



HERALDS OF THE GOSPEL

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*Yesterday and Today,
the Holy Rosary*



Fragrance Rising to My Throne

One day in the novitiate, when the Novice Mistress sent me to work in the children's kitchen, I was very worried, as I couldn't manage with the cooking pots, because they were huge. The most difficult thing was draining the potatoes; sometimes I dropped half of them. At midday, as I was examining my conscience, I complained to God of my failing strength. Then I heard these words in my soul: "From today on you'll have no difficulty at all with it. I shall reinforce your strength."

In the evening, when it was time to drain the potatoes, I was the first one there, confident in the words of the Lord. I had no trouble with lifting the pot and managed to drain off the water quite easily. But when I lifted the lid to let the steam out, instead of potatoes, I saw sprays of indescribably

beautiful red roses in the pot. I'd never seen any like them before. I was very surprised by this and could not understand what it meant, but just then I heard the voice in my soul saying: "I am turning your work into bouquets of the most beautiful flowers, and their fragrance is rising up to My throne."

From that time on I did my best to be the one who drained the potatoes, not only in the week when I was scheduled to do the cooking, but also to do the draining for the sisters when it was their week on cooking duty. I tried also to be the first to help, not only with this job, but also with other difficult tasks, as I'd seen how much it pleased God.

*Words of Our Lord to St. Faustina,
taken from her "Diary", n.65*

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OUR READERS WRITE



AN EXCELLENT AND TRUSTWORTHY TRANSLATION

I belong to the Catholic Study Centre of my city, linked to the Christian Life Movement and the *Sodalitium Christianae Vitae* – an International Association of Pontifical Right – and I am writing to ask about the article published in issue 165, from July of this year, in the section *Voice of the Popes*. It is a translation by the Heralds of a text by St. Gregory the Great.

It so happens that I have been doing research to prepare an article on the blind man of Jericho, including pontifical citations, and I was unaware of this commentary. I would like to ask about the possibility of consulting the complete translation of the Heralds, because of its excellence and reliability. The passage that has been published is already a great insight. I thank you in advance for your attention, with continued prayers for the Heralds' work.

*José Duarte de Barros Filho
Petrópolis – Brazil*

SHOW THE WORLD WHO THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD ARE

As the author of the article *God's Cantor at the Height of Humanism* points out in last August's edition, the Revolution of the 15th and 16th centuries did not create atheists or heretics, but tried to silence the voice of God. Can the Revolution silence God? Can Humanism hide the great and immense Trinitarian mystery?

Providence always arranges things in such a way as to respond to each time and context. At a time when darkness threatened Christian society, through music we meet Josquin des Prez, who was much more than a

composer; he was a man who, moved by the Holy Spirit, during the Renaissance's silence regarding God, cried out with a filial spirit: Abba, Father! From his position, he gave glory to God in every note, without making the least concession to imitation, because only that which flows from the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a triumph, even in revolutionary times.

And now, in our days, without doubt even more corrupt, who will break the silence of grace in the face of sin? Like Josquin, by the hands of Mary Most Holy, Mother of graces and virtues, let us, each within our respective stations and by our service, show the world who the true children of God are.

*Salvador Peñalver
Via revistacatolica.org*

QUIET BUT INTENSE INTIMACY WITH THE SACRED HEART

Like "a lamp at the feet of the Sacred Heart of Jesus" was the venerable Dona Lucilia. And what a light she was!

How grateful we are to Msgr. João for introducing us so charmingly – or so "Lucillianly" – into the quiet but intense intimacy of this resplendent union of soul with the Sacred Heart. May she obtain for us a faith like hers: humble and insistent, serene and profound, serious and trusting, loving and reverent, ardent and delicate, discreet... and triumphant!

*Antonio María Blanco Colao
Via revistacatolica.org*

PRACTICAL COUNSELS FOR OUR DAILY LIFE

Our heartfelt congratulations to the brothers of the Heralds of the Gospel! We are happy to express our gratitude to the Blessed Virgin who continuously pours out so many graces and blessings on our families

and the extended loved ones who are most in need. She has rescued many souls indeed!

We really enjoy reading all the articles in the magazine, especially the ones about Mary, and the Gospel Commentary by Msgr. Joao, which offers us practical counsels for our daily life.

*Lise and Rene Chung
Scarborough – Canada*

AN ARTICLE THAT PROMPTS US TO RETHINK OUR ATTITUDES

Reading the article on the Fatima prophecies in last May's edition, we see how much Our Lady wants her children to be purified of the foulness of this revolutionary world, so as to save their souls.

The article definitely prompts us to rethink our attitudes and fills our hearts with joy and hope to persevere along the path that will lead us to the Reign of Mary! Congratulations, *Heralds of the Gospel* magazine, for another very enlightening article!

*Lúcia Amorim
São Paulo – Brazil*

MARTYRDOM OF SELF-SACRIFICE AND LOVE

The article *Martyrs of the 21st Century*, published in the August issue, highlights the fact that the Catholic religion is the most persecuted and the one with the greatest number of martyrs.

However, today there are also true martyrdoms that are not of blood, but of resolute acts of self-sacrifice and love, like the one we see reflected in the person of Msgr João: his self-sacrifice, holocaust, suffering and willingness to give his life for Christ and for the triumph of the Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church.

*María Ascensión Simón Paricio
Valencia – Spain*

TO OBTAIN TRUE PEACE, USE THE BEST WEAPON OF WAR

When the Incarnation of the Word in the most pure womb of Mary was revealed to the angels, Lucifer immediately rebelled, provoking the greatest battle in history: that fought between those who followed his cry of disobedience and the faithful army commanded by St. Michael.

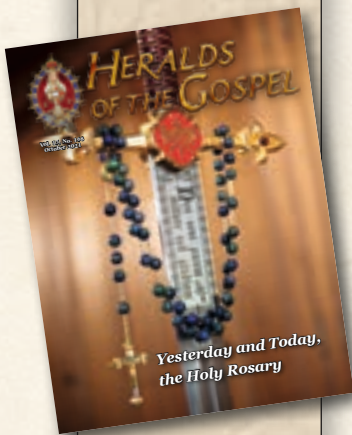
Cast into the abyss, the forces of darkness did not cease, however, to spew their smoke over the light of the Most High. From original sin, through the snares prepared against the chosen people and against Christ Himself and His followers, the diabolical artillery knows no respite. The devil encircles souls as a lion prowls around its prey (cf. 1 Pt 5:8). For this reason, the Apostle exhorts us to pray without ceasing (cf. 1 Thes 5:17) and to use spiritual weapons capable of destroying the strongholds of evil (cf. 2 Cor 10:4).

Without a doubt, after the Holy Mass and the Divine Office, the Rosary is the most powerful weapon against the infernal militia. Besides having been instituted by the Queen of Angels herself, it contains the two most perfect prayers, the Our Father and the Hail Mary, in a continuous battery of supplications, in relentless pursuit of the old Serpent. Since it begins with the Creed, cross in hand, the Rosary also reveals that our battle is based on faith, whose goal is the glory of the Blessed Trinity, proclaimed in the prayer repeated at the end of each mystery. Finally, as its concluding hymn, the Hail Holy Queen expresses our joyful and humble praise of the Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope.

Today, as always, amid the profound crises affecting the most varied sectors of society, the Holy Rosary remains the most effective weapon of the Virgin's offspring (cf. Gn 3:15). If, over the course of history, its recitation has won so many victories against heresy, persecution and diabolical fraud, it easily follows that there is no human or preternatural power capable of halting the victorious march of the children of the Queen of the Rosary.

If we Catholics, who with the help of divine grace aspire to remain entirely faithful to the Holy Church, her immutable doctrine and indefectible morals, clasp the rosary in our hands, we have nothing, absolutely nothing to fear. The onslaughts of the "ungodly men" who "secretly entered in" (Jude 1:4) will be frustrated, like "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own confusion" (Jude 1:13).

Although appearances may cry out the contrary, it will also be by means of this implacable weapon against the power of darkness that the greatest triumph of the true Church will be obtained, namely, the advent of the Reign of Mary. And as its natural consequence, we shall behold the complete collapse of the empire built by Satan on foundations of smoke, at the very moment in history when he, in his aspirations full of *gaudium phantasticum*, imagines that he glimpses, even within the sacred temple, his definitive victory. ✧



*Artistic montage
with the Holy
Rosary in the
centre and an
ornamental sword*

Photo: Daniel Letelier



THE VOICE OF THE POPES

Queen of the Rosary, Virgin of Victories

It has always been the praiseworthy habit of Catholics to have recourse to Mary in danger and in troublous times, and to take refuge in her maternal goodness.

The supreme Apostolic office which we discharge and the exceedingly difficult condition of the present times, daily exhort and almost compel Us to watch all the more carefully over the integrity of the Church, the greater the calamities from which she suffers. [...] To this end, We deem that there could be no surer and more efficacious means than, by religion and piety, to obtain the favour of the great Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. [...]

Therefore, now that the annual commemoration of the manifold and exceedingly great favours obtained by the Christian people through the pray-

er of the Rosary is at hand, We desire that, this year, the same prayer be offered by the whole Catholic world with the greatest earnestness to the Blessed Virgin, so that by her intercession, we may be blessed to see her Divine Son appeased and moved to compassion by the evils which afflict us. [...]

Outstanding defender of the Church of God

It has always been the praiseworthy habit of Catholics to have recourse to Mary in danger and in troublous times, and to take refuge in her maternal goodness. This demonstrates the firm hope – indeed, the complete confidence – that the Cath-

olic Church has always rightly placed in the Mother of God.

And truly the Immaculate Virgin, chosen to be the Mother of God, and for this very reason made the Co-redemptrix of the human race, enjoys such great favour and power with her Son that no human or angelic creature has ever obtained, or could ever attain any greater. [...]

This most ardent and trusting devotion to the august Queen of Heaven has never shone forth with such brilliancy as when the militant Church of God has seemed to be endangered by the violence of widespread heresy, or by an overwhelming moral corruption, or by the attacks of powerful enemies.



Reproduction

The Battle of Lepanto, by Andries van Eertvelt - private collection

Ancient and modern history and the sacred annals of the Church attest to the public and private prayers and petitions addressed to the Mother of God, and to the help She has granted in return, as well as the peace and tranquillity obtained from God through her intercession. This has given rise to the illustrious titles with which Catholic people attribute to Her of Helper of Christians, Benefactor and Consoler, mighty in war, Lady of victories, and peace-giver. Among these titles is specially to be commemorated that of the Rosary, under which the signal benefits She has gained for the whole of Christendom have been solemnly perpetuated. [...]

Victory obtained by the recitation of the Rosary

The efficacy and power of this devotion was also wondrously exhibited in the sixteenth century, when the immense forces of the Turks threatened to impose on nearly the whole of Europe the yoke of superstition and barbarism. Amidst those circumstances, the Supreme Pontiff, St. Pius V, after rousing the Christian princes to the defence of a cause common to all, applied his zeal to obtain for Christendom the favour of the most powerful Mother of God, invoked through the recitation of the Holy Rosary. And the response was the marvellous event which then took place in the sight of Heaven and earth [...].

And thus Christ's faithful warriors, prepared to sacrifice their lives and shed their blood for the deliverance of their religion and their country, proceeded undauntedly to meet their foe near the Gulf of Corinth, while those not invested with arms formed, for their part, a pious band of supplicants calling upon Mary and saluting Her in unison, again and again, in the formula of the Rosary, imploring Her to



Francisco Lecaros

Our Lady of the Rosary of Lepanto - Church of St. Dominic, Granada (Spain)

Our Lady intervened: without sustaining great losses, the Christian fleet gained a magnificent victory, routing the enemy

grant victory to those engaged in battle. And our Sovereign Lady, moved by those prayers, did come to their assistance; for in the naval battle by the Echinades Islands, without sustaining any great loss, the Christian fleet gained a magnificent victory, in which the enemy were routed with great slaughter.

Accordingly, to preserve the memory of this great favour, the Holy Pontiff decreed that a feast in honour of Our Lady of Victories should celebrate the anniversary of so memorable a struggle, a feast

which Gregory XIII later dedicated under the title of "The Holy Rosary." [...]

Exhortation to pray for the Holy Church

Moved by these thoughts and by the examples of Our Predecessors, We have deemed it most opportune to institute solemn prayers to the August Virgin in the recital of the Rosary, so as to obtain from her Son Jesus Christ a similar aid against present dangers.

You have before your eyes, Venerable Brethren, the grave trials to which the Church is incessantly exposed. Christian piety, public morality, and even faith itself, the supreme good and fundament of all the other virtues, are daily menaced with ever greater perils. [...]

However, the most painful and grievous fact is that so many souls, redeemed by the Blood of Christ, snatched from salvation by the whirlwind of an age of error, precipitated into the abyss of eternal death. [...]

For these reasons, we not only earnestly exhort all Christians to apply themselves tirelessly to the pious devotion of the Rosary, whether publicly or privately in their home and with their family, but we also desire that the whole of the month of October in this year should be consecrated to the Holy Queen of the Rosary. [...]

The heavenly Patroness of the human race will kindly receive these prayers and supplications, and will easily obtain a growth in virtue for the good, and that the erring may come to their senses and repent; and that God, the avenger of crime, moved to merciful clemency, may deliver Christendom and civil society from all danger, restoring to them that peace so greatly desired. ✧

Excerpts from: LEO XIII. *Supremi apostolatus officio*, 1/9/1883



Our Lord and the rich young man - St. Wendelin Church, St. Henry (OH)

Nheyob (CC by-sa 3.0)

✠ GOSPEL ✠

¹⁷ As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁸ Jesus answered him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹ You know the Commandments: You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honour your father and your mother.” ²⁰ He replied and said to Him, “Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth.” ²¹ Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, “You are lacking in one thing.

Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in Heaven; then come, follow Me.” ²² At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions. ²³ Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God!” ²⁴ The disciples were amazed at His words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, “Children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God.” ²⁶ They were exceedingly astonished and said among

themselves, “Then who can be saved?” ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, “For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God.” ²⁸ Peter began to say to Him, “We have given up everything and followed You.” ²⁹ Jesus said, “Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel ³⁰ who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come” (Mk 10:17-30).

Wisdom Grants Us the Treasures of Heaven

The attitude of the rich young man has recorded for history the great error of those who, through selfishness, despise the heavenly treasure and lose true happiness on earth.



Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP

I – WISDOM AND AVARICE, TWO POLAR OPPOSITES

The Holy Spirit, through the inspired selection of texts in the Liturgy of this 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, teaches us about the marvels of the gift of wisdom, presenting it in contrast to the terrible vice of avarice.

In the first reading, the sacred author highlights the excellence of wisdom as compared with earthly treasures, affirming to have loved her “beyond health and comeliness” (Wis 7:10), and concluding: “Yet all good things together came to me in her company, and countless riches at her hands” (Wis 7:11).

Indeed, the wise man lives in harmony with God and sees all things as He Himself does, knowing them through connaturality with the Creator. As a result, he enjoys a priceless spiritual treasure, and not even the sufferings of this vale of tears hinder this happiness. On the other hand, even the material means that he needs “shall be added unto him,” according to Our Lord’s promise (cf. Mt 6:33).

The avaricious person, on the other hand, makes the passing goods of this world the pur-

pose of his existence, consuming himself in the affliction of holding on to them and always acquiring more. This is a complete interior disorder which deprives him of the true criteria for judging with common sense and renders him incapable of raising himself to God. Thus, while wisdom brings the soul as close as possible to the beatific vision, avarice leads it to supernatural blindness. It is curious to note that even the pagans of antiquity had some notion of this disastrous consequence of attachment to wealth: in Greek mythology, Pluto, the god of wealth, was blind.

The famous case of the rich young man in today’s Gospel offers us a striking example of the struggle of the human heart in choosing between avarice and wisdom, showing how adherence to the former prevents the latter from flourishing, while causing sadness and frustration.

