



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

September 2013

MARY, MOTHER OF SORROWS: THE MYSTERY OF COMFORT AND HOPE

Louis J. Cameli, abridged

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*luxta crucem tecum stare
ac me tibi sociare
in planctu desidero.*

*Fac ut portem Christi mortem
passionis fac me sortem
et plagas recolare.*

I want to stand with
you next to the cross
and I want to join you
in your grieving.

Make me bear Christ's death
make me share his passion
make me recall his wounds.

Ten or twenty years ago, it
would have been unthinkable
or, at least, improbable, to
consider writing about Mary as
the mother of sorrows.

Devotion to Mary under that title and in Roman Catholic circles had its heyday in the 40s and 50s. Time has passed and given us larger perspectives. The flood of peppy and overly optimistic postconciliar spiritualities failed to satisfy people, precisely because they did not and could not engage people on the level of suffering.

There is a vast quantity of suffering in the world. It extends from deeply personal and hidden domains through social patterns and global realities. It even reaches a cosmic dimension. These abstract levels of suffering are marked out very specifically by sorrowing mothers. In some particular and powerful way, a large quantity of human suffering coalesces in the hearts of mothers. In this context, the early and, in the Christian tradition, paradigmatic figure of Mary, mother of sorrows, is worth pursuing for greater understanding.

Even before a theology of suffering was elaborated, the images of a young and suffering mother, bearing a child in a hostile world and an older mother standing before the cross of her son as he was dying captivated generations of believers. The embodiment in art and poetry and music of the Mater Dolorosa suggests that priority needs to be given to the primary experience which is both imaginative and affective.



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OVERVIEW FOR THE MONTH

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The month of September is dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows, whose memorial the Church celebrates on September 15. September falls during the liturgical season known as Ordinary Time, which is represented by the liturgical color green.

During September, as in all of Ordinary Time (formerly known as Time After Pentecost), the Liturgy does not focus on one particular mystery of Christ, but views the mystery of Christ in all its

aspects. We follow the life of Christ through the Gospels, and focus on the teachings and parables of Jesus and what it means for us to be a follower of Christ. During Ordinary Time we can concentrate more on the saints and imitate their holiness as Christ's followers. ☐

FEASTS FOR SEPTEMBER

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

- 3 Gregory the Great, Memorial
- 9 Peter Claver (USA), Memorial
- 12 Most Holy Name of Mary, Opt. Mem.
- 13 John Chrysostom, Memorial
- 14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Feast
- 16 Cornelius and Cyprian, Memorial
- 17 Robert Bellarmine, Opt. Mem.
- 19 Januarius, Opt. Mem.
- 20 Andrew Kim Taegon, Paul Chong Hasang and Companions, Memorial
- 21 Matthew, Feast
- 23 Pio of Pietrelcina, Memorial
- 26 Cosmas and Damian, Opt. Mem.
- 27 Vincent de Paul, Memorial
- 28 Wenceslaus; Lawrence Ruiz and Companions, Opt. Mem.
- 30 Jerome, Memorial

The feasts of the Birth of Mary (September 8), Our Lady of Sorrows (September 15), and Sts. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael (September 29) are superseded by the Sunday liturgy. ☐

OUR CENACLE CORNER

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

IMPEDIMENTS TO ANSWERED PRAYERS

PRAYERLESSNESS

JAMES 4:2

JOHN 14:27

JOHN 14:12-14

DOUBT AND UNBELIEF

JAMES 1:6-8

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF MARY

www.wikipedia.org

THE EXALTATION OF THE CROSS

Orthodox America

The Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, or simply the Holy Name of Mary, is a feast day in the Roman Catholic Church celebrated on 12 September to honour the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It has been a universal Roman Rite feast since 1684, when Pope Innocent XI included it in the General Roman Calendar to commemorate the victory at the Battle of Vienna in 1683.



Meaning of the Name. In Hebrew, the name Mary is Miryam. In Our Lady's time, Aramaic was the spoken language, and the form of the name then in use was Mariam. In the book, *The Wondrous Childhood of the Most Holy Mother of God*, St. John Eudes

offers meditations on seventeen interpretations of the name "Mary," taken from the writings of "the Holy Fathers and by some celebrated Doctors". The name of Mary is venerated because it belongs to the Mother of God.

Meanings ascribed to Mary's name by the early Christian writers and perpetuated by the Greek Fathers include: "Bitter Sea," "Myrrh of the Sea," "The Light Giver," "The Enlightened One," "The Light Giver," and especially "Star of the Sea." *Stella Maris* was by far the favored interpretation. These etymologies suppose that the Hebrew form of the name is Maryām, not Miryām. The Hebrew name of Mary, Miryām, (in Latin *Domina*) means lady or sovereign.

Veneration. At Rome, one of the twin churches at the Forum of Trajan is dedicated to the Name of Mary (*Santissimo Nome di Maria al Foro Traiano*).

