

KINGDOM

REVELATOR

|||| CATHOLIC PUBLICATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ■ ISSUE 53

**BEAUTIFUL
THINGS HAPPEN**

**WHERE DID GOD
COME FROM?**



ISSUE 53

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KINGDOM REVELATOR



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Pray for our Readers*

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WHO INSTITUTED THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE?

227: Jesus Himself instituted the sacrament of Penance when He showed Himself to His apostles on Easter day and commanded them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (Jn 20:22a-23). [1439, 1485]

Nowhere did Jesus express more beautifully what happens in the sacrament of Penance than in the parable of the Prodigal Son: We go astray, we are lost and can no longer cope. Yet our Father waits for us with great, indeed, infinite longing; He forgives us when we come back; He takes us in again, forgives our sins. Jesus Himself forgave the sins of many individuals; it was more important to Him than working miracles. He regarded this as the great sign of the dawning of the kingdom of God, in which all wounds are healed and all tears are wiped away. Jesus forgave sins in the power of the Holy Spirit, and He handed that power on to His APOSTLES. We fall into the arms of our heavenly Father when we go to a PRIEST and confess.

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EDITORIAL



God is a loving Father. He is so good that He 'makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust' (Matthew 5:45). We can confidently entrust ourselves to His mercy and forgiveness when we sin, for He awaits eagerly to welcome back His repentant children.

Pope Benedict XVI said, "As Father, God wishes us to become His children and to live as such in His Son, in communion, in full familiarity with Him. His omnipotence is not expressed in violence, it is not expressed in the destruction of every adverse power as we might like; rather it is expressed in love, in mercy, in forgiveness, in accepting our freedom and in the tireless call for the conversion of heart."

In this month's issue, we will further explore God's mercy and fatherhood, and how He never abandons His unfaithful children.

Let us respond to our Father's love by loving Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might. Let us entrust our lives to our heavenly Father.



CHRISTIAN MORALITY IN TODAY'S WORLD



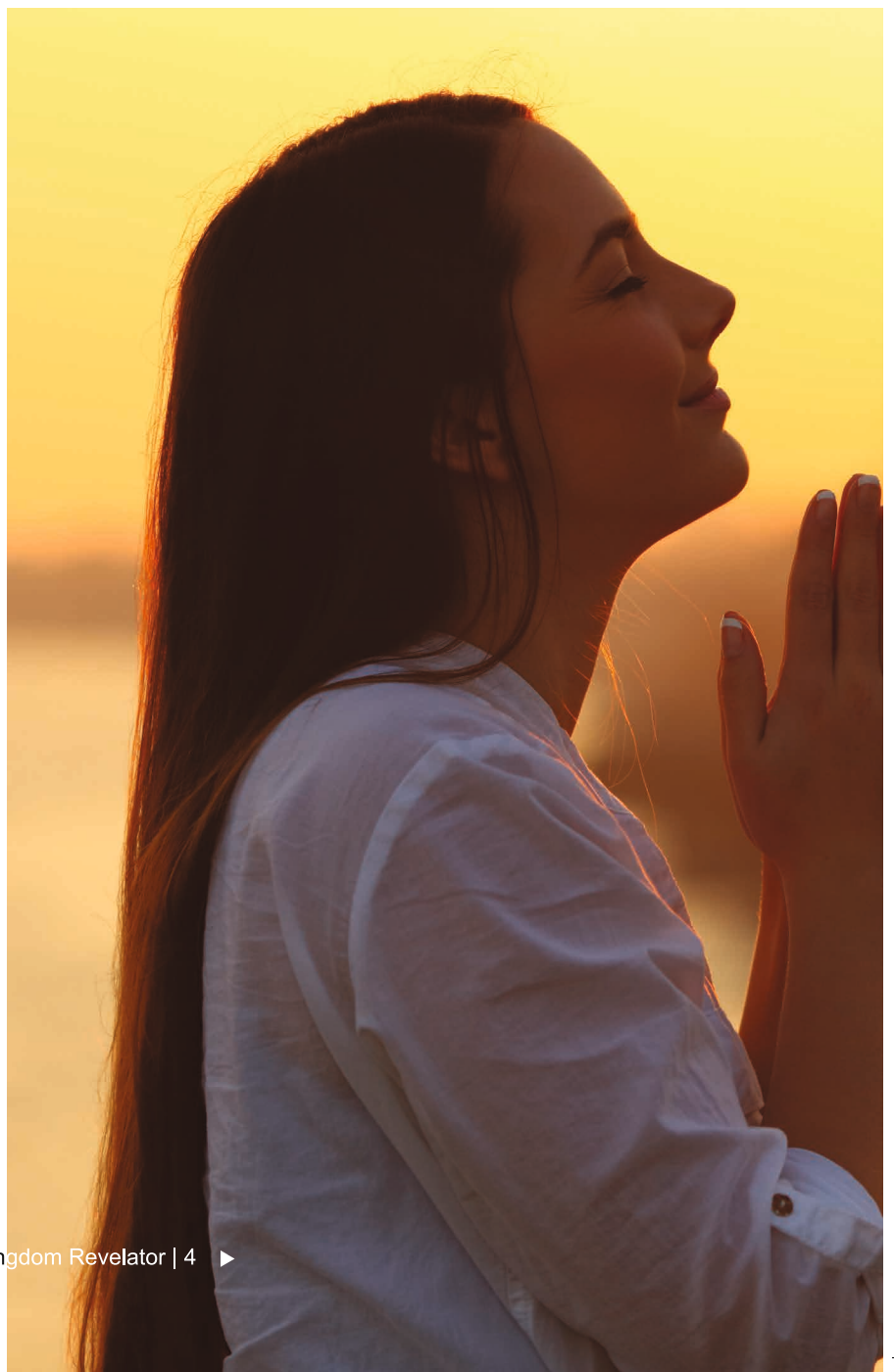
*Deacon Martin
Farell from Derby,
UK, looks into the
importance of morality
in the world.*

A Special Relationship

From the earliest time in the history of Israel, being a 'chosen' race meant that they were to worship and serve their God and obey all that He commanded them. They were the ones who alone would have a special relationship and closeness to the Creator. He would show them the way they should live, and guide and develop this relationship through the Law and the Prophets.