II – AN IMPOSSIBLE CONQUEST FOR MAN

St. Mark opens his tenth chapter by describing Our Lord’s passage through the region of

The wise see all things in consonance with the Creator; the avaricious make the passing goods of this world the purpose of their existence



Peraea – to “Judea, beyond the Jordan” (10:1a) – whence He would continue on towards Jerusalem to be crucified. Just as had happened in Galilee, “crowds gathered to Him again” and “as His custom was, He taught them” (10:1b). At a certain moment, the Pharisees also arrived and questioned Him: “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” (10:2), with the intention of testing Him. In response, Jesus preached on the indissolubility of matrimony in the New Law and, later, “in the house” (10:10) with His disciples, He went more deeply into the matter with them.

These teachings are followed by the narration of the touching scene in which the Divine Master blessed the children and admonished those who were listening to Him: “Let the children come to Me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the Kingdom of God” (Mk 10:14).

Everything leads us to believe that the episode related in today’s Gospel took place immediately afterwards, when Jesus left that house “and went away” (Mt 19:15). We can imagine Our Lord taking the lead and the Apostles hurrying to keep pace with Him, while the people who had attended the preaching also joined them, forming a lively procession.

A good desire, undermined by selfishness

¹⁷ As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

The assurance with which Our Lord expounded His doctrine, the nobility of His gestures, the way in which He addressed His audience, everything about Him had an impact on public opinion and elicited enthusiasm. An abundance of graces, invitations and miracles made a splendid impression on those who came into contact with

Him, and kindled in souls a desire for greater union with God.

This must certainly have been what happened to this “official” (Lk 18:18), who hurried after Jesus. Convinced that He was someone capable of indicating the precise rules for reaching Heaven, he did not want to miss the opportunity to approach Him and ask His advice; however, due to the crowd that had formed around the Master, the only way to exchange a word with Him was to run, overtake everyone and approach Him head-on.

It seems plausible that in kneeling before Jesus, this man’s intention was not only to manifest his admiration, but also to hinder His advance in a respectful manner, so that He would be compelled to hear him. If such was his intention, he was fully successful: the Lord stopped and, always attentive to help those who had recourse to Him, listened to him with benevolence.

The young man’s question reveals a praiseworthy effort to save himself and to enjoy being face-to-face in God’s company. But, at the same time it denotes a selfish deviation, especially if we

consider that he had already practiced virtue for many years. Indeed, rather than being concerned with how to “inherit eternal life,” his main concern should be: “What must I do to give myself more to God?”

The onset of the rejection of grace

¹⁸ Jesus answered him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but God alone.”

More than a rebuke, these words of Our Lord are an invitation to admire Him not only for being good as Man, but also as God, Goodness in substance. This is the first step that Jesus asked of the rich young man: a growth in love.

Because he was more turned towards himself than towards the “Good Teacher”, the one who had come

This is the first step that Jesus asked of the rich young man: a growth in love



running, seized by a sensible grace, did not respond to this appeal. And since in the spiritual life no one remains stagnant, especially after having met Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, this refusal, although not outwardly manifested, signified the beginning of a sad decline.

¹⁹ “You know the Commandments: You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honour your father and your mother.”

The method used by Jesus to capture the goodwill of His interlocutor is admirable. Knowing that this man expected to receive easy guidance to follow, He begins by listing the Commandments concerning social relationships. Being the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Our Lord knew from all eternity the excellent rectitude of that man in his dealings with his neighbour, and He enumerated these precepts in order to reassure him, to make him feel honoured before those who were witnessing the scene, and to encourage him to progress in virtue.

Jesus loved him!

²⁰ He replied and said to Him, “Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth.” ²¹ Jesus, looking at him, loved him...

St. Matthew accurately records that he was a “young man” (19:20), information corroborated by St. Mark’s detailed account. Someone advanced in years would not come running, nor would he have the stamina to kneel down and



Christ and the rich young man -
Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King,
Hamilton (Ontario)

begin to speak immediately after such an effort. Why, then, does he declare that he had been observant from his youth, as if this were a bygone period of his life?

This statement does not refer to a specific age range, but affirms his fidelity to the Commandments from the dawn of his use of reason, due to a special assistance of grace. For this reason, Our Lord looked upon him and loved him – “*intuitus eum dilexit eum*,” in the expressive Latin translation. Consoled to see that those words corresponded to the truth, for he was indeed a virtuous soul, the Redeemer takes no account of his faults, but looks upon him lovingly. Perhaps in that look He spoke an interior word to him, preparing him to accept the call that He would address to him: “Is your relationship with others in order? Excellent! Now I ask you to do the same with your relationship towards God, loving Him with a pure heart, free from attachments!”

“Now I ask you to put your relationship towards God in order, loving Him with a pure heart, free from attachments!”

A rejection of wisdom

^{21b} ...and said to him, “You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in Heaven; then come, follow Me.”

It is unlikely that such a young man would have made his fortune through his own efforts, as that requires decades of work. It is even less likely that he would have become rich by a chance windfall, as can happen to someone nowadays through lotteries. His extensive possessions most probably corresponded to an inheritance accumulated by his ancestors, carefully administered and passed down from father to son over generations. He must have been a conscientious young man who used his money without squan-

The problem lies, not in having too much or too little money, but in the attachment to it that takes root in the heart

dering it, and was skilful in doing business and making investments.

But Our Lord advised him to rid himself of this much-prized wealth, promising him, in exchange, “treasure in Heaven.” It was the decisive moment in his life. In his soul, there was a conflict between avarice, which tied him to earthly things, and wisdom, which would open up the possibility of a share in heavenly goods in this life. If he heeded the Divine Master’s guidance, he would be able to follow Him, perhaps becoming the thirteenth Apostle, as we have already commented on another occasion.¹

To be faithful in this hour, the rich young man needed to acknowledge his own weakness, recognizing himself as incapable of that act of generosity and of the stable practice of any other virtue. However, blinded by avarice, he also lacked the humility through which, with a simple prayer, he would have obtained the necessary strength for such an important step.

The rich young man is disappointed in himself

²²At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

The analysis of this verse gives us the opportunity to clear up a misunderstanding, very common in our days, according to which being rich is considered a bad state in itself. The story of Job,

among many examples in the Old and New Testaments, teaches us something different. The torments suffered by this holy man were largely rewarded by the Lord, when He “restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends; and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before” (Job 42:10). The problem lies, not in having too much or too little money, but in the attachment to it that takes root in the heart, occupying the place due to God and to the supernatural.

We can thus better understand why this young man left Jesus’ presence “sad”. As someone who imagined his accounts to be settled regarding the Law, he was disappointed in himself when he realized that he did not practice the first and foremost Commandment perfectly, for he loved wealth more than he loved God. Although he was so morally upright as to please the Saviour, he was proud; and so, when called to take a greater step, he did not want to rely on God, but on himself, and he stumbled, putting his eternal salvation at risk.

Illustrative example for the disciples

²³Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God!” ²⁴The disciples were amazed at His words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, “Children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God!

²⁵It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God.”

Without a doubt, the outcome of that brief scene deeply shocked the disciples. The unexpected manner in which the young man had approached the Master, the deference manifested in speaking to Him while kneeling, and the short dialogue between the two aroused the in-



Avarice, by Gillis van Tilborgh - Cour D'Or Museum, Metz (France)

terest of those present, especially those who, like the rich young man, had also heard that sublime call: "Follow Me!"

St. Matthew, for example, had abandoned tax collecting, a lucrative post at the time, and was there full of joy, happy to belong to the Apostolic College and to live with Jesus. It was incomprehensible to him to see the attitude of that young man, who withdrew sad and bitter after receiving such an extraordinary invitation!

The Divine Master took advantage of the situation to form His own, pointing out the worst consequence of the inordinate love of money: it closes a person to grace, without the help of which no one can enter the Kingdom of God. Whoever clings to the treasure of earth runs the risk of losing the treasure of Heaven.

The importance that Our Lord attaches to this subject is particularly noteworthy, for He repeats the warning in the subsequent verses. This was a useful teaching for the life of Holy Church, which would develop like a mustard seed sown in the ground and take shape, giving rise to situations in which the disciples, as well as their successors, would be tempted to accumulate riches. With these words, the Divine Founder sealed forever the law of detachment that should govern the conduct of His children when dealing with money.

²⁶They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷Jesus looked at them and said, "For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God."

The Kingdom of Heaven is a good that is superior to human nature, and we will never conquer it if we rely only on our own efforts. But this unattainable goal becomes attainable by the poor in spirit, that is, by all those who know how to join their hands and pray, especially if, with the beads of a rosary running through their fingers, they implore the protection of Our Lady. As St. Alphonsus Maria Liguori teaches, he who prays will be saved; he who does not will be condemned.²



Our Lord preaching to the crowd -
St. Martha Church, Sarasota (FL)

When God asks something, He wishes to give us a hundredfold more

²⁸Peter began to say to Him, "We have given up everything and followed You."

Endowed with an expansive temperament, incapable of remaining tight-lipped for long, St. Peter intervenes in his usual manner, as spokesman for the Apostles. The text of St. Matthew is more complete, recording also the question with which Peter concluded the exchange: "What then shall we have?" (19:27).

Naturally, the Twelve were pondering this question: "That young man left depressed, frustrated, with a tormented conscience, because he did not want to fulfil his vocation... And what

The Kingdom of Heaven is a good that is superior to human nature, and we will never conquer it relying solely on our own efforts

Today's
Liturgy sets
before us a
fork in the
road of the
spiritual life:
on the left
is earthly
treasure, on
the right,
that of
Heaven

shall happen to us, who were docile to the Master's invitation?"

Peter's words, although revealing a naturalistic and utilitarian mentality, not yet transformed by the descent of the Holy Spirit, gave Our Lord the opportunity to show how worthwhile it is, even as regards well-being in this world, to abandon everything in order to heed God's call.

²⁹ Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel ³⁰ who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come."

When God asks something of us, His desire is to give us a hundredfold in return. The story of St. Peter himself illustrates this cogently: he left his family, his nets and all his belongings, and received the primacy of the Church. What marvels flowed from his self-giving! And even at his death, crucified upside down, the first Pope saw the sentence of Our Lord fulfilled in him, who had promised him a hundredfold already on this earth, "with persecutions".

He who forsakes all things for love of God becomes a scandal to the unfortunate ones who cling to creatures, dominated by selfish passions. The latter hate the former, who torment their conscience. Sooner or later, they will want to take revenge by waging persecutions. However, no matter how violent these may be, in no way will they shake the happiness of those who have opted for wisdom, preferring to fix their hearts on the treasure of Heaven.

III – AND WHAT TREASURES WILL WE CHOOSE?

Today's Liturgy sets before us a fork in the road, a *divortium aquarum* in the spiritual life: on the left is the treasure of earth, on the right, that of Heaven. The rich young man hoped to unite the two and reach beatitude bearing all his attachments. However, this possibility does not exist for those who are called to imitate Our Lord Jesus Christ, as the vocation of all the baptized demands.

Let us remember that He does not ask everyone to empty themselves of material goods, but rather those of their hearts. The siblings Lazarus, Martha and Mary, faithful disciples of Jesus and members of one of the wealthiest families in Israel, were never told by Him to renounce their possessions. Using them wisely, they were able not only to provide comfort to the Man-God, but also to show Him their affection and veneration.





Thus, the examination of conscience that falls to us this Sunday does not focus on an economic or charitable problem, as Our Lord's words of advice to the rich young man to give everything to the poor might suggest, but on a deeper question: do I not have some wealth hidden in my heart?

According to the well-known adage: *"Bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quocumque defectu"* – goodness proceeds from an integral cause; evil from any defect." If my heart loves God above all things, then goodness, grace and wisdom dwell in it; if, on the contrary, I nourish some attachment, whether to money, to a friendship or even to a simple object such as a pen, I will not have the strength to remain virtuous and disasters will follow.

Let us grow in the hope of acquiring the treasure of Heaven, an incorruptible inheritance, which neither tarnishes nor withers (cf. 1 Pt 1:4), the sum-

mit of which is found in living with the Blessed Trinity, with our heavenly brethren and, in a very special way, with Our Lady. She, who is the Mother of Mercy, by means of this Liturgy, speaks to us in the depths of our soul:

"My child, to which treasure have you given your heart? However bad your choice has been up to now, I am willing to help you to embrace the path of wisdom, beside which 'all gold, in view of her, is a little sand' (Wis 7:9). This is the wealth that will bring you true happiness and, according to my Son's promise, will multiply even your temporal goods. Ask me! Pray to me with seriousness, confidence and humility, in the certainty that the recognition of your own miseries opens the torrents of love from my Wise and Immaculate Heart." ✧

"My child, to which treasure have you given your heart? However bad your choice has been up to now, I am willing to help you to embrace the path of wisdom"

¹ Cf. CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. The Thirteenth Apostle? In: *Heralds of the Gospel*. Nobleton. Vol. 3, No. 24 (Oct., 2009); p.10-17; *New Insights on the Gospels*. Città del Vaticano-Nobleton: LEV; *Heralds of the Gospel*, 2014, v. IV, p.418-433.

² Cf. ST. ALPHONSUS MARIA LIGUORI. *A oração, o grande meio para alcançarmos de Deus a salvação e todas as graças que desejamos*. Aparecida: Santuário, 1987, p.42.

The Blessed in Heaven, detail of "The Final Judgement", by Fra Angelico - San Marco Museum, Florence (Italy); above, Our Lady Seat of Wisdom - Bela Vista House, Mairiporã (Brazil)



Timothy Ring



Reproducti



Eucharistic Spirituality

Among the elements that make up Eucharistic spirituality are charity, devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and the beauty of the Liturgy, which is not a mere adornment but rather part of the essence of the celebration of the Eucharist.

Bishop Benedito Beni dos Santos
Bishop Emeritus of Lorena



Before all else, I wish to greet Cardinal Raymundo Damasceno Assis. We were colleagues in Rome and have always maintained a friendship and collaboration. He did not invite me for this lecture, but ordered me! And I came with great joy. I also greet my brother bishops here present and Msgr. Antonio Luiz Catelan Ferreira, a great theologian, who was my student at the Faculty of Theology in São Paulo.

At this moment I would also like to greet Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, founder of the Heralds of the Gospel, who continues, with his life of holiness and prayer, to sustain this great organization and glory of the Church.

Let us now enter upon the theme of our reflection: Eucharistic spirituality.

The Eucharist, great salvific event

Immediately following the Consecration of the bread and wine,

the celebrant exclaims, “The mystery of Faith!” According to Pope St. John Paul II, in the Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, and Pope Benedict XVI, in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis*, this is not a simple exclamation, but a proclamation full of enthusiasm and elation, almost an ecstasy. Such enthusiasm is in reality an echo of that which the Apostles experienced at the Last Supper, when they heard Christ’s command: “Do this in memory of Me” (1 Cor 11:24). They would never have had the audacity to repeat the solemn words of Jesus instituting the Eucharist if they had not received this command. [...]

“The mystery of Faith!” Mystery is a salvific event revealed by God Himself. And the Eucharist, as the memorial of the redemptive Sacrifice of Calvary, is the greatest mystery, the greatest salvific event revealed by God. It reminds us that Faith does not consist primarily in adherence to

a doctrine, but in the acceptance of a salvific event. [...]

Salvation history unfolds in space and time. It began immediately after the sin committed at the origins of humanity, when God said to the Serpent, the image of the devil: “I will put enmities between thee and the Woman, and thy seed and her seed: She shall crush thy head” (Gn 3:15); it had its culmination in the “fullness of the time” (Gal 4:4), as St. Paul teaches, at the moment of the Incarnation, when the Son of God became Man; and it will have an end: the glorious return of Christ to deliver to the Father the humanity redeemed by Him on the Cross and resurrected.

However, after the Lord’s Ascension into Heaven, salvation history continues in a sacramental way. And the principal Sacrament is the Eucharist, which St. Thomas Aquinas calls “*tantum ergo sacramentum*”, great Sacrament, great mystery, great salvific event. [...]

Principal act of the Church's foundation

I would like to recall the title of the Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* – The Church draws her life from the Eucharist – by which St. John Paul II shows that the institution of the Eucharist was the principal act of the Church's foundation.

