

KINGDOM

# REVELATOR

CATHOLIC MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ■ ISSUE 39

I'M  
HOME

MONEY MONEY MONEY...  
IS IT A RICH MAN'S WORLD?



SEHION  
ministries

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## KINGDOM REVELATOR



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### FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES:

[Kingrevusa@gmail.com](mailto:Kingrevusa@gmail.com)

### FOR SUBSCRIPTION OR BILLING INFO:

[Krsubscrusa@gmail.com](mailto:Krsubscrusa@gmail.com)

### KINGDOM REVELATOR USA

766 Clover Ridge Lane  
Itasca, IL. 60143

### PLEASE VISIT US AT:

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Welcome to the latest issue of Kingdom Revelator. We hope and pray that it will guide you in your spiritual life and draw you closer to the Lord.

This month we are celebrating the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on August 15<sup>th</sup>. This is a great celebration in the Catholic Church so I thought that I would find out more about it. The Assumption of Our Lady is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible but is, according to the Catholic Church, when Mary, the Holy Mother of God, "having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory". Pope Pius XII declared this article of faith in 1950 but it has been a part of the Tradition of the Church from the very earliest times. The word Assumption comes from the Latin word 'assumptio' which means 'taking' and signifies that at the end of her life Jesus took His Mother, body and soul, to be with Him in Heaven. He was able to do this because she was the 'Immaculate Conception' born free from original sin.

Documents from the early Church always maintained that something extraordinary happened to Our Lady at the moment of her departure from this life and this was accepted by the Church for many centuries. This explains why there is no burial place where the first followers of Christ could pay their respects to His Mother, as they would no doubt have done if it were possible, or even a legend of a tomb. Because of the Assumption, instead of having one place to venerate our Holy Mother, we have Marian shrines around the world dedicated to her. God has allowed Our Blessed Lady to appear in places like Lourdes, Fatima and Guadalupe so that she can speak His words to her beloved children.

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 974) it says that Our Lady's Assumption is a foretaste of what will happen to all believers when Christ comes again, then all the Saints will be united with the Most Holy Trinity in the glory of Heaven. Until that time Mother Mary is a sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim people of God. That is why we remember and celebrate this wonderful Feast.

*Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us.*



KINGDOM  
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*"Call to me and I will answer you"*

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# I'M HOME...

## THOUGHTS OF A NEW CATHOLIC

*There are times when I have so much to say that my mind cannot put its thoughts into order quickly enough for me to be able to write them down. This is one such occasion. I have so much to say that I shall simply have to start at the beginning...*

God made me. He made me for a purpose; He knows it and although in His infinite wisdom He has yet to show me that specific purpose, I know it too. Whatever the beginning circumstances of your life, your family situation or indeed the place you find yourself in now, you can be certain of that too. How can I know this for sure? Because the God I know is love; it is not a knowledge that can be gained in any other way except through hard won experience.

My spiritual life began the moment I was baptised in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I don't remember it but it must have been a 'good

show' since the Lord never does things half-hearted! The grace afforded to me at my baptism was the gift of faith. It has proved very useful in my search for the truth. That is not to say I have never doubted. I have had several periods in my life where there has seemed nothing but darkness. Through these times the fire in me was merely an ember, barely noticeable. But here is the thing about embers, they may be tiny but they are fiercely hot. The smallest of encouragement fans them into flames. A slight wind ignites a near unstoppable force of nature - the Holy Spirit is a formidable force.

I am certain that God had been with me throughout my life thus far but I can remember the moment it all made sense, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2000. It was one of those 'light bulb' moments when clarity reigned. The next sixteen years were a roller coaster of emotions as I first became a wife and a mother not long after. Looking back, God used all these experiences, as He always does, to prune and grow me. He pruned hard and it was painful but no act of refinement

is ever easy. Would I go through those difficult moments again? Yes I absolutely would. You may think that is ridiculous. You may think I am just being dramatic but I can tell you that no amount of pain or hardship could sway me from being where I am now.

I was 35 and happy. I had 4 lovely children and an amazing husband. I went to Church every week and was part of the most wonderful church family. My life revolved around Jesus and I enjoyed studying the Bible and learning from the Sunday sermons. My faith had grown slowly but surely and, despite a period of illness, the roots of my spiritual life had stood firm. Still, I felt something was missing. Instead of having fewer questions about my faith, I was having more. These were not doubts but reasonable theological questions that I had a burning need to explore. I had stagnated and I needed to grow.

One of the hardest things in the last year has been leaving my previous church family. The place I was married, my children baptised and the friendships that saw me through those tough times. It was not a decision I made lightly and it took a lot of courage to finally do it. I had no safety net, no other church to go to. If I left and it was the wrong thing then I was afraid I would lose my faith. But if there was one thing my church had taught me it was that 'if you want to walk on water, you have to get out of the boat'. I had to fix my eyes on Jesus and walk towards Him unflinchingly and without looking down! It could have gone horribly wrong but it didn't. I listened to God calling and as always He was faithful. I trusted in His provision and He blessed me abundantly in ways I never expected.

