



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

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May 2013

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FROM THE HEART: RESTING IN THE ASCENSION

By Douglas Cramer

Summer is almost here. It's a good time to just take a deep breath, and relax. You know, go to the beach if you live close to it, have a barbeque, invite some friends over. I remember doing this on a grand scale as a child growing up in New Jersey. But how often do most of us do this anymore? We're so busy, we've forgotten that true rest and relaxation, the kind that really restores you, is vital to our survival.

This week the Church celebrates the Ascension of our Lord, and our worship since Pascha has been rooted in our joy in the Resurrection. In the light of this glorious, peaceful and fulfilling period of the calendar of our Church we should be totally relaxed and fully in the presence of our Lord. But we still struggle to relax and unclench, to be at peace.

Why? In part, because we live our lives in a kind of emotional and spiritual shallows. We're so busy, we don't pause to reflect, to listen, to understand our motivations. We are busy for busyness's sake. We allow others to set our timetable. We often aren't aware of the reasons we have for doing what we do. We all act a little crazy sometimes, bustling about with all our tasks and projects and responsibilities. It's important for us to act. But it's just as important for us to relax, to quietly find our center, to understand what's driving us to do what we do, to make sure that our choices and actions flow from our deepest values.

How do we turn this around? We start from the heart!

Know Thyself

The Psalms focus this teaching in to a single verse: "Seek peace and pursue it." We need peace, but we must be active to find it - we must seek and pursue. What does this mean? What is this pursuit? St. Isaac of Syria teaches us the answer: "Enter eagerly into the treasure house that lies within you, and so you will see the treasure house of heaven. The ladder that leads to the Kingdom is hidden within you, and is found in your soul. Dive into yourself, and in your soul you will discover the rungs by which you are to ascend."

Seek. Pursue. Enter. Ascend. I'm winded just reading this list. However, this is the language of peace. Jesus Christ proclaims: "The kingdom of heaven is within." We are called to go within, to find our heart, our center, our soul. And to begin our journey there.

The classical philosophers of Greece understood this basic truth of our humanity even before the birth of Christ. The central teaching of Plato, of Socrates, is "Know Thyself." We must get out of our inner shallows, our superficial sleepwalking through life. We're called to wake up, to dive deep.

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OVERVIEW FOR THE MONTH

www.catholicculture.org

The month of May is dedicated to The Blessed Virgin Mary. The first 19 days of the month fall within the liturgical season of Easter, which is represented by the liturgical color white — the color of light, a symbol of joy, purity and innocence (absolute or restored). The remainder of the month (beginning the Monday after Pentecost) is in Ordinary Time which is represented by the liturgical color green. This symbol of hope is the color of the sprouting seed and arouses in the faithful

the hope of reaping the eternal harvest of heaven, especially the hope of a glorious resurrection.

As Spring blossoms forth and we are surrounded by new life, we spend this month full of the joy of our Easter celebration and in anticipation of the coming of the Holy Spirit, our Consoler and Advocate. ☐

FEASTS FOR MAY ¹

The feasts on the General Roman Calendar celebrated during the month of May are:

- 1 Joseph the Worker, Opt. Mem.
- 2 Athanasius, Memorial
- 3 Philip and James, Feast
- 5 Sixth Sunday of Easter, Sunday
- 10 St. Damien Joseph de Veuster, priest, Opt. Mem.
- 12 Ascension or the Seventh Sunday of Easter, Sunday
- 13 Our Lady of Fatima, Opt. Mem.
- 14 Matthias, Feast
- 15 Isidore the Farmer (USA), Opt. Mem.
- 18 John I, Opt. Mem.
- 19 Pentecost; Whitsunday, Sunday
- 20 Bernardine of Siena, Opt. Mem.
- 21 Christopher Magallanes and companions; Eugene de Mazenod (Canada), Opt. Mem.
- 22 Rita of Cascia, Opt. Mem.
- 25 Bede the Venerable; Gregory VII; Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, Opt. Mem.
- 26 Trinity Sunday, Solemnity
- 27 Augustine of Canterbury, Opt. Mem.
- 31 Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Feast ☐

The feast of St. Philip Neri (May 26) is superseded by the Sunday liturgy. The Solemnity of the Ascension (May 9) is celebrated on May 12 (Sunday) in most dioceses in the United States. ☐

¹ Terms used by the Church to classify the level of liturgical celebration and to determine the proper of the Mass: **Solemnity** – highest degree of liturgical celebration and is reserved for the most important mysteries of faith. | **Feast** – honors a mystery or title of the Lord, of our Lady, or of Saints of particular importance, such as the apostles and evangelists and/or of historical importance. | **Memorial** – usually of saints but may also celebrate some aspects of the Lord or of Mother Mary. Memorial is further classified as optional or obligatory. Some memorials may be celebrated only as commemorations.