Promoters of veneration of the Holy Name of Mary include: Saint Anthony of Padua, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, and Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori.

Feast Day. The feast is a counterpart to the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus (January 3). Its object is the Blessed Virgin Mary; the feast commemorates all the privileges given to Mary by God and all the graces received through her intercession and mediation.

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The Exaltation of the Cross is one of the twelve great feasts in the yearly Church cycle. It commemorates two historical events: first, the finding of the Life-giving Cross in the year 326, and second, its recovery from Persia in 628.

History of the Feast. In the first centuries of Christianity, during the years of persecution, the pagans wished to destroy all evidence of the life of Jesus Christ, and the Cross on which He was crucified disappeared. With the conversion of Emperor Constantine the Great, Christians were at liberty to worship openly and build churches. The emperor's mother, St. Helen, longed to find the True Cross of Christ. She traveled to Jerusalem and was told by a very old Jew that the Cross was buried beneath the temple of the pagan goddess Venus, built in 119 AD by the Roman Emperor Hadrian.

The temple was torn down, and digging in the earth below uncovered three wooden crosses. The small board which had hung over Christ with the inscription 'Jesus King of the Jews,' had long since fallen off, and -there was no way of telling which was the True Cross and



which were the crosses of the two thieves crucified on either side of Christ. A sick woman was brought and likewise a dead man who was being carried to burial. The three crosses were laid in turn one by one upon the sick woman and upon the dead man. Two of the crosses had no effect, but through contact with the third cross, the sick woman was healed of her

infirmity and the dead man came to life. These miracles clearly indicated which of the three was Christ's Cross.

Hearing of this discovery, all the faithful desired to see the Cross of the Lord and to venerate it. The Patriarch of Jerusalem, Makarios, took the Cross onto a raised platform and lifted it on high, 'exalting' it, for all to see. The people fell to their knees, bowing down before the Cross and crying out repeatedly: "Lord, have mercy!"

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KNOWING OUR SAINTS

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL (1581-1660)

www.seton.net

Saint Vincent de Paul, who founded the Daughters of Charity, was born in 1581 in a small, poor village in France to a peasant family. At an early age, he showed a talent for reading and writing. At 15, his father sent him to school, managing to pay for it by selling the family's oxen. A good ecclesiastical career, his father believed, would enable De Paul to be financially independent and to help support his family. De Paul was ordained as a priest at the age of 19.

In 1605, de Paul found himself in great debt, and traveled to Marseilles to collect an inheritance. On the way home at sea, de Paul was captured by a group of Barbary pirates. In 1605, the pirates auctioned de Paul off as a slave to the highest bidder, and the future saint spent two years in bondage. Ultimately, the story goes, he became the property of an apostate Christian, whose wife aided in the escape of all his slaves.

Back in Paris, De Paul was driven to succeed and craved the company of high society. Deeply ambitious, De Paul came under the guidance of Father de Burulle, an influential priest in Paris. While working in Paris, de Paul met a theologian in the midst of a crisis of faith. Sensitive to his suffering, de Paul offered counseling.

“In every bed of the hospital with the eyes of faith you will see Jesus.”

“If you help the poor and the needy, God will always provide you with the help you need.”

“Your patients need a share of your joy.”



For the sake of this friend's soul and his own peace, de Paul offered God a bargain: He begged for peace for his friend, even if the price would be for de Paul to experience the same spiritual trial. God took him at his word. While the theologian had his faith restored, de Paul entered a bleak period in which he doubted his faith in God and himself. As a means of diverting himself from his spiritual crisis, de Paul began visiting the poor.

For the next four years, de Paul struggled with his faith. The resolution he ultimately embraced would be surrendering his life's ambition of living out his priesthood in comfortable wealth. He made a pledge to God to serve the poor, relinquishing his quest for power and prestige.

From here, de Paul's ministry would grow. "Before we can save the souls of the poor," de Paul said, "we must give them a life worthy of the name." This meant food, shelter and nursing the sick. In 1617, he founded the Ladies of Charity from a group of ladies within his parish. He organized these wealthy women of Paris to collect funds for missionary projects, found hospitals, and gather relief funds for the victims of war and to ransom 1,200 galley slaves from North Africa. It was not unusual during those years to find him elbow-deep in dishwater, washing bandages for the sick, or ladling out soup for the poor.

One of the Ladies of Charity, Louise de Marillac, took 12 peasant girls in 1633 to work among the poor. She called them the Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul Servants of the Poor. They were the first uncloistered community of religious women.

The Daughters went on to become involved in hospitals, prisons and the care for abandoned children. By 1780, there were 430 houses of the Daughters of Charity in France, 20 in Poland and one in Spain. Today, the Daughters of Charity currently number 27,223 members in five continents with 81 provinces.

Vincent de Paul, who died in 1660, was declared Patron Saint of all works of charity by Pope Leo XIII and was canonized June 16, 1737.