I began going to a different church, it was a place where I knew a couple of people but on the whole everyone was a stranger. On top of not knowing many people, the church was Catholic and so the service was totally different. There was no worship band, the words





*I cannot sleep  
because I am so  
excited, I am looking  
forward so much to  
getting up and  
going to Mass.*

were unfamiliar and more than once I found myself looking at the Mass sheet back to front and upside down, trying to figure out what was going on! I couldn't receive communion as I was not Catholic and this broke my heart. There were no high energy children's group and absolutely zero for my teenage son. My 6 year old was used to being with his friends and found the whole thing boring.

But God is always faithful. He knows what we need before we do and in the coming months the transformation in our hearts was to be enormous. There were the practical things like the parish advertising for a Youth Worker and gradually I set about becoming more familiar with the Mass. We went to as many social events as we could and, despite being shy, I made myself talk to lots of new people. I signed up for the Right of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) which is a course exploring the Catholic faith. I never had any intention of becoming Catholic, it was

simply so I could understand why the Mass was the Mass; why people at my new church did what they did and said what they said. God, however, is the creator of all things seen and unseen, one of which is His sense of humour!

One by one God moved in each of us. My son had a yearning to become an altar server. My other children enjoy singing in the choir and my little one is content these days simply to listen and cuddle on my lap. God was patient with me while I wrestled with Him. He guided and nurtured me during this transient time. I gradually fell in love with the Mass, the depth and richness of the liturgy, the truth and love of His body and blood, the joy and thanksgiving of the Eucharist and the communion which it brings. The delight in receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the grace outpoured at my Confirmation. I am complete; I am home.

As I write this now it is 2.30 am on a Sunday morning. I cannot sleep because I am so excited. I am looking forward so much to getting up and going to Mass, to spending time in His presence. I am excited to see my church family, to share in communion with them and sing songs telling God how awesome He is and how much I love Him.

I do not know what the future holds but I trust in God's plan for it. I am looking forward to growing even more in my faith and to going deeper with God, to developing friendships and becoming an integral part of the church body. The last six months have been amazing and I am so grateful to those who have supported me on this journey. I still have moments when I think it is all a dream and I have to pinch myself but hey, I got out of the boat and I didn't sink!

*Emma, from Leamington Spa in the UK was received into the Catholic Church last Easter.*





# WALKING ON WATER

**Alex Heath**, the Adviser for Adult Faith Formation, Catechetics and Chaplaincy in the Northampton Diocese in the UK explains how God can enable us to do miraculous things if we grow in our openness to the Holy Spirit.

**T**hankfully when the Lord calls us to do something He gives us the power to do it. Scripture tells us that at the invitation of Jesus, St Peter “got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came towards Him.” It was only when he got scared that Peter began to sink. The problem

was that he took his eyes off Jesus and His power (Matthew 14:22-33). At times, like Peter, I fear that I don’t have the abilities or resources I need and so I take my eyes off Jesus and start to sink. Over the past few years I have been gradually learning to let go of relying on my own strength and yield to the Holy Spirit.

## *Keeping Our Eyes On Jesus*

Pope St John Paul II said that “the Kingdom of God is not a concept, a doctrine, or a program...but it is before all else, a person with the face and name of Jesus.” Like Peter did when he got out of the boat, the more we keep our eyes on Jesus, the more we will discover the freedom that yielding to the Holy Spirit brings.

St Luke tells us that after His baptism Jesus was full of the Spirit and was then led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Following this time of testing Jesus then “returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news



about him spread through the whole countryside" (Luke 3:21-4:14). As disciples of Jesus we too are called to be filled, led and empowered by the Spirit.

## A Call To Surrender

In my early twenties I was getting to know Jesus, having recently come to a renewed and living faith in Him as my merciful Saviour. The more I kept my eyes on Jesus the more I realised that He was calling me to surrender everything to Him. During my final year at University, after much struggle, I received the grace to do just that and made a decision to surrender my life to Jesus as my Lord.

## Personal Pentecost

Not long afterwards I took part in a Life in the Spirit course and experienced my own personal Pentecost. It was as if a new dimension of faith was opened up to me. I experienced the love of the Father in the depths of my heart and a new freedom. Scripture and the Sacraments came alive to me in a new way. I also discovered various gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12) in my own life and in the lives of my friends, which though I had known about theoretically, I had not seen used before. As we stepped out in using these gifts we saw the fruit of the Spirit grow and develop in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23). Looking back now, I can see how these various graces helped to release the power of the Spirit that I had already received through my Baptism and Confirmation. But there was more to come.

## A Time Of Testing

After His baptism Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert. There He was tested and experienced various hardships including hunger and thirst as well as various temptations. In the weakness of His humanity Jesus, the New Adam, continued to do the will of His Father and lived by the Spirit. After forty days and

nights, Jesus emerged in the power of the Spirit to begin His public ministry.

## Let Him Work In You

In the desert we too have to learn to be led by the Spirit, to yield. As we follow the Lord and seek to do His will, we will be brought face to face with our own weakness and areas within our hearts and minds that need to be transformed. There have been many times over the last few years when I have experienced God leading me into the desert and inviting me to yield to His work in me because it is there that we come face to face with our own weaknesses.



*"The Kingdom of God is not a concept, a doctrine, or a program... but it is before all else, a person with the face and name of Jesus."*

*Pope St John Paul II*

## My Grace Is Sufficient

There too we can become aware of what we may be relying on other than God. The Bible says that God's Word is "like a hammer which breaks the rock in pieces" (Jeremiah 23:29). Sometimes we can build our lives on 'rocks' other than the rock of obedience to God's Word. God will, at times, allow us to experience weakness in some areas of our lives so that we rely more fully on Him, our true rock and our salvation (Psalm 18). Although St Paul pleaded with the Lord to take away his struggles, his thorn in

the flesh, the Lord said to him 'my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' The Lord says the same to us.