OUR CENACLE CORNER

Seeking a deeper relationship with God through meditation of passages from Holy Scriptures

THE GOOD AND THE BAD WILL RISE ON THE LAST DAY

- John 5:28-29

MONEY, WEALTH & ALL THAT IS WORLDLY

- Luke 12:15

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

ST. JOSEPH, THE WORKMAN FEAST DAY – MAY 1

St Joseph the Worker Feast Day is celebrated on May 1 each year. The title, St Joseph the Worker, was given to St Joseph, the patron of carpenters, builders and all workers by Pope Pius XII in 1955.

St Joseph is also patron saint of the universal Church of Christ on earth, the dying, marriages, fatherhood, families, house sales and finances. He is also an excellent example of humility and obedience to the calling of God in his life.

However, it is St Joseph's patronage of workers that is one of his most illustrious titles, warranting a special feast day in his honor.

St Joseph was himself a humble carpenter who knew what it was to work hard, often for meager pay, in order to earn a living to support his wife and foster child. Though a hard worker, he knew poverty and when presenting gifts at Jesus' presentation in the Temple, it was the gift of the poor that St Joseph presented to God, 'a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons' (Lk 2:24).

In these times of recession with unemployment rising high we ask for Joseph's intercession and help from Heaven to help us in our work or indeed to find good, productive work which will improve the society in which we live and give us a spirit of peace and joy. Pope Pius wrote a prayer especially for this great Feast:

"Oh glorious St Joseph, model of all who are devoted to labor, obtain for me the grace to work in the spirit of penance in expiation of my many sins; to work conscientiously by placing love of duty above my inclinations; to gratefully and joyously deem it an honor to employ and to develop by labor the gifts I have received from God, to work methodically, peacefully and in moderation and patience, without ever shrinking from it through weariness or difficulty to work; above all, with purity of intention and unselfishness, having unceasingly before my eyes death and the account I have to render of time lost, talents unused, good not done, and vain complacency in success, so harmful to the work of God.

All for Jesus, all for Mary, all to imitate you, O Patriarch St Joseph! This shall be my motto for life and eternity. Amen"

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION - MAY 12

*Fr. Kevin O'Sullivan, O.F.M.
Excepted from The Sunday Readings*

The death of a member of his family or of a loved friend, must be the saddest event imaginable in the life of an atheist. He is one who really is convinced that there is no God, no future life and therefore that the relative or friend is to turn into dust in the grave, never to be met with again. The thought that every day that passes is bringing him too nearer to that same sad fate, death, which will be the end of all his ambitions, all his enjoyments, the end of everything he thought he was or had, must be something hard to live with.

Thank God, we have the good fortune to know, and reason and faith convince us of this truth, that death is not the end of man. It is rather the real beginning. Today's feast - the Ascension of our Lord in his human nature - to his Father's and our Father's home, is the confirmation and the guarantee of this doctrine of our faith. We shall all rise from the grave with new, glorified bodies and ascend to heaven, as Christ did. There we'll begin our true life of eternal happiness.

While it is true that even for good Christians the death of a beloved one is a cause of sorrow and tears, this is natural as we still are of the earth earthly. Yet the certitude that our beloved one has gone to his true life and will be there to meet us when our turn comes, is always at the back of our minds to console and comfort us. What all human beings want is to live on forever with our dear ones. Death breaks that continuity but only for a little while. That break is necessary for the new life to begin.

It is only in heaven that this natural desire of an unending life with all those we love can be realized and death on earth is the door to that eternal life.

Look up to heaven today. See Christ ascending to his Father and our Father. Say : Thank you, God, for creating me, and for giving me, through the Incarnation of your beloved Son, the possibility and the assurance that if I do my part here, when death comes it will not be an enemy but a friend, to speed me on my way to the true, supernatural life which you have, in your love, planned and prepared for me.

It was written, and foretold, that Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory. The servant is not above the Master. I too must suffer. I too must accept the hardships and the trials of this life, if I want, and I do, to enter into the life of glory. Christ, who was sinless, suffered hardship and pain. I have earned many, if not all of my hardships, by my own sins. I should be glad of the opportunity to make some atonement for my past

offenses, by willingly accepting the crosses he sends me. These crosses are signs of God's interest in my true welfare. Through him he is giving me a chance to prepare myself for the day of reckoning, for the moment of my death which will decide my eternal future. For every prayer I say for success in life, I should say three for a successful death, a death free from sin and at peace with God. □

TRINITY SUNDAY – MAY 26

*By Fr. Munachi E. Ezeogu, cssp
Munachi's Homepage of African Christian Inspiration*

The story is told of St Augustine of Hippo, a great philosopher and theologian. He was preoccupied with the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. He wanted so much to understand the doctrine of one God in three persons and to be able to explain it logically. One day he was walking along the sea shore and reflecting on this matter. Suddenly, he saw a little child all alone on the shore. The child made a hole in the sand, ran to the sea with a little cup, filled her cup with sea water, ran up and emptied the cup into the hole she had made in the sand. Back and forth she went to the sea, filled her cup and came and poured it into the hole. Augustine drew up and said to her, "Little child, what are you doing?"