True Happiness

The happiness that comes from obedience to God is not just about being rewarded for good behaviour. One of the main reasons for God creating us is that we would be happy and "rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4), and that in Jesus our "joy will be complete" (John 15:11). When the pagans first converted to Christianity, it was with great happiness and rejoicing that they turned to the Christian faith and received the Holy Spirit (Acts 3:11; 8:8; 13:48). Indeed, Jesus Himself makes the connection between this happiness and the way He wants us to live in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12).



Our Freedom

The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that human freedom is the power to take deliberate action or not, and to do this with full individual responsibility. The proper use of our freedom will be fruitful and beneficial for our development as human beings. "Human freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed towards God, our beatitude" (CCC 1731).

However, making the wrong decisions can have the opposite effect, and lead individuals to become slaves to their passions such that their freedom may be reduced or even lost. The concept of freedom can be interpreted from a number of different perspectives, but the

fundamental understanding of the term is that we can either be free from something, which then makes us free for something else, or free to do certain actions. In the Christian sense, we can be set free from sin and every kind of evil so that we can be free to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, to work for truth and to building up God's Kingdom on earth.

Our Conscience

To act according to our conscience is not merely to do what my conscience tells me but rather to act in accordance with the truth and the moral order that is revealed by God through Christ. When people promote the 'rights of conscience', they may not always be seeking to act according to God's law but, may instead be

Human freedom
attains its
perfection
when directed
towards God.

defending their right to speak and act in agreement with their own judgement. One of the flaws in this understanding of conscience is that circumstances can affect the formation of conscience. Familiarity with sin, for example, can often distort the truth and create a blind conscience.

Our Fallen Nature

When our first parents abused their freedom through disobedience and the desire to become like God, they sought to replace their allegiance to God

with their own judgement on what is good or evil, thereby developing a self-determined morality (Genesis 3:1-5). The consequences of this fall can be seen in a wounded human nature with its vulnerability to sickness, hardship and death. All human beings inherit this fallen nature, with its inclination to selfishness, malice, and violence. Personal sin can eventually become acceptable in society as a whole, and lead to the 'Institutionalisation' of immoral practices under the guise of 'lifestyle choice' that becomes fashionable, protected in law, and promoted by the media.

Natural Moral Law

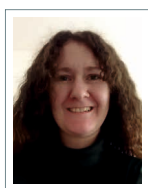
Damaged by sin and evil, our human nature is in need of restoration and redemption by God. Moral Law has its origin in God who instructs and guides mankind in the same way that a father looks after and disciplines his children, for their good. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, "All law finds its first and ultimate truth in the eternal law" (CCC 1951).

God's Solution

The underlying factor in all this is that every sin or immoral act has a 'victim'. However, in God's divine plan, we have the ultimate victim of all humanity's sins and offences, namely, Christ, who "redeemed us from the curse of the Law by being cursed for our sake" (Galatians 3:13). After what Jesus went through for us, whatever happens in this life, we can be certain that God's purpose and providence will endure over all misdeeds and injustice. "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).



TRIUMPH OVER TRIALS



*Maria Davies
from Birmingham,
UK, explains how
to achieve victory
over our
troubled
circumstances.*

Let's face it, life does have its ups and downs. It could be stress at work or school, financial worries, sickness or relationship problems. Jesus never said that life would be easy. We can choose to either be defeated by worry and self-pity, or believe that we can find strength from our faith in God.

Life may be hard, but God is good. In the Bible, the apostle Paul writes; "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." (Romans 8:35-37). We can have the attitude of victory over our troubled circumstances if we keep our faith in Christ Jesus.

Examine and guard your heart; "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it" (Proverbs 4:23). In difficult circumstances dealing with our attitude is the most important thing we can do for ourselves. Examine whether you are carrying offence and resentment in your heart. Look at whether your heart is truly on the things of God more than that of the world.

After reflecting, confess to God about where you have gone off track, and tell God that you want Him to guide your life from now on. Keep this "Book of the Law" always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and



successful” (Joshua 1:8). Make time to read the Holy Bible, hear about His promises with regard to your circumstances. You can only reap the benefits of God’s Word as you apply His truth to your life. Jesus promised; “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 15:7). Allow God’s Word to be a reality in your life.

Praying with Faith

In the face of difficult times in life, spend time in prayer, and ask God to supply specific needs as He promises in His Word: “Therefore I tell you, whatever

you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:24).

Renewing of the Mind

Our thinking can influence how we feel and behave. As you face challenging circumstances, you can find that you become very focused on them. A negative cycle of sadness, resentment, or anger could lead to making poor decisions and actions. So instead of allowing worries to bring you down, try to make the effort to focus on what God’s Word says about you and your situation. As you continue to keep your attention on God’s Word, you will start to get God’s perspective on the situation you are facing. Then you will see that things are not as hopeless, for God is in the situation changing you and also your circumstances. With your new way of thinking, you can see how God turns your adverse circumstances to be a blessing in your life and the lives of others.

Build up your Faith in God

“All things can be done for the one who believes” (Mark 9:23). What is faith? It is the confident belief in things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). Express the confidence of faith by boldly declaring specific promises relating to your situation. As you do, you will find that you have peace and quite. Rest in the confident belief that God is at work in the situation, even though you might not see it yet.

Give Thanks and Praise to God

“Give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Spend some time and thank God for His goodness in your life. Call to mind specific things He has done for you and start thanking Him. Let praise and thanksgiving flow from your heart, for God is good!

Care for your Spirit, Soul and Body

As you pass through difficult circumstances, your spirit, soul and body can be affected. When you pursue a balanced life, you care for all aspects of your life, including the physical and spiritual domains. Building strong connections at Church is essential. Here you can connect, grow in your faith and experience a sense of belonging. Remember to

Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.

Martin Luther King Jr

“Cast all your anxieties and worries on Him because He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). With your faith at the centre of your life, you are more flexible to adapt to challenging situations. You will experience God’s peace, spiritual and personal growth, as you pass through the tough times. “Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase”. (Martin Luther King Jr.)

So, remember next time when life gets difficult, don’t give up. Keep turning to God in prayer and give thanks in all circumstances. He always provides, He always cares and will never leave you nor forsake you. His word tells us in truth that He loves us, so we do not have to be afraid. So, keep the faith!