There were various foundational acts of the Church. It is enough to recall the convocation of the Twelve Apostles. The people of Israel, God's people of antiquity, were made up of twelve tribes, descendants of the twelve sons of the patriarch Jacob. By calling twelve Apostles, Christ showed that He was founding the new Israel, the new people of God. Therefore, the number twelve became sacred. Because of Judas' death, the first action the Apostles took after the Ascension was to re-establish the number twelve in the Apostolic College, with the choice of Matthias.

We can say that the institution of the Lord's Prayer, the Our Father, which Christ transmitted to His disciples, was also a foundational act of the Church. At that time, each religious group in Israel – that of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and John the Baptist – had its own prayer. An interesting fact: it was the prayer that gave the group its identity. So, by giving the community of His disciples their own prayer, Jesus gave it an identity before the other religious groups of Israel.

However, the main act of the foundation of the Church was the institution of the Eucharist, in which the paschal lamb was replaced by the Body of Christ, and the chalice of the Old Covenant by that of the New Covenant. Just as Israel became God's people through the covenant on Sinai, Christ, in making the New Covenant through the institution of the Eucharist, founded the New Israel, which is the Church.

Ecclesia de Eucharistia signifies what the Church does, celebrates the Eucharist; it is the principal act that she performs, through her ordained ministers. But it also means that the Eucharist illuminates the whole life of the Church: catechesis, morality, mission, and so on. [...]

The Church becomes fully the Body of Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist

Ecclesial communion is not a voluntary effort on our part. It is first of all communion in grace, the communion of Saints – of those who have been sanctified through Baptism –, communion with Christ. That is why St. Paul clearly shows that the Church becomes fully the Body of Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist.

In a sense, he defends the following thesis. When I eat a piece of bread, it becomes my body; when I drink a cup of wine, it becomes my blood. So eating and drinking are acts of communion (cf. 1 Cor 10:16-17).

From this, Paul draws some consequences: those who eat meat offered in sacrifice – he refers to the Jewish cult – enter into communion with the altar, with the sacred; those who eat meat offered to idols enter into communion with demons, because idols are works of demons; and those who eat the Eucharist enter into communion with the Body of the Lord. It is in the celebration of the Eucharist, then, that the Church becomes fully the Body of Christ. The Eucharist expresses the identity of the Church, and every time the Church celebrates it, she grows in communion. [...]

Centre of Christian life

We now turn to Eucharistic spirituality, the theme of this reflection. [...] Spirituality consists in living in relationship with God, in communion with God. Now in this world there is no fuller way of being in communion with God than the Eucharist. It is

the centre of the Christian life, and Eucharistic piety is Christian spirituality. Therefore, any other spirituality must be linked to the Eucharist, otherwise it will not be authentic.

From this premise I wish to demonstrate some consequences.

First of all, a component of Eucharistic spirituality is our life transformed into worship pleasing to God. St. Paul says in the Letter to the Romans: "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sac-



The Last Supper (detail) - St. Raphael's Church, Springfield (OH); previous page, solemn Mass presided over by Bishop Beni in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, Caieiras (Brazil), on 27/12/2017

There is no fuller way of being in communion with God than in the Eucharist. It is the centre of the Christian life

rifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (12:1). For Paul the body means the whole human being, including its visibility. And to designate worship, he speaks of liturgy: “Brothers, I ask you to offer your bodies as a liturgy pleasing to God.” So, the life of the one who has Eucharistic spirituality becomes that liturgy pleasing to God.

Sacrament of charity

Another component of Eucharistic spirituality is charity. We can say that the Eucharist is the Sacrament of charity, the Sacrament of the new commandment: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (Jn 13:34). It is no longer a matter of loving one’s neighbour as oneself, but of going further: of loving one’s neighbour like Christ, in the manner of Christ.

St. Augustine¹ affirms that whoever lives the new commandment of love becomes a new creature. This new commandment is so important that the Christians of the apostolic age invented a technical term to designate it: *agape*, which we translate as *charity*.

Charity is first of all a crucified love, capable of suffering and dying for one’s neighbour, as Jesus did. Charity is a self-giving love. It does not consist only in giving something to one’s neighbour – food, for example – but in giving oneself, each day spending a little of one’s life so that the other may have more life. Charity is a love full of hope.

For those who have charity, no one is beyond recovery, no one is definitively lost; a person can become a new creature even at the moment of death. And finally, charity is the love that forgives everything.

What does it mean to forgive? To forgive is not just to forget the fault or to be indifferent to it, but to heal the wound of the fault. Every fault



Leandro Souza



Juan T. Tejada

is an open wound in truth and love. Every fault offends God, because God is Truth, God is Love. Now, through the love of charity, in which we unite our forgiveness to Christ’s forgiveness, the wound of the fault is healed. [...]

The devotion most pleasing to God and most useful for us

Yet another component of Eucharistic spirituality is what we may call the cult of the Eucharist. The Real Presence of Christ continues in the species of bread and wine even after Mass, and from this arises the worship of the Eucharist, expressed in the various forms of adoration.

St. Alphonsus de Liguori states: “To adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is, after the Sacraments, the first among all devotions, the one most pleasing to God and the one most useful to us.”² Adoration of the Eucharist takes place at holy hours, at Benedictions with the Blessed Sacrament, in Perpetual Adoration, in Eucharistic processions, in visits to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. My mother visited Him every day.

St. Augustine wrote, already in his time: no one should approach the Eucharist without first adoring Him. Adoration of the Eucharist, then, makes us participate more deeply in the Eucharistic Celebration.

The beauty of the Liturgy is not merely an adornment

Another element in Eucharistic spirituality is the beauty of the Liturgy. Pope Benedict XVI³ says that the beauty of the Liturgy is not an adornment, but rather it belongs to the essence of the Liturgy, especially the Eucharistic Liturgy.

Note well that, as St. Luke shows, the Eucharist was instituted by Jesus’ will in the upper room of the house, furnished with cushions (cf. Lk 22:12). It was a beautiful room! At the beginning of the third century, Christians began to build temples that were architecturally beautiful. Why? Because the Eucharist was to be celebrated there. Accordingly, not only the soul of those who participate in the Eucharist ought to be, by the state of grace, beautiful, but so also the temple in which it is celebrated.



Beauty belongs, therefore, to the celebration of the Eucharist. And this is why nothing can be changed in the celebration of the Eucharist. No one owns the Eucharist; it is a patrimony of the Church.

Indeed, the Church, when she wants to make a very small change in the Liturgy, takes great care and first verifies that the proposed modification is in accordance with Christian Tradition and the doctrine of the Magisterium. [...]

The Heralds evangelize, above all, through the beauty of holiness

I wish to close my presentation by referring now to the theme of this symposium: the charism of the Heralds. This charism is expressed in the very name of the institution: Heralds of the Gospel. Proclaimers! People who proclaim the Gospel aloud, with conviction.

In the case of the Heralds, however, this proclamation has a very important detail: they evangelize by means of the *via pulchritudinis*, as St. Augustine said, by the way of beauty.

The Heralds evangelize through the beauty of the Liturgy, which they cultivate. They evangelize through the beauty of music, especially Gregorian chant. This is the liturgical chant par excellence, the chant that elevates us to God through its melodies. And how they sing! The Heralds also evangelize through the beauty of their churches. They are not rich churches, but beautiful churches.

However, I would say that the Heralds evangelize, above all, through the beauty of holiness. They nurture holiness with great care, and holiness is beautiful. The beauty of God, infinitely removed from all evil and sin, is found, first of all, in His holiness. So it is through the beauty of holiness of life that the Heralds evangelize. For this reason, they are a patrimony that the Church must guard with great care and must also love. ✧

Excerpts from the conference given at the symposium on the charism of the Heralds of the Gospel, on 4/8/2021, in São Paulo – Any imprecision that may be found is due to the spoken language in which it was delivered

From left to right: Chapel of Lumen Maris House, Ubatuba (Brazil); Our Lady of Fatima Church, Tocancipá (Colombia); Perpetual Adoration Chapel in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, Caieiras (Brazil); Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, Cotia (Brazil)

If the soul of those who participate in the Eucharist ought to be, by the state of grace, beautiful, so also the temple in which it is celebrated

¹ Cf. ST. AUGUSTINE. *Tratados sobre o Evangelho de São João*. Tratado LXV, n.1.

² ST. ALPHONSUS MARIA LIGUORI. *Visite al Santissimo Sacramento ed a Maria Santissima*. Introduzione. In: *Opere ascetiche*. Roma: CSSR, 1939, v.IV, p.295.

³ Cf. BENEDICT XVI. *Sacramentum caritatis*, n.35.

Efficacious Weapon against God's Enemies

Among the means within our reach for confronting the crisis of the contemporary world, the Rosary stands out for its extraordinary power in obtaining God's intervention in events.



João Luís Ribeiro

For many, the Rosary may appear to be a subject about which nothing further remains to be said.

It is a magnificent prayer, without a doubt. But could there be a single nook in this splendid pal-

ace which has not yet been thoroughly explored, mapped out and catalogued by the cohort of Saints and theologians who have so far ventured to enter it? What could possibly motivate someone to write a few pages on this subject, if they are destined to be lost among the thousands – perhaps millions – that have already been written?

Although there is some validity in these questions, they do not express the full reality. Our Lord compares

the scribe who becomes a disciple of the Kingdom of God to a father who brings out of his treasure things new and old (cf. Mt 13:52). In an analogous way, everything that Holy Church has engendered throughout the centuries always has an application for the present time, and it is the task of Catholics to point it out.

In this sense, it is not difficult to demonstrate that the Rosary is extremely timely. However, in order to appreciate the “new things” in this treasure, it will first be necessary to contemplate the quality of some of the jewels of venerable antiquity which compose it.

The excellence of the Holy Rosary according to the Popes

Do we really know the enormous power of this prayer, apparently so simple, so unassuming, so accessible and so widely spread by popular devotion?

Recourse to the papal Magisterium will certainly provide us with a firm foundation on which to base our answer.

*Another factor,
perhaps even more
sublime than the
preceding ones,
also points to the
grandeur of the
Rosary: its origin*

Our Lady reveals the devotion of the Rosary to St. Dominic of Guzman - Parish church of Riquewihr (France)



The Popes have called it “the perfect prayer,”¹ “the summary of Gospel teaching,”² the “badge of Christian piety,”³ “the sweet chain linking us to God, the bond of love uniting us to the Angels, the tower of salvation against the assaults of hell,”⁴ “the sure guarantee of divine power, the support and defence of our hoped-for salvation.”⁵



A great historical mystery

Another factor, perhaps even more sublime than the preceding ones, also points to the grandeur of the Rosary: its origin. Those who believe that it is a devotion descended from Heaven and given to mankind personally by the Blessed Virgin are not wrong. Yet there is controversy as to whether or not it

The Rosary has the “power to instil confidence into the hearts of those who pray,”⁶ to rekindle the Catholic Faith, revive hope and inflame charity; it preserves chastity and integrity of life.⁷ In short, it is “the great bulwark against heresy and vice”⁸ and “the way to attain every virtue.”⁹

Theologians give it first place

Yet if the superlative praise of the Popes is not enough to convince us that the Rosary is “the most beautiful prayer, the richest in grace and the most pleasing to the Heart of Mary,”¹⁰ we may still have recourse to the Doctors. There is a theological reason of great beauty which justifies the lofty position occupied by this prayer in relation to the others.

Broadly speaking, the types of prayer can be divided into two main groups: vocal and mental. Using an analogy with the human being, we could say that the first is to the second more or less as the body is to the soul. In vocal prayer, the words used to address God – whether they are found in a missal or breviary, in the case of an official prayer, or even from a book, a devotional card or any other source – constitute the “material” element of the prayer, which serves to stimulate mental prayer. The latter, in its turn, is properly the raising of the mind to God, that is to

The Rosary is “the great bulwark against heresy and vice” and “the way to attain every virtue”

say, it takes place when we use our intelligence and heart to contemplate and love heavenly realities, with the help of grace.

Now, among vocal prayers, what could surpass the Our Father, composed by the God-Man himself (cf. Mt 6:9-13), the Angelic Salutation (cf. Lk 1:28,42) and the Glory be to the Father, in honour of the Blessed Trinity? And in the field of mental prayer, what more sublime theme for meditation can be found than the mysteries of the life, Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, contemplated throughout the Rosary?

Therefore, the renowned theologian Fr. Antonio Royo Marin, OP, sums up this prayer as “encompassing the advantages of mental and vocal prayer to the most perfect degree objectively possible.”¹¹

was first revealed to St. Dominic.

History, always bound to documents that have survived the passage of time, says merely that a great mystery hovers over the origins of the Rosary. There are no records from the thirteenth century attesting that St. Dominic was the initiator of this devotion, since it did not appear in the writings of popes and authors until the fifteenth century. They were preceded only by Catholic piety, which, it is true, always precedes in some manner the official proclamation of the most beautiful truths of Mariology.

In fact, long before the birth of that holy preacher, a pious custom was already in place among Christians of reciting the Hail Mary one hundred and fifty times in place of the Psalms of David, which were recited in the early days of the Church. This led to the prayer becoming known as the *Psalter of Mary*.¹²

Only in the XIII century – at the time when St. Dominic developed his apostolate – did this practice spread all over Christendom, and its main promoters were the Dominicans! Mere coincidence? Again, a mystery...

The only source capable of providing us with any information on the subject – less appealing to unbelieving spirits – is the voice of mysticism, which, especially in the person of

Blessed Alan de la Roche, presents an account imbued with the sense of the marvellous. Is it entirely veridical? A certain enigma remains, and perhaps will remain until the end of time... But what is certain is that the account of this Dominican religious is so in keeping with St. Dominic's prophetic vocation that, if it presents any inconsistency with reality, we are inclined to believe that events unfolded in an even more sublime manner.¹³

Narration of Blessed Alan de la Roche

St. Dominic of Guzman is labouring with great effort to convert the Albigensian heretics, who have been devastating Europe since the 12th century, especially in the Languedoc region in of southern France. His dedication, however, is not bearing much fruit, as the number of those who adhere to the Cathar sect only grows daily.

Distraught, the faithful devotee of Mary retires to a forest near Toulouse to beseech Heaven to put an end to this calamity. After three days of fasting and sacrifices, his strength fails him and he collapses.

But just when his physical forces have been pushed to their extreme limit, the Blessed Virgin approaches, enveloped in intense light, and asks him:

“My dear Dominic, do you know with what weapon the Blessed Trinity wants to reform the world?”



St. Dominic of Guzman - Sancti Spiritus Monastery, Toro (Spain)

The Blessed Virgin asked him: “My dear Dominic, do you know with what weapon the Blessed Trinity wants to reform the world?”

“You know better than I do,” replies an astounded Dominic.

“Know, then, that the principal arm of combat is the Angelic Salutation, cornerstone of the New Testament. If you want to win these hardened hearts for God, pray my Psalter.”

After these words, a furious storm suddenly breaks out, with lightning, thunder, torrential rain and earthquakes. Terrified, the population of the city takes refuge in the cathedral, to the sound of the bells that miraculously peal of their own accord.

The tempest continues to rage for some time, and only ceases with the prayers of St. Dominic, who is already in the cathedral, before the assembly. Consoled by the help of the Queen of Angels, he then proclaims the Holy Rosary to them. Almost all the inhabitants of Toulouse accept it, and abandon their evil ways.¹⁴

Thus, amidst stupendous miracles, this devotion was said to have arisen, a gift from Heaven brought by Our Lady herself for the benefit of men.

The Rosary at times of crisis

We promised, at the outset, to deal with the timeliness of the Rosary.

This year, we will observe the concurrence of three great commemorations, all of them connected with

¹ BENEDICT XV. *Letter “Di altissimo pregio”*, 18/9/1915.

² LEO XIII. *Amantissima voluntatis*.

³ LEO XIII. *Supremi apostolatus*.

⁴ PIUS XI. *Apostolic Brief*, 20/7/1925.