She replied, "I am trying to empty the sea into this hole."

"How do you think," Augustine asked her, "that you can empty this immense sea into this tiny hole and with this tiny cup?"

She answered back, "And you, how do you suppose that with your small head you can comprehend the immensity of God?" With that the child disappeared.

The doctrine of the inner relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in such a way that each of them is fully and equally God, yet there are not three Gods but one, cannot be fully comprehended by the human mind. It is a mystery.

If we expected Scripture readings to give us a clear and elaborate presentation of the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, we have found out that they simply do not. The doctrine of three persons in one God, equal in divinity yet distinct in personality, is not explicitly spelt out in the Bible. In fact the very word "Trinity" is not found in the Bible. Early Christians arrived at the doctrine when they applied their God-given reason to the revelation which they had received in faith. Jesus spoke about the Father who sent him (the Son) and about the Holy Spirit whom he was going to send. He said that the Father had given him (the Son) all that he has and that he in turn has given to the Holy Spirit all that he has received from the Father. In this we see the unity of purpose among the three persons of the Trinity.

In the story of salvation we usually attribute creation to the Father, redemption to the Son and sanctification to the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, though they are distinct as persons, neither the Father nor the Son nor the Holy

Spirit ever exists or acts in isolation from the other two persons of the Godhead.

Like Augustine we may not be able to understand the how of the Trinity but I think it is very important to understand the why. Why did God reveal to us this mystery regarding the very nature of the Supreme Being? The importance of this doctrine lies in this: we are made in the image of God, therefore, the more we understand God the more we understand ourselves. Experts in religion tell us that people always try to be like the god they worship. People who worship a warrior god tend to be warmongering, people who worship a god of pleasure tend to be pleasure-seeking, people who worship a god of wrath tend to be vengeful, and people who worship a god of love tend to be loving. Like a god, so the worshippers. Therefore, the more important question for us to ask today is: What does the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity tell us about the kind of God we worship and what does this say about the kind of people we should be? On this, I have two points to share with you.

- (1) God does not exist in solitary individualism but in a community of love and sharing. God is not a loner. This means that a Christian in search of Godliness (Matthew 5:48) must shun every tendency to isolationism. The ideal Christian spirituality is not that of flight from the world like that of certain Buddhist monastic traditions where the quest for holiness means permanent withdrawal to the Himalayas away from contact and involvement with people and society.
- (2) True love requires three partners. You remember the old saying "Two is company, three is a crowd." The Trinity shows us that three is community, three is love at its best; three is not a crowd. Taking an example from the human condition we see that when a man A is in love with a woman B they seal the loving by producing a baby C. Father, mother and child -- love when perfected becomes a trinity.

We are made in God's image and likeness. Just as God is God only in a Trinitarian relationship, so we can be fully human only in a relationship of three partners. The self needs to be in a horizontal relationship with others and a vertical relationship with God. In that way our life becomes Trinitarian like that of God. Then we discover that the so-called "I-and-I" principle of unbridled individualism which is acceptable in modern society leaves much to be desired. The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity challenges us to adopt rather an I-and-God-and-neighbour principle. I am a Christian insofar as I live in a relationship of love with God and other people. May the grace of the Holy Trinity help us to banish all traces of self-centeredness in our lives and to live in love of God and of neighbour. □

KNOWING OUR SAINTS

SAINT ISIDORE, THE LABOURER FEAST DAY – MAY 15

www.wikipedia.org

Isidore the Labourer, also known as Isidore the Farmer, was a Spanish day laborer known for his piety toward the poor and animals. He is the Catholic patron saint of farmers and of Madrid and of La Ceiba, Honduras. His feast day is celebrated on May 15.

Isidore was born to very poor parents in Madrid, in about the year 1070, of poor but very devout parents, and was christened Isidore from the name of their patron, St. Isidore of Seville. Isidore spent his life as

a hired hand in the service of the wealthy Madrileño landowner Juan de Vargas on a farm in the city's vicinity. He shared what he had, even his meals, with the poor. Juan de Vargas would later make him bailiff of his entire estate of Lower Caramanca.