GOD TOUCHED ME

THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING, AND A SEASON FOR EVERY ACTIVITY UNDER HEAVEN

By: Nona Alapag

*For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—
it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.*

Habakkuk 2:3

My spiritual journey is ongoing, and God continues to touch me.

Over 36 years ago, I had a blood transfusion which saved my life, unfortunately though, it carried the Hepatitis C virus, known at that time as non-A, non-B hepatitis. I went through several treatments, causing me to lose weight, to lose a lot of hair, and to progressively get weaker. In 1996, I was told that I had cirrhosis of the liver due to the virus. In 2006, I was diagnosed with end-stage liver disease a natural course that is expected. I was immediately put on the fast track for liver transplant. I underwent multiple tests, evaluations by the different disciplines in medicine, including dental and psychiatric clearances. Right after the diagnosis, I joined, without hesitation, our Lady's pilgrimage to Fatima in Portugal, Santiago De Compostela in Spain, and to Lourdes in France. My sister was against the plan since I was having upper abdominal pain (which was mild). I was to fly alone to Lisbon, under bad weather conditions at that time. With God's grace, at the very last minute, I was allowed by the pilgrimage organizers to join. I assured my sister not to worry, that I could read and write (but of course only in English and Tagalog) and since I had cancer of the liver, I had nothing else to lose. God will be with me -- as always.

On July 13, 2006, I started to visit the "Sacred Room", and I got the message [through an instrument of God who has been given the gift of locution] that very evening, that in three months I will be "cured". During all those three months, I prayed as I have never prayed before, I recited the Divine Mercy frequently, specifically at 0900, 1500 & 2100 daily. I went for Eucharistic Adoration almost every day. All the prayers kept me strong. In October 2006, my tests showed that the malignant tumors were gone, and so I was informed that I will not be included in the list for liver transplant anymore.

In November 2008, my husband was diagnosed with multiple myeloma and had to undergo chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Ten months later, in September of 2009, the tumors in my liver resurfaced and I was then diagnosed with an end-stage liver disease. I needed a

liver transplant and while waiting for a donor, I had to undergo Chemoembolization (an invasive procedure via a blood vessel in the groin treating the tumors directly in the liver.) I didn't want to have this procedure, because of the severe side effects. I was told that if I don't undergo this treatment I had only one year to live. I told the doctor that it is enough time for me to prepare myself. But of course, I had several of those treatments. I was being obedient I guess, and God probably wants me to be still around – to accomplish whatever He has yet planned for me.

Thinking back during those years, I realized that my husband and I accepted everything that was going on with both of us. We took turns driving each other for treatments, tests, etc. for almost five days a week.

Sometime during this period, my husband's uncle from Hawaii came to Los Angeles purposely to see how his nephew was doing and to spend some time with him. Little did I know that he would be another one of my "patients" in my [nursing] retirement years! He had an emergency open heart surgery due to quadruple blockages. And so between treatment and follow-up visits at Kaiser for my husband and myself, I had to oversee his care at Glendale Memorial. From the time of his release from the hospital until he was well enough to travel back to Hawaii, it was at our home where he convalesced.

All these times though neither my husband nor I felt sad or angry. We continued our usual activities until the month before he passed away, two years from the day he was diagnosed with cancer. I had to advise the transplant committee then that I no longer had a caregiver. A transplant will not take place without the assurance of a caregiver(s) who can strictly supervise the care necessary 24/7 before, during and after the transplant, with post-transplant care taking at least three to six months. Nevertheless, the social worker informed me that my children had already mapped out a plan to provide for all the care that I will need.

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MEDITATION AND COMMENTARY

THE PROBLEM WITH BEING GOOD

Father Dwight Longenecker
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The idea that being good is enough is the most persistent and pernicious heresy within Catholicism.

The problem with being good is that you think that's good enough. But being good is not good enough. Jesus Christ looked at the Scribes and Pharisees — who were very good and nice and respectable people and he said to his disciples, "You see them? You've got to be better than them." In other words, their goodness wasn't good enough.

If you think being good is good enough, you're not good enough. The problem with being good is that it is putting the cart before the horse. We see people who are holy like Mother

Teresa and we notice that she does good. She feeds hungry people and rescues babies from the trash heap. So we are inspired



and we decide to be good too. So we get involved in the local soup kitchen and we busy ourselves helping the needy and that's all well and good, but we forget that before Mother Teresa went out on the streets she spent an hour in contemplative prayer. She was more than good. She was holy.

Her goodness and compassion was of a different order than mere human virtue. When we put being good first instead of being holy first we are replacing sanctification — the process by which God makes us holy from the inside out — with mere human virtue. The problem with mere human virtue is that it is — well, merely human virtue. It doesn't change us on the inside. "Jes 'cause ya wear a ten gallon hat don't mean you're a Texan ..." Just because you do good doesn't mean you're being transformed into the image of Christ Jesus.