⁵ PIUS XII. *Letter “Philippinas insulas”*, 31/7/1946.

⁶ LEO XIII. *Iucunda semper*, n.3.

⁷ Cf. PIUS XI. *Ingravescentibus malis*.

⁸ BENEDICT XV. *Letter “In cætu sodalium”*, 29/10/1916.

⁹ PIUS XI. *Apostolic Brief*, 20/7/1925.

¹⁰ PIUS IX. *Letter “Pium sane”*, 24/3/1877.

¹¹ ROYO MARÍN, OP, Antonio. *La Virgen María. Teología y espiritualidad marianas*. 2.ed. Madrid: BAC, 1997, p.467.

¹² Cf. ST. LOUIS-MARIE GRIGNON DE MONTFORT. *Le secret admirable du très Saint Rosaire*. Montreal: Librarie Montfortaine, 1947, p.14-15.

¹³ Cf. GETINO, Luis G. Alonso. *Santo Domingo de Guzmán*.

Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1939, p.172-185.

¹⁴ Cf. ST. LOUIS-MARIE GRIGNON DE MONTFORT, op. cit., p.2-4. This booklet by the great Marian doctor was praised by St. John Paul II as “an excellent work on the Rosary” (*Rosarium Virginis Mariæ*, n.8). It should also be noted that Blessed Alan and St. Louis de Montfort were the

this devotion. In the first place, it is the 850th anniversary of St. Dominic's birth, and the 800th anniversary of his death.¹⁵ In addition, the current month marks the 450th anniversary of the Battle of Lepanto, a key event in the history of Christendom, which led to the institution of the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.¹⁶

Why is this important for the present moment?

The most crucial moments in the history of the Rosary were precisely those when calamity had reached a peak. During the time of St. Dominic, the Faith was being threatened by the Albigensian heresy, and the Saint employed the Rosary to safeguard orthodoxy. At Lepanto, the visible structure of the Church and Christian Civilization was on the verge of collapse. The Rosary of St. Pius V wrought for Don Juan of Austria the same victory that the arms of Moses, stretched out on the mountain top, won for Joshua against the Amalekites (cf. Ex 17:8-13).

In both cases, the pledge of victory was this same celebrated devotion.

Powerful weapon for our days

Today the Faith and the Holy Church would seem to be equally or even more endangered than in those times. Their worst enemies no longer use clear arguments in open debates, nor do they fight with weapons of iron or fire. Rather, they take ad-

vantage of darkness to grow, ambiguity to conquer and relativism to demolish.

We must therefore make use of every means within our reach to confront this crisis, and the Rosary, as we have seen, can obtain God's intervention in these events.

Just as St. Dominic and St. Pius V made use of it as a "weapon to defeat the enemies of God and of religion,"¹⁷ so the faithful of today, armed with this same instrument of warfare, will easily succeed in destroying the monstrous errors and impieties which are arising everywhere.¹⁸

This is why Mary Most Holy, on two occasions, at Lourdes and Fatima, instructed all of humanity to pray it. In the Cova da Iria – indeed, during the apparition of October – the Virgin affirmed: "I am the Lady of the Rosary." Under this standard Christians have triumphed in the past; and under it they will triumph today and always. ✦

"I am the Lady of the Rosary." Under this standard Christians have triumphed in the past, and under it they will triumph today and always

Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima - Church of Our Lady of Fatima, Tocancipá (Colombia)

Juan Tomas Tavaréz

principal apostles of the Rosary in France, as the Dominican theologian Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange points out (cf. *La Madre del Salvador y nuestra vida interior*. 3.ed. Buenos Aires: Desclée de Brouwer, 1954, p.266).

¹⁵ As with ancient figures, there is disagreement among authors about the year of St. Dominic's birth. The fact that

he was born at the end of 1171 has been taken from the collection ECHEVERRÍA, Lamberto de; LLORCA, SJ, Bernardino; REPETTO BERTES, José Luis (Org.). *Año Cristiano*. Madrid: BAC, 2005, v.VIII, p.197.

¹⁶ The celebration of Our Lady of the Rosary was instituted by St. Pius V in thanksgiving for the triumph of the Christian

fleet at the Gulf of Lepanto on October 7, 1571, while the confraternities of Rome celebrated Rosary processions, one of them presided over by the Supreme Pontiff himself. Originally, however, the Blessed Virgin was invoked as Our Lady of Victories, which was gradually replaced by Our Lady of the Rosary. In 1716, Clement XI extended the

commemoration to the Universal Church. Leo XIII introduced it into the Liturgy, and St. Pius X fixed October 7 as the definitive date (cf. ROYO MARÍN, op. cit., p.507).

¹⁷ PIUS XI. *Ingravescentibus malis*.

¹⁸ Cf. PIUS IX. *Egregiis*, 3/12/1856.

Masterpiece of Catholic Spirituality

The devotion of the Rosary has tremendous power and substance. It does not involve merely emotions, but is serious and full of reflection. Through it, the spiritual life of the Catholic is built up as a solid and splendid edifice of certainties.



Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

To fully understand the value of devotion to the Holy Rosary, let us examine it more closely.

After being given directly by Our Lady to St. Dominic of Guzman, devotion to the Rosary spread rapidly throughout the Church, going beyond the confines of the Dominican Order and becoming the hallmark of many other Orders who

began to wear it hanging from their cinctures.

There was a time when every Catholic habitually carried a rosary with him, not only as an object for counting Hail Marys, but as an instrument to attract God's blessings.

A prayer that intimately unites us to God

What is the Rosary?

Put briefly, it is a composition of meditations on the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of His Blessed Mother, combined with vocal prayers. This combination of vocal and mental prayer is truly splendid, for while a petition is uttered with the lips, the mind concentrates on a certain point.

By this means, man does everything he can in the supernatural order: by his intentions, he unites him-



Daniel Letelier

The Rosary is the prayer of the strong, the prayer of warriors, for it has such efficacy that it makes evil retreat and good advance

Priests, deacons, and laymen pray the Holy Rosary at Lumen Prophetæ House, Mairiporã (Brazil)

self to what his lips pronounce, and by his mind, he surrenders himself to what his spirit meditates upon.

In this mode of prayer, man unites himself intimately with God, especially since this union is formed through Mary, the Mediatrix of all graces.

Someone might ask: “What is the sense of praying vocally to Our Lady while meditating on something else? Could it not be something simpler? Would it not be easier to meditate first, and then to say ten Hail Marys?”

The answer is very simple. Each mystery contains, in its details, endless sublimities which our poor spirit seeks to fathom... Now, to do this perfectly, we need to be assisted by God’s grace, and this grace is given to us through the help of Our Lady. In short, we say the Hail Mary to ask the Blessed Virgin to obtain for us the graces needed to meditate well.

A powerful and serious devotion, full of reflection

In the Rosary, we discover small but precious theological treasures that make it a masterpiece of Catholic spirituality and doctrine.

This devotion has tremendous power and substance. It does not involve merely emotions; on the contrary, it is serious, full of reflection, with firm foundations. Through it, the spiritual life of the Catholic man is built up as a solid and splendid edifice of conclusions and certainties.

Moreover, meditation on the mysteries of the life of Our Lord and His Mother gives the faithful the opportunity to receive graces pertaining to the event that they are contemplating.



Our Lady of the Rosary - Monastery of St. Dominic of Guzman, Madrid (Spain)

The countless graces that Mary Most Holy distributes through this devotion show it to be superior to other acts of Marian piety

When we consider the countless graces that Mary Most Holy distributes through the recitation of the Holy Rosary, we see in it something that makes it superior to other acts of Marian piety. Now, why is this?

First of all, it is worth pointing out that Our Lady, as exalted Queen, has the right to set her preferences! And She wished to elevate this devotion above all others, distributing very

special graces through the recitation of the Holy Rosary.

Resolution to always pray the Rosary

An incident in the life of St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori shows us that, particularly during a great struggle, the Rosary is a pledge of victory.

While the Saint was being guided in a wheelchair through the corridors of the convent by a brother of his Order, he asked if they had prayed the whole Rosary. The brother replied:

“I don’t remember.”

“Let us pray it, then” said St. Alphonsus.

“But you are tired! What harm is there in not saying the Rosary today?”

“I fear for my eternal salvation if I neglect to say it for just one day.”

This is precisely what we should think and feel: the Rosary is the great guarantee of our final perseverance. We must ask the Blessed Virgin for the grace to pray it every day of our life.

Let us never forsake it!

The Rosary is the prayer of the strong, the prayer of warriors, for it has such efficacy that it makes evil retreat and good advance. It binds the faithful to Our Lady and drives away the devil, who hates and fears Her.

To those who are tempted, I give this recommendation: hold on to a rosary! But physically hold on to it, never let it go.

Even when sleeping, try to keep the rosary close at hand, so that you can feel it with you. And if you are afraid that it will fall to the floor – for we must treat it with all reverence – hang it around your neck or put it in your pocket.

“I would like to resurrect with the rosary in my hands”

When our hands can no longer open or close, and when they are moved by others who assist us, let us have, as our last position of prayer, the rosary entwined between our fingers, so that when the resurrection of the dead takes place and our bodies are brought back to life, the Holy Rosary will be there in our revived fingers.

I hope that, at the moment when all the just are called to the resurrection, my first reverent kiss will fall on the rosary which I find in my hands.



Material and Symbolic Beauty of the Rosary

In my opinion, the beauty of the Rosary is not confined merely to the spiritual excellence it offers to souls.

Its marvellous impetrative power, as well as how pleasing it is to God and to Our Lady, are also expressed in the physical form of the Rosary, which is surrounded by imponderables that make us feel the pulchritude of this devotion. There is something beautiful and inexpressible in it that seems to me supremely appropriate and irreplaceable.

I remember when I was still a student at St. Louis School, at the beginning of the 1920s, and noticed that a new type of rosary was beginning to circulate, one that was “more discreet”, in the intention of its creators. It was an object similar to certain calculating gadgets of the time, with two

rows of superimposed beads: larger ones on which the Hail Marys and Our Father were counted, and smaller ones to mark the mysteries being meditated upon.

It was a small object, to take up the least space in the pocket and to be seen as little as possible by others. It had everything in its favour: it was practical, cheap, portable and “concealable” – which was a great advantage for Catholics with human respect. But it did not take hold...

Nothing could replace the old Rosary, the marvellous and timeless Rosary in all its various forms!

Small rosaries, graceful rosaries, elegant and delicate, for well-bred children. Modest rosaries, workers’ rosaries, heavy and rustic as manual labour so often is, but strong ros-

aries, their beads passing through the fingers of virile hands. Serious and manly rosaries, the rosaries of warriors. Rosaries of princesses, of queens, elaborated like veritable jewels, as are the precious rosaries that hang from the hands of the statues of Our Lady.

How many forms of rosary there are!

Some speak of grace and of charm; they show something of the regal sweetness and goodness of Mary. Others make us see Her as the protector of children; others as the helper of the poor and working man, like her princely husband, St. Joseph, descendant of David and a carpenter. Still others speak of the piety of the warrior, of the fighter for Catholic ideals, like St. Dominic of Guzman, who fought and

*I hope that,
at the moment
of the resurrection,
my first reverent
kiss will fall upon
the Rosary that I
find in my hands*

Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias
presents Dr. Plinio with a rosary to kiss,
during a ceremony on 11/12/1994

defeated the Albigensian heresy
with the Rosary.

Indeed, this attribute of the Rosary as a true weapon for Catholics has always attracted me in a very particular way, which is why it has always seemed to me that the Rosary together with a sword is a combination of exceptional beauty.

Once, while in Buenos Aires, I was invited to the house of a gentleman who possessed one of the most beautiful private collections of arms that I have ever seen. Exquisitely arranged in showcases and on shelves, there were all kinds of arms, but most especially, several types of swords.

As I contemplated them, this thought occurred to me: "If I were on familiar terms with this man, I would suggest to him to acquire a collection of rosaries as rich as that of his swords. And that each day, on a beautiful table arranged in the centre of the room and covered with a prestigious cloth, he would place a new sword and rosary in honour of an image of Our Lady that would preside over the whole collection."

Here, then, is a suggestion for after the resurrection. I have never heard of any counsel being given or any agreement being made for that moment, but I propose one.

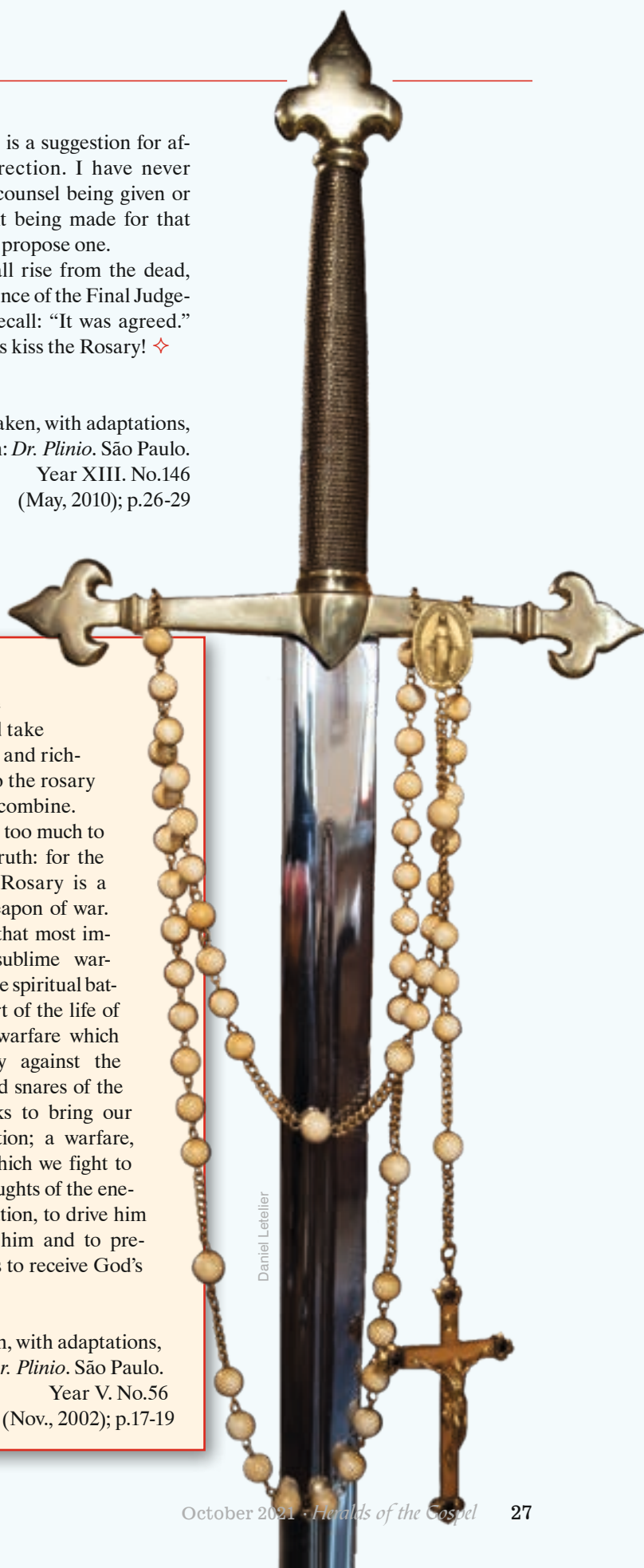
When we all rise from the dead, amid the radiance of the Final Judgment, let us recall: "It was agreed." And then let us kiss the Rosary! ✧

Taken, with adaptations,
from: *Dr. Plinio*. São Paulo.
Year XIII. No.146
(May, 2010); p.26-29

I believe that his private museum would take on another life and richness, so well do the rosary and the sword combine.