## Jacob's story

The Bible also tells us about Jacob. One night he came face to face with his own weakness. Deprived of his family, possessions and all alone he 'wrestled with God'. Jacob's hip was wounded, but he received a blessing and his name was changed to Israel (Genesis 32: 22-32). Jacob is a changed man and gradually he learns to walk in the power of the Lord rather than his own strength. If we are to enter fully into our own calling we too need to discover God's strength at work in our weakness, to go by the way of the cross. In this way the desert becomes a fruitful place, a place where new life begins. Then as we emerge from our own deserts, we too will know the power of the Spirit in our lives.

## My Experience

In 2001, I moved back home as my Father was very ill. I was without a job and very unsure about what lay ahead. Although it was a very difficult and painful year, during which my father died, many blessings also came out of that time including getting engaged and married to my wonderful wife. During that year I also began to be involved in new areas of pastoral work in the Church which I have continued to this day. That year taught me so much about what it means to surrender to God and yield my life to His will.

So, let's not be afraid of our weaknesses and limitations but rather surrender ourselves fully to the Lord who loves us beyond measure. That each day, His power working in us really can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine as we yield our lives to Him.





# GOD'S WORK OF ART

Recently I joined 30,000 people from 128 nations in Rome to celebrate 50 years of charismatic renewal in the Church. It was an amazing occasion with huge gatherings and on the evening before Pentecost Sunday, we gathered with the Holy Father, Pope Francis. There he called us to unity and to reach out to our Christian brothers and sisters in other denominations. The Holy Father prayed for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

## *The Holy Spirit Is At Work*

When I was thinking about those few days in Rome I wondered what brought such a diverse crowd together as one. No guessing needed, it is the Holy Spirit at work!

I deliberately use the words, "at work" in the present tense. With our simple yes at this moment or at any point in time He is at work. It is an inside job. Somebody on the inside has to let Him in. Once He is in, with our permission He will start work. In my last article I said that He writes the letter from God on our hearts. It doesn't stop there. He continues to work deep within us.

*Steve Lavery previously wrote about allowing the Holy Spirit to work in us. He reminded us that since our Baptism and Confirmation, the Holy Spirit has been truly present in us, waiting for our co-operation. This month he tells us what to expect when we do say yes to the Holy Spirit.*

It tells us in Ephesians 10:2, "We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus for the good works which God has already designated to make up our way of life." When we open ourselves up to the Holy Spirit we become a work in progress. It is like He is creating a beautiful symphony of our lives. Each of one of us, when we are docile before the Spirit, will become a beautiful symphony of grace.

As a symphony is made up of movements, usually four, the composer works on each movement using all the parts of the orchestra to create the most beautiful music, so it is with the Holy Spirit and us. He will use all the parts of the orchestra around us, the Sacraments, our families, the teachings of the Church, but most of all He will use our co-operation, our yes.

## *Soul*

First I suggest He works on the movement of the soul. He takes up residence there and leads us to making a new connection with God as our loving Father, who made us, loves us and wants us to be with Him forever. We can cry out, "Abba Father" because we received the Spirit of adoption as Sons and Daughters of God (Romans 8:15). We connect to Jesus through the work of the Spirit and realise that He died for us personally and won for us the forgiveness of our sins and life everlasting. "Nobody is able to say, 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3).





While these connections are being made we are gradually making a new connection with the Holy Spirit as the giver of life, the living water and the breath of God. Our renewed connection with Jesus brings about changes in our lives as we say 'Yes' to Him and recognise that He is Lord, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

## Heart

The work begins on the movement of our hearts. As promised in Ezekiel, He takes away our heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh. Our loving God works gently on our hearts, transforming them and He writes His laws of love on them. This helps us to make new connections with people who we are called to love.

## Mind

The work continues on the movement of our minds. The Holy Spirit will enlighten our thinking and inspire our thoughts. We will hear in a new

way the Word of God when it is preached. We will be filled with awe when we read it and with understanding it will pierce our hearts. With inspired teaching, we will be able to recognise the truth among all the messages that we receive.

## Will

The Holy Spirit works on the movement of our will. The world tells us that self is first, self-reliance, self-determination, choose for yourself, but the Spirit whispers deep within us trust in God. Surrender and let Jesus be Lord. The Spirit asks us to let Him lead us, guide us and empower us. Then we will be led to conform our will to the Divine Will.

Once we allow the Holy Spirit to start creating this beautiful work of art within us, we have to continually be saying 'yes'. We have to be faithful to our prayers; faithful to the Sacraments and faithful to learning more about Jesus and His Church.

## Gifts

Now, this all sounds good and holy, and it is, but it is not always easy. There are a few things that can get in the way. It could simply be that we are satisfied with the way we are already and don't

want to change. It could be the attractions of the world. It could be mood swings and of course it could be sin. It does take a certain effort but God knows this and in the flood of sanctifying grace He gave us the gifts of the Holy Spirit to help us. We received these gifts in Baptism and they were strengthened in Confirmation.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1831) notes that the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit "complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them." Infused with His gifts, we respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as if by instinct, the way Christ Himself would. These gifts that help us so much are: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord.