The next problem with being good (and only being good) is that you are proving the atheists' point. They like to observe that you don't need to be a Christian and go to church in order to be good. They're right of course. People are dumb. When we as Catholics stress good works and brag about all we're doing to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, they conclude that the main thing about Christianity is helping poor people. But are they

dumb? We've told them that this is the main thing. We've skewed the priorities. In fact they're not dumb. They're smart. They've drawn the conclusion from what we've told them. They think the main thing about being a Christian is to feed poor people, and they then conclude that you don't need to go to church to do that.

Then we wonder why no one goes to Mass anymore.

The idea that being good is enough is the most persistent and pernicious heresy within Catholicism. The ghost of Pelagius still haunts our hallowed halls, and we need to hear again and again that we shouldn't just be good, we should be better, and not just better, but best.

This is what the church calls the "universal call to holiness" — that each one of us is called first and foremost to be holy. To be holy is not to be extra pious and prudish and prayerful, but to become who God truly intended us to be. Through prayer and sacrifice and devotion we draw nearer to God, and as we draw nearer we become more like the One we worship. This is the primary work of the Christian, and as that work is done we are driven out to do the good works that are the mark of our calling.

Father Dwight Longenecker is the chaplain of St. Joseph's Catholic School, Greenville, South Carolina. He also serves on the staff of St. Mary's, Greenville. Father Longenecker studied for the Anglican ministry at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford and served for ten years in the Anglican ministry as a curate, a chaplain at Cambridge and a country parson. In 1995 he and his family were received into full communion with the Catholic Church.



*Holy Indifference is complete
renunciation of self will and complete
submission to God's Will. Ask (God) for
nothing and refuse (God) for nothing.*

- Saint Francis de Sales

*Be Holy Indifferent for all clashes of
conditions, sin excepted, no matter how
we may have been placed in them.*

- Saint Vincent de Paul



FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF MARY

The entry in the Roman Martyrology about the feast speaks of it in the following terms:

The Holy Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a day on which the inexpressible love of the Mother of God for her Holy Child is recalled, and the eyes of the faithful are directed to the figure of the Mother of the Redeemer, for them to invoke with devotion.

History. The feast day began in 1513 as a local celebration in Cuenca, Spain, celebrated on 15 September. In 1587 Pope Sixtus V moved the celebration to 17 September. Pope Gregory XV extended the celebration to the Archdiocese of Toledo in 1622. In 1666 the Discalced Carmelites received the faculty to recite the Office of the Name of Mary four times a year. In 1671 the feast was extended to the whole Kingdom of Spain.

Before the Battle of Vienna in 1683, John III Sobieski placed his troops under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the following year, to celebrate the victory, Pope Innocent XI inserted the feast in the General Roman Calendar, assigning to it the Sunday within the octave of the Nativity of Mary.

In the reform of Pope Pius X, the liturgy of the Sundays, which previously had been generally replaced by celebrations of saints, was restored to prominence. The celebration of the Holy Name of Mary was therefore moved to 12 September. Later in the same century, the feast was removed from the General Roman Calendar in 1969, as something of a duplication of the 8 September feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary but it did not cease to be a recognized feast of the Roman Rite, being mentioned in the Roman Martyrology on 12 September. In 2002 Pope John Paul II restored the celebration to the General Roman Calendar.

The day was commemorated in Vienna by creating a new kind of pastry and shaping it in the form of a half-moon. It was eaten along with coffee which was part of the booty from the Turks.

A number of parishes and schools are dedicated in honor of the Holy Name of Mary. □

... I am your Mother Mary.

When you become closer to God, you must also take the responsibility of offering all your senses. You must look at the works that you do if this is in conformity with what the Lord wants. Total Obedience to God in every decision you will make, nothing can substitute this my children. The fiat of oneself before God Almighty.

- Mary, Your Lady of the Rosary and Queen of Heaven and Earth

080313

.... I am your Mother Mary.

Petitions you have on this day of my beads, raise up before the throne of God.

The works you do for God Almighty and my son Jesus must be always for the glory of God. Nothing must be done for your own glory will be accepted by God. Today offer all your prayers for the unborn. They were not given a chance to fulfill the works of God and the evil one has successfully eradicated their existence. Prayers for them must be said as you light the candle of life.

In the days ahead, prepare for many will be victims of water and other natural dislocation.

Thank you my children for listening to my call.

- Mary your Lady of the Rosary
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THE EXALTATION OF THE CROSS

To house the relic of the True Cross, St. Helen had a church built over the Holy Sepulchre. The church was consecrated on September 13, 335, an event also commemorated in the service hymns of the Feast. The finding and exaltation of the Cross was appointed to be celebrated annually on the following day.