MOVIE: MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN

A Christian movie which portrays the possibility of miracles. A 10 year old girl is diagnosed with a rare incurable intestinal disorder that leaves her unable to digest food. While her devout Christian parents are busy searching for the best treatment for their daughter, Anna falls from a tree and wakes up in a place she believes is heaven, leading to an encounter with God.

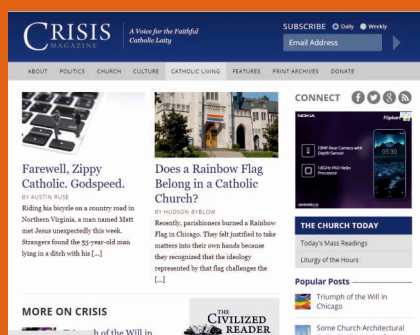
SONG – RECKLESS LOVE

By Cory Asbury



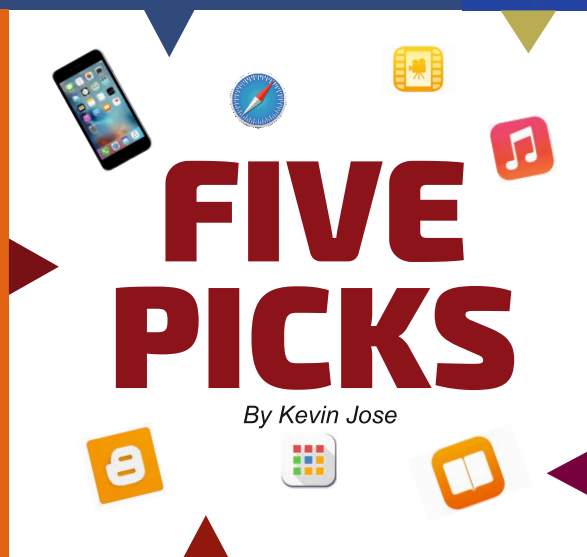
RECKLESS LOVE

FEAT. CORY ASBURY



BLOG – CRISIS MAGAZINE - A Voice for the Faithful Catholic Laity

It explores topics such as politics, business, culture, faith, and family life from a Catholic perspective and encourages the catholic society to defend the common good and teachings of the church, work towards a just society and protect the families, dignity of work and the sanctity of life.



Pray

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The Catholic Novena app makes prayer easier for catholics around the world. It lets you share your own specific prayer request and have others join in your paryers.



BOOK – JULIA'S GIFT (Great War Great Love Book 1) By Ellen Gable

A religious fiction which talks about a young girl who began to buy gifts for her future spouse. But soon after the United States enter the Great War, Julia joins the Red Cross to volunteer as a medical worker with no experience. It's a story about how a young woman transitions from her small world to discover herself and her true self and purpose.



WHERE DID GOD COME FROM?



*Felius Nawab
from Karachi,
Pakistan,
ponders on
who created
God.*

If God created the universe, then who created God? Often, during my childhood, I spent hours pondering on this question. My parents would patiently explain to me that God is an uncreated eternal being who has always existed, even so I still could never quite wrap my mind around the concept of eternity. Many still struggle with this question. To answer it, let us navigate through a few points.

What if the Universe is Eternal?

What if no one created the universe? What if the universe has always existed? This would eliminate the need for a God.

Science tells us that the universe is constantly expanding, and that we can calculate its age. In the twentieth century, Edwin Hubble, an astronomer “rebound” the process of the expanding universe mathematically and proved that the universe, along with its energy, matter and time had a beginning. Later, the COBE satellite experiments

in 1992, proved it too. Most cosmologists today agree that the universe did have a beginning. Thus, science disproves the theory of an eternal universe, and enlightens us that the universe, in itself, is not an uncaused cause. This leads us to the principle of cause and effect.

The Principle of Cause and Effect

The principle of cause and effect states that every material effect must have a cause that caused it and existed before it. Therefore, the universe (which had a beginning) must have a cause that caused it and existed before it. We call this cause, God. If we theorise that this God was caused by a greater god, then we must accordingly theorise that, that God was caused by a greater god and so on and so forth.

Therefore, we fall into the trap of infinite regress. At some point there has to be an uncaused cause. The Bible identifies this uncaused cause as God who is everlasting and eternal.

How Can There be an Uncaused, Eternal Cause?

As human beings we will always encounter problems when trying to understand eternity. To put this into perspective, consider a being who is living in a two-dimensional world. This being will have difficulty understanding a three-

dimensional world because his/her world is limited by two dimensions. Similarly, our world is governed by the laws of physics, and is limited by time. Therefore, it is challenging for us to understand a timeless, eternal world.

Time, space and matter (a trinity representing the triune nature of God) came into existence, when God created them, as Genesis 1:1 describes, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

"Beginning" denotes time; "heaven" denotes space while "earth" denotes matter. Thus, God who created time, space and matter, is not limited by them.

To God, the universe is like a box. He created that box and is therefore outside of that box. The laws of the universe, like time, do

The Bible identifies this uncaused cause as God who is everlasting and eternal.

not apply to Him and that is precisely why He is eternal. That is why He can exist for eternity without having to be caused.

Another example would be that

of a computer and its assembler. The person who assembled the computer is outside of it and is not limited by it. The computer runs on electricity and if there is no electric power it will not function. The same is not true for its assembler. He "created" the computer and he will continue to exist and function even if the computer does not function due to lack of electricity (i.e. the laws and limitations of the computer do not affect him).

Similarly, time does not affect God. He exists outside of time, in eternity, and that is why He does not need to be created, or to be caused by a greater cause.



PLACES FROM THE BIBLE

GETHSEMANE

By Mary Powathil



The Garden of Gethsemane is where Jesus prayed on the night of His betrayal and arrest. It is located at the foot of the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. Jesus and His disciples frequently met in this garden. Which is why Judas, the betrayer, led the guards to this garden on the night of Jesus' arrest (John 18:2-3).

By the end of the third century itself the site was being visited by Christians who made special prayers there. Today, the part of Gethsemane that is watched over by the Franciscans has three important sites of pilgrimage: the Church of All Nations, the Grotto, and the Garden of Olives.

