Queen of the Universe and the edification of the faith of future generations.

How pleased Heaven was with the composition is clear from eyewitness accounts, which state that a beautiful little bird of splendid and varied colours was often seen flying around Anchieta while he was writing his poem, and resting either on his shoulders, his head or his hands.<sup>2</sup>

For her part, the Virgin was faithful to the pledge, preserving his purity of soul and life itself intact, even when on the sunny beach the fearsome cannibals made sure the missionary heard this threatening phrase: "Have your fill of the sun, because soon we will kill and eat you." To which he quietly replied: "You shall not kill me; my time has not yet come."<sup>3</sup>

### *Conversion won by sweetness*

Such was the Saint's conduct during the three months he remained alone among the savages. The gentleness of his manner and the uprightness of his unblemished habits won over their hearts, so that at last a peace treaty was established, to the great satisfaction of both parties.

After publicly giving thanks to God for such an outstanding benefit, he prepared to leave for São Vicente, which was very difficult for him, because he could not forget the favours he had received from Providence there in Iperoig. Like St. John on the Island of Patmos, he loved that place which, from a land of exile, had become his beloved home. He saw, moreover, that the native peoples were amenable to civilization, as long as skill and a true apostolic spirit were employed. It broke his heart to leave a region where so much good remained to be done.

The Indians themselves, in turn, were opposed to his leaving, for, having changed their attitude, they now conceived a heartfelt love for him. They could not resign themselves to the absence of the man of God who had so assisted, consoled and helped them in their afflictions. His departure was heroic; holy obedience called him and he did not hesitate.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, on September 21, 1563, after almost five months away, Anchieta entered São Vicente to open the precious treasure of his memory and give the world the pearls of inestimable value of the poem of almost six thousand verses that he had engraved on the sands of Iperoig.

### *The poem*

As a sample, we present some extracts from the famous *Poem to the Virgin*. The offering transcribed below evinces the sublimity that runs through the entire literary piece from beginning to end:

To sing or to fall silent? / your praises, Most holy Mother of Jesus

/ shall I sing them or keep silence? / The restless mind / feels impelled by the spur of love / to offer some verses to its Queen...

But it fears, with impure tongue / to proclaim thy glories: / faults without number encumber it with stain. / How can earthly tongue dare to extol / Her who bore the Omnipotent in her womb?<sup>5</sup>

Centuries before the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception, and witnessed only by Angels and the disquieting stares of fierce Indians, the cantor of the Im-



Reproduction

St. Joseph Anchieta, by Benedito Calixto Paulista Museum of the USP São Paulo; previous page, *The Poem to the Virgin Mary* by Benedito Calixto - Anchieta Museum, São Paulo

*Anchieta lived like  
a lily among thorns.  
His existence among  
the natives served  
to strengthen and  
give new lustre  
to his virtue*

maculate expresses himself with the following lines on the sands of the Land of the Holy Cross:

Conceived, as we were, in a mother's womb, / only Thou, O Virgin, wert free from the stain / that blemishes all others, / and with thy heel dost Thou crush / the head of the coiled dragon, / its disgraced brow is held fast under thy foot / All fair with dazzling radiance, / no shadow was found in Thee, sweet friend of God!<sup>6</sup>

And seized with zeal for orthodoxy, against the insolence of the Calvinist heresy which attacked the perpetual virginity of the heavenly Queen, he declares:

As he fails to see the rays of divine light, / imparting the brilliance of thy body and soul, / he robs Thee of the honour of perpetual virginity [...]. / With blackened and leprous heart, / he casts arrows at Thee, poisoned with viper's gall. / Monster, why are you swollen / with the envy of the old Serpent? / Why do you, with madly grinding teeth, malign / the beauty of the Virgin Mother? [...] / Do you dare, venomous snake, / to touch, with your accursed tongue, / the purest white bed of the eternal God?<sup>7</sup>

With a brief dedication, the poem ends in a cry of love to the Virgin, in the burning desire for martyrdom and with a noble sentiment of humility:

Here are the verses that long ago, O Holy Mother, / I pledged to Thee by vow, / seeing myself surrounded by fierce enemies. / While, among the rebellious Tamoios, / as a poor hostage, I advocated the longed-for peace, / thy grace enfolded me / in thy maternal mantle / and thy veil

*"In Anchieta,  
a flower of virtue  
had sprung up:  
gentle meekness,  
linked to serene  
but inexorable  
energy"*



Gospel in the Jungle, by Benedito Calixto  
Painting Gallery of São Paulo State

guarded intact my body and soul. / At Heaven's inspiration, / I often desired to suffer/ and to expire cruelly in harsh irons. / But my desires were met with deserved rejection: / such glory is fitting for heroes alone!<sup>8</sup>

### *Flower sown throughout Brazil*

Praising the virtues of the Apostle of Brazil, Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira solemnly affirmed in the National Constituent Assembly of 1934:

"In Anchieta, *vas electionis*,<sup>9</sup> a flower of virtue had sprung up, and this flower he sowed throughout Brazil: it is gentle meekness, linked to the serene but inexorable energy, which is the axis of our soul."<sup>10</sup>

Let us confidently ask that, at the behest of this incomparable hero of the Faith, Our Lady of the Conception Aparecida, Patroness of Brazil, obtain for us, at the current historical crossroads through which the nation is passing, extraordinary graces so that our country may indeed become the Land of the Holy Cross of which its founders dreamt, and whose grandiose future was prophesied by St. Joseph Anchieta in the epopee *The Saga of Mem de Sá*: "When the Brazilian peoples observe the doctrine of Christ, a golden age will be established for centuries in this southern world!"<sup>11</sup> ✧

<sup>1</sup> St. Joseph Anchieta was ordained a priest three years later, on June 6, 1566, in the Cathedral of Salvador.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. SAINTE-FOY, Charles. *Vida do Venerável Pe. José de Anchieta*. São Paulo: Jorge Seckler, 1878, p.43-47.

<sup>3</sup> VIEIRA, Celso. *Anchieta*. 3.ed. São Paulo: Compan-

hia Editorial Nacional, 1949, p.210.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. SAINTE-FOY, op. cit., p.47-48.