And it is not too much to insist on this truth: for the Catholic, the Rosary is a magnificent weapon of war. A weapon for that most important and sublime warfare, which is the spiritual battle which is part of the life of every man; a warfare which we wage daily against the temptations and snares of the devil who seeks to bring our souls to perdition; a warfare, therefore, in which we fight to resist the onslaughts of the enemy of our salvation, to drive him out, to defeat him and to prepare our hearts to receive God's graces. ✧

Taken, with adaptations,
from: *Dr. Plinio*. São Paulo.
Year V. No.56
(Nov., 2002); p.17-19



Daniel Letellier



José Luis Filipo Cabana (CC by-sa 3.0)

The climate was harsh, with frequent snowfalls, and the soil poor. The woodlands, with no existing roadways, were difficult to explore. To establish a monastery there seemed madness. But the ideal that moved St. Bruno was not based on human criteria...

ST. BRUNO

Father and Founder of the Carthusians



Fr. Antonio Jakoš, EP

The deep contemplative spirit of the Carthusian Order, where time is measured by eternity, came to the fore in a way that was unique – but, in itself, prestigious for the Order – when the three-hour documentary, *Into Great Silence*, was released worldwide in 2005. Its producer had requested to make the film in 1984. With more zeal for the charism than for publicity, the Carthusians replied that they needed time to think it over. Permission was granted sixteen years later, under three conditions: that only one cameraman do the filming, that silence be maintained, and artificial lights not be used.

This refreshing fact reflects the supernatural strength which has sustained the institution from its beginnings, confirming the comment of Pope Innocent XI when the Carthusian Order, six hundred years after its foundation, comprised over two hundred monasteries: “*Nunquam reformata, quia nunquam deformata.*”¹ Or what Pope Pius XI stated more recently: “It is clear that the Carthusian spirit, faithful to its founder and father for almost nine centuries, has not required, over such a long period, any amendment or reform, in contrast with other Orders.”²

The story that unfolds in the following pages reveals the primary

cause of such continuity: the life of St. Bruno.

Born in “German Rome”

His date of birth is unknown, as is most of his life. It is known with certainty only that he came into the world between the years 1027 and 1035. An oral tradition indicates that he was a native of the city of Cologne, the ancient *Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensis* of the Romans, and came from a patrician family, perhaps of the Hartenfaust, from the *gens Æmilia*. His father was also called Bruno.

Years before his birth, that region had been blessed with the presence of a saintly duke and archbishop, who died in 965: St. Bruno the Great, brother of Emperor Otto I. A genius for organization, he had made Cologne the premier city of the Holy Empire and had fostered monastic life by building hermitages and monasteries. In Bruno’s childhood, the city – then known as *Holy Cologne* or *German Rome* – boasted nine collegiate schools, four abbeys and nineteen parishes, an astonishing number for the time, and even for many modern metropolises.

All higher education was provided by the schools of the monasteries, cathedrals and other churches, which, shortly after the Saint’s death, would adopt the name *universitas* or university. It is not known where Bruno stud-

ied, but it is indisputable that he profited very well from the teachings received, for while still an adolescent he brilliantly continued his intellectual career in the city of Reims.

Uprightness amid success

At about the age of fifteen, Bruno moved to this city to study theology and philosophy under the tutelage of Canon Herimann. Because of his excellent progress, he received the canonicate at St. Cunibert, in his native Cologne, and from 1057, when he was between twenty-six and twenty-eight years old, he assumed the office of *magister scholarum* or *scholasticus* of the Cathedral of Reims, succeeding Canon Herimann. This office made him director of all the schools under the jurisdiction of that French diocese, a responsibility which he exercised for about twenty years with such efficacy and virtue that Pope St. Gregory VII bestowed upon him the honourable title of *Remensis Ecclesiae magistrum* – master of the Church of Reims.

Among his pupils were great luminaries of the time, such as Odo of Chatillon, canon of Reims and later prior of the Abbey of Cluny, who was subsequently elected to the pontifical throne under the name of Urban II.

Around 1076, St. Bruno was appointed chancellor of the cathedral by Bishop Manasses de Gournay. He soon found himself in a delicate situation, which proved an occasion for him to demonstrate rectitude, diplomacy and wisdom: the Archbishop practiced simony and squandered the goods of the diocese, for which he was subjected to a lengthy canonical process. Once his godless conduct was exposed, St. Bruno opposed him and was

one of his accusers at the Council of Autun in 1077, at which the prelate was suspended from office. Finally, St. Gregory VII deposed him on December 27, 1080.

St. Bruno renounced the title of chancellor, as it had been bestowed on him by the simoniac dignitary, and refused the Archbishopric of Reims, for which he had been recommended as the most suitable candidate after the expulsion of Manasses.

The decision to abandon the world

As a secular canon of the cathedral and a member of the Chapter of Reims,³ St. Bruno carried out his teaching duties with a certain freedom: although he was obliged to take part in the Office recited in the cathedral, he lived in his own house, had canonically stipulated incomes and had servants at his disposal. Nevertheless, it was at this time that the desire to dedicate himself entirely to recollection and penance germinated in his soul.

In his search for an ideal form of contemplative life, he visited various monasteries and religious orders, as the call of God was not yet clear. He probably visited the abbeys of Saint-Thierry and Saint-Remi, which he admired. It is certain that he held in high esteem the “black monks”, the Benedictines, upon whose rule he was later inspired to organize the Carthusian Order.

However, it was a supernatural event that occurred outside the cloisters that led St. Bruno to decide to abandon the world for good. This is how the biographer of the first five Carthusian priors recounts it:

“About the year 1082 of the Incarnation of the Lord, [...] a certain doctor [Raymond Diocrès] of apparently blameless life, reputation, doctrine and science, fell seriously ill and shortly afterwards died. Following Parisian custom, the coffin with the body of the deceased was exposed in the school at an early hour for the singing of the Divine Office, which brought together students and doctors alike, for the purpose of giving such an illustrious man due funerary honours and a dignified burial.

“When the reverend gentlemen approached to take the coffin and carry it to the church, suddenly, to the astonishment of all, the dead man raised his head, sat up, and with a loud and terrible voice exclaimed, ‘By the just judgment of God, I have been accused.’ Having said this, he lay down and remained motionless as before.

“As the occurrence became the subject of heated debate, it was impossible to bury him that day, and it was left until the next morning. By the second day, the news had spread, and a great crowd was now gath-



An unexpected incident would forever change the life of Canon Bruno

St. Bruno's conversion before the corpse of Diocrès, by Vicente Carducho - Prado Museum, Madrid; previous page, St. Bruno - Chapel of the Charterhouse of Seville (Spain)

ered to accompany the coffin to the church, but the deceased, as on the day before, raised his head and with a tragic and terrible voice exclaimed: 'By the just judgement of God, I have been judged.'

"The crowd present heard the sentence loud and clear, being more astonished than the day before. Desirous to know the meaning of such an unusual and unexpected pronouncement, they made the decision to postpone the burial. On the third day, a large part of the city gathered at the site, and when everything was ready to take him to the tomb, again the dead

man, as on the two previous days, exclaimed with a woeful cry: 'By the just judgement of God, I have been condemned.'

"Hearing this, almost all were seized with great fear and trembling, convinced of the condemnation of that man, who in appearance had led an honest, illustrious, and worthy life, and shone for his knowledge and wisdom.

"Now, in the midst of that tumult was Master Bruno, of the Teutonic nation, from the city of Cologne, born of illustrious parents, canon of the Church of Reims, where he taught Theology, who, salutarily moved by the condemned man's words, remarked to his companions present there: 'What to do, my friends? We shall all die, and only those who flee from this world are saved. If this happens amidst splendours, what will happen amidst hardships? If a man so worthy, so learned, who led a seemingly honest life and was famous for his knowledge, has been condemned, what will become of us, the most miserable of men? [...] After the terrible things we have heard today, let us not harden our hearts, but let us leave Babylon, flee from the Pentapolis⁴ already condemned to fire and brimstone and, following the example of the blessed



St. Bruno aspired to a purely hermitical, strictly isolated life, with only a few religious acts in common

St. Bruno clothes a postulant in the habit, by Manuel Bayeu - Museum of Huesca (Spain)

hermit Paul, of the blessed Anthony, Arsenius, Evagrius and other Saints, like St. John the Baptist, let us flee to the desert caves, let us save ourselves in the mountains, to avoid the wrath of the Eternal Judge and His sentence of eternal damnation. Let us escape the flood by entering Noah's ark, Peter's barque, where Christ stills the wind and the storms, that is, the boat of penance, so that we may reach the port of eternal salvation."⁵

The dawn of the Great Charterhouse

With these and other words, St. Bruno exhorted his companions, so that six worthy men decided to follow him, seeking solitude to do penance, forsaking all earthly riches, delights and honours.

Initially, they went to the Benedictine monastery of Molesme, in the former Diocese of Langres. The abbot was then St. Robert, who in 1098 would found the Cistercian Order. But St. Bruno aspired to a more austere life of greater isolation. So he left with his six companions for the desert of Sèche-Fontaine, a few kilometres from Molesme.

After a period that biographers estimate at between one and three

years, St. Bruno went on to Grenoble, whose bishop was a former student of his, St. Hugh of Châteauneuf. The latter granted him the mountainous region of Chartreuse in the desert of St. Pierre, where St. Bruno erected a building in the year 1084.

From a human perspective, the choice of location seemed absurd: an area at an altitude of between 780 and 1150 metres, accessible only by steep paths. The climate was severe, with frequent snowfalls, and the soil poor. The absence of roadways made it difficult to explore the forests; the place was impene-

trable for most of the year, compromising the arrival of help in case of fire or illness. However, St. Bruno relied on divine rather than human criteria and none of these difficulties discouraged him. Indeed, even today, the robustness, good health and longevity of the Carthusians is remarkable.

Aiming at a purely hermitical, strictly isolated life, with only a few religious acts in common, he organized the work with the rigours of winter in mind: cells were individual and separate, but connected by a covered cloister that allowed access to the church, the chapterhouse and the refectory. This early Carthusian structure was to be the model for all the others founded throughout the world over time.

On September 2, 1085, Bishop St. Hugh consecrated the church, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and St. John the Baptist.

A few decades later, after an avalanche, the monks were forced to rebuild the Charterhouse two kilometres further south in a safer location, where it stands today.

Establishment of the second Charterhouse

After a wait of over half a century for the realization of this dream, St.

Bruno would enjoy its solitude for only six years. Pope Urban II, remembering the virtues of his former teacher, summoned him to Rome in the name of holy obedience. The founder of the Carthusians arrived there in 1090. When he learned that the Pope had appointed him to the episcopal see of Reggio Calabria, he availed himself of the right to refuse such an election, since he was certain that this was not his vocation.

After spending a year at the papal court, he obtained permission from the Pontiff to return to the contemplative life, but not to France: Urban II imposed the condition that he remain within the boundaries of present-day Italy.

Thus it was that in 1091 St. Bruno founded a monastery in Calabria, in Santa Maria della Torre, Diocese of Squillace, where he would remain until his death. The work, like future foundations, received the name of Charterhouse, in memory of the mother house, and soon obtained the

proper approvals and authorizations from Pope Urban II.

Precious spiritual legacy

St. Bruno died on October 6, 1101. Of the almost seventy-one years of his life, he spent only sixteen in his much-appreciated solitude: six in the French Charterhouse and ten in the Italian one.

Among his few known writings, there is a letter written in 1099 or 1100 in which he describes the joys of the contemplative vocation: “Only those who have experienced them know how much profit and divine joy the solitude and silence of the desert bring to those who love them. Here dedicated men can recollect themselves as much as they wish, live in solitude, eagerly cultivate the seeds of virtue and be happily nourished by the fruits of Paradise. Here one acquires that serene gaze which wounds the Spouse with love, and by means of which, clean and pure, one sees God. Here one practices a laborious leisure, and rests in a

tranquil activity. Here, God rewards His athletes for the effort of combat with the longed-for prize, namely, ‘the peace the world does not know, and the joy of the Holy Spirit.’”⁶

Although the spiritual legacy of the Carthusian Order is by far its most precious patrimony, it also translates into countless concrete aspects, among which is the famous Chartreuse liqueur, composed of one hundred and thirty herbs. The method of its long preparation process, with four distillations and five infusions, is known only to two Carthusians. It is remarkable that one of the most austere Orders of the Church, whose customs prescribe strict fasts and do not even allow this liqueur on their tables, should have offered the world such a marvel.

It is fitting that the shield of the Order bears the seven stars representing St. Bruno and his first six disciples, forming a semi-arc over an orb crowned by the cross, and the motto *Stat crux dum volvitur orbis* – The Cross stands firm while the world turns. ✧



“Here one acquires that serene gaze which wounds the Spouse with love. Here, God rewards His athletes for the effort of combat with the longed-for prize: the joy of the Holy Spirit”

¹ WIEL, Constant Van de. *History of Canon Law*. Louvain: Peeters Press, 1991, p.84. From the Latin: “Never reformed, because never deformed.”

² PIUS XI. *Apostolic Constitution Umbratitem*.

³ There were also regular canons, who lived in community. It is not known when St. Bruno was ordained a priest. At that time it was customary to use the title of cleric for any member of the hierarchy, even those who were not priests.

⁴ Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar: five cities from the Old Testament chastised for their sins.

⁵ VITA ANTIQUIOR SANCTI BRUNONIS, n.1-7: PL 152; 482-484.

⁶ ST. BRUNO. Carta a su amigo Raúl. In: SÁEZ DE SANTAMARÍA, Gerardo Posada. *Maestro Bruno, Padre de monjes*. 2.ed. Madrid: BAC, 1995, p.163.



Sebastián Caçavidi

How to Discern a True Apostle of Jesus Christ

To be an apostle is a vocation that extends to all times and places. But how can we differentiate between the true and the false apostle? The Second Letter to the Corinthians offers us some valuable criteria.



João Felipe Trevisan

To be an apostle is not something exclusive to the early period of the Church, but rather a vocation that extends to all times and places. Otherwise, it would not be possible to fulfil the Divine Master’s command: “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation” (Mk 16:15).

However, alongside these authentic envoys of God, there are always those who present themselves as such, but in reality are ravenous wolves who seek to destroy Christ’s flock (cf. Mt 7:15).

This sad reality and its consequences were foretold by Our Lord Himself: “many false prophets will

arise and lead many astray. And because wickedness is multiplied, most men’s love will grow cold” (Mt 24:11-12).

It is therefore very important to know how to discern the true apostles from the false ones. How can we do this?

The Second Letter to the Corinthians and the figure of the apostle

The Second Letter to the Corinthians is one of St. Paul’s richest writings. The circumstances surrounding it, its intended recipients, and even the pastoral problems that motivated it make it shine as a “passionate unburdening of the heart of the great

Apostle, a vigorous defence of his apostolate in response to the calumnies raised against him.”¹

In the epistle, the Doctor of the Gentiles draws a contrast between himself and the “false apostles” who sought to undermine his work. It is therefore easy to detect, throughout this biblical text, the characteristics of the true ambassador of Jesus Christ. Let us consider some of them.

Chosen by God

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God” (2 Cor 1:1).

In the very first words of his epistle, St. Paul points out his vocation: apos-

tle of Christ Jesus. This is his identity, his credentials, his definition.

However, another truth is clearly manifested in the sacred text: he receives his mission directly from God. It is by the divine will that man is raised to the very high condition of being sent by the Lord. It is a gift, a grace that no human force can grant or usurp.

Sign of contradiction

“For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life” (2 Cor 2:15-16).

Even while being an emissary of God, the true apostle does not enjoy the acceptance of all. Some regard him as a bearer of death. He is a sign of contradiction! His listeners will be compelled to take a definitive attitude: to accept or to reject. Acceptance will come with admiration; rejection, with hatred.

Such a trait would seem inconsistent and even contradictory with the apostolic mission, which aims at saving the greatest number of souls; however, it is not. Wanting the salvation of all does not automatically bring as a consequence that all will want to be saved.

For those who have little concern for their own eternal destiny, the figure of the apostle becomes unbearable. This is what St. John Chrysostom explains, commenting on the passage quoted above: “He who is on the path of perdition can only reproach himself. Pigs are said to be suffocated by

perfume, and light, as I have said, blinds unhealthy eyes. Such is the nature of good things: it not only heals what is like it, but it destroys what is contrary to it; in this way its power is shown to be very strong.”²

Apostle of Christ or servant of Belial?

“Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What

The true apostle does not enjoy the acceptance of all. Some regard him as a bearer of death. He is a sign of contradiction!



Martyrdom of St. Peter - Cathedral of St. Peter, Condom (France); previous page, the preaching of the Apostles - Cologne Cathedral (Germany)

accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?” (2 Cor 6:14-16).

Here is another fundamental characteristic of the true apostle of Jesus Christ, clearly stated by St. Paul: integrity!

Those who have received this calling must guard against actions that undermine it; accordingly, they must be aware that, on the path of fidelity, there is no room for iniquitous compromises.

In preferring tolerance to intransigence against evil, the false apostle wishes to fabricate a pretended compatibility between Christ and Belial, between Light and darkness, between God and idols.

Infidelity is an unmistakable mark of one who is not an authentic envoy of God. Moreover, it clearly distinguishes a servant of Belial, since anyone who does not show himself to be upright in the service of God deserves to

hear the words of the Divine Teacher: “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters” (Lk 11:23).

St. Irenaeus of Lyons pronounces a severe judgement on this type of person: “As for those who pass for presbyters in the eyes of many, but are slaves to their passions, who do not put the fear of God above all else in their hearts [...] and do evil in secret, saying ‘no one sees us,’ they will be rejected by the Word, who does not judge according to opinion and does not look at appearance but at the heart, and they will hear these words spoken prophetically by Daniel: ‘Race of Canaan

Francisco Lecaros

and not of Judah, beauty has fascinated you and passion has perverted your heart. Man grown old in evil, now appear the sins you once committed, uttering unjust judgements, condemning the innocent and setting the guilty free, when the Lord said: You shall not cause the innocent and the just to die.”³

**Persecuted
by “false apostles”**

“And what I do I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds” (2 Cor 11:12-15).

This is one of the many passages in which St. Paul insinuates that he is being persecuted.

The Corinthian community – for which the Apostle shed tears of love (cf. 2 Cor 2:4) – began to charge him with various unfounded and slanderous accusations. Numbering among them are: that he did not belong to Christ, that he was a corrupter of communities, that he invaded the territory of others and that he

even suffered from schizophrenia (cf. 2 Cor 10:1-14)!⁴

How can it be explained that the very people to whom St. Paul had dedicated himself so much could have rebelled in such a vile way? A contemporary exegete answers: “The Corinthians did not formulate these accusations against Paul on their own. Behind them are those whom the letter calls, with a good

The apostle must never become overwhelmed by persecutions, even when they come from those who have been the object of his kindness

dose of irony, ‘super-apostles’. Who are they? Certainly influential persons, representatives of the central hierarchy that imposes itself on the community.”⁵

**In face of persecution,
do not flinch, but fight!**

On the other hand, the Apostle’s response to slander is moving! The true messenger of Christ must never allow himself to be overwhelmed by the persecutions he suffers, whether external or internal, even when they come from those who have been the object of his greatest kindness, dedication and hope.

The means employed by St. Paul to overcome the difficulties encountered on the path of evangelization were to defend himself fearlessly and with confidence in the Almighty, removing every pretext from dishonest workers (cf. 2 Cor 11:12-13). This made him a truly majestic man.

In this regard, Pope Benedict XVI wisely ponders: “How can we not admire a man like this? How can we not thank the Lord for having given us an Apostle of this stature? It is clear that he would not have been able to face such difficult and, at times, desperate situations if there had not been a reason of absolute value, before which no barrier could be considered insurmountable. We know that for Paul, this reason is Jesus Christ.”⁶

**Apostle of the
“secrets” of God**

“I must boast; there is nothing to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years



St. Paul is stoned in Lystra -
Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, Rome

ago was caught up to the third Heaven – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter” (2 Cor 12:1-4).

In theology, mystical, extraordinary or supernatural phenomena, such as the one recounted by St. Paul, are considered *gratis datae*, that is to say, gifts that God freely grants to whom He pleases. They are reserved for the few; indeed, many Saints never received them. Nevertheless, it must be borne clearly in mind that every baptized person should nourish an intense interior life – mystical in the deepest sense of the word – and this is an indispensable condition for any pastoral action. No apostle can excuse himself for not cultivating and fostering contemplation.⁷

Nevertheless, this does not mean that these phenomena are always fortuitous. On the contrary, many of them are a result of the intense degree of spiritualization attained by certain chosen souls.⁸

Thus, in St. Paul’s eloquent description of the revelations he has received, we find a guarantee that he is not only a bearer of the Spirit, but he



St. Paul, by Lippo Memmi - Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Glory, for the faithful apostle, means putting on Jesus Christ, considering himself an instrument placed in the Lord’s hands

also enjoys great intimacy with Our Lord Jesus Christ. God often reveals

Himself mystically to the apostle in order to make him, in an even more evident manner, His emissary.

“Apostle of Jesus Christ and herald of the truth”

The text of the Second Letter to the Corinthians goes on to list other qualities that distinguish the true apostle from the false, such as unpretentiousness (cf. 2 Cor 12:14), sincerity (cf. 2 Cor 1:12-14), and being a minister of the Spirit rather than of the letter (cf. 2 Cor 3:5-6). However, the limits of this article prevent a more extensive analysis.

In any case, the character of the authentic evangelizer is outlined with unique clarity in the epistle, whose central idea consists in the defence of the Pauline ministry. In the words of a renowned exegete, its common thread can be defined thus: he is an “Apostle of Jesus Christ and herald of the truth, with all the difficulties and all the glory that this entails.”⁹

Glory: a sweet-sounding word to everyone’s ears. Both the true and the false apostle seek it untiringly.

For the latter, glory translates into deceit, opportunism and hypocrisy. For the former, however, it means putting on Jesus Christ, considering oneself an instrument placed in the Lord’s hands. An instrument that is at times weak; but, paradoxically, from this weakness Our Lord Jesus Christ manifests all His strength and power (cf. 2 Cor 12:10). ✧

¹ PEIFER, OSB, Claude J. *Conoce la Biblia: Nuevo Testamento. Primera y Segunda Epístola de San Pablo a los Corintios*. Santander: Sal Terrae, 1966, v.IX, p.106.

² ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM. *Omelie sulla Seconda Lettera ai Corinzi*, 5, 2. In: ODEN, Thomas C.; BRAY, Gerald (Ed.). *La Bibbia commentata dai Padri. Nouvo Testamento:*

1-2 Corinzi. Roma: Città Nuova, 2014, v.VII, p.276.

³ IRENAEUS OF LYONS. *Contra as heresias*. L.IV, c.26, n.3: SC 100, 721-723.

⁴ For a more detailed explanation of these and other attacks against St. Paul, see: BORTOLINI, José. *Cómo leer la Segunda Carta a los Corintios. Los agentes de pastoral y el*

poder. Santafé de Bogotá: San Pablo, 1998, p.22-24.

⁵ BORTOLINI, op. cit., p.25.

⁶ BENEDICT XVI. *General Audience*, 25/10/2006.

⁷ The importance of contemplation for the perfect development of the life of the apostle is clearly explained in: GAR-RIGOU-LAGRANGE, OP, Réginald. *Las tres edades de*

la vida interior. 3.ed. Buenos Aires: Desclée de Brouwer, 1950, p.1075-1082.

⁸ Cf. ROYO MARÍN, OP, Antonio. *Teología de la perfección cristiana*. 6.ed. Madrid: BAC, 1988, p.886.

⁹ TURRADO, Lorenzo. *Biblia Comentada. Hechos de los Apóstoles y Epístolas paulinas*. Madrid: BAC, 1965, v.VI, p.460.

The Reform of the Incarnation, and St. Teresa's Kitchen

Zarateman (CC BY-SA 1.0)

The glorious cradle of Teresa of Avila's vocation remained oblivious to this Saint's reform for four hundred years. The skilful intervention of one of her daughters obtained the long-awaited restoration, and was crowned by an exciting discovery.



Sr. Diana Devia, EP

Avila, 1562. After twenty-seven years of cloistered life in the Monastery of the Incarnation, Teresa of Jesus left the almost one hundred and eighty religious who had accompanied her in her first steps in her vocation, and set out on the greatest adventure of her life: the reform of the Carmelite Order.

Taking only what was indispensable for her first foundation, she said goodbye to those walls, the silent witnesses of her blessed journey: the door through which she entered the monastery, the parlour where Our Lord had rebuked her for engaging in worldly conversations, the cell in which she had dwelt and had so often held supernatural colloquy

with Him, the stairway where once she had met a beautiful Child who declared to her that He was "Jesus of Teresa"...

Yet, despite having been the starting point of the Carmelite renewal, this glorious monastery would welcome her only four hundred years later, through the skilled and virtuous intervention of one of her spiritual daughters in the twentieth century.

Indeed, many years after her departure, and having won countless victories for Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St. Teresa was led by obedience back to her community, this time as superior. She met, however, with stiff opposition from the nuns there, who, in an act of manifest rebellion, de-

nied her entrance and possession of office... The outcome of the bitter hardship she endured there was that, at her death, the Monastery of the Incarnation remained as "calced" as before; that is to say, it had not adhered to the discalced renewal she desired.

First stirrings of transformation

In 1940, certainly through the heavenly intercession of the foundress, this monastery did accept the reform, although it still needed to make progress on many points. The four centuries of resistance had deeply marked the community, and there were difficulties in fully adhering to the Teresian spirit.

Since the spiritual state of a group of people is often reflected in the material reality which surrounds it, in 1966 – twenty-six years later! – the lack of fervour of those Carmelite nuns and their desire for leniency in observing the rule were lamentably reflected in the physical condition of the monastery which, battered by time, was on the point of collapse.

The convent, which had housed more than a hundred nuns in the time of St. Teresa, was reduced to a small community consisting mostly of elderly sisters, for whom the maintenance of the building was too heavy a burden.

In addition, as this monastery was the cradle of the Teresian vocation, a great number of pilgrims, wishing to imbibe the spirit of the Saint, now visited it every year, creating no small disruption in the contemplative life that ought to be led there.

Another “Teresa” to reform the Incarnation

Although the Sisters of the Incarnation were aware of the deplorable situation of the monastery, they felt unable to take on the mission of reforming it, both because of the economic resources and the moral strength that would be required to carry this out. It was necessary to find someone capable of moving generous souls to finance the work and, above all, someone with a selfless heart who was ready to suffer the adversities that such a vast project would involve.

The community’s confessor, Fr. Crisógono de Jesus Sacramento, and the Bishop of Avila, Most Rev. Santos Moro Briz, seeking a solution to the problem, came to the conclusion that the only person capable of accomplishing this work was Mother Maravillas de Jesus, prioress of the monastery of Aldehuela, near Madrid, who had recently completed



St. Maravillas photographed at the end of her life; on previous page, the Monastery of the Incarnation, Avila (Spain)

Out of love for her spiritual mother, St. Teresa, she prepared to take on the difficult task, despite her seventy-four years of age and weak health

the restoration of the Carmelite community of El Escorial.

Accordingly, they asked her, in the name of the religious of the Incarnation and of the diocese, to take charge of the restoration, not only of the buildings, but also of the souls, bringing with her other nuns of her foundations who could help her. Nevertheless, Mother Maravillas considered herself unqualified for such a mission... Determined to convince her, Bishop Santos wrote to her in January 1966, affirming that if she did not accept the task, God would

call her to account for the ruin of such a venerable monastery.

It thus became clear to Mother Maravillas that her intervention was indeed needed to prevent the complete destruction of the community of the Incarnation. Out of love for her spiritual mother, St. Teresa, she prepared to take on the difficult task, despite her seventy-four years of age and fragile health.

The fight to open souls

Before communicating her decision to the General of the Order, Mother Maravillas visited the monastery twice and saw the sorry state into which it had fallen. According to the reports of the religious who accompanied her, the nuns there “were quite alarmed” and “did not want [Mother Maravillas] to come with plans to correct and reform the community spiritually. They only wanted financial assistance and nuns to help them materially.”¹

To move wills and to open hearts is much more difficult than to construct buildings and raise walls... Nevertheless, little by little, Mother Maravillas convinced the nuns to accept the conditions for the reform and in the end they all came to love her, which caused no little amazement in those who were acquainted with the previous dispositions of the community.

It is known that this soul chosen and loved by the Blessed Virgin asked the Lord to enlighten her before choosing the Carmelites who were to accompany her in her arduous mission, letting it be seen in some letters how much she wished them to be the most observant and virtuous. After a meticulous selection, Mother Maravillas nominated Mother Magdalene of Jesus as the new prioress and, besides the eight nuns designated to assist her, she entrusted the repairs of the building to Sr. Isabel de Jesus, who, while not being an architect, planned all her foundations.

The first steps towards the reform of the Incarnation had finally been taken.

Unwavering determination in obtaining resources

Having achieved the opening of souls and established a group of auxiliary Carmelite nuns, the first practical concern of Mother Maravillas was to turn her attention to the extremely urgent material needs of the community.

According to expert opinion, the monastery was being held up by a real miracle, which the sisters attributed to St. Teresa. Between forty and fifty support posts needed urgently to be placed to prevent the building's downfall! The roofs tiles had to be torn up, the attics rebuilt, the wooden beams, almost rotten and splintered, had to be replaced by others of cement and iron, new cells had to be built, the church restored, and many other repairs made...

With unwavering determination, Mother Maravillas decided to begin the renovation by asking government officials for financial help, convinced that the conservation of such a valuable relic was also their responsibility. It was then that a veritable battalion of architects, stonemasons and labourers of all kinds began work on the convent.

Inspired by the historical value of the building and the symbolism of its every corner, the workers were tireless in their efforts, which would soon be well rewarded by Heaven through an unexpected and surprising gift.

A present from St. Teresa

During the painstaking restoration, the door through

which St. Teresa had entered the monastery on her appointment as prioress in 1571 was found, as well as various windows and paintings from that period. However, the greatest and most interesting discovery was made on December 3, 1968.

Great was their surprise upon finding the kitchen in which St. Teresa had prepared her meals for twenty-seven years!



On the upper floor, the kitchen discovered during the renovation of the monastery - Monastery of the Incarnation, Avila (Spain)

On the instructions of Sr. Isabel, workers had for several days been endeavouring to knock down one of the walls in the Chapel of the Transverberation, built years before on the site of St. Teresa's cell. The Carmelite "architect" hoped that behind one of those walls could be found part of the foundress' cell or kitchen, because, from the measurements of the building, it was calculated that there was a space between the wall of the chapel and what would have then been the door of the cell.

After days of toil, the workmen made the surprising discovery of the coveted kitchen in which St. Teresa had prepared her meals for twenty-seven years! The blackened bricks still perfectly formed the arch of the chimney, and the odour of

smoke concentrated by centuries of enclosure was perceptible just by drawing near.

Astonishment and emotion filled the hearts of all those present, when they saw their efforts generously rewarded with the finding of such a unique relic.

Summoned to verify what had happened, the former prioress of the monastery, Mother Incarnation, after staring for some time at the ceiling and the whole kitchen, remained motionless for several minutes. Her marked pallor attracted the attention of everyone there and, as she did not stir, some thought she had taken ill. Without, however, answering the questions put to her, Mother Incarnation kept her eyes fixed on that small but blessed space. After some time, she explained what had happened. She had seen St. Teresa herself there, who had told her: "Rest assured, for everything that the Mothers

are doing in this holy house is pleasing to me and very well done.”²

The holiness of the reform undertaken by Mother Maravillas and her sisters was thus sealed with a supernatural communication, and it was proved once again how much God blesses, even in this life, those who care for His works: “whatever good any one does, he will receive the same again from the Lord” (Eph 6:8).

The Carmelite spirit is restored

The renovation of the building was completed in a record time of five years. To facilitate the observance of the rule, the punctuality of schedules and the participation of the community in common acts, the design of the cells was modified, making them smaller, more cheerful and sunny. A new choir was erected for the use of the nuns, and the old one, with the place where St. Teresa had knelt to receive Communion, was exposed for public visitation. A Teresian museum was also planned with all the mementos of the Saint so that they could be venerated by pilgrims.