Isidore married Maria Torribia, known as Santa María de la Cabeza in Spain because her head (cabeza in Spanish) is often carried in procession, especially during droughts. Isidore and Maria had one son. On one occasion, their son fell into a deep well and, at the prayers of his parents, the water of the well is said to have risen miraculously to the level of the ground, bringing the child with it. In thanksgiving Isidore and Maria then vowed sexual abstinence and lived in separate houses. Their son later died in his youth.

Isidore died on May 15, 1130, at his birthplace close to Madrid.

Miracle stories

Every morning before going to work, Isidore was accustomed to hearing Mass at one of the churches in Madrid. One day, his fellow labourers complained to their master that Isidore was always late for work in the morning. Upon investigation, so runs the legend, the master found Isidore at prayer whilst an angel was doing the ploughing for him.

On another occasion, his master saw an angel ploughing on either side of him, so that Isidore's work was equal to that of three of his fellow labourers. Isidore is also said to



have brought back to life his master's deceased daughter, and to have caused a fountain of fresh water to burst from the dry earth to quench his master's thirst.

One snowy day, when going to the mill with corn to be ground, he passed a flock of wood-pigeons scratching vainly for food on the hard surface of the frosty ground. Taking pity on the poor animals, he poured half of his sack of precious corn upon the ground for the birds, despite the mocking of witnesses. When he reached the mill, however, the bag was full, and the corn, when it was ground, produced double the expected amount of flour.

Isidore's wife, Maria, always kept a pot of stew on the fireplace in their humble home as Isidore would often bring home anyone who was hungry. One day he brought home more hungry people than usual. After she served many of them, Maria told him that there simply was no more stew in the pot. He insisted that she check the pot again, and she was able to spoon out enough stew to feed them all.

He is said to have appeared to Alfonso VIII of Castile, and to have shown him the hidden path by which he surprised the Moors and gained the victory of Las Nevas de Tolosa, in 1212. When King Philip III of Spain was cured of a deadly disease after touching the relics of the saint, the king replaced the old reliquary with a costly silver one.

Isidore was beatified in Rome on 2 May 1619, by Pope Paul V. He was canonized nearly three years later by Pope Gregory XV, along with Saints Ignatius of Loyola, Francis Xavier, Teresa of Avila, and Philip Neri, on 12 March 1622.

Saint Isidore is widely venerated as the patron saint of farmers, peasants and day laborers. The cities of Madrid, Leon, Saragossa, and Seville honour him as their patron. The US National Catholic Rural Life Conference claims him as its patron. San Ysidro, California and San Ysidro, New Mexico were named after him.

His master Juan de Vargas's house in Madrid is now a museum with temporary exhibitions on Madrilenian subjects, as well as on the life of the saint.

The story of St. Isidore is a reminder of the dignity of work and ordinary life can lead to holiness. Legends about angel helpers and mysterious oxen indicate that his work was not neglected and his duties did not go unfulfilled. St. Isidore's life demonstrates that: If you have your spiritual self in order, your earthly commitments will fall into order also." □

MEDITATION AND COMMENTARY

WELCOMING THE WORD

Dr. Adrian Rogers

"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." James 1:21-24

Do you want to be a successful, vibrant Christian? Then, you must stay in the Word of God. There is power in the Word of God. And the reason so many Christians are anemic is they have never learned to receive the Word of God.

Now, I'm not just talking about casually reading it. The word receive here means not just to reach out and take the Word, but to open your heart and welcome it. I want to tell you three ways James tells us to welcome or receive the Word.

Welcome the Word with Repentance

Once, someone came up to a man and said, "You have a carrot in your ear."

He said, "Huh?"

"You have a carrot in your ear."

"Huh?"

"You have a carrot stuck in your ear."

He said, "I can't hear you, I have a carrot in my ear."

Now, it seems that God is trying to tell us there's something wrong with us, but we can't hear Him because the very thing that's wrong with us is keeping us from hearing Him tell us what is wrong with us. (Did you get that?) And we're not going to be able to receive the Word until we take out of our ears that which is stopping up our ears. That's what it means in verse twenty-one when it says, "lay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness."

Do you want the Bible to speak to you, to be alive to you? I know of no way you can do it unless you're willing to repent.

Receive the Word with Readiness

And then verse twenty-one tells us to "receive with meekness the engrafted word." Look at that word

meekness. It means "to have a compliant spirit," a spirit ready to obey. If you are meek, you are "teachable, trainable, and controllable."

Do you know why some folks don't really understand the Word of God? Because when God's Word says something, they parade it past the jury of their mind. The Word of God says ABC, and they say, "Let me see...ABC.... Does that sound right? I believe A...but I'm not so sure about B. Yea...C is all right. Well, let me see...what about that B?" And they try to figure it out. They're not teachable.