<sup>5</sup> ST. JOSEPH ANCHIETA. *Sobre a Virgem Maria Mãe de Deus*. 5.ed. São Paulo: Paulinas, 1996, p.57.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, p.59.

<sup>7</sup> Idem, p.140-141.

<sup>8</sup> Idem, p.340.

<sup>9</sup> From Latin: vessel of election (cf. Acts 9:15).

<sup>10</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. 98<sup>th</sup> Session, March 19, 1934. In: *Opera Omnia. Reedição de escritos, pronunciamientos e obras*. São Paulo: Retornarei, 2009, v.II, p.63.

<sup>11</sup> ST. JOSEPH ANCHIETA. *De gestis Mendi de Saa*, apud VIOTTI, SJ, Hélio Abranches. *Anchieta, o Apóstolo do Brasil*. 2.ed. São Paulo: Loyola, 1980, p.237.

<sup>12</sup> ST. JOSEPH ANCHIETA, *Sobre a Virgem Maria Mãe de Deus*, op. cit., p.278-279.



# Hymn of Love to the Divine Wound

In his Poem to the Virgin, St. Joseph Anchieta dedicates some verses to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, wounded with love for the salvation of men. He thus

preceded St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, who in the following century would receive from the Saviour himself the mission of spreading this devotion throughout the world.

**O** sacred wound, it was no iron spear that opened thee, but rather the passionate love that Jesus had for our love that opened thee!

O torrent that flowed in the heart of Paradise, of thy waters the earth is imbued and made fruitful!

O royal road, jewelled gate of Heaven, tower of refuge, shelter of hope!

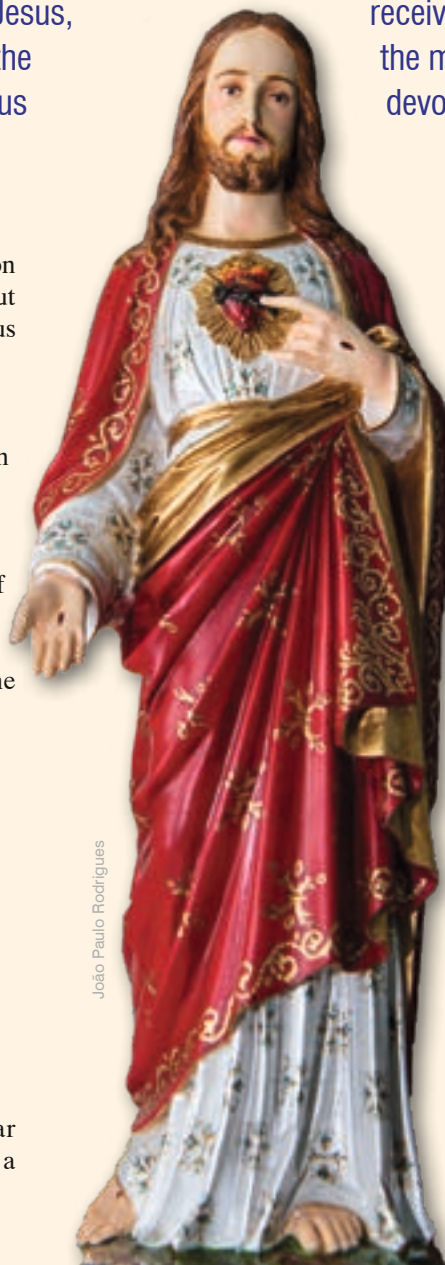
O rose exhaling the divine perfume of virtue! Precious stone with which the pauper buys a throne in Heaven!

Nest in which the snow-white doves place their eggs, in which the chaste turtledove feeds its fledglings.

O red wound, that glows with immense beauty and wounds the hearts of its friends with love!

O lesion that opened with the spear of love, through the divine breast, a wide path for the Heart of Christ!

Proof of untold love with which He drew us close to himself: port which harbours the ship in the storm!



João Paulo Rodrigues

Sacred Heart of Jesus  
Tabor Formation House, Caieiras (Brazil)

To thee fly those pursued by the dread enemy, remedy to cure any ill!

From thee the sorrowful will drink consolation and remove the burden of sadness from their oppressed heart.

The hope of the poor convict will not be dashed who, forsaking fear, enters the palaces of Paradise, by your way.

O abode of peace! O perennial stream of living water that gushes unto eternal life!

Only within Thee, O Mother, was this laceration inflicted, only Thou dost suffer it, only Thou canst bear it.

Let me enter into that breast pierced by iron and abide in the Heart of my Lord; by this road I will reach the depths of this holy love; there I make my resting place, my eternal home.

There I will plunge my crimes into the river of His Blood, and cleanse the vileness of my soul, in this crystalline water. In this abode, this cove, how sweet it will be to live the rest of my days, and there, at last, to die!<sup>12</sup>

## *Assistance, Protection and Security*

Grateful for so many benefits received, many wish to express the tremendous happiness they feel in finding a mother who, from eternity, has guided, supported and protected them.



**Elizabete Fátima Astorino**

**T**he words of the Psalmist could be applied to the incomparable goodness of Dona Lucilla towards those who implore her aid: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil” (Ps 23:4), for under her maternal shawl they find refuge, protection and security (cf. Ps 71:3).

Indeed, with her special knack, Dona Lucilla has delivered her faithful devotees from difficulties, leading them along the right path and restoring their strength amid the countless sufferings and difficulties of life.

***“By her intercession,  
I am here”***

Ana Karina Bueno writes from Recife (Brazil), to tell us about the cure of an illness, obtained through the intercession of Dona Lucilia:

“I visited my doctor for routine examinations and the ultrasound showed an enlargement in one of the ovaries. What was supposed to be six cubic

centimetres was forty. The doctor, distrusting the ultrasound, as it is not the most precise test, ordered an MRI with contrast to be done in another, more reliable laboratory. The result not only confirmed the first, but also indicated that it was an enlargement to sixty cubic centimetres. In other words, it was ten times larger than normal.

“The doctor referred me to a surgeon, who explained to me the need to remove this ovary and perhaps even the uterus, depending on its condition at the time of surgery.”

While she was undergoing the pre-operative examinations, Ana

made a quick trip to São Paulo, during which she had the opportunity to visit one of the houses of the Heralds and speak with a priest of the institution:

“We told him everything that was happening, asked for a blessing, and he immediately granted it, asking for Dona Lucilia’s intercession.”