The Life-giving Cross was kept in Jerusalem until the year 614 when the Holy City fell to the Persians who looted the Church of the Resurrection and took the True Cross back with them to Persia. Fourteen years later Emperor Heraclius concluded a peace with the Persians, and the Holy Cross was brought to the imperial capital of Constantinople. The Emperor, taking off his shoes and his imperial robes, carried the Cross into the Church of Holy Wisdom (Agia Sophia) where it was once again triumphantly exalted. It was then resolved that the Feast be celebrated by the Church in all parts of the world, for which reason it is called the Universal Exaltation.

The Service. The Vigil for the Feast, one of the most moving and impressive services of the year, contains several distinguishing features. After vespers, the cross decorated with flowers and sweet-smelling herbs, is placed upon the altar. Following the Gospel reading in Matins, the faithful sing "Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ..." usually sung only during Saturday night vigils. At the end of the Great Doxology, to the slow singing of the Trisagion--"Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us"--the priest, carrying the Cross on his head, brings it out from the altar and places it on an analogion in the center of the church. He censes the cross on all four sides, and everyone prostrates before it to the singing of the hymn: "Before Thy Cross, we bow down, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection we glorify." Then the faithful, following the celebrants, venerate the cross in turn, making three full prostrations, and receive anointing. The cross remains in the center of the church until the Apodosis or "leave-taking" of the Feast on September 21.

In cathedrals and monasteries the adoration is preceded by the ceremony of exalting the cross. After the cross is brought out from the altar, the bishop or archimandrite takes it up in his hands and raises it on high. Then, as the people chant "Lord have mercy" a hundred times, he slowly lowers the cross nearly to the ground and just as slowly raises it. This is done five times as the celebrant faces first east, then west, south, north and east again, signifying that "the Cross is the guardian of the whole world" and through it "the world is sanctified." In some churches the cross has rose water poured over it during these exaltations. The rose water is caught in a basin of flowers held by the acolytes, and the flowers are distributed to the faithful at the end of the service.

Although it is one of the major Church Feasts, the Exaltation is always kept as a fast day, because together with the joy of the finding of the Cross, this great "weapon of peace and sign of victory," we are also reminded of the sufferings which our Lord endured in being crucified.

On the Sign of the Cross. The Orthodox Christian ends his evening prayers with a prayer to the Venerable Cross: *"As wax melts from the presence of fire, so let the demons perish from the presence of those who love God and who sign themselves with the Sign of the Cross..."* When properly applied, the sign of the cross is a most formidable weapon in a Christian's armor.

The power of the cross in the unseen warfare with the demons is illustrated in countless lives of saints. One of the most striking examples is found in the life of the holy martyrs, Saints Cyprian and Justina (October 2). An expert sorcerer before his conversion, St. Cyprian was engaged by a pagan youth to use his magic in order to seduce the Christian maid Justina. But even with the help of the prince of demons, the sorcerer was powerless before the maiden who "fled to the defense of the Cross of the Lord and placed its honorable Men on her forehead," causing the demons to depart in shame. This brought Cyprian to his senses, and he railed at the evil one whom he had served for so long: *"O destroyer and deceiver of all Now I have discovered your infirmity. For if you fear even the shadow of the cross and tremble at the name of Christ, then what will you do when Christ Himself comes to you?"* Furious at Cyprian's rebuke, the devil began to beat and strangle him. Already scarcely alive, Cyprian "remembered the sign of the cross, by the power of which Justina had opposed all the demons' power, and he cried out: 'O God of Justina, help me! Then, raising his hand, he made the sign of the Cross, and the devil immediately leaped away from him like an arrow shot from a bow."

The power of the Cross is given to each and every Christian. But just as a soldier must learn to properly wield his weapons in battle, so a warrior of Christ must learn how to correctly make the sign of the cross. A shield has no effect if carelessly waved about in the air. Likewise, there are many who receive no benefit from the sign of the Cross because they make it mechanically or haphazardly.

Some time ago we were justly taken to task by one of our readers for an all too common inaccuracy in describing the making of the sign of the cross: "We touch the forehead, the breast..." Our reader pointed out that the first edition of the widely used Orthodox catechism, Archpriest Seraphim Slobodskoy's Law of God, contained the same error which was corrected in the second edition with the following explanation: in making the Men of the cross from forehead to breast and then shoulder to shoulder, "the lower end of the cross turns out to be

shorter than the upper one; i.e., the cross comes out upside-down." Man thereby inverts the Cross of Christ "to which only the demons rejoice." The Holy Fathers taught that the sign of the cross should be made by touching first the brow (the forehead), marking the upper part of the cross, secondly the womb (the stomach), marking the lower part of the cross, thirdly the right frame (shoulder) and fourthly the left frame, representing from end to end the horizontal bar of the cross.

This is not to say that the correct external formation of the sign of the cross of itself carries the power to wound demons, it must be made with faith. St. John of Kronstadt cautions: "In order that the unbelieving heart should not think that the sign of the cross and the name of Christ act miraculously by themselves, apart from, and independently of Christ Himself, this same cross and name perform no miracles until I see Jesus Christ with the eyes of my heart ... and believe with my whole heart all that lie has accomplished for our salvation."