Receive the Word with Responsiveness

Finally, verse twenty-two instructs us to be "doers of the Word, and not hearers only." Do you know what's wrong with some folks? Listening to sermons! They have a notebook full of sermons, and they feel so good about all their knowledge. But they have no intention of obeying what they hear. They become hearers of the Word without becoming doers.

James gives us a great example of what he's talking about. He says a person who merely hears the Word is like a man who wakes up in the morning — his beard is grown out; his hair is tussled; he's got bags under his eyes; and he's still got soup on his mustache from last night. He looks in the mirror for a moment and agrees that he needs to put his face in shape. But after a fleeting glance, he goes his way and goes off to work looking like that. He's just like he was — no change. He saw it and forgot it.

Dig into the Word

I believe it was Peter Lord who said, "What we really believe, we live by. The rest is just religious talk." You want me to give you a test so you can see whether or not you're really receiving the Word? Is your knowledge of the Bible making you more like Jesus Christ? That's a simple test.

So many of us have sort of a little Brylcreem type of devotions — a little dab will do you. We read a little or we've got some little book of devotions, and that's it. When will we get the Bible and peer into to it, study it, and let it change our lives? That's where the victory is! □

GOD TOUCHED ME

ULTIMATE VALUE

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal.

- Matthew 6:19-20

By Gina, a devotee

What a surprise! A Christmas card from a long, lost friend. Of course I was indeed happy and reciprocated by sending a card along with my telephone numbers, urging to meet sometime after the holidays. It is always a nostalgic feeling to hear from people you cared about. We were friends for ten years as we started working in the same school. We both came to this country with nothing but a job. And we were both committed and driven. Somehow we drifted apart, she changed career, moved to a better job, got married, and raised a family. Interestingly enough, that distance was not the cause of why we parted. We basically live within an eight mile radius. I have always felt that it had something to do with her spouse, who at that time had insecurity issues with regard to her close friendship with me. I respected that and eventually eased out from their lives.

Now, twenty years after, we got re-connected! Just like me, she is also an empty-nester. She has two grown children, both college graduates and they have become valuable members of the society. The pride of a parent, let alone the pride of Filipino parents - bright, educated children, stable, and independent. She has worked hard to maintain a stable marriage and her husband has worked hard too, to secure financial stability. The American dream, as you may call it, is achieved! Is it not the reason why we work so hard in this adopted mother land? Of course, for the security of our future and the comfortability of our daily lives. Do you sense a tinge of jealousy on my part? After all, I am not there yet! Jealousy it is not, but a feeling of angst inside of me, probing and reflecting of where we are now at mid-life. Let me get back to this feeling later on.

So my long lost friend and I met, with our spouses, and guess where? In a line dancing group which meets weekly, not the least to be expected, if you are Filipino. I was truly happy to see her and I know the feeling is mutual. Her husband has mellowed a lot and seemed more eager to let us into their lives this time. We are currently in the process of catching up and time, I hope, is on our side.

As to that feeling of angst, where is it coming from? This friend of mine threw a huge birthday celebration for her mom, her 75th birthday. It was truly a joyous celebration, something to be grateful for – life, longevity,

and health. It is interesting that one statement said that night could cast a spell on my complex mind like a bomb defusing from nowhere! My friend delivered a well-crafted speech, thanking everyone who came and supported them all along but it was the last sentence that got me thinking. And she said, “we all have to be grateful here in this land as we are all better off”. What she meant did not matter to me as it already moved me in a different direction. After all this is a statement open to different interpretations. In retrospect, are we really better off? Am I really better off? I have a roof on my head, food on my table, clothes and shoes that could not fit in my closet, just enough money to pay our monthly bills, and a fairly good health. Grateful I am, to God. Better off than any people outside this country, I am not so sure. Unless we measure the worth of one’s success in material accumulations, worldly accomplishments such as job status and children’s accomplishments! Is this what we have to show forth? What about our fellow citizens way back from home, who toil day in and day out, year in and year out, and yet have not achieved the material stability that most people we know have achieved. Are they less better off? Fellow citizens of the journey who are constantly dependent on God’s providence, truly living and believing in, “Give us this day our daily bread”, with contentment in their heart for the little joys that come their way, and the hopeful anticipation of another day. They are not any less better but they got more! And I am truly jealous! The more we accumulate, the unhappy we become, the more fearful we become when we lose what we have, and the more we lose track of what God truly intends for us.

Every one of our treasures, except our relationship to God and his people, is temporary. So why do we spend so much time investing in things that will not satisfy or sustain? Jesus urges us to invest in what is lasting, eternal, and ultimately perfect.