So we are a work in progress, a work of art in God's hands. The Holy Spirit is like the wind blowing over the sea and to catch the wind we have to raise the sails. To catch the wind of God's Spirit we just have to say, "Come Holy Spirit, enkindle in me the fire of your love." ◊

***The Holy Spirit is like the wind blowing over the sea and to catch the wind we have to raise the sails.***





# THE BIBLE

DID YOU KNOW



The Bible is a collection of divinely-revealed writings divided into the Old and New Testaments. The word "Bible" is derived from the Greek 'ta biblia' meaning "the books."



The earliest books of the Bible were handed down by word of mouth over many centuries. They were first written down on scrolls when the Jewish people settled in the Promised Land. The earliest is thought to have been written around 950 BC, during the reign of King Solomon.



The Old Testament Scriptures are common to both Jews and Christians except that the Jews, and later the Protestant Churches only recognise the books that were originally written in Hebrew, forty in all. Catholics Bibles also contain books and extra passages that were written in Greek. These extra books include Judith, Tobit, Maccabees I and II, Wisdom and Sirach.



The New Testament books were written in the first century AD. The first documents, thought to be St Paul's letters, were written only about 20 years after Jesus' death and resurrection.



St Mark is thought to have been the earliest Gospel account of Jesus around 70 AD, based on St Peter's preaching in Rome. St Luke's Gospel was written about 10 years later and was written particularly for the communities of non-Jewish people who had converted to Christianity. At around the same time St Matthew wrote his Gospel for the Jewish communities showing how Jesus was the promised Messiah.



There are thirteen letters that are described as 'Pauline' although some scholars think that they may not all have been physically written by St Paul. The letter to the Hebrews is written in a very different style to the others and the opening greeting from Paul is missing. Other letters written by St Paul are mentioned but these are not included in the Bible. For example, in Colossians 4:16, Paul writes about a letter to the Laodiceans, that has been lost.



It was not until the fourth century that the Catholic Church officially determined the list of inspired books of the Bible (the Canon) and formally collected all the approved books into one document. It was from this Bible that the Sacred Scriptures were selected to be read in Church as the inspired Word of God. There are many Christian documents from that time, including other Gospels and letters that were not included in the Bible.



Although written by human authors, the Church teaches that God is the author of Sacred Scripture. "The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of Sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit" (CCC 105 and 111) and it must be read and interpreted in the light of the same Spirit by whom it was written.



The Gutenberg Bible was the first book to be printed using a mechanical new printing press in Germany around 1455. Very few copies exist today. They are very valuable and are mainly kept in museums and libraries.



It is estimated that over 100 million Bibles are sold or given away for free every year in the world. According to Guinness World Records, the Bible is the best-selling book of all time with over 5 billion copies sold and distributed.







## Testimony

Steffi Emmanuel from Reading University, shares her powerful story.

Looking back I suppose that I was a fairly passive Christian. I believed in God and prayed to Him when I needed help or advice. I suppose that I had received many blessings in my life, but other than to go running to Him when I was in trouble, I never bothered much about God and I didn't think that He bothered much about me either.

In August 2016, I decided to go to a School of Evangelisation (SOE), a youth retreat led by Sehion ministries in Huntington. It was a spur of the moment decision to go, after one of my friends told me about her amazing experience at a similar event. Usually I attend retreats when I feel like I am drifting away from God or when I have an important prayer that I want Him to answer. I didn't want anything from God at the time when I decide to go to this retreat. In my busy life it was difficult to fit it in but it turned out to be the most blessed five days of my life!

SOE was an eye opener for me! There

were so many things that touched my heart, in revelation and repentance and many blessings. As a practicing Catholic, it was shocking to realise where I stood in my spirituality. It made me take a step back and look at my life from a totally new perspective. Although I had never thanked Him for it, I realised that my Lord had been continuously showering me with His love throughout my life. My eyes were opened to see the boundless mercy that He had been showering on me all my life.

There were several talks about a range of faith-building topics including the importance of giving thanks to God, the Ten Commandments and the Sacrament of Confession. Something that stood out for me was when one speaker said that after being filled with the Holy Spirit, the disciples were so full of God's grace, that He was able to perform miracles through them. Some people were even healed when the disciple's shadows fell on them! I was so inspired by this. I wanted to be filled with God's grace, so that I could spread His blessings through every step that I took.

# 5 DAYS THAT CHANGED MY LIFE



Another very inspiring speaker told us about the importance of going to Confession and how we receive God's grace through the Sacrament. It made me realise how little I had appreciated the Sacraments before and it inspired me to do the best Confession I have ever done. That was the big turning point for me and it became clear why God had called me to be on this retreat.

Another insight that I took away, was that if anything makes you a slave, it must be sinful, because the Truth, which is God sets you free. I felt that God wanted me to recognise the difference between good and bad and reject anything that is bad. He chose us to be holy and blameless before Him and He wants me to be his little angel! All I have to do is open the



**“I told Him that I was weak, but I still wanted to be His little angel, and to this day He hasn't let go of my hand.”**

door of my heart to Him and ask Him to help me.

I still remember the incredible feeling of happiness I had when I came back from the chapel after my Confession. I felt like a new person and a new creation in God. He gave me a new start and I was not going to let that go to waste. I wanted to keep my white garment free from the stain of sin. I felt so brave and nothing under the sun was going to stop me! I had an overwhelming feeling that I wanted to do great things for my Lord.