The cross, once a tool of death, has become a means to life, an instrument of our salvation; it gives strength to resist temptation, to refrain from gossip or harsh words; it dispels fear. If we learn to use the cross effectively, we shall come through experience to understand the Apostle's words:

But God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. ☐

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MARY, MOTHER OF SORROWS

An example of giving priority to the imaginative is found in the remarkable medieval hymn *Stabat Mater* (verses above). When these and other similar verses are read in a perspective of male-female dynamics and spirituality, some significant conclusions emerge. The poet, a man, is asking a woman, Mary, to help him to identify with, join with, and participate in, the sufferings and death of another man, Jesus.

Read in this way, the *Stabat Mater* highlights the need or, perhaps more accurately, the necessity of Mary in the spiritual journey. Gerald May says, "... in my experience I have never met a sincere Western spiritual seeker who did not have to encounter Mary at some point along the way, regardless of that seeker's religious denomination. The image of Mary allows both men and women to relate their images of the divine in ways simply not possible with a totally male divinity."

The *Stabat Mater*, I suggest, captures a way in which Mary gives access to all believers to the mystery of Jesus Christ. In a particular way, she provides male believers with a possibility for intimate relationship with the suffering and dying Jesus, that is, on the level of his vulnerabilities and our vulnerabilities as well as on the level of strong affect or feeling.

Although admiration and veneration are both historically and theologically valid and appropriate, another dimension of Marian devotion, recently recovered and reemphasized by Paul VI in *Marialis Cultus*, needs our attention. The other dimension is identification with Mary or the imitation of Mary. Identification with Mary means that Christians see her and say not only "Look, there is the mother of sorrows," and admire her; they also say, "Here is a life and faith pattern which I can call my own."

If we are to trace the biblical witness to Mary's sufferings, her experience of sorrow, a fundamental distinction is necessary. We are following the experience of someone whose title is sorrowful mother, not depressed mother. In the gospels as documents of faith, we have Mary's experience of suffering presented in a context of faith, hope, and love. Were the gospels to chronicle her pain simply in a context of sadness, perhaps anger, a lack of resolution, and ultimately without perceived hope, then she would not emerge as a pained, sorrowing, yet faith-filled person but rather as a depressed person.

The sufferings endured by Mary were complex. As we noted, the gospel narratives often mix a joy and a sorrow. Their layered descriptions ring true to the texture of real life. In a similar way, one would expect and correctly find a complexity in the responses of Mary to suffering. Although we instinctively look for a single solution to "the problem of suffering," faith and, more specifically, the Mary experience in the New Testament lead us to a multifaceted approach. I will describe her responses under the categories of struggle, presence, expansion, and surrender.

STRUGGLE – Mary's first response to suffering is struggle. Because of an excessively passive piety in the past, we may be surprised that struggle can be named the first response to suffering. Mary's "yes" is not mere acquiescence but active engagement in the unfolding of salvation. Mary's response to suffering by way of struggle becomes clear in the *Magnificat*. Here we find suffering, struggle, hope, courage and anticipation.

PRESENCE – As she shares in the sufferings of her son, Mary accompanies him, does not "do" anything. Hers is an active and engaged presence which includes knowing, understanding, accepting and loving. When "nothing can be done" medically, socially, psycho-therapeutically, or whatever way, then the core needs of people emerge. They are being known, being understood, being accepted, being loved. These elements form the content of Mary's presence.

EXPANSION – A significant response of Mary to suffering is an expansion of consciousness and of concern. The gospel narratives are quite clear about this. At the cross, in John's Gospel, she faces the greatest loss. Precisely at that moment, she expands her embrace and receives the beloved disciple and, symbolically, all other disciples as their mother. In the face of her most intense suffering, she expands the arena of her concern.

SURRENDER – Mary's surrender is a surrender to God. Psychologically, that means not clinging to her control over matters or outcomes. In faith, it means the radical acknowledgment of God's sovereignty. In hope, it means re-imagining the future, not simply making the future an extrapolation of the present. In love, it means the movement toward the union of wills with the one who loves us absolutely, unconditionally.

The mystery of suffering is a mystery of connection and disconnection. The overall pattern of Mary emergent in our reflection is to link us with Jesus in his suffering and dying and rising, to link us with one another as we share common struggles and suffering, to link us with a larger world of concern. Mary comforts primarily by being a sacrament of God's compassion, enduring, promising, supporting.

How can Mary be the sorrowful mother if she has been gloriously assumed into heaven? Recall the image of the appearing risen Lord who continues to bear the wounds of his passion. He is glorified and wounded still. For the mystery is one: death and resurrection. Similarly, Mary is both *virgo assumpta* and *mater dolorosa*. Her sufferings and sorrows have shaped her glory. She is "a sign of sure hope and solace for the pilgrim people of God."