At this point of my life, all I wanted to do is to simplify my life because it is when we become materially poor that we become empty vessels for God’s grace. Let us join hands and strip ourselves of the worldly attachments and leave room for the purpose God wills for us. May our lives, our hearts, and our souls be vessels that await the flow of God’s Spirit! □

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

- You are enjoined to practice Eucharistic Adoration at least an hour a week. Let us render God adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and petition. Kindly check with your respective parishes for schedules. Some churches are open 24-hours for Eucharistic Adoration.
- Pray at least one rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary daily.
- Pray the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy at 3:00 PM and at 9:00 PM daily.
- Pray the Angelus at 6:00 PM daily.
- Pray the Pro-Life Scriptural Rosary [www.rosaryoftheunborn.com] to make reparation for the crime of abortion.
- Think of ways to make reparation to Mary for the sins committed against Jesus and Mary. A very good one is to join the **First Saturday devotion**; another is the **2000 Hail Mary devotion**.
- During May, encourage your children to show special devotion to the Blessed Mother. Daily recitation of the Rosary is one way of doing so; keeping fresh flowers before the painting of the Mother and Child in your home may be another. The Litany to the Blessed Virgin may be recited in addition. Instruct your children about the many benefits which can be derived from a wholesome devotion to Our Lady.
- Set aside a special time or times a day to offer devotions to Mary to invite her to your life a little more deeply.
- Take time to research the many ways Mary has appeared to the world since Biblical times – Lourdes, Guadalupe, and others.
- Re-read the Gospels to see how God works through the Blessed Virgin to glorify all creation.
- Give up a bad habit, such as yelling at other drivers or eating sweets, and substitute Hail Mary's until the desire goes away.
- Pray the Novena to the Holy Spirit starting on May 9, Ascension Thursday.
- If you have any personal articles or God's miracle in your life you want to share with the devotees, we will gladly add it on those months when the article is relevant. Please submit your article by the second week of the present month so that it can be included in the next month's release. Write what's in your mind and heart and not worry about grammar, syntax, spelling or style. Our guardian angels in heaven and on earth will help us edit the article. □

... I am your Mother Mary.

On this day, my children, offer your prayers for individuals whose lives are dedicated to evil thoughts and deeds, solely for the destruction of their fellow humans. As I have said before, these are souls who are misled by others who are themselves influenced by the evil one to be executors of his evil will.

Sincere prayers will give enough strength to their individual angels to persuade their souls to think more deeply the repercussions of their actions.

Be more intent in your prayers my children and open your hearts also for the souls passing through from this physical life to the spiritual life of eternal bliss or to eternal damnation. Free will they have used either with God's intention or misused with the evil one's intention.

The beads of my rosary are your strength of power to battle the advances of the evil one and his agents.

Thank you my children for adhering to my call.

I love you my children.

*- Mary, your Lady of Grace
04202013*

SPIRITUAL ARMY NEWS DISPATCH

DIVINE MERCY CELEBRATION & 1ST SUNDAY DEVOTION TO GOD THE FATHER

April's 1st Sunday Devotion to God the Father and the Feast of the Divine Mercy were concurrently celebrated by The Spiritual Army of God the Father, at the Monastery of the Angels in Los Angeles and at St. Bridget's



in Las Vegas. Devotional prayers to God the Father preceded the Divine Mercy procession and flower offering. Fr. Ray Matunog, a member of the Metropolitan Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and Fr. Innocent Anyanwu, C.S.SP. celebrated the Mass, in Los Angeles and Las Vegas, respectively.

Devotees enjoyed an hour of fellowship partaking on sumptuous croissant sandwiches, chips and mini-chocolate muffins prepared by some kind-hearted and generous devotees. □



PRAYING FOR AND SUPPORTING OUR PRIEST OF TOMORROW - LA DEVOTEES MEET ABBE' JOEL

Abbe' Joseph Joel Estrada, the seminarian who The Spiritual Army has adopted [to lend financial assistance for completion of his seminary program and ultimately, his ordination to priesthood], was in LA for his Easter break from Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest in Tuscany, Italy. Just before the 1st Saturday Devotion Cenacle, Abbe' Joel answered questions from devotees relating to his vocation and the Institute. He was also present at the Divine Mercy Celebration|1st Sunday Devotion to God the Father at the Monastery of the Angels. The Spiritual Army of God the Father looks forward to Abbe Joel's ordination to the diaconate on

July 3, 2013, after which he will only be one step away from the sacred priesthood.

*"Honor the Lord with your wealth,
with the first fruits of all your crops;
then your barns will be filled to overflowing,
and your vats will brim over with new wine."
Proverbs 3:9-10*

To our benefactors and donors:

We thank you for the unselfish support financially and spiritually. Your benevolence has brought the Ministry to where it is right now. The plan and the will of God, we can only put into actions. His imprimatur of approval can only be known by the progress of the Ministry and benefits derived by our beneficiaries through our outreach programs.