In addition, due to the influx of the faithful and priests who wished to celebrate Mass in the monastery, Mother Maravillas entrusted the service of the external sacristy and the care of pilgrims to a newly founded congregation, the Servants of the Gospel, and constructed a building annexed to the monastery to house these religious women.

On the other hand, no less glorious than the material restoration was the moral transformation brought about by the wisdom of Mother Maravillas. Through patience and good example, discipline and the Teresian spirit gradually took root in the Monastery of the Incarnation. The community began to observe the holy customs of the discalced reform, and peace and unity were soon established among the sisters.

Let us collaborate in the reform of the world!

Scripture says that “where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (Rom 5:20). Although resistance to divine grace held sway for four hundred years in that monastery which was the cradle of the vocation of St. Teresa of Jesus, there, too, the mercy of God triumphed magnificently and, through the virtuous action of a chosen soul, marked the history of the Carmelite Order for ever.

In our present days, as we witness the undeniable increase of sin, let us ask St. Teresa, Mother Maravillas of Jesus and all the Carmelite Saints to watch over our souls and make them docile to the action of the Divine Holy Spirit and of the men chosen by Him, so that we may collaborate in the reform of the world and triumph with them in the Reign of Mary! ✧

“Rest assured, for everything that the Mothers are doing in this holy house is pleasing to me and very well done”



Francisco Lecaros



Reproduction



Gustavo Kraij

Interior of the Monastery of the Incarnation, Avila (Spain); in centre, St. Teresa of Jesus - Monastery of the Annunciation, Alba de Tormes (Spain)

¹ GONZÁLEZ CHAVES, Alberto José. A casa de Teresa. 50 años de la restauración del Monasterio de la Encarnación de Ávila por Santa Maravillas de Jesús [The House of Teresa. 50 Years of Restoration at the Monastery of the Incarnation of Avila by St. Maravillas of Jesus]. In: *Santa Madre Maravillas de Jesús*. Madrid. N.178 (2016); p.6.

² MAGDALENA DE JESÚS, OCD. Un hallazgo singular [A Rare Discovery]. In: *Santa Madre Maravillas de Jesús*. Madrid. N.178 (2016); p.19.



The Choice of a Vocation in God's Hands

Even beyond Dona Lucilia's virtuous aspirations to the lofty and sublime was the determination to fulfil God's will, even if this meant relinquishing some of her good inclinations.

Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP

As she approached the age of thirty, during long hours of quiet contemplation mingled with vocal prayer, the desire for the religious life became increasingly defined in Lucilia's soul. However, even beyond her virtuous aspirations to the lofty and sublime was the determination to fulfil God's will, even if this meant relinquishing some of her good inclinations.

She was ready to follow the voice of the Holy Spirit at all moments, cost what it may, convinced that He often made His wishes known through the orders or counsels of her dear father, Dr. Antônio Ribeiro dos Santos.

Docility to the designs of Providence

One evening, with characteristic fatherliness, Dr. Antônio broached the delicate topic of matrimony with his daughter. He reflected that the years were passing by, threatening to leave her a spinster around whom nephews and nieces would play.

Of course, as a good father, Dr. Antônio did not wish to compel Lucilia to make a decision about marriage. But he told his daughter that

a friend of his, Dr. João Procópio de Carvalho, had presented a young lawyer to him, Dr. João Paulo Corrêa de Oliveira, a descendant of an illustrious family from the state of Pernambuco, very refined and intelligent. For these reasons, Dr. Antônio considered him a suitable match, but would leave the final word with her.

Dona Lucilia listened to her father's suggestion with her customary mild and amiable expression – a sign that the stability of her temperance had already reached full bloom.

If the will of Providence was being revealed in this way, why not be glad? Her future husband must be a good man, since he was recommended by Dr. Antônio. What else was needed for her consent? But always measured and prudent, she asked her father for some time to think it over. Only after much prayer and reflection did she consent to having the worthy and genial lawyer presented to her, and they became engaged.

Lucilia was not mistaken when she discerned in her father's words an indication of God's designs for her.

For she was, in fact, called to exercise the irreplaceable role of a good

mother for Dr. Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, a man raised up by God to mark the twentieth century with his virtue and action in favour of the Holy Catholic Church and Christian Civilization.

Wedding pomp

July 15, 1906, was a significant date in São Paulo's social chronicles on account of the brilliant event reported the next day in the "*Correio Paulistano*."

"Yesterday, in this capital, the marriage between Miss Lucilia Ribeiro dos Santos, beloved daughter of Dr.

*Dona Lucilia
heard her father's
suggestion with an
amiable expression.
If the will of
Providence was being
revealed in this way,
why not be glad?*

Antônio Ribeiro dos Santos, and distinguished lawyer Dr. João Paulo Corrêa de Oliveira took place. [...]

“The very well-attended religious ceremony was celebrated at 8:30 in the evening in the chapel of the Diocesan Seminary. The Venerable Archdeacon Francisco de Paula Rodrigues, administrator of the diocese, proffered a beautiful prayer imploring blessings for the couple’s future.”

The numerous guests from the highest society flowing into the church piqued the curiosity of passers-by, who soon formed a lively crowd in front of it.

Immediately following the ceremony these spectators watched with mounting fascination as a winding cortège of carriages and automobiles proceeded toward the Ribeiro dos Santos residence. Leading the way, the newlyweds’ car attracted the most attention, tastefully adorned and upholstered in silk.

The long-awaited encounter with the Eucharistic Jesus

Before the pontificate of St. Pius X at the beginning of the twentieth century, the privilege of First Holy Communion had not yet been extended to children and adolescents. But this was not the only reason that prevented Lucilia from receiving this Sacrament until close to her marriage. The Brazilian population of the time was mostly Catholic and would attend all religious events, yet would rarely receive the Sacraments. This contradictory attitude was partly the result of a vicious anti-clerical campaign – which the censurable conduct of a certain number of ecclesiastics only served to foment.

This brought with it regrettable misunderstandings between the clergy and faithful, and favoured the spreading of appalling rumours such as the insinuation that some priests used the confessional to make shameful propositions to penitents. Within this sad climate, it may be understood why

the heads of many households barred their daughters and wives from Confession. Dr. Antônio thought he was acting correctly by taking such a position.

For a soul ardently devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Communion would have been the natural apex to intimacy with the Divine Saviour. The long delay in receiving this Sacrament was a heavy ordeal for young Lucilia. Although she never allowed this to diminish her high regard for her father, she could not hide her respectful incomprehension with his inflexible attitude, but to no avail.

Her marriage finally allowed her to fulfil her long-awaited desire to receive Our Lord in the Eucharist. As the wedding approached, Dr. Antônio said to his future son-in-law:

“Dr. João Paulo, because of the state of the clergy, I have never permitted Lucilia to go to Confession or, as a result, to receive Communion, although she has truly desired this. Since the situation is improving, I am more inclined to allow it, but this is in fact your decision. If you agree, she will confess and receive Communion now, before the wedding.”

Dr. João Paulo looked at his fiancée to see what she wished. With

customary graciousness, she said that she would like very much to receive Communion regularly. With this agreement between the two of them, Lucilia was able to confess and receive First Holy Communion, on the eve of her wedding (July 14, 1906), in her beloved chapel of Luz Convent. By this means, her soul gained added strength to face the uncertainties of her new state of life. ✧

Taken, with slight adaptations, from: *Dona Lucilia*. Città del Vaticano-Nobleton: LEV; Heralds of the Gospel, 2013, p.97-101

For a soul ardently devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Communion would have been the natural apex to intimacy with the Divine Saviour



Lucio César

The main altar in the chapel of the Luz Monastery, in São Paulo, where Dona Lucilia received her First Communion; previous page: Dona Lucilia shortly before her marriage



Photos: Jano Aracena

Peru – At the invitation of the Operational Command of Ucayali, a Marian Mission was organized by the Heralds in the city of Pucallpa, in the Peruvian Amazon region. The Pilgrim Statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary visited military bases of the Army, Navy, Air Force and National Police, among other places.



Photos: Rogério Baldasso

Italy – The Heralds carried out a Marian Mission in Barrafranca, Sicily, at the request of the parish priest of the municipality, Fr. Salvatore Cumia. The mission included Masses, Confessions, and periods of prayer and catechesis on the message of Fatima, in addition to a memorable visit to a nursing home.



Photos: Arthur Benedetti

Ponta Grossa (Brazil) – At the beginning of winter, the Heralds of the Gospel collected over six thousand warm clothing items through their campaign, with the help of the community and the 13th Armoured Infantry Battalion. Donations were distributed to needy families and the homeless, in a social outreach at the City Hall.



Photos: Breno Fonseca e Luis Plinto

Juiz de Fora (Brazil) – On July 16, the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Metropolitan Archbishop Gil Antônio Moreira presided over the Mass for the inauguration of the towers of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, belonging to the Heralds of the Gospel. Immediately after the celebration, the bell tower blessing ceremony took place, followed by a fireworks display. After a few words from the prelate and Fr. Antônio Guerra, EP, participants viewed a retrospective video of the construction of the church, which began in May 2015.



Photos: Cassio Miguel

Arujá (Brazil) – The choir and orchestra of the Heralds of the Gospel’s Major Seminary was invited to solemnize a Mass at the main parish of Arujá celebrated by Bishop Pedro Luiz Stringhini of Mogi das Cruzes diocese, on August 5. This date marked the 280th anniversary of the finding of the miraculous statue “Senhor Bom Jesus”, the city’s special Patron.

CHURCH AND WORLD EVENTS



Number of Christians killed by terrorists in Nigeria grows

Intersociety, the International Society for Civil Liberties and the Rule of Law of Nigeria, has released a report which highlights that during the present year of 2021 alone, more than 3,400 Christians were killed by Islamic terrorists in that country, an average of seventeen deaths per day.

According to Intersociety, these figures are the second highest since 2014, during which more than 4,000 Christians were victims of the Muslim group Boko Haram, and another 1,200 people were massacred by Fulani herdsmen.

Furthermore, between January and July of 2021, nearly three thousand Christians were kidnapped. It is estimated that for every thirty Christians

kidnapped, at least three end up dying, bringing the number of deaths in captivity to three hundred. One hundred and fifty unregistered murders were also counted, as well as three hundred churches that were threatened, attacked or burned.

The authors of the research lament the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators, which fuels and encourages the repetition of such atrocities. The Nigerian government has also come under heavy criticism for its complicity in crimes against Christians in the country.

Beatification process for Gertrude Detzel begin

On August 15, the opening of the diocesan phase in the beatification process was announced for the Servant of God Gertrude Detzel, a laywoman who dedicated herself to evangelization during the hard years of Stalinist repression. The announcement took place during the Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Bishop Clemens Pickel of San Clemente a Saratov diocese, in the Basilica of St. Joseph in Karaganda, Kazakhstan.

Gertrude Detzel was born in 1904 to a Catholic family in the village

of Rozhdestvensky. At the start of World War II, she was sent to work in the cotton fields south of Kazakhstan and later to the Guryev region, where she served in the Baichunas oil field.

In the midst of her toil, she found time to gather the women together to pray and to speak of God. Denounced, she was arrested, tried and sentenced to ten years of forced labour in Soviet gulags. Her release was decided during the 1954 amnesty, and she settled in Karaganda, where she aided priests who, while in hiding, were organizing the Catholic communities. Gertrude died on August 16, 1971.

First Catholic monastery in Tajikistan

An unprecedented event in Central Asia took place in Tajikistan when its first Catholic monastery of contemplative life was founded last June 27, the day on which the country celebrates its national unity.

The religious family of the Institute of the Incarnate Word (IVE), a foundation of Argentine origin, is responsible for the new monastery. It was named after St. John Paul II, in honour of the Pontiff who was such

Approximately forty thousand pilgrims visit Częstochowa

Despite the pandemic, and fulfilling all health regulations in force, sixty-three groups of pilgrims totalling almost forty thousand visited the Marian Shrine of Częstochowa in Poland to celebrate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary last August 15.

The Bishop of Radom, Most Rev. Marek Solarczyk, saw to the spiritual needs of the pilgrims, and had a trumpet call mark the beginning of the daily activities for the participants. These were individuals of all ages, including clergy, consecrated and lay people, both educated and simple, but all with a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

This year's August pilgrimage was especially an act of thanksgiving for the celebration of the 30th anniversary of World Youth Day in Częstochowa. Therefore, one of



the main events was the concert *Pilgrims Sing the Songs of John Paul II*.

Jasna Gora News

Benedictine Monks Return to Historic Solignac Abbey



After two hundred and thirty years of absence, the Benedictine monks returned at the beginning of August to Solignac Abbey, an emblematic monastery founded in the 7th century by St. Eligius, near Limoges, France.

The Benedictine Order had been expelled from it in 1790, during the French Revolution. Since then, the abbey has been used successively as a prison, a boarding school for girls, a porcelain factory and a shelter for Catholic teachers during the years of the Second World War. Starting in 1945, it housed

the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, more recently becoming the property of the Diocese of Limoges and now belongs once again of the sons of St. Benedict.

According to Dom Jean-Bernard Marie Bories, abbot of the Benedictine monastery of St. Joseph of Clairval, which re-acquired the Solignac Abbey, the locale will not only be used by the Benedictine community, but also as a spirituality centre for prayer and retreats.

The official opening of the monastery is scheduled for November 28.

a strong promoter of the missions in Central Asia at a time when communism still impeded the public expression of the Faith.

Fr. Pedro López, priest responsible for the Catholics in Tajikistan, told *Asia News* that the sisters of the mission will be praying constantly for the apostolic fruits in the country, and that the foundation of the monastery was providential, as it took place before the problems with its neighbour Afghanistan began.

The ceremony was marked by a Holy Mass celebrated by the Apostolic Administrator of Uzbekistan, Fr. Jerzy Maculewicz. This was followed by a short procession with the Virgin of Luján—Patroness of Argentina and of the IVE missions—carried on a litter by the sisters, to be enthroned as Patroness of the house.

Collection on the Church's Social Doctrine published in São Paulo

Kolping Brasil published the *Collection of the Social Doctrine of the Church* at the Ítalo Brasileiro University Centre on August 7, as the fruit of

a course held between 2015 and 2016 in the Diocese of Osasco, subsequently produced into an extensive and thorough work. It is the first publication bearing the Kolping Brasil seal, a non-profit association that strives to overcome all forms of poverty through education and work. The collection is presented in a box with three volumes: *The Person of Jesus Christ and His Message*; *The Social Doctrine of the Church*; *The Life and Work of Blessed Adolfo Kolping*.

The publication was made possible through the support of the Mercy Fund, which received the request for help made by Kolping Brasil Foundation president Edvaldo Azevedo, with the consent of Cardinal Odilo Pedro Scherer, Archbishop of São Paulo, in April 2019, but can only now reap the rewards of its sponsorship. The Cardinal prefaced the first volume of the Collection.

12th-century pipe organ to be restored

Frozen in time, like a kind of “musical Pompeii,” the 221 remaining original pipes of the organ in the

Church of the Nativity, in Bethlehem, West Bank, can be given new life. So hopes David Catalunya, musicologist, historian and University of Oxford researcher, responsible for the project that aims to replicate the original pipes and reconstruct the missing parts of the organ so that it may once again be heard, after eight hundred years.

According to the researcher, the instrument dates from the 12th century and is a unique specimen in the world. Its pipes were discovered in an archaeological dig at the Franciscan monastery of the Church of the Nativity in 1906, along with bells and other liturgical accessories, and were taken to Jerusalem under the care of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land.

Catalunya believes that the French Crusaders brought the organ to the Holy Land in the first half of the 12th century, and that it survived Saladin's invasion in 1187 only because it was regarded as a mere piece of furniture. In 1244 the pipes, bells and other liturgical items were buried in the face of the imminent invasion of the Khwarazmian Turks.