Source: Louis J. Cameli, abridged from the article with same title which appeared in *Chicago Studies*, 27, 1: April, 1988, 3;15. This excerpt appeared in *The Marian Library Newsletter*, Spring, 1991.



HOLY AND UNHOLY FEARS

*THERE IS A FEAR OF GOD AND THE FEAR OF JUDAS.
TOO MUCH FEAR MAKES US ACT WITHOUT LOVE,
AND TOO MUCH CONFIDENCE [PRESUMPTION] CAUSES US
NOT TO CONSIDER AND FEAR THE DANGER THAT WE MUST
OVERCOME. ONE SHOULD HELP THE OTHER, AND GO
TOGETHER LIKE TWO SISTERS. ALWAYS, WHEN WE BECOME
AWARE OF BEING AFRAID, OF HAVING TOO MUCH FEAR,
WE SHOULD REMEMBER TO BECOME CONFIDENT. IF WE ARE
EXCESSIVELY CONFIDENT, WE SHOULD BECOME INSTEAD A
LITTLE FEARFUL. LOVE TENDS TO THE OBJECT LOVED;
HOWEVER, IN ITS APPROACH, IT IS BLIND.
BUT HOLY FEAR ENLIGHTENS IT.*

**QUIET MOMENTS WITH PADRE PIO
120 DAILY READINGS
COMPILED BY PATRICIA TREECE**



Continued from Page 5

GOD TOUCHED ME

After my husband passed away, and while awaiting for a donor, my youngest son who is severely aphasic, autistic and mentally challenged was placed on supportive living services in 2011. He was moved into an apartment with a staff to oversee his needs. Thus, when I was finally admitted for the liver transplant, I did not have to worry about his meals, doctor and dentist's visits, etc. God took care of everything! All the people caring for him are all Godsend!

God's timing is always perfect. He's neither early nor late! I cannot even visualize what my two older children will have to go through to cope up with the care of two sick parents juggling from two different hospitals [UCLA for myself and Kaiser for my husband] had there been an available liver while my husband was undergoing radiation and chemotherapy for his multiple myeloma!

I received four calls from UCLA's Transplantation Team and underwent pre-transplant procedures three times but the "perfect match" did not come until all was completely and smoothly ironed out for my youngest son's daily care and provisions!

Looking back now – I just organized everything that needs to be done during my confinement and recuperation. Things like, bills to pay, watering of plants, etc. All others, I know that are beyond my control, I handed over to God's mercy and love.

For the past six years before my transplant, I prayed for an increase in faith. With the help of our group, the Spiritual Army of God the Father, most especially my family, relatives, friends and so many people praying for me, I knew that I had all the support, spiritually. I placed everything in His hands!

Of course, I had complications, experienced a lot of pain, and depended so much on my children for my physical needs -- and they came through with flying colors! But as I now reflect on God's amazing provisions, I can't be grateful enough to God for all the blessings that I have received and continue to receive.

So be encouraged. Wait patiently on the Lord. Trust in God and He will work things out in your life. God will use you as you are, if you make yourself available to Him. God is faithful, trust in Him and His perfect timing. ☐

*If you have any personal articles
or God's miracle in your life
you want to share with the devotees,
we may be reached at
the following e-mail addresses
and phone numbers:
evelyn.pua@spiritualarmyofgod.org
alice.a@spiritualarmyofgod.org
(702) 274-4315 and/or (213) 385-7798*

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**.
- Pray the Stations of the Cross, contemplating on receiving the life and power that flow from Jesus' cross!
- Teach your children and others the Servite Rosary to be prayed every Friday. For the month of September, pray this daily.

THANK YOU

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

Psalm 106:2

FOR PRAYERS HEARD AND PETITIONS GRANTED



"I thank God for His love and patience with my continuous straying and complaining yet He has never given up, I also thank Him for giving me three wonderful grandchildren who I love very much. I also thank God for knowing what is best for me even though my patience is not always great. I also thank Him for leading me to the right group who has helped me improve my relationship with Him... Praise the Lord for He is always good!!!"

- Fed



Thank you, dear Lord, for everything, including the trials and tribulations. I leave everything in Your hands – Thy will be done. I love you always and forever with all my heart.

- Mila



Kristen's surgery to remove a nodule between her lung and her heart on August 22 was the most difficult, yet with God's grace - uneventful! The procedure itself took five hours, making it the longest one she ever had. She checked in on Thursday night and was discharged from the hospital the following Monday. Except for some pain in the surgery site, Kristen is recovering well. We thank God for His goodness and mercy and for the Spiritual Army of God the Father's prayer warriors.

Aida

2000 HAIL MARY DEVOTION

The Spiritual Army of God the Father acknowledges with thanks our generous September 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.