Upon returning to Recife and completing the pre-operative examinations, Ana’s surgical procedure was scheduled:

“I went for the surgery asking her, Dona Lucilia, to be with me. And to everyone’s surprise – especially the doctor, who could not figure out what had happened – there was



Ana Karina Bueno and her daughter

*“The doctor didn’t know what to say when she saw the video of the surgery; she told me that she had no way to explain the fact”*



no change in my ovary. It was the normal size, and I could conceive again if I wished."

Amazed, Ana took the video of the surgery to the doctor who had previously attended her, in order to inform her of what had happened:

"The doctor didn't know what to say when she saw the video, because she thought I wanted an explanation. She told me that she had no way to explain this fact."

Recognizing the enormous favour granted by Dona Lucilia, Ana affirms: "I knew perfectly well and I had no doubt that I was healed in the blessing I received. Through her intercession I am here, and I have faith that she will be helping me again so that my baby will be completely healthy."

***"I started a novena to Dona Lucilia"***

Jorge Nunes, from Xangri-Lá (Brazil), knowing of the countless benefits obtained through Dona Lucilia, also appealed to her, asking her to help his son to overcome a certain difficulty that prevented him from continuing his training after passing the Fire Department exam:

"During the physical tests he was unable to complete the 'bars' segment because of a muscular problem he had developed. But the medical examination did not reveal any abnormality. I began a novena to Dona Lucilia, praying a Hail Mary every day. Then he found a specialist who suggested a possible treatment for the discomfort.

"After that my son was able to perform the exercise beyond the minimum required. He went through all the levels and graduated on November 20, the date up until which I



Jorge Nunes together with his family; above, in the inset, his son, Miguel Nunes

*"After the novena to Dona Lucilia, my son was able to perform the exercises and graduated on November 20"*

continued to pray. From then on I changed the intention to gratitude."

***Motherly love that restored her peace and her life***

Flavia Duarte, from Campo Grande (Brazil), also writes to us to make known her gratitude for the support she received from Dona Lucilia, during a troubled period of her life:

"A few years ago, after suffering several attacks of migraine headaches, with chest pains and tingling in my arms, which occasioned several visits to the emergency room, I was diagnosed with physical exhaustion accompanied by mental exhaustion. At first, I tried seeking psychological treatment; nevertheless, the attacks continued. I was terribly afraid

that I was going mad. The symptoms bombarded my body and, above all, my mind.

"After a few months, I started psychiatric treatment. The diagnosis was depression and panic syndrome. I then began taking the prescribed medications. There were good days, followed by bad days. The medicine mitigated the symptoms overall, but did not prevent the attacks.

"A year later, I was about to make a trip to São Paulo, since our family was taking part in the pilgrimage to Aparecida organized by the Heralds of the Gospel. However, an extremely severe panic crisis brought me once again to the hospital. I felt my whole body tingling, and my breathing became very difficult, so that I almost lost consciousness. A different anxiolytic medication was prescribed, and with that I decided to go ahead with the plans for the trip."

At one point in the pilgrimage, Flavia received a photograph of Dona Lucilia. Deeply impressed with that the kindness of her look, which transmitted so much peace, she decided to resort to her intercession:

"When we returned home, I had another day of terrible symptoms. That was when I decided to take that little picture and ask Dona Lu-

celona for help, begging her to take away the ‘feeling of not knowing how to breathe.’ I said that I could bear the other symptoms, but this one was the worst of all of them, since it completely robbed me of peace!

I put the photo under my pillow and when I woke up, I realized to my surprise that the distress had disappeared. The days passed, and none of the symptoms returned; I was cured! I was able to stop taking the drugs, and today I lead a normal life, thanks to the motherly love of that lady who restored to me my peace and my life.”

### **Unexpected obstacles while closing a sale**

Mrs. Maria Baghdikian’s family, from São Paulo, was in a very precarious financial situation when they decided to sell a property received as an inheritance. An unexpected mishap, however, threatened the successful outcome of the deal:

“We managed to find a buyer, under the condition of delivering him the property, totally unoccupied, within three months. The ground floor was occupied by us. The upper floor was rented to a person who, since the beginning of the lease, knew of our intention to sell it. This tenant, with whom we had a long-standing relationship of good faith, had agreed to vacate the premises in the event that the property was sold, so as not to create obstacles.

“However, as soon as the deal was closed, he began to adopt a negative attitude: he became extremely aggressive and refused to vacate the property, thus making it impossible to meet the conditions of the sale.”

### **“I am grateful for her goodness and promptness in helping me”**

It was at this tense moment that a relative recommended that Maria

appeal to Dona Lucilia’s intervention, so that the case could be resolved in time:

“We tried to convince the tenant to comply with what we had agreed upon verbally. But the conversations were only becoming more problematic, leading to arguments and hostility. So the time passed and the deadline for handing over the property was approaching and the risk of losing the sale became more and more

probable due to the tenant’s growing obstinacy.

“Ten days before the deadline, we had a heated dispute, in which his behaviour became much more aggressive and vulgar.

“Extremely distraught, I decided to talk to my uncle, to ask if he had any ideas or suggestions to make. Seeing no way of solving the problem, other than through legal action, a solution which, since it would demand a lot of time, could very well result in the cancellation of the sale, he suggested I should turn to Dona Lucilia.

“I immediately prayed three rosaries asking for her intercession. Soon afterwards, the tenant appeared unexpectedly on the ground floor of the property, where I was staying and, spontaneously and astonishingly, told me that he was going to vacate the house.

“There had been a radical and inexplicable change in his behaviour. I immediately associated this change with an intervention by Dona Lucilia. I thank God for the favour He had granted me through her intercession, and I am grateful to her for the goodness and promptness with which she helped me.”

\* \* \*



Flavia Emilia Duarte and her husband holding a poster of Dona Lucilia

*“I begged her to take away the feeling of not knowing how to breathe. I could bear the other symptoms, but this one robbed me of my peace!”*

With interventions such as those narrated above, Dona Lucilia has sheltered under her maternal shawl all those who, afflicted and in need of help, address prayers to her.