I wasn't scared to let Him take control of my life any more. I told Him that I was weak, but I still wanted to be His little angel, and to this day He hasn't let go of my hand. He knows how weak I am but I have seen His powerful hands intervene whenever I am tempted, as they draw me closer to Him. God helped me build a really strong foundation of faith during the five days of the retreat and I continue to grow in faith and draw closer to Him, daily.

The ultimate gift that we are all seeking is happiness. We spend lots of money and precious time trying to find it but I now realise that as God's creation, our ultimate happiness is when we allow our creator to be the Lord of our lives, and this comes free of charge. God gave me the grace to experience His joy and peace and it cost me nothing. Every inhibition I had about evangelisation and talking to others about my faith has now gone. I want everyone that I meet to feel the love and happiness that I have felt, so I try now to help others to encounter Jesus through everything that I do and say. Yes, my life has changed, I am happier now and I feel the power of the Holy Spirit is with me and I know that I have Almighty God at my side.







# Money Money Money Is It A Rich Man's World?

*A reflection on how we regard wealth by one of our young readers.*

## **Culture**

Do you sometimes wander round the shops looking at the latest fashions or gadgets thinking, "If only I could afford it?" I think most of us young people feel that we need more money. We are growing up in a culture where wealth means power and money brings respect. It seems that people who can afford it are able to buy anything they need like love, pleasure, friends and popularity. Perhaps that's why everyone wants to make money as quickly as possible, by whatever means. I am not judging anyone because I have been there too.

## **Wrong Mentality**

Money is important to everyone, whatever their background, rich or poor. Our culture today portrays wealth as one of the most important things that define who we are. If you are rich you will be treated as a celebrity and can get away with practically anything. Society tells us that a person with money, regardless of how they got it, is popular and to be respected. This sort of mentality affects many young people today.

## **A Vicious Circle**

I was the same. When I was growing up my aim was to be incredibly rich, not because I wanted the money, but I knew that having lots of money would make me the "big man" in my area. If I was wealthy, people would like me, look up to



me and respect me. So far, my dreams have not come true but as I've grown older I have learnt that this sort of respect is short-lived anyway. If someone else comes along who is richer then people will stop giving you their attention and will turn to the richer person. This drives you to try and make more money, to become richer and richer by trying to make money by whatever means. It's a vicious circle.

## Stealing

Some of you reading this might relate to it in a small way. I am ashamed to say that I have taken money from my parents' wallet without asking them. Some of you may have stolen money from others. I used to gamble at school to try to make more money and even used stolen school vouchers to buy lunch so that I could save up as much money as I could. I did all this just to show my friends that I had enough money to buy a drink and a packet of crisps on the way back from school.

## Greed

Looking back this was a very silly reason to be so dishonest, yet this sort of thinking has crept into my adult life too. I remember one time, when I started to think that I should be paid for my work helping with some Church ministry. But the Lord showed me that it was voluntary work that I should be doing freely for the love of God. At that time money had become my motivation for preaching the Gospel and I had become greedy. I had a constant desire for more and more money, which had started to control me. This meant that God had started to lose His priority in my heart and the desire for money had taken over.

## Emptiness

St Paul put it beautifully when he wrote, "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains." (1 Timothy 6:10) When money starts becoming our goal then lots of things start to fall apart. Cardinal Basil Hume wrote that the "consumer society has not satisfied the deepest longings of the human heart, or given the joy and contentment which every heart craves." This is very true. We hope

that amassing money will fill the emptiness in our hearts which desire love, but it never does. And when we become dominated by money we end up thirsting for the unsatisfactory transient pleasures that money can bring and become addicted to them. The more we crave for something the more we are willing to compromise on our morals to get it and so we end up stealing or cheating for a quick fix.

## Boasting

The Bible says that one of the things that has corrupted the world is the "pride in riches" (1 John 2:16). I remember how pleased I was when I was able to buy a new pair of trainers or some designer wear, so I could show them off to my friends. It made me feel superior to them. This made me arrogant, boastful

and competitive and spoilt my relationship with my friends. King Solomon made a similar mistake because he struggled to accept that all his riches had been given to him by God and instead became proud and possessive and eventually ended up losing everything.

## Wanting More

Riches, rather than solving our problems, will lead us into more trouble and sin. Money does not equate to happiness, rather it equates to burden. Money does not bring friends or good relationships, it brings people who want to be your friends or want to be in a relationship with your money and not you. Money does not bring complete happiness and satisfaction because you will never be satisfied with the amount you have and will always want more.

## Be Satisfied

Am I saying that all money is bad? No! I am saying that the message that we hear so often that we need more money than necessary is poisonous. It slowly kills us from the inside without us even knowing it. Henry Fielding once said, "Make money your god and it will plague you like the devil." This is the truth. Once money becomes our goal, it takes us over and we lose our ability to love. Instead of finding happiness and fulfilment, greed makes us feel emptier inside. Let us not fall into the trap of wanting money for the sake of it. I think Will Smith put it brilliantly when he said, "Too many people spend money they haven't earned, to buy things they don't want, to impress people they don't like".