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The Lioness' Loss and the Tortoise's Triumph

What chance does the tortoise have? Its speed is minimal, it has no one to ask for help, and it is incapable of fighting. It has only one defence...



Lorena Mello

It is another day on the vast African savannah. The sky is a deep blue, the sun is blazing, and all the different animals are occupied in their normal activities. Some are mild-natured, and co-exist peaceably with their neighbours. Others, however, are of a more aggressive temperament...

It is dinnertime, and the lioness is on the lookout for something to eat. She strolls quietly along the plain, discretely observing different groups of animals from afar, in search of the most likely meal. She walks with a leisurely air, as if she were merely passing the time, with no particular interest. But everyone is wise enough to know that a lioness prowling around at this time of day can only be looking for food.

"How tired I am today," she says to herself. "I haven't the strength to hunt for large prey. I think I'll look for something simpler to eat. But what will it be? So far I have only come across swifter animals;

to chase and capture one of them, I would spend all my energy."

The lioness wanders on, certain that she will soon find just the right prey to satisfy her appetite. And so she does: a few metres away, she spies a tortoise is making its unhurried way along the ground. Pretending not to have noticed her victim, the lioness casually draws nearer, gloating to herself: "Aha! This tortoise will make a delightful appetizer for my meal. When it least expects it, I will pounce on it and finish it off in no time!"

The tortoise is slow but clever. It sees the predator approaching and thinks: "Hmm... A lioness following me at this hour of the day? That lazybones must be wanting to eat me! How can I escape? This shell I carry doesn't allow me to run."

The big cat finally comes up alongside the tortoise, and, disguising her intentions with a friendly air, she strikes up a conversation:

"Oh, how do you do, tortoise? What a pleasant surprise it is to find you here! I have never seen a tortoise close up. Tell me, how are all the other members of your clan?"

Realizing that it could not flee, the tortoise quickly came up with an idea to save its life.

"The pleasure is all mine, lioness! Unfortunately, all is not well with us tortoises... The scientists who often come to visit this region have just discovered a terrible disease in our species. It seems to be a type of toxic fungus; anyone who touches us or eats us would be seized with dreadful convulsions and would die in a few minutes!"

"Is that true?" gasps the feline.

"Sadly, yes. In fact, we have all been feeling very strange for some time now, without knowing why. But at last everything has become clear. We are all devastated, for from now on we will no longer be able to have any contact with the rest of the animals. We will have to segregate our-

selves completely, otherwise we will infect the entire population of this savannah.”

The lioness, seeing the failure of her plans, replies dismally:

“Oh, what a pity... My deepest sympathy. Well, I must be going. After all, I don’t want to be infected, or to pass this plague on to the other members of the pride. I wish you all a speedy recovery!”

“Thank you kindly, lioness!”

Dejected, the cat turns around and slinks away to seek her meal elsewhere, while the tortoise laughs over the trick it has just played.

As she retreats, the feline broods over her misfortune; she is now famished, and can hear the rumbling of her empty stomach... But suddenly, she comes to her senses and realizes she has been deceived! Enraged, she runs back.

“Oh, no! Here comes my enemy! She has caught on to my ruse. And now how am I going to get myself out of this predicament?”

What chance does the tortoise have against the lioness? Its speed is minimal, it has no one to ask for help, it is incapable of fighting. It has only one defence left: to enter its fortress!

Overtaking the reptile in a few bounds, the lioness cannot believe

her eyes. “What? Where did that tricking tortoise go? I saw it just now! Did it leave its shell and run away? Or could it be inside?”

Intrigued, she turns the tortoise this way and that, looking for some way to reach her prey. But in vain. Nearby, other wild creatures begin to observe her antics and they laugh among themselves to see the lioness playing “ball” with a tortoise. So absorbed is she, however, in unravelling the “mystery” that she pays no attention.

After rolling and tossing the shell around at length, the lioness finally admits defeat and returns home, hungry and humiliated. The triumphant tortoise, for its part, only ventures from its shelter several minutes later – a little dizzy, it is true, but safe and sound! Then it continues slowly on its way, eager to join the other tortoises and tell them of its escapades.

* * *

We are in constant danger, because our “adversary the devil



Disguising her intentions with a friendly air, the lioness says: “Oh, how do you do, tortoise?”

prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Pt 5:8). In moments of trouble, we have an unfailing shelter: the sacred mantle of Our Lady! Like an invincible fortress, it is truly the refuge of sinners and protection for all who find themselves in difficulties and afflictions. Those who confidently turn to the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin will always emerge victorious from the attacks and snares of the infernal enemy! ✧



Our adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. We are in constant danger, but in moments of trouble, we have an unfailing shelter...

THE SAINTS OF EACH DAY

1. St. Therese of the Child Jesus, virgin and Doctor of the Church (†1897 Lisieux - France).

St. Nicetius of Trier, bishop (†561). According to St. Gregory of Tours, he was powerful in preaching, formidable in debate and steadfast in teaching. He was exiled during the reign of Chlothar I.

2. Holy Guardian Angels.

Blesseds Ludovicus Yakichi, his wife Lucia and their sons Andreas and Franciscus, martyrs (†1622). Benefactor of the Dominicans of Nagasaki, Blessed Ludovicus was burned alive, after witnessing the beheading of his wife and children.

3. 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Sts. Andrew of Soveral, Ambrose Francis Ferro, priests, and **companions**, martyrs (†1645 Cunhaú and Uruaçu - Brazil).

St. Gerard of Brogne, abbot (†959). Founder and first superior of the Abbey of Saint-Gérard in Brogne, Belgium. He dedicated himself to the renewal of monastic discipline in Flanders and Lotharingia.

4. St. Francis of Assisi, religious (†1226 Assisi - Italy).

St. Aurea of Paris, abbess (†c.666). Abbess of the Monastery of St. Marcial, in Paris, where about three hundred virgins lived under the rule of St. Columbanus.

5. St. Benedict the Black, religious (†1589 Palermo - Italy).

St. Maria Faustina Kowalska, virgin (†1938 Krakow - Poland).

St. Placid, monk (†sixth century). Disciple of St. Benedict from his childhood. He is patron of Benedictine novices.

6. St. Bruno, priest (†1101 Serra St. Bruno - Italy).

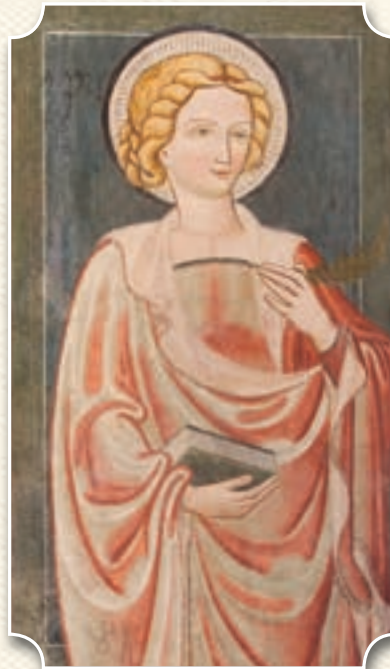
Blessed Marie-Rose Durocher, virgin (†1849). Foundress of the teaching Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in Longueuil, Quebec.

7. Our Lady of the Rosary.

St. Augustus, priest and abbot (†c.560). As he suffered from swollen hands and feet, he supported himself on his knees and elbows. Cured through the intercession of St. Martin, he founded a community of monks in Bourges, France, dedicated to unceasing prayer.

8. St. Reparata (†third century). Tortured and killed during the reign of Decius, for refusing to sacrifice to idols.

9. St. Denis, bishop, and companions, martyrs (†third century Paris).



St. Reparata - Holy Cross Church, Genazzano (Italy)

St. John Leonardi, priest (†1609 Rome).

St. Publia, widow (†fourth century). She entered a monastery after the death of her husband. She was beaten by order of Emperor Julian the Apostate for singing psalms condemning idolatry.

10. 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

St. Cerbonius, bishop (†c.575). Bishop of Populonia in Italy.

11. St. Philip. One of the first seven deacons of the Church. He converted the Samaritan and baptized the minister of Queen Candace of Ethiopia.

12. Blessed Thomas Bullaker, priest and martyr (†1642). Franciscan religious arrested during the reign of Charles I of England while celebrating Holy Mass. He was hanged, drawn and then quartered while still alive in Tyburn.

13. Blessed Magdalene Panattieri, virgin (†1503). In a small chapel of Trino, Italy, this Dominican tertiary gave catechesis and counsel even to priests who came to see her.

14. St. Callistus I, Pope and martyr (†c. 222 Rome).

St. Angadrisma, abbess (†c.695). Superior of the Benedictine monastery of Oroër-des-Vierges, founded by St. Ebrulf near Beauvais, France.

15. St. Teresa of Jesus, virgin and Doctor of the Church (†1582 Alba de Tormes - Spain).

St. Barsen, bishop (†379). Condemned to exile by Arian Emperor Valente, he died in Edessa, Turkey.

16. **St. Marguerite d'Youville**, religious (†1771). Memorial in Canada. As a young widow, she founded the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, the “Grey Nuns”, who serve God in the person of the poor and sick. First Canadian-born canonized Saint.

St. Hedwig, religious (†1243 Trebnitz - Poland).

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, virgin (†1690 Paray-le-Monial - France).

17. 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

St. Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and martyr (†107 Rome).

Blessed Marie Natalie of St. Louis Vanot and companions, virgins and martyrs (†1794). Religious from the Ursuline Order guillotined in Valenciennes, France.

18. **St. Luke**, Evangelist.

St. Asclepiades, bishop (†218). Outstanding confessor of the Faith in the time of the persecutions in Antioch, in present-day Turkey.

19. **Sts. Jean de Brébeuf, Isaac Jogues, priests, and companions**, martyrs (†1642-1649). Memorial in the US. (Feast in Canada, September 26th).

St. Paul of the Cross, priest (†1775 Rome).

St. Frideswide, virgin (†735). She left court life to be abbess in Oxford, England.

20. **St. Cornelius**, the centurion. Baptized by St. Peter in Caesarea of Palestine.

21. **St. Cilinia** (†c.458). Mother of the bishops St. Principius of Soissons, and St. Remegius of Rheims.



St. John of Capistrano - Discalced Carmelite Convent, Lima (Peru)

Photos: Gustavo Krallj

22. **St. Lupentius**, abbot (†c.684). Abbot of Saint-Privat in Javols, Chalons. After enduring false accusations and outrages from Innocentius, Count of that city, he was beheaded.

23. **St. John of Capistrano**, priest (†1456 Ilok - Croatia).

St. Ethelfleda, abbess (†tenth century). While still an adolescent, she consecrated herself to God in the abbey founded by her father Æthelwold, in Romesey, England. She was abbess of the same abbey for many years until her death.

24. 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

St. Anthony Mary Claret, bishop (†1870 Fontfroide - France).

St. Martin of Vertou, deacon and abbot (†sixth century). Ordained deacon by St. Felix, Bishop of Nantes, France, he was sent

by the latter to evangelize pagans in the neighbouring regions. He built and ruled the monastery of Vertou.

25. **St. Anthony of Saint Anne Galvão**, priest (†1822 Brazil).

St. Maurus of Pécs, bishop (†1070). Abbot of the Monastery of St. Martin of Pannonhalma, Hungary, appointed Bishop of Pécs at the suggestion of King St. Stephen.

26. **Sts. Lucian and Marcian**, martyrs (†c. 250). Burned alive in Izmit, Turkey, by order of proconsul Sabinus.

27. **St. Gaudiosus**, bishop (†fifth/sixth century). Bishop of Abitina, in present-day Tunisia, who after having fled the persecution of the Vandals ended his days in a monastery he founded in Naples, Italy.

28. **St. Simon and St. Jude Thaddeus**, Apostles.

St. Vincent, St. Sabina and St. Cristeta, martyrs (†c.305). Having fled from Talavera de la Reina to Avila, they were cruelly assassinated in that Spanish city.

29. **St. Dodo**, abbot (†eighth century). Abbot of Wallers, France, who feeling called to the ascetic life, became a hermit in the vicinity of that monastery.

30. **Blessed Benvenuta Bojani**, virgin (†1292). Dominican tertiary, who consecrated her life to prayer and penance in Cividale del Friuli, Italy.

31. 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Blessed Christopher Romagna, priest (†1272). Friar minor sent by St. Francis of Assisi to preach in Aquitaine. He died a centenarian in Cahors, France.

Courage

Just like the edelweiss, favourite flower of alpinists, which germinates at altitudes that are difficult to reach, certain qualities of soul are reserved for those who are willing to scale the pinnacles of virtue.

The eternal, virginal snows of the Alps, which are constantly battered by icy winds, nobly crown the peaks of imposing rock formations.

During the 19th century, perhaps driven by nostalgia for the epic spirit which shone so brightly in the Europe of bygone days, many young people set out to conquer the summits of those mountains which their ancestors had only contemplated. They received as recompense the sight of grandiose panoramas, the satisfaction of a goal achieved with

pro prowess and, perhaps, a degree of renown...

Unexpectedly, they were also rewarded with a simple treasure endowed with beautiful symbolism. Those daring pioneers came across a tiny jewel of the plant kingdom, hitherto admired only by eagles: the edelweiss – from the German *noble white* or *pure white* –, a small white and velvety flower that would become the symbol of mountaineering.

Since it was endemic to high altitudes and not easy to find, this flower took on legendary tones, and was

considered to endow its possessor with a halo of bravery and unprecedented intrepidity.

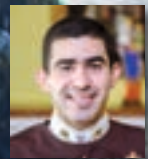
Thus, Franz Joseph I chose it in 1907 as the symbol of the Mountain Troops of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; in Switzerland, the highest ranks of the army used it as an insignia to replace stars; and, during the First World War, it was awarded as a medal to German troops that demonstrated outstanding valour.

For its simplicity and charm, it was also much appreciated by the Austrian aristocracy, who adorned their

and Purity



Franck Hidvégi (CC by-sa 4.0)



Santiago Rodríguez

clothing with fine jewellery inspired by it. Little by little, this mythical plant – also known by the French as *étoile des Alpes*, star of the Alps – celebrated in poems and songs, established itself definitively in the cultural firmament of the Old Continent.

God often manifests the most sublime metaphysical realities to men when they combine the admiring contemplation of nature with tradition. And the edelweiss offers us a clear example of this. Indeed, those who analyse and meditate with a supernatural spirit on the transcendent aspects and

reflections contained in it will find something even more precious: a cathexis, a message from the Creator.

Chastity – purity of body and soul, symbolized by the apparent fragility and whiteness of the flower – sprouts only from the immaculate snow that is devotion to Mary Most Holy, and it is preserved only by those truly combative, daring and audacious souls who, having set their sights on the heights of Christian perfection, resolve to fight to attain it. They are courageous souls, who trust not in their own strength, but only in the grace that

comes to us through Our Lady, abandoned in her maternal arms like edelweiss under the mountain sun.

“Edelweiss souls”, on receiving the last rays of the sun, never withering, finally rise above paltry matter, to sparkle with renewed radiance... Not like the *étoiles des Alpes*, or like fine jewels on the dress of an earthly princess, but with supernatural splendour, they are destined to adorn the crown of Her whose holiness suffuses the whole world with its perfume: Mary, the Queen and Sovereign, invoked as *Splendor Firmamenti*. ✧

The Zillertal Alps viewed from the Schmirn Valley (Austria) with the Kleiner Kaserer peak in the foreground; inset, the edelweiss flower photographed in Queyras Valley (France)

Maboll (CC by-sa 3.0)

St. Therese of the
Child Jesus in 1881

In this photograph at the age of eight, St. Therese is looking at a vague, undefined point, but with a kind of rapt, affectionate, respectful contemplation.

In the final analysis, it is the look proper to a deeply contemplative spirit. Because her gaze has something which is difficult for me to adequately express, but which is that turning of the soul towards things that are entirely superior. Hers was a deeply conscious, meditated, and reasoned childhood. Here is St. Therese of the Child Jesus with all the treasure of meditation that can exist in a child's soul; she lived her childhood true to herself and continued to be herself until the height of her maturity.

Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