The Church of All Nations, also known as the Church of the Agony, is built on the rock of agony where Jesus is believed to have prayed on the night of His arrest. The current church, which was consecrated in 1924, is built on the site of two destroyed ancient churches.

The Grotto of Gethsemane is a natural grotto, where, it is believed, the disciples slept while Jesus prayed. After His agony, Jesus met the Apostles who were resting there, when Judas arrived with the guards (Matthew 26:47). Some believe that it is in this grotto that Nicodemus met Jesus at night (John 3:1-21). Perhaps, this was the site of an oil press too. In fact, the word 'Gethsemane' is derived from an Aramaic word meaning "oil press".

The Garden of Olives has several Olive trees that are among the oldest in the world. Recent studies have found that the oldest of these trees are from the branch of a single tree, suggesting the attempts to multiply a single, venerated tree; perhaps because it was believed to have "witnessed" the night of Jesus' agony.



MEET THE APOSTLES SAINT PHILIP

Series by Alvina Benny.

St Philip is a frequent character in the Gospel of John and is also found in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:13).

Interestingly, he is listed in the fifth place in the lists of the Apostles in Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:14-19; Luke 6:13-16).

Philip is a Galilean from the city of Bethsaida, from the same place as apostles Andrew and Peter (John 1:44).

Philip is a Greek name; which may be the reason why the Greeks approached him with the request to see Jesus (John 12:20-22).

St Philip is the patron saint of hatters and pastry chefs.

He died in 80 AD. The relics of St Philip are preserved in the crypt of the Basilica of Twelve Apostles in Rome. The feast of St Philip is celebrated on the 3rd of May.

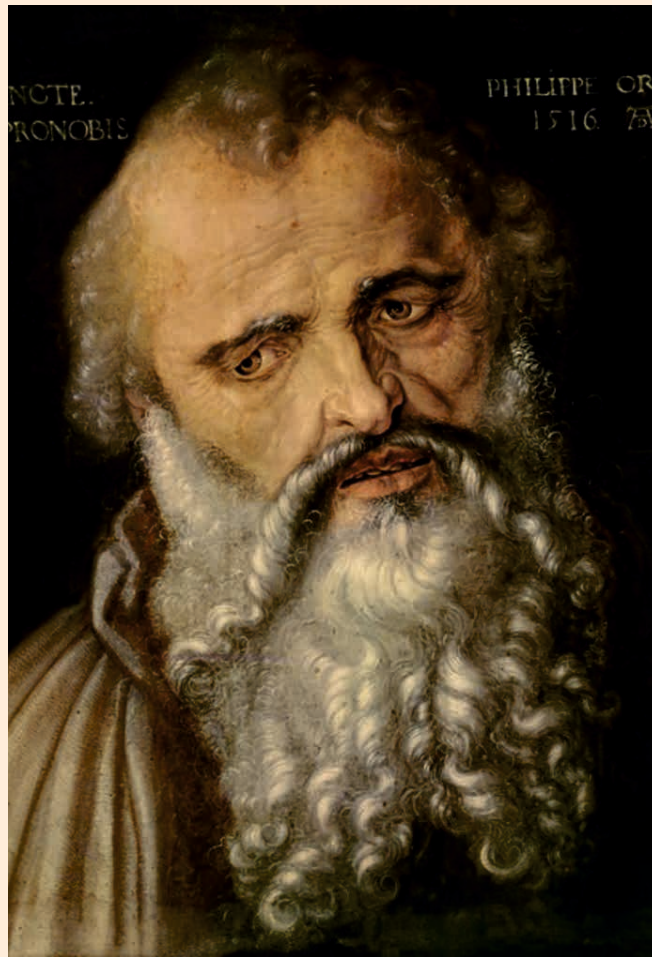
Philip the Apostle and Philip the Evangelist are different. Philip the Evangelist is one of the deacons of the early church (Acts 6:5).

During the Last Supper, Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father (John 14:8) and Jesus taught His disciples about the unity of the Father and the Son.

Philip can be seen tested by Jesus before performing the miracle to feed the five thousand. Jesus asks Philip where they can buy enough bread to feed all the people (John 6:5-6).

Some people believe that at the time of his call Philip belonged to a group influenced by John the Baptist.

Philip brought Nathanael (probably Bartholomew the Apostle) to Jesus. This led to Jesus revealing that He saw Nathanael while He was sitting under the fig tree, even before Philip called him (John 1:48).



THE COMPASSIONATE FATHER



*Nimmy Elizabeth Biju
talks about God's
mercy even when
we sin against Him.*

Whatever I do or don't do, there has always been one thing that has followed me along with the love of God: the mercy of God. The fullness of His mercy could never be explained by myself or anyone else in this world. Nor will our human mind understand it fully. It's so deep, so vast, and so beautiful; I could use the strongest of words, but it would still be inexplicable.

There have been times when I have slipped, fallen and been bruised due to my own mistakes. At times I have been attracted by false light and flown to it as moths do. Later, burning my wings, wounded I fluttered back to the Lord - my Father and the King of mercy. I always found Him waiting for me; to receive me back, to clean my wounds and heal me. Saying sorry wasn't enough; yet He couldn't care less. He simply wanted His child to run back to Him; to love and to take care of me Himself. How can I thank Him for His kindness? I'm not sure. But I have surrendered all to Him and that's all He desires. "The Lord is compassionate and merciful" (Sirach 2:11).

Falling Short of God's Mercy

After Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they tried to hide themselves from the presence of God (Genesis 3:8). They were naked, "the Lord God made garments of skin for the man and for his wife, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21). The actions of His most precious creations surely offended God, but how great was His mercy to them! We see the first great act of God's grace after their tragic act of rebellion - He gave them promise of a Saviour. It's something that I can't seem to explain in its fullness.

Remember that Noah got drunk, Moses murdered and David committed adultery; yet, God showed great mercy to them. When the soldier cruelly pierced the heart of Jesus, the blood and water that gushed forth healed his blind eye. Imagine the mercy that was shown to Peter, who walked side by side with Jesus for three years. He was appointed the first Pope of the Church, even though he broke the Lord's heart by denying that he even knew Him!