Las Vegas, Nevada

Abelardo & Nicet Santos

Los Angeles, California

Regina Lim | Sulay Leon-Pilcher
Alice Ng | Carolina Abrego-Pineda
Clara Velasquez | Manny & Julita Villamil

Frank & Lorma Batino
Coordinators

SPIRITUAL ARMY NEWS DISPATCH

MAKING GOD THE FATHER KNOWN HONORED AND LOVED

The Spiritual Army's devotion to the Father of All Mankind has now expanded to Canjulao, Lapu-Lapu City, Philippines.

In 2006, the Descendants of Serapio and Cresencia Berdin, one of whom is our own devotee, Dorie Cortes, constructed a chapel in their hometown and named it The Chapel of the Black Nazarene. Sometime in late 2011, the icon of God the Father was offered to Dorie. This icon was from a visiting nun from the Missionarie "Unitas in Christo ad Patrem", [the community which Mother Eugenia Ravasio



founded in Anzio, Italy], whom the "Son Helper" met in a church in Los Angeles. For a long time, the Son Helper tried to find a "home" for this icon – offering it to churches, convents, monasteries in Los Angeles, Northern California and Las Vegas, Nevada, none of which found a space on the wall or



a room in any of the inns – until he thought of Dorie, who accepted without hesitation, and sent it promptly to the Philippines. Upon receipt of the icon, Dorie's relatives had it framed. In May 2012, the image was then enthroned and the chapel was rededicated and re-named as the Chapel of the Eternal Father [Altar of the Black Nazarene].

Since then the community in Canjulao has celebrated the God the Father's feast day every year starting with the Holy Octave of Consecration to God our Father culminating the solemn eighth day with a Holy Mass, a feast and a grand procession of God the Father's icon around three barrios in Lapu-Lapu City.

The Spiritual Army of God the Father appreciates the generous assistance of the Descendants of Serapio and Cresencia Berdin in its mission in making God the Father known, honored and loved by all men! □



UPCOMING EVENTS

**TOY DRIVE FOR THE
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
[ONGOING]**

**WHITE ELEPHANT BAZAAR
COMING VERY SOON**

**FEAST DAY OF
THE HOLY INFANT JESUS**
SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 2014
ST. CASIMIR CATHOLIC CHURCH
2718 ST GEORGE STREET
LOS ANGELES, CA 90027

SAVE THE DATE
AND SAVE UP FOR A
**PILGRIMAGE TO
MOTHER MARY'S
APPARITION SHRINES
PORTUGAL | SPAIN | FRANCE**
DECEMBER 4-21, 2014
DAILY ACTIVITIES AND OTHER
INFORMATION ARE AVAILABLE AT
WWW.SPIRITUALARMYOFGOD.ORG

DEVOTION SCHEDULE



THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER

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 – September 21, 2013

at the Convent of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master | starting at 8:30 a.m.

Please call Victor at (213) 385-7798 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 PM
Cenacle will be at 10:00 AM 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 from 2:00 to 3:30 P.M.

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

2000 Hail Mary Devotion – September 14, 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 the coming months or for more 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.

**PRAISING GOD THE FATHER
FOR SENDING AN ARMY OF ANGELS ON HIS FEAST DAY,
YEAR AFTER YEAR, AFTER YEAR, AFTER YEAR!**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO HELP

THANK YOU FOR HAVING A HEART THAT CARES

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, TREASURE AND TALENT

WE CAN'T THANK THE FATHER ENOUGH FOR THE BLESSINGS YOU HAVE BLESSED US WITH!

Frank & Beth Lim | Ben & Vince Ong | Carmen & Nestor Mora | Tessie Almero | Nonie Alapag | Glecy Rosario Aida Terashima | Carolina Pineda | Sylvia Melendez Frank & Lorma Batino | Marilyn Batino | Dorie Cortes Florita Gajito | Celia Tiguelo | Helen Lapitan | Susie Ulip Elizabeth Tampus | Jonathan Ramos | Myla Cawa | Lolita Estrada | Regina Lim | Esperanza Dominguez | Evelyn Real | Estela & Dads Morales | Pablo Martial | Ed Santillan April Araneta | Ivan Torres | Aida Tuason | Lilia Tuazon Marie Nguyen | Ruth & Bon Mercado | Key Ebarle | Denise Dizon-Gier | Jen & Jon DyReyes | Mercedes Holzinger | Au & Rom DeGuzman | Arlene Gorre | Luz Ortiz | Alice Ng Loreto Melo | Marlyn Saraza | Aurora Sevilla | Luchie & Manny Umandap | Divina Mercado | Jhune & Bless Buan Edwina Gamboa | Cora Pablico | Theresa Casasola Cecilia Acevedo | Laddie Regalado | Joyce Ulmer | Robert Pua | Ma. Theresa Muego | Evangeline Soronio | Brenda Batten | Shirley Santalan | and all other Angels who
p r a y e d a n d r e j o i c e d w i t h u s !