*"A heart  
troubled by the  
desire for possessions  
is a heart full of desire  
for possessions, but  
empty of God."*

*Pope Francis*

*2<sup>nd</sup> March 2014*





# PRAY FOR WISDOM

Shirleyne Jayakody from Kingdom Warriors Youth Ministry, Birmingham explores what the Bible says about wisdom.

**R**ecently I read in my Bible, “How great is the one who finds wisdom!” (Sirach 25:10). I wondered what it meant – do we have to go out and look for wisdom, is it somehow hidden from us? Then I saw in his letter to the Ephesians (1:17) that St Paul had written, “I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know Him.” I decided to investigate further to find how wisdom can help us and how we can find it.

## ***Solomon's Gift***

When the Lord asked Solomon what gift he wanted Solomon asked for wisdom, and this pleased God (2 Chronicles 1:11) because he did not ask for earthly rewards or the death of his enemies. So, the Lord not only answered Solomon but also lavished on him wealth, possessions, honour, and long life. It didn't take long for people to discover the wisdom of Solomon. During his reign, two women claiming to be the mother of the same child came before the king. One woman said, “this woman's son died in the night, and she switched her dead baby for my living one.” The other woman said, “No, the living one is mine, and the dead

one is your son.” The King quickly resolved the dispute by ordering to bring a sword and to divide the child in half. Then the real mother of the living baby said, “Please, my Lord, give her the living baby. Don't kill him!” But the other said, “Neither I nor you shall have him, but divide him.” Then the King gave his ruling: Give the first woman, the living child. She is the mother.” And all Israel heard of the judgment of the king, and they greatly respected him.

## ***Wisdom in the New Testament***

In Luke 21:15, Jesus promised that He would give His followers wisdom to help them after His death and resurrection, “I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict”. This promise was initially fulfilled in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost when St Peter addressed the crowd, boldly proclaiming that those who call on the name of the Lord would be saved. That day people's hearts were touched by the Holy Spirit working through Peter and 3000 people were added to their number. Later in Acts (chapters 6 and 7) there is the story of St Stephen, who was full of the Holy Spirit. As he bravely faced death he asked the Lord to forgive those who were killing him because they acted in ignorance. St Peter tells us that St Paul wrote his New Testament letters with the wisdom that God gave him (2 Peter 3:15). It is the wisdom of God that changes and moulds us to become more like Him, and enables us to do His will.

## ***A Gift of The Spirit***

So, what is wisdom? It is one of the gifts

of the Holy Spirit that is constantly poured out on the Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1830) says that the moral life of Christians is sustained by these Gifts of the Spirit that we receive in the Sacraments. Wisdom is personified as a female in the bible for poetic purposes. We are called to love her and desire her from our youth, to have a close relationship with her, to find life and to experience pure delight in her as the Word of God says in Wisdom 8: 17-18, “that in kinship with wisdom there is immortality, and in friendship with her, pure delight.” When she is born within us, she will glorify the life she is in by living with God. The Lord of all will love the life where wisdom of God dwells. Wisdom helps us to resist evil (Wisdom 7:30).

## ***Ask For Wisdom***

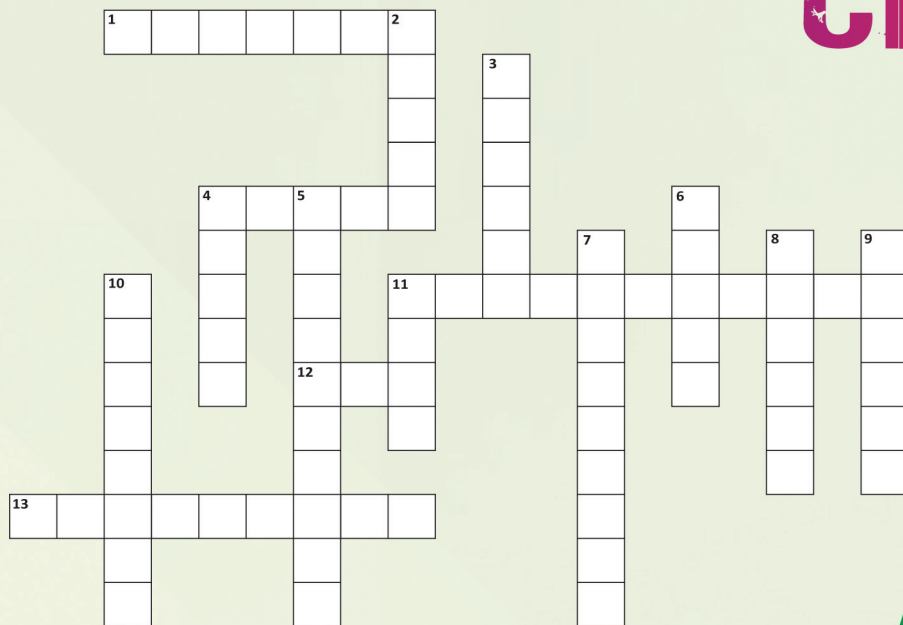
Jesus will give His wisdom to all who ask for it. “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5). The Lord lavishes wisdom on us for the glory of His name and for His Church. Let us ask the Lord with all our hearts to give us His wisdom.

*Lord, let us desire wisdom above all earthly things, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen*





# CROSSWORD



## Down

Saint Teresa of \_\_\_\_\_ was the first woman to be proclaimed Doctor of the Church.

2

Our Lady of Mount \_\_\_\_\_.

3

The king at the time of Jesus' birth.