In Micah 7:19, the prophet exclaims: "You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." What is this sea? It is the sea of mercy! Daniel 9:9 proclaims: "to the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness." Our sins, mistakes, regrets and burdens which we carry along with us are nothing compared to His endless mercy. Our sins are like

*The greater
the sinner,
the greater
the right he
has to the
mercy of
God.*

*(Diary of
St Faustina, 723)*

pebbles and rocks, big or small, that can be thrown into the depths of the ocean of His mercy. Jesus came not for the righteous, but for sinners like you and me (Luke 5:32). In fact, the greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to the mercy of God (Diary of St Faustina, 723).

Divine Mercy In Our Soul

A while back, I came across the diary of St Faustina, 'Divine Mercy in My Soul'. It overwhelmed my heart to know how the Lord spoke to her about His mercy. Jesus says: "Let the weak, sinful soul have no fear to approach Me, even if it had more sins than there are grains of sand in the world, all would be drowned in the immeasurable depths of My mercy" (Diary 1059). The more we turn away from Jesus, the more guilty and worthless we feel. Then it seems harder to return to Him. But it is then that we should remember the words of our Lord: "there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

Do you desire the mercy of God? Come now; "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool" (Isaiah 1:18). "Do not delay turning back to the Lord, and do not postpone it from day to day" (Sirach 5:7). He is waiting; He is standing at the door of our heart, knocking. Open the door and let Him overwhelm us with His love and mercy.







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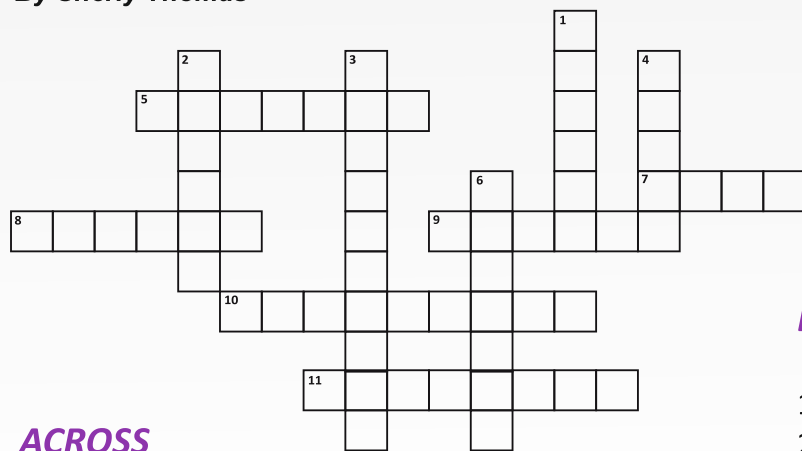
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CROSS WORD

By Sherly Thomas



ACROSS

5. The Angel who announced to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive the Son of God.
7. The mother of the Virgin Mary.
8. The day Jesus died was Good _____.
9. The son of Jacob who received a coat of colours from his father.

10. This day celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit unto the disciples of Jesus after His Ascension.
11. The place where Jesus was crucified.

DOWN

1. The number of the Tribes of Israel.
2. The land that God promised to Abraham.
3. The prophecy of the second coming of Jesus is written in this book of the Bible.
4. This prophet spent 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of a whale.
6. This king built the First Temple of God in Jerusalem.



BLESSED CHIARA LUCE BADANO



Munnu Fenil from the UK, talks about a beautiful, lively girl who was deeply in love with Jesus and inspired many people through her life.

Who was Chiara?

After waiting for many years, the prayers of Ruggero and Maria Teresa Badano were answered and Chiara Luce Badano was born on 29th October 1971 in Sassello, a small town in Italy. She enjoyed hanging out with friends, playing sports, and travelling. At the age of seventeen she was diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer. Initially she struggled to accept God's plan for her life, but her love and trust in Jesus changed her attitude. She believed that whatever He decided, would be the best and right path forward for her. Two years later, on 7th October 1990, Chiara bid goodbye to the world. She was beatified on 25th September 2010. Her beatification was attended by thousands of young and old people from all over the world. Chiara lived a brief life during which she radiated love and joy towards her family and friends, even amidst immense pain. Let's have a look at Chiara's life through her dear and near ones' memories.

Mum Remembering Chiara

Maria Teresa Badano recalls the exceptionally happy nature of Chiara. "She was a sweet-natured and easy-going normal little girl, but she certainly wasn't perfect!" Even at an early age she would sort her toys and would give them to the poor children. Chiara was raised as a Catholic and attended Holy Mass regularly. Her love for Jesus radiated within her. When asked if she speaks to her friends about Jesus, she answered: "I should not speak about Jesus, rather, I have to give Him to them by the way I listen to them, by the way I dress, and above all, by the way I love them."

Maria remembers Chiara complaining about the shoulder pain that didn't go away. Everyone assumed that she may have strained her shoulder while playing tennis, her favourite sport. It was later that an MRI scan confirmed that Chiara had an aggressive form of bone cancer. The devastating news was a great shock for her parents, but Chiara was positive. After surgery and painful chemotherapy, Chiara was still hopeful of beating the cancer. Maria narrates an incident, when Chiara was told of her incurable condition by her doctor. Like most of us, she struggled to accept her situation, but after an hour of quiet time she said yes to God's plan for her life. She was filled with amazing grace from then till the last moments of life and her final words to her mum were, "Be happy, because I am happy."

Dad's Letter to Chiara

Ruggero Badano still cherishes the moment when he first held Chiara in his arms; "I'd waited so long to hold my own child in my arms." On her 18th birthday, despite being in the middle of cancer treatment and pain, she was filled with divine joy and told her parents that she didn't need any presents as she had everything she needed. Instead of a present, Ruggero wrote a letter to her. The letter begins by addressing Chiara as 'My joy' and thanking her for the happiness she gave her family. He wrote Chiara that he is an earthly father who entrusted his beloved child into the hands of the Heavenly Father.

Moments with Her Best Friend

Chiara enjoyed spending time with her friends, especially with Chicca Coriasco who was her best friend. When she was about nine years old, Chiara discovered the Focolare movement and went to the meetings with Chicca. The Focolare movement is a Catholic organisation

which promotes the ideals of unity and universal brotherhood. Its mission is to build bridges and connect communities with a view to bringing them closer to God. Chicca remembers Chiara enjoying all the Focolare meetings they attended together, which made a huge impact on Chiara's life. They were normal teenagers who loved shopping, swimming and sports, such as skiing and skating.