Grateful for so many benefits received from this generous lady, who made of her life a constant holocaust for the benefit of her neighbour, many wish to express through these accounts the tremendous happiness they feel in having found a mother who, from eternity, has guided, supported and protected them. ✧





## Order and Compassion

There were countless opportunities for Dona Lucilia to show her motherliness through the measureless, supportive, and unfailing love she extended to anyone who had been visited by hardship or was in any kind of need.

An example of this is her care for her sister Zili. Dona Lucilia, 13 years her elder, was a mother to her from her first moments, surrounding her with boundless affection. Throughout her life, Zili would bear an almost filial love and gratitude to Dona Lucilia.

Dona Zili's daughter, Ilka, was blessed in like manner. She also lived in the Ribeiro dos Santos mansion and was close in age to her cousins, being educated with them as if she were their sister. Many decades after those pleasant days, Dona Ilka still had fond memories of her aunt:

"Aunt Lucilia was a real lady, with a superior spirit and a kindness that was out of the ordinary. We sometimes tend to think that a good person never opposes others and does not notice evil. Not Aunt Lucilia! When she was vexed with Plinio for

some mischief of his, I would often see her take a silver hairbrush and spank him on the hand with it! But at the same time, she possessed a rare kindness – she was so good!

"Aunt Lucilia was a saint. She suffered much during her life, but knew how to bear everything patiently. She was really an extraordinary person.

"She was the one who brought up my mother. Aunt Lucilia was thirteen when my mother was born, and it was she who effectively took on her education. Aunt Lucilia was really my mother's mother.

"My mother was crazy about her! Crazy! I think my mother felt a much closer bond with her sister than with her own mother."

Dona Lucilia was considered the favourite aunt among her nieces and nephews. They loved to hear her stories and to spend Christmas, Easter and all the family festivities with her.

For her, pleasant, harmonious, and respectful interaction was the perfection of social life – a true gift of God to ease the burden of man's pilgrimage in this land of exile.

Her exercise of authority was always firm and clear, while consistently main-

taining a tone of kindness. Whenever possible, she was quick to implement her decision toward solving any problem that fell under her jurisdiction. However, she never diminished in her certainty that it was kindness, above all, that would overcome obstacles and soften the hardness of self-love in the numerous souls she would encounter. ✧

CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio.  
*Dona Lucilia.*  
Città del Vaticano-São Paulo: LEV;  
Heralds of the Gospel,  
2013, p.120-121



Plinio, Ilka e Rosée in the Luz Garden, São Paulo; above, Dona Lucilia photographed in 1912, in Paris

Photos: Reproduction

Photos: Lucilla Bassi



**USA** – During the month of May, at the invitation of the pastor, Fr. Ivan Sciberras, Herald missionaries gave talks on the Blessed Virgin at St. Peter's Church in New Jersey, as well as at the parish school. Processions and other acts of devotion were also carried out in honour of the Mother of God.

Photos: Dora Santos



**Brazil** – The Heralds of the Gospel were invited to solemnize the installation of Fr. Dorival Aparecido de Moraes as pastor of St. Anne's, the Diocesan Cathedral of Mogi das Cruzes (SP). The Eucharistic celebration, presided over by Diocesan Bishop Pedro Luiz Stringhini, took place on April 11.

Pedro Beltrán



Ana Maria Veas

**Chile** – Missionaries from the male and female sectors of the Heralds visited the Parish of Our Lady of Carmel, in Curacaví, with the Pilgrim Statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (photo 1), and carried the Shrine to homes (photo 2) and institutions, including Las Garzas Agricultural School (photo 3).





## ***“Jubilant Testimony of the Resurrected Lord”***

**W**ith these words, the Apostolic Nuncio in Costa Rica, Archbishop Bruno Musarò (photo 3), described Fr. Gonzalo Raymundo Esteban, EP (photo 2), who on April 12 surrendered his soul to God in the city of São Paulo, victim of fulminant cancer. They were spoken during the Mass celebrated by the prelate in the Heralds' house in Costa Rica, where Fr. Gonzalo had carried out his tireless pastoral activity during the last few years.

Also the Archbishop of Madrid, Cardinal Carlos Osoro Sierra (photo 1), who during his term as head of the Oviedo Diocese had personally met Fr. Gonzalo, wanted to preside over a Eucharist for the soul of this dedi-

cated apostle. The celebration was held at the Church of San Ginés in Madrid (photo 5), with Bishop Luis Armando Tineo Rivera, Emeritus of Carora, and sixteen priests concelebrating.

For his part, the Apostolic Nuncio in El Salvador, Archbishop Santo Rocco Gangemi, celebrated a Holy Mass in the Heralds' house in the city of San José (photos 4 and 7), while the Archbishop of the Toledo diocese and Primate of Spain, Most Rev. Francisco Cerro Chaves, presided over a Eucharist at the Heralds' house in Camarenilla (photos 6 and 8). He commented that “Fr. Gonzalo was a priest who transmitted what he lived.” ✧





## CHURCH AND WORLD EVENTS .....

### **France's Minister of Education outlaws "inclusive writing"**

The use of "inclusive language", which employs a "neutral" term to refer to the masculine and feminine genders, has been banned in schools in France by the Minister of Education, Jean-Michel Blanquer. He explains that the use of this form of writing impairs pupils' understanding because of its complexity and instability.

### **British police apologize for entering parish**

Following a disruption carried out by police during the Good Friday service at a Polish parish in London, the officers in charge of that action have been urged to apologize due to the illegal nature of the intervention.

The complaint that had reached the police that day stated that preventative regulations against COVID-19 were being breached in the church. However, it was found that all the regulations were being followed to the letter by the parishioners, who further stated that they followed the same protocols during the Holy Thursday and Easter Vigil Masses.

### **Ancient monastery recommences its brewery**

The oldest Western abbey still active today is located in Switzerland. It is the monastery of Saint-Maurice d'Againe, which was founded in 515 and boasts a rich artistic heritage as well as ancient and valuable relics.

The traditional brewing of beer at this monastery, interrupted in the 13th century, was resumed in 2019 and should revitalize the archaeological site of the abbey, as well as contributing to the community's livelihood. Three varieties of the beverage have already been formulated, and another is forthcoming.