For your continuing support or one time love gift, visit our web site donation link and follow the instructions @ www.spiritualarmyofgod.org.

Thank you | Salamat Po | Gracias | Merci | Danke | Grazie | Mahalo | Kamsamnida | Arigatou gozaimasu

UPCOMING EVENTS

CORONATION OF MARY

SATURDAY, MAY 4, 2013
CONVENT OF THE SISTER
DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE MASTER
501 N. BEAUDRY AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CA
AND
AT THE CENACLE HOUSE
IN LAS VEGAS, NV

FEAST DAY OF THE FATHER OF ALL MANKIND

SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2013
THE MONASTERY OF THE ANGELS
1977 CARMEN AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90068
AND
ST. BRIDGET'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
220 N. 14TH STREET
LAS VEGAS, NV

START SAVING UP FOR
**PILGRIMAGE TO
MOTHER MARY'S
APPARITION SHRINES
PORTUGAL | SPAIN | FRANCE**
DECEMBER 2014

THANK YOU

... a small and simple phrase that comes from a grateful heart!

Psalm 106:2

FOR PRAYERS HEARD AND PETITIONS GRANTED

Thank you, Eternal Father, for Your Will that transformed our sorrow into joy, our tears of anguish into tears of thanksgiving. Our physical and spiritual re-creation, through Your Healing Hands, kept us enclosed and revived in our hope for renewed lives as we look up to the heavens praising You, in Jesus' most Holy Name, through the intercession of Mary, our Blessed Mother, and of the angels and saints.



*I would like to give thanks for a petition granted,
that our son Peter Clinton has been accepted into
Gymnasium.*

Thank You Lord, for Your kindness and mercy!



From our Worldwide Web

*Thank for very much for your prayers for
Samantha who has been in the hospital since
March 25th. She had her surgery on April 9 and it
was a great success. Our prayers have been
answered. Now I ask for your continued prayers
for her speedy recovery. Thank you again!*

- Lori Paguio



*Lord, I give You thanks for dying
on the cross for my sins.*



*Thank You, Dear Lord, for bringing us all into the
healing light of Your everlasting Love. Your
Prayer Warriors are true and mighty. Dear Lord,
we come to You to ask blessings for each and every
one of these Warriors. Lord, we ask You continue
to love, guide, and protect these devotees who have
so eagerly given of themselves. Grant this prayer,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

2000 HAIL MARY DEVOTION

The Spiritual Army of God the Father acknowledges with thanks our generous May sponsors of the 2000 Hail Mary Devotion. We are grateful that we have merited their partnership and support in providing a venue of spirituality and fellowship for the devotees of our Blessed Mother. The devotion continues to be a constant success.

Los Angeles, California

Marilyn Batino | Alice Ng
Sulay Leon-Pilcher | Carolina Pineda
Glecy Rosario | Aida Terashima

Evelyn Real | Aida Terashima
Coordinators

Las Vegas, Nevada

Dr. & Mrs. Ramon Santos
Laddie & Gertrude Regalado

From the Heart: Resting in the Ascension

This isn't easy. Indeed, it's the work of a life time. So, we just start wherever we are, and work through our stumblings. St. Isaac also said, "There is no virtue which does not have continual struggle yoked to it." Or consider how the abbot of a monastery once answered a question about what the monks do all day: "We fall down and we get up, we fall down and we get up ..."

We're all swamped by too much information. There's an Orthodox saying that through most of the 20th century the devil tried to overcome the Church by repressing information, by making it impossible for people to hear God's Word. And sadly, this is still happening in many places. But, the saying goes, today the devil has changed his strategy - he's trying to flood us with words and ideas, with too much information, trying to make it impossible for us to find God's Word amidst all the distraction.

But this doesn't have to stop us. Elder Paisios, a great 20th century teacher of Mt. Athos, taught that we must be like bees. A bee will find the one flower in a field of dung, Paisios said. The problem is we often act like flies instead, who find the one pile of dung in a field of flowers. God's will is our flower. We need to question and seek within ourselves, and find Him.

It's Easy To Go Wrong

The reading from the Gospel of St. John for the Sunday of the Blind Man (John 9:1-38), the Sunday before Ascension, lay out just how easy it is to get caught in the thickets of bad motivations, of how lost people become by trying to do the right things for the wrong reasons. And of how the solution is to remain centered in the peace of Christ.

Why are we doing what we are doing? Know thyself, find the treasure house, and you will find the source of right reasons.

The story of the Blind Man shows us the contrast between being centered in the peace of Jesus Christ, and being lost in a confusion of thoughts and unquestioned assumptions and motivations. Christ corrects his disciples misunderstanding that the man was born blind as a punishment from God. Christ teaches them the plain truth: "I must work the works of Him who sent Me ... I am the light of the world." He is light. He is clarity. He is our center and source, the rock on which we can stand firm.