Ordinary Girl with an Extraordinary Message

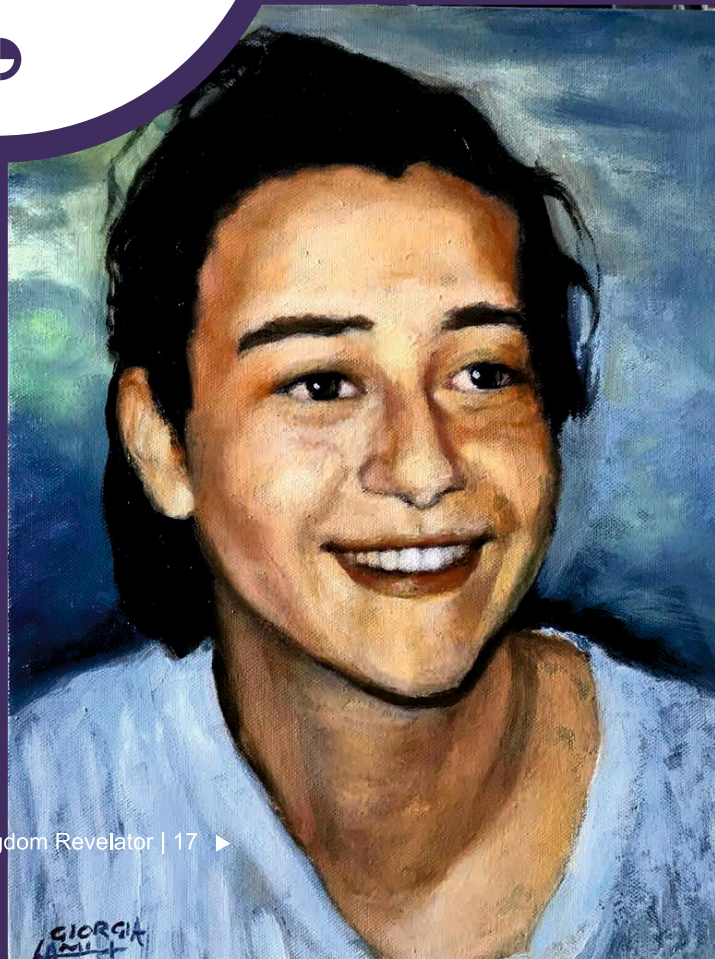
Chiara, with whom many of us could relate, was a normal teenager who loved sports, travelling and spending time with friends. What marks her life as extraordinary is her love of Jesus and the acceptance of God's plan for her life, even though it was against her wishes. Chiara loved Jesus so much that she faced her painful days at the hospital saying "For you Jesus, if you want it, I want it too!"

Chiara's message to all of us is to say 'yes' to God's plan for our life, even if it is entirely opposite to what we want, because His plan always has a reason and purpose. "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." (Jeremiah 29:11) ◆◆◆◆

“
**FOR YOU, JESUS;
IF YOU WANT IT,
I WANT IT TOO!**

BLESSED CHIARA

”



FROM FUNDAMENTALISM TO CATHOLICISM



*Nevil George
from the UK, dwells
on the life of
artist Audrey Assad.*

Audrey Assad is a contemporary Christian music artist, singer, and songwriter. Her debut album was 'The House You're Building', which she recorded in partnership with Sparrow Records. The album went on to be named the Christian Breakthrough Album of the year on iTunes. Throughout her career Audrey has been on tour with many other renowned Christian artists, such as Matt Maher, Chris Tomlin, Tenth Avenue North and many more.

Audrey was born into a Protestant family in the state of New Jersey to an American mother and an Arab-American father of Syrian descent. Audrey had an affinity for musical instruments from a young age; at the age of two she started to play the piano. At the age of eighteen, Audrey and her family moved to Florida where she spent the next six years of her life, during which she attended college and provided for herself by working odd jobs. She also began writing and composing songs at this time. Audrey spent around five years performing at various venues such as restaurants and weddings.

Journey of Faith

It was while living in Florida that Audrey began to learn about the Catholic faith, and in 2007 she was received into the Catholic

Church. "I wish I could point out a catalytic moment, but my journey out of fundamentalism was very gradual," Assad explains. "Actually, I found that fundamentalism was not just a descriptor for my childhood beliefs, but was also a deeply ingrained worldview through which I viewed everything in my life. It has taken far longer to soften the effects of that lens than I had imagined it would, when I left my Plymouth Brethren church behind at the age of twenty-one."

About her journey of faith, Assad continues: "I do remember hitting a wall in late 2014 when I was experiencing some serious burnout, and when I finally took some time to breathe and examine my interior state in early 2015, I found scorched earth. I had always struggled to relate to believers who heard the voice of God at every step, but it had gotten even more desolate and I truly felt no sense of God's presence at all, either in my heart or in the universe. I would say that it was then that I truly began to actively deconstruct the religion I had grown so comfortable with. It seemed very bleak to me at the time but looking back it was a really healthy experience of disillusionment that led to greater detachment. I've learned to live with open hands around everything, even my belief."

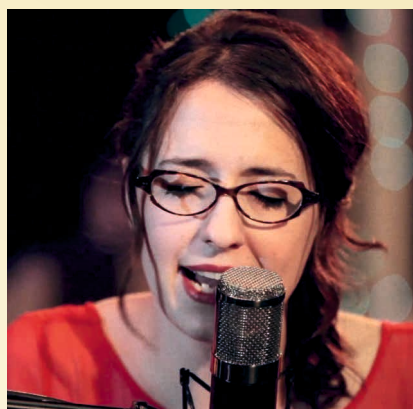
Jesus My Deliverer

Talking about "Wounded Healer," which was written and co-produced with Ben Shive and inspired in part by a book of the same name, by Henri Nouwen, she said, "I heard the term first from him and fell in love with the idea that Jesus rose from the dead still bearing His wounds, and went to heaven with a wounded body. It's something I try to meditate on frequently and to seek out what mysteries

God might be revealing about Himself in it." Talking about Jesus, she says, "All along I had thought Jesus was my deliverer from God, instead it turns out that, among other things, Jesus actually delivers me from my worst ideas about God."