### **Iraqi children receive First Communion**

In the Church of St. John the Baptist, in Qaraqosh, northern Iraq, one hundred and twenty-one children made their First Holy Communion. The celebrant, Fr. Majeed Attalla, said that four hundred more are still waiting to receive this Sacrament, and stated:

"Thank God we have many children, and this is a source of joy, because they give strength and hope to continue. They represent the future. [All] were prepared with a spirit of great participation. COVID-19 stopped the world, but fortunately it did not stop the life of the community."

Qaraqosh is currently the most important Christian centre in the Nineveh plain: almost the entire population professes faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Re-opening of Notre-Dame is planned for 2024**

The French President, Emmanuel Macron, promised that the restoration of the historic Parisian cathedral will be finished by 2024. Michel Picaud, president of the charity Friends of Notre-Dame de Paris –

an organization aimed at collecting donations and funds for the reconstruction – also assured that it is possible for the temple to indeed be ready for reopening in the year planned, although the roof may not be completely finished at that time.

The rector of Notre-Dame Cathedral, Monsignor Patrick Chauvet, said that the work could take another twenty years, with a total expenditure of over one billion euros.

### **Hermitages from the 4th century discovered**

Archaeological missions have located the oldest Christian monastery ever discovered at the site of Tal Ganoub Qasr-al Agouz, in the Bahariya Oasis (Egypt). Radiocarbon analyses indicate that it dates from the 4th century. Until now, it was believed that the first communities were from the 5th century, so the discovery will provide important information about early Christianity and monasticism in Egypt.

Six hermitages built of basalt, dug into the rock or made of clay bricks were found at the site. Thanks to the absence of humidity and the desert sand, the ruins have been exceptionally well preserved. Greek inscriptions and Coptic paintings are engraved on the walls. The texts came as a surprise to scholars and will be the subject of in-depth analysis.

### **New Vatican Observatory website launched**

A new website has been launched by the Vatican Astronomical Observatory in order to "show the world that the Church supports science," the director, Fr. Guy Consolmagno, S.J., told Catholic News Agency. At the same time, a podcast has been launched that explores "the wonders of God's universe," with explanations from experts on the subject. The website has a series of resources on faith and science, and those interested will be able



to access it and get to know the work in more detail.

### ***French churches object of increasing attacks***

France's central criminal intelligence unit has reported that 877 attacks on Catholic places of worship were registered in the country in 2018 alone. The president of the Paris Observatory of Religious Heritage, Edouard de Lamaze, pointed out that this number has increased fivefold, as compared with the previous decade. He warned that if vandalism continues, 5,000 edifices of our religion face probable disappearance.

Lamaze deplored the fact that such sites have not been restored or protected by the government since

the law of separation of Church and State was decreed in 1905.

In sum, France has lost a Catholic temple every fortnight. Of all offences perpetrated against buildings of worship, the majority target the Catholic Church.



### ***Another church burned in Chile***

In mid-April, a blaze engulfed one of the chapels of the Parish

of St. Anthony, in the commune of Padre Las Casas, in La Araucanía. All evidence indicates that the cause of the fire was a terrorist attack. The chapel was completely destroyed, despite the fact that four crews of firefighters were deployed in the emergency.

### ***Image of the Virgin of Guadalupe re-enthroned in Houston***

The statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe, belonging to Queen of Peace Parish in Houston, was received by the faithful in a ceremony after being restored. In December last year, the image had been shot six times with a revolver by an aggressor who, according to witnesses, was wearing a red suit and a black hat.

## ***Museum of Sacred Art to Restore Vandalized Statues***

Six statues belonging to the Parish of Our Lady of Remedies of the Brazilian Diocese of Osasco have been sent to the Museum of Sacred Art to be restored after the damage they suffered at the hands of two men and two women who broke into the parish church. As he pursued the vandals, the parish administrator, Fr. Amauri Baggio, heard one of them say that the attack had been carried out "in the name of Jesus."

Among the damaged statues was that of the Patroness, Our Lady of Remedies, and another of St. Ubald, brought from Italy more than sixty years ago and entirely carved in wood. There was also a seventh, representing St. Cecilia, which could not be repaired due to the extent of the damage.

John Rossi, commissioned with the restoration, estimates that the work will take about a year. He also stated

that fifteen people, including restorers and volunteers, will take part in the effort, doing their best to ensure that the finished images will be as close as possible to the originals. The first statue to be refurbished will be that of the Patroness.



**Church of Our Lady of Remedies, Osasco (Brazil); inset, the statue of St. Cecilia which was not restorable due to the severity of the damages**



# From Stones

With the departure of Amethyst, things began to change. What had started as a simple pastime for the new stars began to deeply trouble them.



**T**he cold night wind gusted relentlessly through village and woods. The animals took refuge in their dens, the birds in their nests, and townspeople slept soundly by their hearths. But there were some who were unconcerned about warmth or shelter, and quite insensitive to the chill of the night.

Resting motionless on the ground and hidden from sight, some precious stones were looking up at a marvel of creation that was manifesting itself at that moment: the light of the stars.

Citrine raised its eyes to the heavens, and exclaimed to the other gemstones:

"Friends, look how beautifully those stars shine! Every time I gaze at them, I feel irresistibly uplifted and drawn to God."

"Just to think!" replied Ruby. "They don't mind the cold, for they are fiery like the sun that warms us!"

"Ah, what joy is theirs! For they have movement, and they shine so



brightly above this world!" exclaimed Opal.

"They live in the heavens... while we must spend our days on this altogether ordinary ground," sighed Diamond.

Once more, it was Citrine that spoke: "Someday we will be like them, close to our Creator!"

"My friends, let us not lose hope!" urged Emerald, "The stars are our close relatives and will certainly welcome us. Let us go! Let us go up to the heavens!"

At these words, Amethyst contested:

"Wait, Emerald! On our own, we will never be able to get there. We need someone to help us! We haven't the strength to even move, let alone fly beyond the atmosphere... Let us pray to the Angel that governs us."

No sooner had they started to pray, than the Angel of Created Beauties, strong and shining as the Sun, appeared. Hearing of their desire to inhabit the vast skies, he replied:

"The stars would certainly welcome you! However, be aware that everything is

very different there. Therefore, if you ever wish to return to earth, you may do so at will."