He restores the blind man's sight. And immediately, in rushes more confusion as the crowds try to figure out what happened, finally getting the Pharisees involved. You can hear the arguments running thick and heavy, the raised voices and the lack of peace among all the parties involved - even the blind man's parents, who try to avoid getting drawn in to the courtroom drama over Christ's miracle. Yet the man born blind ultimately triumphs by

remaining centered in Christ. He knows himself. He knows the truth—that he was born blind, and that Christ healed him. And in knowing himself, he finds himself on the path of Christ. With no one standing with him, he speaks from his heart and tells the Pharisees: "If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing." The final scene is of his victory, worshipping Christ and proclaiming "Lord, I believe!"

We so often don't know why we do what we do. We're distracted by too much information. We haven't ventured deep in to ourselves. **We may be doing good works, but are we doing them for the right reasons?** Our salvation depends on the answer. So we all need to relax. To unclench. To seek peace.

Once we turn our attention towards seeking peace in our hearts, we can take that seeking with us to Church. Pursue your peace there. The Church is your gateway. We need community, yet we are fractured by loneliness. But we were not meant to be alone. The whole New Testament is built around the work of the Holy Spirit to create this new community, the Church, to show the world just how people are supposed to be community together. A person who puts his or her best energies into knowing God will discover that God, as Trinity, is the model for community. But knowing God isn't the same as knowing about God. A relationship with God is not simply an intellectual pursuit. It requires opening your heart to an intimate knowledge of God founded on personal communion with God Himself.

The Church is the gateway to the Kingdom. It is also the image of the Kingdom - it is our treasure house. So draw on the treasures in our worship, our Scripture, our icons, our music, our prayer, our theology. Use these treasures on your journey, on your pursuit to peace. Come to this refuge, and depart refreshed. □

This reflection is adapted from a speech originally written for Fr. Christopher Metropulos of St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Ft. Lauderdale, FL, and SCOBA's Orthodox Christian Network.

DEVOTION SCHEDULE



THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER

WWW.SPIRITUALARMYOFGOD.ORG

cordially invites you to the following devotions:

In Los Angeles:

1st Saturday Devotion

The Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master | 501 N. Beaudry Avenue | (213) 250-7962
Holy Mass starts at 8:30 A.M. | 1st Saturday Devotional Prayers follow.

Devotion to God the Father

Every 1st Sunday of the Month

The Monastery of the Angels | 1977 Carmen Avenue on Gower | (323) 466-2186
11:20 A.M. - Rosary to the Father | 11:50 A.M. - Holy Mass
1:00 P.M. - Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
Confession ongoing from 11:20 A.M. to 11:45 P.M.

2000 Hail Mary Devotion – May 18, 2013

at the Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master | starting at 8:30 a.m.
Please see Victor if you wish to become a Sponsor of the 2000 Hail Mary Devotion.

In Las Vegas:

1st Saturday Devotion

at The Cenacle House in The Enclave, 8455 West Sahara Avenue #172, Las Vegas, NV 89117 at 1:00 P.M.
Cenacle will be at 10:00 A.M. before the devotional prayers
Please call Evelyn at (702)274-4315 for entry to The Enclave or for more information.

Devotion to God the Father

Every 1st Sunday of the month at 2:00-3:30 P.M.

at The Cenacle House in The Enclave, 8455 West Sahara Avenue #172, Las Vegas, NV 89117

2000 Hail Mary Devotion – May 18, 2013

*Please call (702) 255-9616 or (702) 274-4315 for
dates and venues for the coming months or for more information or if you wish to Sponsor the Devotion.*

In Laughlin, Nevada:

1st Saturday Devotion

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church | 3055 El Mirage Way
Holy Mass starts at 8:00 A.M. Devotional prayers follow.

In Northern California:

1st Saturday Devotion

2000 Hail Mary Devotion

*Please call (650) 766-2071 for dates and venues for information.
For Sacramento, please call Precy Rieta (916) 564-3733; Caring Sturgill (916) 897-3194;
Maria Rosario (916) 230-7756.*

In San Diego

Rosary to the Father

Monday – Saturday after the 8:00 A.M. Mass [Look for Iris Haj]
St. Mary's Church | 1160 S. Broadway | Escondido, CA 92025

In the Philippines

2000 Hail Mary Devotion - Metro Manila Area

Letty Rollan has organized the 2000 Hail Mary Devotion in various areas of Metro Manila through the members of the "Mother Butler." Please call her U.S. Vonage phone (510) 779-6652, text her at Manila #916-384-9300, and/or call her Manila landline 939-4677. Mention Mila Lumba's name to be recognized.