Surrendering Her Talent

Wanting to direct her music closer to liturgical and worship music, and attracted by the economic advantages of independent production, Audrey Assad parted ways with Sparrow Records on good terms. With the



“**All along I had thought Jesus was my deliverer from God, instead it turns out that, among other things, Jesus actually delivers me from my worst ideas about God.**”

help of her husband, William Price III, Assad began a Kickstarter campaign that reached double its goal by its finish on April 15, 2013. The proceeds paid for Assad's third studio album, *Fortunate Fall*. Assad released her second independent album, *'Inheritance'*, in February 2016, which contained a large number of renditions of traditional church hymns, such as "Holy, Holy, Holy" and "Be Thou My Vision," as well as a new rendition of the Latin-language hymn "Ubi caritas."

Audrey is another example of a famous and talented musician who has surrendered her talent for the Kingdom of God. Growing up she listened to secular music as well as French and middle eastern music, but in later years she began to listen to Christian artists, such as the Newsboys, Nicole Nordeman and Cindy Morgan. At the age of nineteen, Audrey began to lead worship, write and compose her own music. The type of music she now composes is a mix of religious and non-religious themes. In her music she draws from her Catholic faith as well as from literary references, based on her love of reading literature and poetry. Audrey reveals that her music consists of songs that have been sung to God rather than songs about God. One of her notable quotes is; "It can be so hard for us to let someone really look at or into us, even God, even though that gaze is healing. I am always seeking to become better at receiving it."

Audrey currently resides near Nashville with her husband William Gene Price III and two children and continues to produce and make music as a means of sharing her Catholic faith with the world.

Recommended songs: Drawn to You, I shall not Want, You speak



AN ODE TO GOD'S LOVE

Love of parents for their children is the purest in this world, but it is imperfect and finite. God's love is perfect, infinite, and everlasting. Elizabeth Shaji delves on the wonderful manifestations of God's love for His chosen people.

Formation of a Divine Nation

When the Israelites prayed for freedom from their bondage in Egypt, God remembered His covenant with their forefathers and decided to liberate them (Exodus 2:23-25). God delivered the Israelites from the mighty Pharaoh. He split the Red Sea into two for them to cross safely, showered Manna from Heaven for them to eat, gave them quails for meat, and made water flow from the rock for them to drink. All through their journey to the promised land, like a good shepherd, God ensured their safety and provided everything for them to be contented and happy. God said to them: "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth as his people, his treasured possession" (Deuteronomy 7:6).

However, the Israelites were not always faithful to God. They sinned against God by disobeying His commandments. When they turned away from God they faced many problems on their journey through the wilderness to the promised land - they had to fight against enemies, and

suffer hunger and disease. Although God never abandoned them, He allowed sufferings in their lives to make them realise His steadfast love and faithfulness. "The clothes on your back did not wear out and your feet did not swell these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a parent disciplines a child so the Lord your God disciplines you" (Deuteronomy 8:4-5).

An Enduring Covenant of Love and Protection

We are the new Israel, the chosen people of God. He has the same love and care for us. The same promise of eternal happiness for us is Heaven - our promised land. We all face trials and tribulations in life and at times fail to see the hand of God supporting us. This happens not because God has forgotten us or is angry with us, but because He is disciplining and training us to be holier. God gives us opportunities in life to make choices and enlightens us to choose the right paths. "So now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you; only to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy



10:12). He does not want any of His children to go astray. He does not allow anyone else to steal us from Him, because every child is precious to Him. “Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you” (Isaiah 49:15).

When we fall into the slavery of sin, God rescues us. “The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still” (Exodus 14:14). Even if we are unfaithful in our promises to Him, God can never be unfaithful. He always keeps His word, as He is the perfect Father who cares for His children. He loves us unconditionally, even if our love for Him wavers. He is always waiting, with arms wide open, to receive us. He will never accuse us for our shortcomings if we realise our mistakes and return to Him with repentance. We will find consolation and

“
**HE LOVES US
UNCONDITIONALLY,
EVEN IF OUR LOVE
FOR HIM WAVERS.**
”

comfort in His loving embrace. By relying fully on His mercy we will be strengthened to resist temptations and will never want to offend our loving Father. At the end of our journey on earth we will meet our loving Father who waits for us to be with Him for eternity!

A Lesson to be Learned

From the experience of the Israelites, we should learn that with God on our side everything

works in our favour but without Him our lives will be aimless and disastrous. Now it is our turn to listen to God in everything we plan and in everything we do. Let us, therefore, stop worrying when we have to walk through the wilderness of this worldly life, feeling abandoned and unprotected. We should realise that God is always there on our side, silently listening to us, guiding us, meeting our needs, and carrying us safely in the palm of His hand.

We can be courageous and proactive in our steps to show to the world around us what it means to be a child of God and what the power of God’s providence is; because, “the steadfast love of Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:22-23).



Beautiful

Things Happen

Sam Angelica, a 14 year old from London, has some valuable advice for those who want to grow in their faith.

I started yearning to become closer to God about a year ago. I never really used to pray before that, but then I started to pray for just a few minutes every day. I remember that I really wanted to become closer to God but I didn't know where to start. I knew many people who were non-believers and at times I too would question my faith because of their influence on me.

In order to help me strengthen my faith, I began to study the lives of saints, such as St Rose of Lima, St Therese of Lisieux, St Agnes and St Francis of Assisi. I continued to try to deepen my faith. I naturally began to pray more and my prayers became more meaningful. Through Jesus I have been able to break free from many bad habits and become a better person. It's amazing how much can change in a year when you begin to love the Lord and accept His will for you. In today's society, strong faith can be something that seems so hard to achieve, but it is surely worth persevering for.

Now, I have a message which I want to share with everyone who yearns to strengthen their relationship with our Almighty Father:

Keep steadfast in your faith and serve God in everything you do. When you allow Jesus to come into your life, beautiful things happen. Remember this always!