And he began to designate each gemstone's destination:

"You, Ruby, because you are a reflection of matchless fortitude, your post will be in the Leo constellation."



"For your generosity, Amethyst, you may take up your post in the constellation of the Southern Cross, which calls to mind God's infinite bestowal to mankind: His Death on the Cross."

"Diamond, being so constant and unchanging, you represent true peace; for this reason, you may join the Aquila constellation, there to peacefully contemplate eternity, as the eagle contemplates the sun."

"You, fair Citrine, for your golden colour, the noblest colour of all, you shall dwell in the Shield constellation, to signify the valour of those who fight for the Faith."

"Opal, with your joy of many hues, you will adorn the Southern Crown constellation."



# to Stars...



**Sarah Mafort**

“And you, enchanting Emerald, will better reflect your light among the Three Marys, which serve to identify other constellations.”

Having said these words, the Angel shed his light upon the gemstones. They became brighter, and brighter, and brighter, until, like the morning dew touched by the sun’s blazing rays, they gradually rose from the earth to the sky.

When they finally arrived in the magnificent galactic dwelling-place, the stars made a type of parade, merrily dancing and singing for their new companions. In a mixture of curiosity and sheer joy, they began to ask the newcomers all about life on the Earth. In every constellation, tales were told of the seas and lakes, the snowy mountains and fiery volcanoes. However, what most enchanted them was to hear about the lives of the Saints.

A few days later, an unusual movement in the Southern Cross caught the attention of the celestial assemblies:

“Star-Amethyst has decided to return to Earth,” was the news.

“For what reason?” asked one of the stars.

“Her generosity is very expansive, and the only way it can reach its fullness is through suffering. Here above, she discovered that no one suffers, and so she decided to return the people of Earth.”

After Amethyst’s departure, things slowly began to change.

One morning, the gem-stars set to observing human lives unfolding below. This began as a simple pastime for the new stars, but soon began to upset them:

“Look, my friends,” exclaimed the Opal-star. “In almost every house there is someone weeping! They have no joy. Our beloved Amethyst is there to help them, but nobody knows how to accept suffering well... I must go down to help all those people.”

“Good gem-star, don’t go without me! Humanity will only have true happiness if it becomes strong to courageously combat evil,” declared Ruby.

A voice coming from the constellation of the Shield then interrupted the dialogue of the joy-star and fortitude-star:

“And who will make it possible for men to live according to what

you preach? Without faith, all joy is pointless and all strength is brutish. I feel that there is no place for me here; my heaven is among faithful hearts! I will go along with you.”

Then, the star of peace began to cry:

“Will you all leave me here to live without you? I cannot descend, for earth is not a place of absolute peace. God made the world a place of warfare, and complete peace can only be possessed in Heaven.”

“Take heart, my friend. Soon you will have new company, for I too will return to our homeland to visit souls. There, I will strive to fill them with the hope of possessing peace forever,” said Emerald comfortingly.

At that, the beautiful Diamond-peace stopped weeping, and the other star-gems made their descent to earth. Until today, they accompany the star of generosity and pain, which daily visits the hearts of mortals, eager to lead them to the enjoyment of the Kingdom of eternal peace. Let us keep our souls open to the message these wondrous heavenly lights bear! ✧

Illustrations: Priscila Vieira





# THE SAINTS OF EACH DAY

1. **St. Justin**, martyr (†c. 165 Rome).

**Blessed John Pelingotto**

(†1304). Franciscan tertiary from Urbino, Italy. He withdrew to live in a cell, which he only left to care for the poor and sick.

2. **Sts. Marcellinus and Peter**, martyrs (†304 Rome).

**St. Blandina**, martyr (†177). Beheaded in Lyon, France, at the time of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, after suffering numerous torments.

3. **St. Charles Lwanga and twelve companions**, martyrs (†1886 Kampala - Uganda).

**St. Clotilda**, queen (†545). By means of her prayers and apostolic zeal, she obtained the conversion of her spouse Clovis, king of the Franks, and the entire kingdom.

4. **St. Optatus**, bishop († fourth century). As head of the Diocese of Milevi, in northern Africa, he distinguished himself in the fight against the Donatists. He wrote several works highly esteemed by St. Augustine.

5. **St. Boniface**, bishop and martyr (†754 Dokkum - Holland).

**St. Eoban**, bishop, and **ten companions**, martyrs (†754). He received the palm of martyrdom with St. Boniface, in Phrysia, present-day Holland.

6. **Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ** (Transferred from Thursday, June 3.)

**St. Norbert**, bishop (†1134 Magdeburg - Germany).

7. **St. Robert of Newminster**, abbot (†1159). After being ordained priest, he entered the Benedictine Abbey of Whitby, England. With twelve other monks, he helped found several monasteries, in-



**St. Barnabas - Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Montevideo (Uruguay)**

cluding Newminster, of which he became abbot.

8. **St. Ephrem**, deacon and Doctor of the Church (†378 Edessa - Turkey).

**St. Fortunatus of Fano**, bishop (†sixth century). Bishop of Fano, Italy, who dedicated himself to the rescue of captives.

9. **St. Joseph of Anchieta**, priest (†1597 Reritiba - Brazil).

**Blessed Joseph Imbert**, priest and martyr (†1794). Jesuit religious appointed vicar-apostolic of Moulins by Pius VI during the French Revolution. He was imprisoned in a galley in Rochefort, where he died.

10. **Blessed Diana d'Andalo**, virgin (†1236). She pronounced her vows in the hands of St. Dominic himself and, having overcome all the obstacles raised by her family, she entered the monastery of St. Agnes, in Bologna, Italy.

11. **Solemnity of Sacred Heart of Jesus.**

**St. Barnabas**, Apostle.

**St. Rosa Francisca Maria de las Dores**, virgin (†1876). She transformed an association of pious women into the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation in Tortosa, Spain.

12. **Immaculate Heart of Mary.**

**Blessed Guido of Cortona**, priest (†c. 1245). Disciple of St. Francis of Assisi, he founded the convent of Celle, Italy. He earned a reputation for sanctity during his life, and worked many miracles.

13. **11<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**St. Anthony of Padua**, priest and Doctor of the Church (†1231 Padua - Italy).