4

The separation of the government from religion.

5

The Latin word for creed.

6

The father of John the Baptist.

7

The place where Saint Anthony of Padua was born.

8

The Promised Land in the Bible.

9

Hebrews 12:14 states that no one will see God without \_\_\_\_\_.

10

Adam and Eve's third son.

11

## Across

1

The name of the youngest Saint in the Catholic Church who is not a martyr.

4

The book after Daniel in the Bible.

11

The Latin translation of 'Hail Holy Queen'.

12

Abraham's nephew.

13

The name of the chant that is traditionally sung in the Roman Catholic Church.

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# AND ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD!

*June Palmer looks  
at how we can  
put these words  
into practice in  
our daily lives.*

## *Dismissal*

These and other similar commands are the final words spoken at Mass. They are telling us that when we receive the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist, it is not just for ourselves but so that we can share the blessings with those we meet. Another dismissal that the priest or deacon may use is, "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life!" This is another wonderful instruction to demonstrate by

the way that we live and by our actions that we belong to Christ.

## *With Power*

So how do we announce the Gospel of the Lord to those around us? Even the great evangeliser, St Paul did not find it easy, "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I came to





you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:2-5). His words would have been ineffective without the power of the Holy Spirit working through them to change people's lives.

## **Conversion**

God can work miraculously and change people's hearts instantaneously but I have found that conversion is usually a long process, where the influence of one or two Christians in someone's life has made all the difference. So be patient and pray for the right moment to speak about Jesus and what He has done

for us. Consider where people are at in their spiritual lives and don't be too 'pushy' or make them feel uneasy. God is love and He works through love so lovingly consider what may be helpful. St Paul says, "I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready" (1 Corinthians 3:1-2). So I will start by speaking of God's love and mercy and not trying to give the whole story of salvation in one go (unless they ask about it).

## **Prepare**

I personally would find it difficult to talk about my faith to a group of people, worrying that I would be ridiculed or someone will ask me a question that I cannot answer. These are genuine fears but the answer is to do the groundwork first. Start by praying for someone in particular

answer but we can try to lovingly steer the conversation back to what we believe and how Jesus helps us. It is difficult for anyone to argue with someone's testimony about what Jesus has done in their lives.

## **Welcome**

We may have the opportunity to invite someone to come to Mass with us. That is a great starting place to talk about our faith and for them to receive the grace of being present at the Sacraments but be aware that someone who does not go to Church may find it very confusing and feel uncomfortable if they don't understand what is happening. So we should speak to them beforehand about what to expect, give them a copy of the words and responses so they can join in and help them to know when to stand, sit and kneel. There are so many things that happen at Mass that we take for granted

# ***Demonstrate by the way that we live and by our actions that we belong to Christ.***

and build up a relationship of trust with them, showing by your life of love and service that your faith is important to you and helps you. Then you will notice opportunities to speak about your faith, and offer to pray for them. Think about how you might answer questions like, "How does your faith help you?" "Why do you go to Church?" "What do you believe?" "Why do you believe?" Some people love to argue and may pose questions that we cannot

that may need to be explained. Also we can pray that our Church will be welcoming to the stranger. A welcoming community of believers will naturally attract people to stay.

So, when we hear those words, "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord" we shouldn't panic. Let's pray for an opportunity to take the Gospel message, the grace of the Eucharist, that is Jesus to those we encounter in our daily lives.





# PATIENCE IN PRAYER

*The circumstances of St Monica's life could have made her a nagging wife, a bitter daughter-in-law, or a despairing parent, yet she did not give way to any of these temptations. **Sharlet Francis Xavier** explains how her patience and persistence in prayer reaped great rewards.*

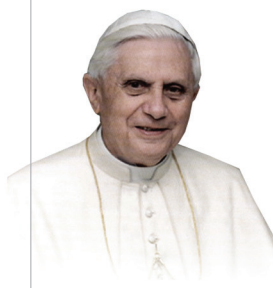
In the modern world with its instant access to information via the Internet, high-tech gaming, online shopping, text messages, tweets and instant credit we are not used to having to wait patiently for things to happen. This influences our spiritual life and we often expect instant answers to our prayers too. In contrast, St Monica is a great example of how patience and persistence in prayer can change lives. Her determination and strength enabled her to experience the conversion of her hot-tempered husband, her cantankerous mother-in-law and her brilliant but rebellious son, Augustine.

St Monica, the mother of St Augustine of Hippo, was born in 331 in Tagaste (in modern day Algeria). Her parents were Christians but Monica was married to a pagan official named Patricius at a very young age. He was bad-tempered and abusive and criticised his wife for her acts of charity and piety, but she was always calm and loving and he respected her. Monica's prayers, patience and gentle deeds of selfless love eventually resulted in the conversion of her husband and mother-in-law to Christianity.

Monica had three children: Augustine, Navigius and Perpetua. It was a source of great pain that Patritius would not allow their children to be baptised. At one time, when Augustine was seriously ill, on Monica's pleading, Patritius agreed that he could be baptized. But when Augustine recovered, he changed his mind. After Patritius died Navigius and Perpetua entered religious life. As a young man, Augustine was sent to Carthage to study but he was a wayward son and lived an undisciplined life. Monica was always worried about Augustine,

who had an illegitimate son with a young woman he was living with in Carthage. Monica's constant prayers and pleading for her son's conversion continued day and night for many years.