CROSS WORD ANSWERS

ACROSS: 5.GABRIEL 7.ANNA 8.FRIDAY 9.JOSEPH 10.PENTECOST 11.GOLGOTHA
DOWN: 1.TWELVE 2.CANAAN 3.REVELATION 4.JONAH 6.SOLOMON

POPE'S *Voice*

Let us pray that programmes for development may predominate in the world, and not those for weapons. Pope Francis

GLOBAL CATHOLIC NEWS

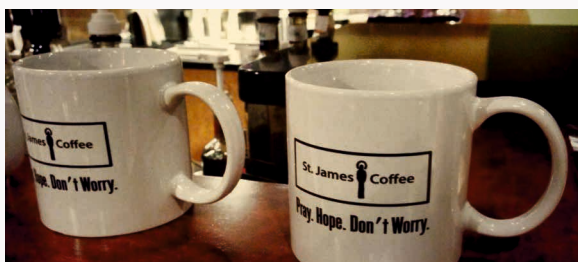
Compiled by Smitha George

AUSTRALIA'S FORMER ATHEIST GOVERNOR GENERAL BECOMES CATHOLIC



Brisbane: Australia's former Governor General Bill Hayden has been baptised as a Catholic at the age of 85, after a lifetime as an atheist. Hayden attributed his conversion to the influence of Ursuline Sisters and his mother. He said that the sisters who taught him at primary school stressed the principles of social commitment, humanity, and service to others.

SERVING SOULS ONE CUP AT A TIME



Minnesota: Across the United States, Catholic coffee shops are taking evangelisation to new heights. Located in Rochester, Minnesota, St James Coffee shop serves fair-trade and hosts lectures on Scripture and theology and organises pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Café Holy Grounds in Santa Monica, California aims to provide "second chances" for ex-offenders who have been released from prison. Bibles and rosaries are also sold at the shop. Ignatius Café sponsored by the St Agnes Korean Catholic Church is all about bringing God to all people. "Since God is open to all people, the church must be open to the public", Fr Choi, the man behind the cafe, said.

YOUNG CATHOLICS SHUN MODERN LIFE TO EMBRACE RELIGION IN UK

London: Statistics compiled by the National Office for Vocation in UK, show more commitment to religion in among younger Catholics, precisely in age group of 20s and 30s, in the United Kingdom. While just seven women joined religious orders in England and Wales in 2004, by 2014, that number had increased to 45 — the highest number in a quarter-century. An average of 25 has joined annually in the last three years.



CHINA AND VATICAN SIGN HISTORIC DEAL ON BISHOPS

Beijing: China on September 22nd reached a historic breakthrough with the Vatican on the appointment of bishops. Under the deal, Pope Francis recognised the legitimacy of seven bishops appointed by the Chinese government. The issue of who appoints bishops has been a debate since China first broke off diplomatic ties with the Holy See in 1951. With 90 million Christians, Christianity is regarded as the fastest growing religion in China.



CHURCH DONATES MOTHER MARY'S ORNAMENTS FOR FLOOD RELIEF



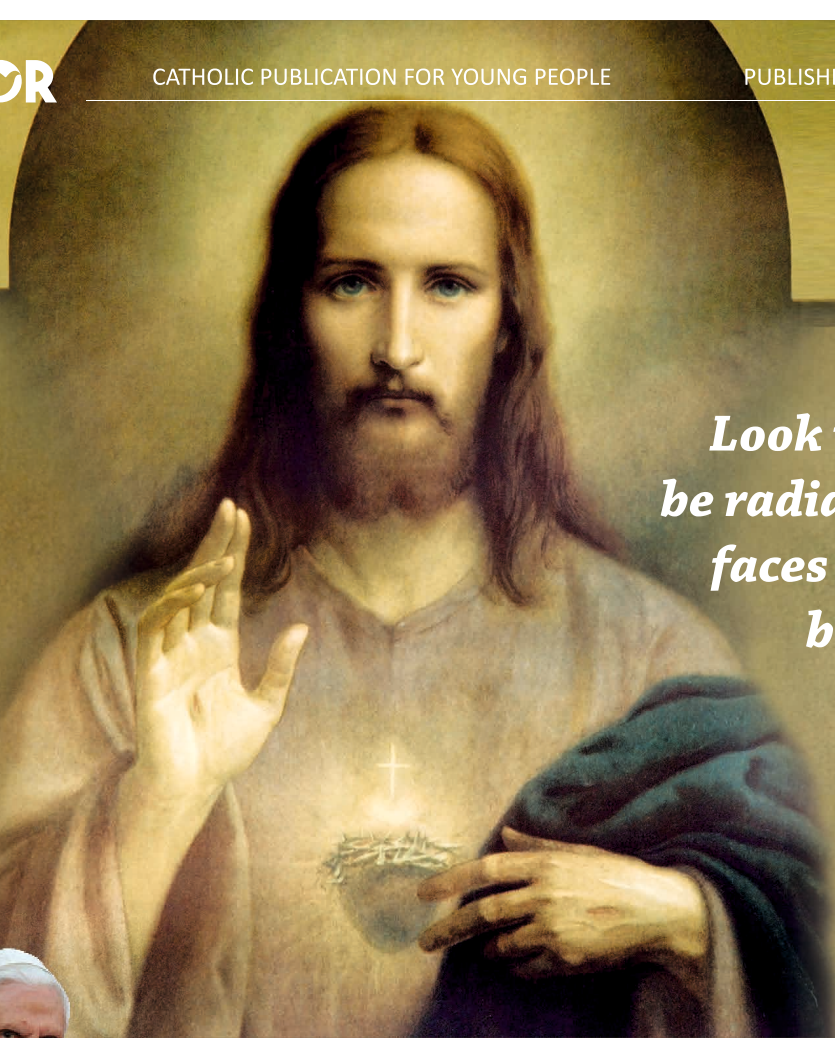
Kochi: A Catholic parish in Kerala, India joined global efforts to raise funds for the flood-devastated Kerala by donating gold ornaments that adorned a Mother Mary statue. The necklaces weighing 25 sovereigns were made from gold offered by the devotees. Kerala recently faced its most affected flood in the last 100 years.

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PUBLISHED BY: SEHION UK MINISTRIES



***Look to him, and
be radiant; so your
faces shall never
be ashamed.
(Psalms 34:5)***



***The joy you are seeking has a name, a face;
that of Jesus of Nazareth, who waits for you
in the Eucharist. (Benedict XVI)***

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