**St. Fandila**, priest and monk (†853). Beheaded in Cordoba, Spain, during the reign of king Muhammad I.

14. **St. Elisha**, prophet. Disciple and successor of St. Elijah and prophet of Israel from the time of King Joran until the days of Joah.

15. **St. Barbara Cui Lianshi**, martyr (†1900). Mother of family killed by means of the cruellest torture during the persecutions in China.

16. **St. Julietta and St. Cyriacus**, martyrs (†fourth century). Young widow martyred with her young son, in Tarsus (present day Turkey).



**17. St. Raniero of Pisa**, penitent (†1160). He gave himself over to worldly amusements during his youth. After his conversion he left everything and went to the Holy Land where he lived for thirteen years doing penance.

**18. Blessed Osanna Andreasi**, virgin (†1505). Dominican religious from Mantua, Italy, who managed to wisely unite contemplation of divine things with labour and the practice of good works.

**19. St. Romuald**, abbot (†1027 Marcas - Italy).

**St. Juliana Falconieri**, virgin (†c. 1341). Of noble birth, she founded the Third Order of the Servants of Mary in Florence. They are called “Mantellates” due to their religious habit.

## 20. 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Blessed Dermot O’Hurley**, bishop and martyr (†1584). Imprisoned and tortured for months during the reign of Elizabeth I of England. He was finally hanged for not wanting to break with the Church of Rome.

**21. St. Aloysius Gonzaga**, religious (†1591 Rome).

**St. Ralph of Bourges**, bishop (†866). Benedictine abbot elected Bishop of Bourges, France. He showed great solicitude for the perfection of the clergy.

**22. St. Paulinus of Nola**, bishop (†431 Nola - Italy).

**St. John Fisher**, bishop, and **St. Thomas More**, martyrs (†1535 London).

**Blessed Innocent V**, Pope (†1276). After having received the Dominican habit and taught theology in Paris, he was appointed Bishop of Lyon and later elected

Pope. He strove to unite the separated churches to the Roman See.

**23. St. Joseph Cafasso**, priest (†1860). Priest from the Diocese of Turin, Italy, he dedicated himself to augmenting the piety and learning of future priests, and reconciling with God prisoners and those condemned to death.

## 24. Nativity of St. John the Baptist

**St. Mary of Guadalupe García Zavala**, virgin (†1963). Co-founder of the Congregation of the Handmaids of St. Margaret Mary and the Poor, in Guadalajara, Mexico.

**25. St. Eurosia**, virgin and martyr (†c. 714). Princess of Bohemia who, according to tradition, was killed close to Jaca (Spain) while travelling to marry a Visigoth prince of Aragon.

**26. Blessed Andrew Hyacinth Longhin**, bishop (†1936). Capuchin religious appointed Bishop of Treviso (Italy) by St. Pius X; he helped refugees and prisoners during World War I and defended the rights of the weakest of society.

## 27. 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

**St. Cyril of Alexandria**, bishop and Doctor of the Church (†444 Alexandria - Egypt)

**St. Marguerite Bays**, virgin (†1879). Franciscan tertiary from Fribourg, Switzerland, who, without neglecting her life of prayer, untiringly dedicated herself to various works of lay apostolate.

**28. St. Irenaeus**, bishop and martyr (†c. 202 Lyon - France).

**St. John Southworth**, priest and martyr (†1654). Condemned to death for clandestinely exercising his priestly ministry in England.

**29. Solemnity of St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles.**

**Sts. Paul Wu Yan, John Baptist Wu Mantang and Paul Wu Wanshu**, martyrs (†1900). During the religious persecution in China, Paul Wu Yan, a layman, suffered a brutal martyrdom together with his seventeen-year-old son John Baptist, and his sixteen-year-old nephew, Paul Wanshu.

**30. First Martyrs of the Church of Rome** (†64 Rome).

**Blessed Januarius Maria Sarnelli**, priest (†1744). Having met St. Alphonsus Liguori, he became a Redemptorist and they travelled together on missions throughout Italy.



**St. Blandina - Stained glass in St. Irenaeus Church, Lyon (France)**





# Defier of the Sky

Our earthly life is a succession of struggles and conquests for survival, and above all, to attain Heaven, the reward of true heroes.



Sr. Cecilia Grasielle Levermann, EP

When we contemplate a horizon dominated by a limpid blue sky, we are enchanted by its placidity. Nevertheless, this same wide expanse may have been the stage for feats of intrepidity that are seemingly at odds with the tranquil appearance of the panorama.

I am not referring to aviation stunts performed before spellbound crowds. The “hero” of whom I speak is indeed a great defier of the skies. But he does not seek to shine before men, for his “war” is for survival and is a daily routine. The prowess of this fighter usually goes unnoticed, but when we witness it, we are filled with admiration.

This figure is not entirely beyond our reach; all we have to do is lift our gaze skyward and there we will find the falcon, in full flight, waging its arduous battle.

When it glides through the air, it is the picture of serene composure, which in no way hinders it from being attentive to everything that is happening around it. It thus evokes the state of mind of vigilance and prayer,

taught by the Master to His disciples and followers of all times.

The falcon’s “battlefield” transcends that of other birds of prey, which usually capture ground animals. It, in turn, seeks riskier adventures and costlier conquests by hunting airborne game. Once the target is fixed with its acute, broad and analytical vision, it attacks with speed. Cutting through the winds and closing the distance with prodigious vitality, it seizes its prey with an élan worthy of its dignity. After a previous and careful calculation, the attack was impetuous, and the result was successful: behold, the falcon returns victorious from its expedition.

We can find in this bird an image of how the human will acts. Before doing anything, man draws up a plan: it is intelligence that acts. Once the objective has been defined, it penetrates into the heart, that is, the will. Then the person uses the necessary means to accomplish what he has conceived, in a manner similar to the direct and energetic flight of the creature contemplated in this article.

Our earthly life is a series of struggles and conquests for survival and, above all, to attain Heaven, the reward of the true heroes who fight for God’s cause. It is up to us to weigh the challenges and to set out enthusiastically to meet them, following the advice from the Letter to the Hebrews: “let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (12:1-2).