While in Carthage, Augustine fell under the influence of the heretical Manichean sect, who taught a mixture of pagan and Christian ideas. His



*"How many difficulties there are also today in family relations and how many mothers are in anguish at seeing their children setting out on wrong paths! Monica, a woman whose faith was wise and sound, invites them not to lose heart but to persevere in their mission as wives and mothers, keeping firm their trust in God and clinging with perseverance to prayer."*

*Pope Benedict XVI  
(August 27 2006)*



mother was horrified and tried to turn him away from this cult. She was consoled after having a dream in which God told her to be patient and gentle with her son. Augustine, however, paid little attention to her advice, and remained with the sect for nine years. St Monica felt disheartened and was disappointed, but she never gave up. She even tried to enlist the help of a bishop who had once been a Manichean himself, but he would not argue with Augustine. The bishop reassured her saying, "Go on your way, and God bless you, for it is not possible that the son of these tears should be lost." From that time on, she became reconciled with Augustine and stayed close to her son, praying and fasting for him.

When he was 29, Augustine decided to go to Rome to teach rhetoric. His mother was determined to go with him as she was so worried about him. Augustine didn't want this, so one night he told his mother that he was going to the docks to say goodbye to a friend but instead, he boarded a boat and set sail for Rome. Monica was heartbroken when she learned of Augustine's trick, but she still followed him and arrived in Rome to find that he had left for Milan. Although travel was difficult in those days, Monica chased after him.

In Milan, Augustine met the bishop, St Ambrose and was greatly impressed by his preaching. Bishop Ambrose was instrumental in the conversion of Augustine. After settling in Milan, Monica became a leader of the devout women there. Monica's prayers were answered when Augustine was reading the New Testament one day and he decided that he would immediately "cast off the works of darkness," and "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 13:12-14). He was deeply touched by these verses and decided to be baptised. During the Easter celebrations in 387, St Ambrose baptised Augustine and many of his friends.

Soon after his baptism, Augustine and his mother made plans to return to Africa. Monica knew that her mission to convert Augustine was complete. She told him, "Son, nothing in this world now affords me delight. I do not know what there is now left



for me to do or why I am still here, all my hopes in this world being now fulfilled. On the way home they stopped to rest in Ostia, where Monica was taken ill and died at the age of fifty-six. She was buried there until in the thirteenth century, St Monica's relics were moved to the Basilica of Sant'Agostino in Rome.

St Monica is venerated as the Patron Saint of wives and mothers whose husbands or children have gone astray. Her Saintly motherhood of longstanding patience, penance and prayer is celebrated on her feast day, 27<sup>th</sup> August in the Catholic Church.



## CROSSWORD ANSWERS

### ACROSS

1. Jacinta, 4. Hosea, 11. Salve Regina  
12. Lot, 13. Gregorian

### DOWN

2. Avila, 3. Carmel, 4. Herod, 5. Secularism  
6. Credo, 7. Zechariah, 8. Lisbon, 9. Canaan  
10. Holiness, 11. Seth





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# POPE'S *Voice*

"How beautiful it is to see when young people are "street preachers", joyfully bringing Jesus to every street and every corner of the earth!" **Pope Francis**



## GLOBAL CATHOLIC NEWS

### 1,600 YEAR-OLD BASILICA FOUND UNDER WATER IN TURKEY



Turkey: The remains of a 1,600-year-old basilica have been discovered at the bottom of lake Iznik in northwest Turkey. It is close to the site where the Councils of Nicaea were held in 325. The ancient basilica was found lying in shallow water. The ruins were originally noticed in aerial photographs taken in 2014 and has now been excavated.

### FORMER MANCHESTER UNITED PLAYER ORDAINED CATHOLIC PRIEST



England: A former Manchester United and Northern Ireland footballer, Philip Mulryne has been ordained a Catholic priest in the UK. After his retirement from the game, the one-time Premier League footballer became a Dominican and devoted himself to religious life.

### HOVERBOARDING CATHOLIC NUN SPOTTED!



France: Sister Fabienne, a 78 year old nun from a community in Bauge, France, has become an internet sensation after being spotted riding to a polling station on a Hoverboard last month. Sister Fabienne said that a priest taught her how to ride and commented, "It is the joy of living, being comfortable, relaxed. I still have to pay attention to move on it because I keep forgetting to lean forward, but it is pleasant."

### ATHEIST'S JOURNEY TO CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD

Australia: Robert Krishna, originally a Hindu from India who became an atheist at the age of ten, and in his late teens became an agnostic, was recently ordained as a Catholic priest. While studying for his degree at the University of Sydney, in Australia, he was impressed by the joy of the many young Catholics that he met and was attracted to the Dominican way of life. He became a Catholic and after a long period of discernment he joined the Dominican Order and started formation for the priesthood. He was ordained a Priest on July 15<sup>th</sup>.



### RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH FINDS SHARP RISE IN SEMINARY ADMISSIONS

Russia: The Orthodox Church in Russia has reported a sharp rise in seminary admissions in its 261 dioceses. It added that a total of 5877 seminarians were now preparing for ordination. The Russian church claims to have 144 million members, with 368 Bishops and around 40,000 Priests and Deacons.





*Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

*(Matthew 5:48)*

*“All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity. All are called to holiness: Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” CCC 2013*

*“The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross. There is no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle.” CCC 2015*