Let us not flee from the pain that wounds our senses. On the contrary, let us embrace suffering in imitation of the divine Redeemer: “who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross” (Heb 12:2). With resolute steps and with soul ablaze, let us advance towards holiness, defying every obstacle so as to become instruments for the glorification of God and the exaltation of Holy Church, which will bring us eternal salvation.

And let us never forget that on this pilgrimage we will never be alone: a Mother full of goodness and mercy watches over each one of us and points the way to the eternal dwelling place. ✧





John O'Neill (CC by-sa 3.0)

1



Fir0002/Flagstaffphotos

2



Peter A. Berman (CC by-sa 4.0)

3



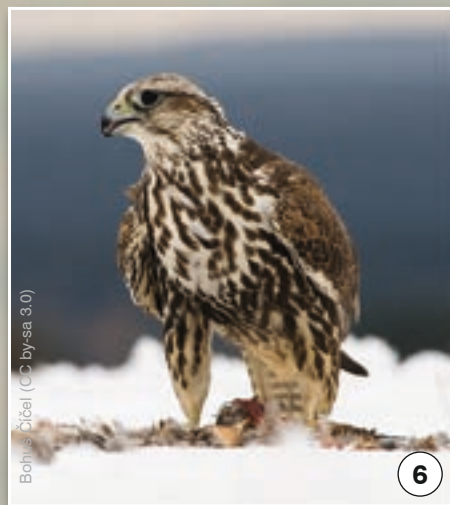
Andreas Trepte (CC by-sa 2.0)

4



Upd KwaZulu-Natal (CC by-sa 3.0)

5



Bohus Čížek (CC by-sa 3.0)

6

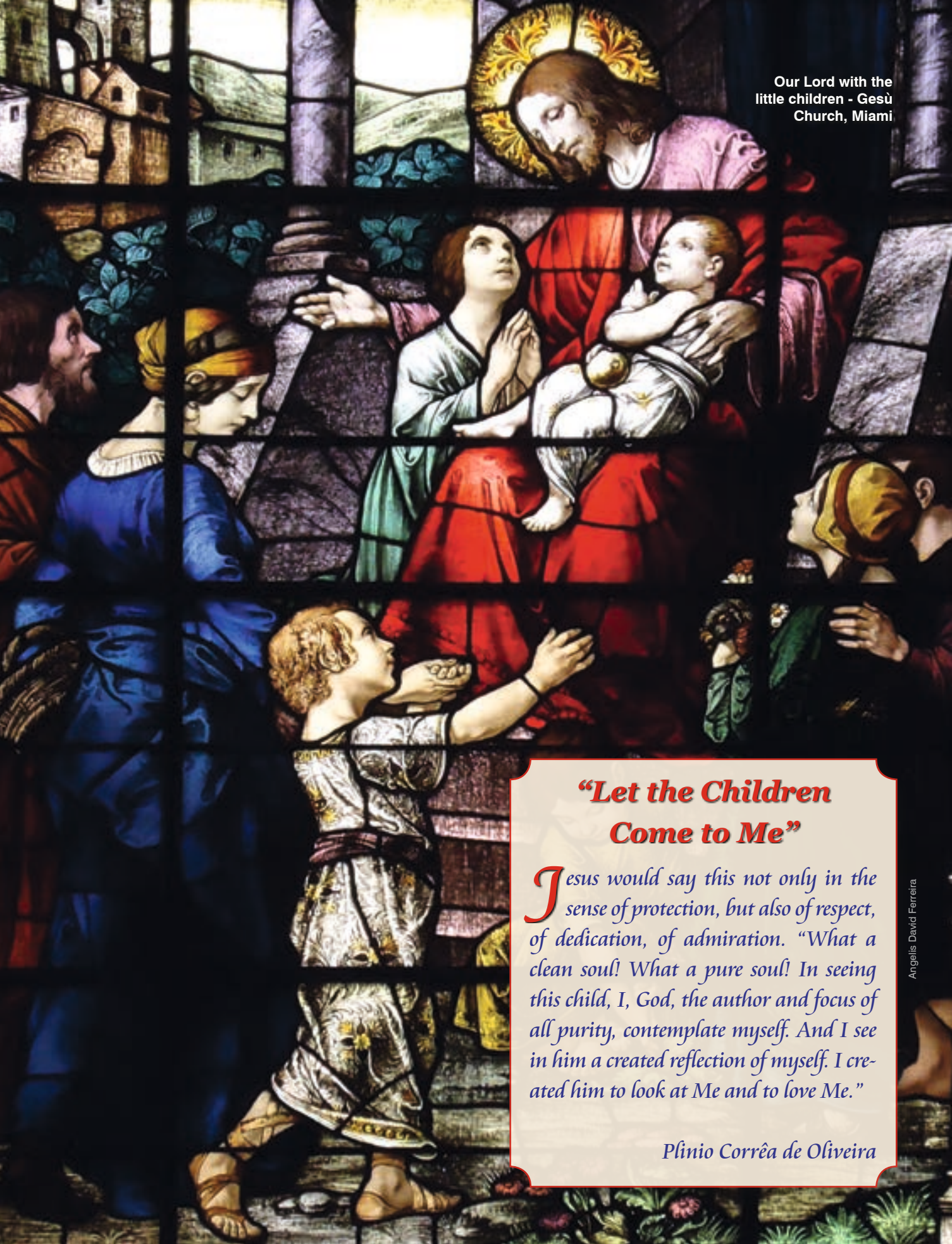


Juan Latorre (CC by-sa 3.0)

7

In the photos above: 1. Brown falcon, Victoria (Australia); 2. Nankeen kestrel falcon, Victoria (Australia); 3. Aplomado falcon; 4. Common kestrel falcon; 5. Brown falcon, Northern Australia; 6. Saker falcon, Herálec (Czech Republic); 7. Peregrine falcon in flight; previous page: Lanner falcon, KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa)





Our Lord with the  
little children - Gesù  
Church, Miami

***“Let the Children  
Come to Me”***

*J*esus would say this not only in the sense of protection, but also of respect, of dedication, of admiration. “What a clean soul! What a pure soul! In seeing this child, I, God, the author and focus of all purity, contemplate myself. And I see in him a created reflection of myself. I created him to look at Me and to love Me.”

*Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira*