

KINGDOM REVELATOR

|||| CATHOLIC MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ■ ISSUE 41

**TRANSFORM
YOUR BODY?**

**DEFENCELESS
LOVE**



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KINGDOM
REVELATOR

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OUR HEAVENLY PATRESS

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom, pray for us.

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PLEASE PRAY FOR PRIESTS

Welcome to Kingdom Revelator. We pray that as you read this magazine your faith will be increased and that the Holy Spirit, the gift of God, which is in you, will be fanned into a flame (2 Timothy 1:6).

Recently, I have felt called to pray for priests. For an increase in vocations to the priesthood but more especially for those who are already ordained. These holy men have given up their lives to serve us and they need our love and prayers.

I imagine that being a parish priest can sometimes be a lonely life, and at other times very demanding. Having a large parish family to look after and minister to, responsibility for looking after the buildings and staff, never knowing who will turn up at your door needing help or what the next phone call will involve must be very stressful.

Coming from a large family I know how difficult it is to keep the peace and harmony in a large group of people. It must be even more difficult trying to keep all the parish family happy. Anyone who has experienced changes to the Mass times, moving the choir to different seats or even just moving the lectern from one side of

the altar to the other will know that it will not suit everyone in the parish and it is usually the priest who is held responsible for any 'bad' decisions. He has the tricky job of balancing the opinions of his parishioners and making the right choices that will benefit most people. It is not an easy task.

Of course being a priest has many rewards. It must be incredibly satisfying to know that you have made a difference to so many people's lives. Helping others through their most difficult times, enabling them to enjoy a new life in Christ through Baptism, being a minister of God's mercy and forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, helping them to deepen their faith and trust in God and ensured that it will be passed on to future generations. The priest knows that he has been chosen by the Lord as a special instrument of His grace and he has been given the privilege of making Christ present to His believers. There can be no greater honour in this life than to stand at the altar in the power and place of Jesus and say, "This is My Body...", "This is My Blood..."

So let us pray for our priests for wisdom and guidance and let us show them that they are appreciated, loved and cared for.

A CALL TO ACTION



Many people spend their lives striving for power, wealth and status but Jesus shows us that this is not how it will be in His Kingdom. June Palmer looks at what this means.

Servant Leadership

I love the Holy Thursday Mass of the Last Supper when the priest washes the feet of the congregation. It is a beautiful reminder of what we are all called to do. Our feet today are much cleaner than they would have been in Jesus' time and probably don't need washing but the priest is showing us how Jesus wants us to treat others. It is an image of servant leadership. Jesus said, "Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all, for the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10: 43 - 45).

The Pope

The Pope is the head of the Roman Catholic Church but they call themselves, "The servant of the servants of God". That is a remarkable image. Pope Francis shows us that the way to demonstrate this servant leadership is through humility and love. Although he is a powerful leader in the eyes of the world the Pope never seeks power or recognition for himself, but strives always to make the lives of others better in whatever way he can. He is very humble and compassionate and always puts the needs of others first, even when it means messing up his planned schedule. This can make it difficult for those organising his diary but Pope Francis always sees the hurting person and the beautiful soul that lie beneath the dirty rags, in the outcasts from society, the sick and the disadvantaged. He treats them with dignity, giving them what they need and showing them by his love that they are loved and valued in the eyes of God.

The Commandments

When Jesus was asked which commandment was the greatest He said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." and the second is, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." (Matthew 22:36-39) In English the word 'love' has many meanings. It can be a feeling, a romantic attraction, a desire or a strong liking. But the love that Jesus asks of us is not passive, it is not a feeling but it is something active that makes us do something to promote the good of the other person. It can be called charity. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that "Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbour as ourselves for the love of God" (CCC 1822). Jesus showed His love by dying on the Cross for us. This was the greatest act of charity.

Choose Today

If we want to be more like Jesus we must decide to be more loving and be willing to die to ourselves daily, to give up our desires and selfish pride to help our neighbours who are in need. We can't just wait until we feel more loving; we have to make the choice to be more loving. Of course this is not easy but it is like sport and the more we practice, the easier it will get. We also have the greatest coach, The Holy Spirit, who we can call on every day to show us how to be more loving in all our daily encounters. He can transform our hearts and our lives to be more Christ-like.

The Beatitudes

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus shows us how He wants us to live. He says, "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy" (Matthew 5:5-9).



"Love has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like." St Augustine of Hippo

Our Calling

The most important thing that God asks of us is that we let His love flow through us to others so that we can give life and hope to those who don't know Jesus, bringing light into

the darkness. "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the Day of Judgment" (1 John 4:16-17). One day we will come face to face with God, and one of the most important questions that He will ask us is, "How have you shown love to God and to your neighbour?" He will ask us how we have taken His love, mercy and compassion to a hurting world. How did we spread happiness, laughter and joy around us and how did we promote reconciliation and peace? These are questions that we should ask ourselves every day. Even small acts of kindness done in a loving way can have a great impact on the lives of others. Saint Therese of Lisieux said, "You know well enough that Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, nor even at their difficulty, but at the love with which we do them."

These are all promises that if we try to live as He suggests then we will be blessed. It is a call to make ourselves vulnerable to others, even if it is counter-cultural. In a world of people striving for power, the weak are usually looked down on, but God says that they are the ones who will inherit the earth. When we strive to help others to find peace and justice in their lives we will be rewarded. This could be helping to fight for a just distribution of the world's resources so that no-one will die of hunger. It might be through helping persecuted Christians, promoting fair trade or helping local parish groups to reach out to others. These are all a demonstration of our charity and love.

SHOUT IT FROM THE ROOF

When Rosemary from Australia, decided to surrender her life to God she had no idea how soon she would need His help.

I live in Victoria, Australia and regularly attend the Divine Mercy Shrine in Keysborough. One day, I was very touched by a talk that I heard about abandoning ourselves to God through the Surrender Prayer and how God would be faithful and help us. So I began to pray the 9 day Novena of the Surrender Prayer, giving all my problems to God and asking Him to sort them out. "O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything!" Later that week, following a routine examination, I was told that I had uterine cancer. The first miracle was that the cancer was found so early.

People can react in many different ways when they are diagnosed with serious illness. Some seem to find strength and relief by talking about it to everyone. I was the opposite. Although I am not usually a proud person, I was very adamant that no one was to know about my diagnosis because I did not want to be known as 'the lady with cancer'. I chose to tell a few close friends, family, my priest and a nun. I knew that I could rely on them to pray constantly for me.

In the talk they said that if you trust in God you will be all right, surrender your problems to Him and

TOPS!

He will not let you down but this is very difficult to believe when your future is so uncertain. Every day I went to the Shrine, praying and crying, usually just feeling numb as I tried to understand what was happening to me. I prayed, "If I have to have chemo or radiation therapy, please help me to deal with it." Of course, I also bargained with God, "Lord, if you make sure that all the cancer is removed, I will shout your praise from the rooftops."

I need not have worried. The Lord answered my prayers and I was really blessed that all the cancer was removed and had not spread. I was overjoyed, but then I had to work out how I could shout from the rooftops how good and faithful God has been, when so

few people knew that I had been sick. It is still very difficult for me to admit that I was a very sick person, but I did make a promise to God and I wanted to keep my word.

Jesus says these words to us in the Surrender Prayer "Do not be afraid, I will take care of things and you will bless my name by humbling yourself." So very humbly now, I want to praise God and thank Him for not forsaking me and my family. I want to thank all those who have helped with their prayers and also for the example of St Jacinta, the seer of Fatima, who at 8 years old was ready to be thrown into a cauldron of hot boiling water for the conversion of sinners. She made me feel so ashamed of my fears and gave me strength and confidence to go through my ordeal.

"Close your eyes and let yourself be carried away on the flowing current of my grace. Close your eyes and do not think of the present, turning your thoughts away from the future just as you would from temptation. Repose in me, believing in my goodness, and I promise you by my love that if you say "You take care of it," I will take care of it all; I will console you, liberate you and guide you."

(From the Novena of Surrender to the will of God written by Fr Don Dolindo Ruotolo)



THE IMPORTANCE OF WALSINGHAM



Ann-Marie Chinnery from Manchester, tells us about the Youth 2000 retreat.

The Holy House

In a small village in Norfolk, on the East coast of England, lies a peaceful shrine which many Christians seem to have forgotten about. That place is Walsingham, the home of the National Shrine of Our Lady. Why is it here? Well, it is said that in 1061, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Richeldis, the Lady of the Manor, in a dream and asked her to build a replica of her house in Nazareth in the village of Walsingham. How amazing is that! A copy of the house where Our Lord Jesus Christ spent many years

of His early life with Mary and Joseph was to be built in England. Following Our Lady's instructions the house was built and Walsingham became known as 'England's Nazareth'.

A History of Pilgrimage

Soon pilgrims started to flock to this holy place, not just from England, but from around the world and it became one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in Europe. King Henry III made the first of his many pilgrimages to Walsingham in 1226. Since then nearly all the kings and queens of

England, including King Henry VIII and his queen Catherine of Aragon, made a pilgrimage to the Holy House. Sadly, during the reformation in 1538 the priory, which had been built around the shrine, was destroyed along with the Holy House. Only the remains of a great archway and a few walls now survive from the original magnificent buildings.

The National Shrine

There is an Anglican shrine in the village now, this was built in the 1930's and around the same time the Slipper Chapel in a nearby



hamlet became the Catholic Shrine to Our Lady of Walsingham. This small chapel, dating back to the 14th century, was the last stop for pilgrims who walked the final Holy Mile in bare feet as they approached the Holy House. It was where they removed their shoes hence the name, Slipper Chapel. Walsingham and the surrounding countryside is a quiet area where there is virtually no phone signal. In a world where we are constantly distracted by television, ipads, music, computers and phones, it is a welcome respite where we can switch off and take the time to listen to what God is saying to us in our hearts.

Say Yes to God

The original house of Nazareth is only known about because Our Lady gave her 'Yes' to God's plan for her life in that very place. Although she was confused and no doubt scared, she agreed to become the mother of the Messiah. She trusted that although there would be difficulties along the way, everything would work out, because it was all part of God's plan. How many of us trust God enough to let Him lead us to where He wants us to be? How many of us choose a life of comfort rather than rising to the

challenges God has set for us so that His plan for salvation can be accomplished? This is why Our Lady appears in so many places around the world. She wants to intercede for us, to care for us as a mother and to lead us to her son, Jesus. She wants us to say 'Yes' to God each day in the little things and the big things which He asks us to do. She knows that living a good Christian life today is not easy. She faced difficulties and temptations and so she knows what we are going through and she wants to help us.

Youth 2000

There are a number of pilgrimages and retreats that take place throughout the year in Walsingham. One of these is Youth 2000 which happens over a weekend at the end of August. For those of you who haven't been, a big tent is erected in a field next to the Catholic shrine, where the Eucharist is exposed from Thursday

evening until Monday morning on top of a 'burning bush'. Around 2,000 people (mainly between the ages of 18-35) attend the retreat over the weekend where Jesus is at the centre of everything we do and is adored throughout the weekend.

Our Lady's Return

I'm always amazed at how many young people choose to camp in the field next to the tent and endure whatever weather is thrown at them. The love that they have for the Lord is so inspiring. There are various talks given over the weekend on different topics, priests are always available to hear confessions, there's plenty of social time for people to get to know each other and there's a healing service on the Saturday night. I imagine that Our Lady loves this retreat very much. She must love to see so many people adoring, praising and worshipping her Son because her one desire is to lead us to Jesus. There is a prophecy that when England returns to Walsingham, Our Lady will return to England. I pray that Youth 2000 and the other pilgrimages will lead to the fulfilment of this prophecy.

Our Response

Why not ask Our Lady of Walsingham to intercede before her Son for you in a special way? Ask for her help to always follow Christ and to help you become the person God created you to be. And what better way to thank Our Lady for this beautiful shrine than to make a special pilgrimage to Walsingham yourself!

When England returns to Walsingham, Our Lady will return to England.



TRANSFORM YOUR BODY?



Mother of two, Raphaëlle, from Daventry in the UK, reflects on the challenges facing young people today.

Constant Messages

Have you noticed the pop-ups and adverts that appear time and time again, as you scroll through pages on the internet all seem to have the same message? They are all telling us to "Transform your body!" Does that mean that I am not good enough as I am then? Insidiously, the world is constantly giving out similar messages; and with technology and advertising challenging every detail of our intimate lives, I feel for young people today and the pressures they face.

Self-Image

Of course, since time immemorial mankind has created ways to try and improve their self-image. This applies to both men and women: from tattoos to jewelry, make-up to ornate clothing. Originally, staying young and looking healthy meant having a better chance of finding a good marriage partner and it could mean life or death for you. But never have temptations to change your image and inducements for self-loathing been so high as they are nowadays. Over the last hundred years we have witnessed the birth of cosmetic surgery providing eternal youth, with glamorous international models and stars setting fashion trends.

Confusion

This means that whilst black people bleach their skin, white people tan theirs and so the skin cancer rates explode. Straight hair - get a perm! Curly hair - get straighteners! Expose your perfect flesh! Botox for all - these are the confusing messages that we are being bombarded with. Our leisure time is meant to be spent exfoliating, moisturising, nail painting, the list goes on. We can flick through the pages of women's magazine to find hundreds of examples. Of course, young men are not exempt from these trends either. As a result of the 'photo shopped' ideals thrown at us, over the last two generations, a steadily increasing number of young people of both sexes are suffering from eating and mental disorders.

No Self-restraint

Who would have thought even fifty years ago that anyone would be able to pop in a shop 24/7 (yes, even on a Sunday!) and always find food on demand. There would be fridges and freezers in our homes that we could stock with multi-buy savings that we didn't need (hello bulimia and anorexia). Needless to say, a secular, consumerist world does not look

keenly on fasting, religious holidays and self-restraint, let alone obeying our Lady's requests for sacrifices as in the messages of Fatima. No, being young today is not easy.

Love Yourself

So, shall I venture one piece of advice? I am a mum after all and so love to give unsolicited advice, it's my job! Love yourself, as you are. After all, you are beautiful. How do I know this? It is because "God created us in His own image" (Genesis 1:27). How could you hate yourself if you love God? Can you not see that these constant attacks on our self-esteem come directly from the evil one? God loves us as we are, He made us and He is happy with His creation!

A Vision

To explain what is happening we might reflect on a vision that was given to Pope Leo XIII. After celebrating Mass on October 13th 1884, he fell into a trance and heard a conversation between Satan and Jesus. The devil boasted that he could destroy the church within 75 - 100 years if he had more power over the people who would give themselves in service to him. He was given permission to try and then the Pope had a

horrifying vision of all the evil demons being released from hell to do Satan's work but at the last minute, he saw St Michael, the Archangel drive them all back into hell. When we reflect on how our world has gone so mad lately, this vision could explain why the Church and everything it upholds is constantly being attacked in so many ways.

An Example

of us. Look beyond the image you see in the mirror to find the beautiful inner self, where the image of God can be found.

Love Yourself!

God loves you as you are. Now begin to love the image of God that shines through you. Only then will you be able to love your neighbour as yourself and to seek God within yourself and in other

people. Start loving others by loving yourself. When I see those who are propagating hate and evil in this world I cannot imagine how much self-loathing is deep within them. They need help to find love, God's deep, restful and joyful love within themselves. In life, the simplest things are always the most obvious but the most difficult to accomplish.



If we are made in the image of God, then we must accept ourselves as we are, warts and all. I think of Venerable Marthe Robin as an example for the sick and disabled. She was a French Roman Catholic mystic and stigmatist who founded the Foyers de Charité. Through illness, she became bedridden when she was 21 years old until her death 58 years later. Those who have finally accepted their physical weaknesses and gone beyond suffering have an aura and inner strength to be admired by all

"Our leisure time is meant to be spent exfoliating, moisturising, nail painting, the list goes on!"

THE JOY OF ROME



Grace Kuriakose describes the most amazing experience she has ever had when she travelled to Rome with her family and friends.

The Joy of Rome

In May, I had the privilege of attending the CCR (Catholic Charismatic Renewal), 50th anniversary celebration in Rome. I went with a small group of people and we were all very excited. As we arrived at our accommodation in Rome we could see the dome of St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, it was amazing!!

What is CCR?

The CCR is a Catholic movement that began in 1967 at a retreat for college students in the University of Pittsburgh, in Pennsylvania (USA). The students had spent much of the

weekend in prayer and during the retreat they had a powerful and transforming experience of God through the power of the Holy Spirit, which came to be known as the 'Baptism in the Spirit'. When the students started telling others about their experience and praying for them to be filled with the Holy Spirit, it began to spread to neighbouring colleges and parishes and gradually throughout the world. The CCR is currently active in more than 200 countries and has touched the lives of over 120,000,000 Catholics. I am very proud of being brought up in a Catholic family that is part of the Catholic Renewal.

Pope Francis

There were many different things happening during the celebration but the most joyful time was when we saw Pope Francis. Being near him was an amazing experience, as he came round in his Popemobile and everyone was so happy. I was filled with tears of joy, and so were many others. Everyone was shouting for Pope Francis and cheering. Being present at the Mass with the Pope was a great honour. When he gave the homily, even though we could not understand a word he said (because it was in Italian) we could truly feel the presence of God.





Many Nations

It was a great experience meeting people from different countries who spoke different languages. Even though we couldn't communicate with many of them, the Spirit of God made us feel like we were all one big happy family. There was so much joy among us. We were united by the language of the Holy Spirit; the gift of tongues. One time a group of us were in St Peter's Square worshipping Jesus and singing praise songs, when people just started joining in. The small circle of friends became a massive crowd of people and everyone was so happy! I had an amazing time. "All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name" (Psalm 86:9).

Queueing Joyfully

Each day we had to get up early to make sure that we got seats and it usually took about two hours to get through security. But waiting in the queues was amazing as everyone was singing and dancing in their own language as they waited. There were priests, deacons and religious brothers and sisters singing the psalms as part of their Morning Office. It was wonderful. I felt as if I was in heaven, there was so much love and joy.

The Great Gathering

My favourite event was the great gathering in the Circus Maximus,

when thirty thousand Catholics came together to sing, dance and praise Jesus. Even the priests and nuns were dancing joyfully! We had to sit in the scorching heat for hours, but even so it was amazing to see how thirsty everyone was for God's Word. I remember thinking if I have this much joy here on earth worshipping Jesus



with all these people, how much more joy will there be in heaven when the whole world will come together and worship Jesus forever.

Visiting Saints

I also had the honour of visiting some of the famous religious sites. We had to travel for hours but it was worth it. We visited Assisi and saw the original church that St Francis built. There was a statue of St Francis with a real dove rested on it. One of the priests told us that there are two doves who regularly come and sit on the

statue of the saint who used to preach to the animals, especially birds. I also visited the body of St Clare and St Padre Pio. We visited the simple room that Padre Pio stayed in and we saw the very basic shoes and clothes that he wore. Padre Pio once said, "Worldly goods prevent us from keeping our eyes fixed on our heavenly home."

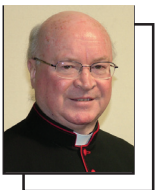
Other Sites

It was a great blessing for me to be able to visit the place where the first Eucharistic Miracle was reported in Lanciano, it increased my faith more in the Eucharist. Also to be able to see the tomb of Pope St John Paul II, the tomb of our first Pope St Peter and the tomb of St Paul was a great experience. I was privileged to be able to visit the Holy Steps,

believed to be the same steps that Jesus was made to walk carrying the cross. It was a very emotional time, my knees started hurting after a few steps so how much more pain would Jesus have suffered carrying a heavy cross on His back as well.

Overall my pilgrimage to Rome and my experience joining in the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal was incredible. Meeting new people and celebrating Christ with thousands was an amazing adventure and an unforgettable experience.

DEFENCELESS LOVE



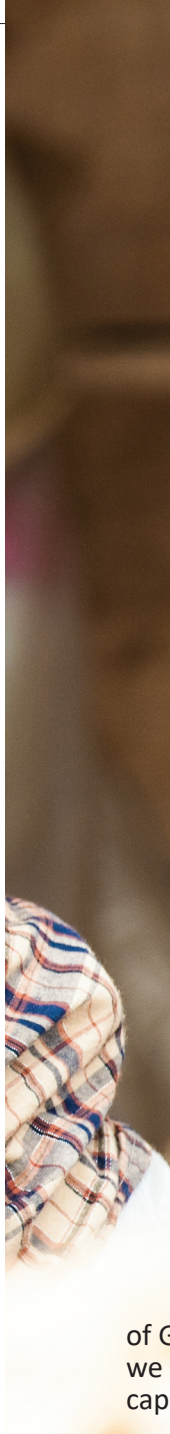
***Canon Anthony McBride
from Salford in the UK,
explores a new way of
living and loving by
following Jesus.***

Pope Benedict XVI, in a catechesis on Christmas in 2009 said, "St Francis with his crib highlighted the defenceless love of God, His humanity and His kindness; God manifested Himself to humanity in the Incarnation of the Word to teach people a new way of living and loving."

The Way to Love

The Holy Father's comments may have been about Christmas and the crib, but they equally refer to

our life in Christ all year round. Our life is primarily a time of training and nurture to bring into our way of life what Jesus Christ has taught us; 'A new way of living and loving'. Every day is lived in the company of God if only we have the eyes to see and the ears to hear! The deepest experience we have of being human is what we know about ourselves and we all know how defensive we become when we are accused of something. We can tell white lies and even great whoppers in our



own defence. We sometimes even try to blame others to protect our own so-called innocence. We are one of the most defensive entities on planet earth!

Divine Love

So what is this defenceless love that Pope Benedict speaks about? It is primarily about God's love for us, not our love for God. Jesus taught us not just to love one another but to 'love as He has loved us' (John 13:34-35). A good example of this is His commandment to 'love our enemies'. We don't want to do that, do we? But that is what Jesus did on the Cross when He said, "Father forgive them for they don't know what they are doing". If we follow Jesus then we must love, not as the world loves, not as our favourite singer, dancer or film star loves, but as Jesus loves. It is hard to love at all, let alone to love as Jesus loves, but Pope Benedict reminded us in 'Deus Caritas Est' that "Love is possible because we are created in the image

of God". That is our starting point; we are created for love and are capable of love.

Sacrificial Love

St Maximilian Kolbe, a Franciscan priest who was executed in Auschwitz concentration camp is a good example of this defenceless love made visible in an ordinary man. He offered his life instead of a fellow prisoner who had a wife and children at home. What made him do this was not any human love of the person he saved from death. He did it out of love for God. He was called in a special way to share in this sacrificial love of Jesus for all on the Cross of Calvary. As St Paul said, "What

proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us, while we were still sinners!" (Romans 5:8). It is not a love that is earned, but a love that is a free gift. What we often call 'grace'! It is what Jesus came to show us and to share with us.

Our Love

What does all that mean for us? Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, gave us a pattern of living and loving which He invites us to follow. It is not a pattern of loving only those who love us, but it is a love which is defenceless in the face of all human need, want and necessity. It is a loving of others through a love of God, not just because we feel humanly attracted to them! It's not romantic love! This is the pattern of living and loving which we have to embrace if we are going to live as adopted children of God, reborn in Baptism, and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. This is what we are called to and were created for and it is possible when we allow God's loving action to work through us. It's not about our often poor attempts at what we call love, which is often no more than either lust or self-interest!

Sacrament of Love

We should also remember the utter generosity of God in the way He offers His forgiveness. The difference between great saints and the worst of sinners is only a visit to the Confession box! St John Vianney used to say that not all saints started out well, but they all finished well! It doesn't have to be a Confession box; I have heard Confessions in all sorts of places and so reconciled people to God and His Church wherever it has been needed. God gave us the whole world in which to do good, not just certain places. Jesus, the friend of sinners, was often seen by others to be in the wrong place, but always doing the right thing.

If we follow Jesus then we must love, not as the world loves, not as our favourite singer, dancer or film star loves, but as Jesus loves.

Imitating Love

St Teresa of Calcutta wrote, "We are all called to do something beautiful for God". This is possible because God has done something beautiful for us. He lives among us in the person of His Son, really and truly present in the Blessed Sacrament and in the other sacraments. The sacraments are 'holy things for holy people'; and are there to encourage and strengthen us to be saints. So, as we continue on our journey of faith, let us remember the hope to which we are called by God. It is a hope not just for this world, but a hope for eternity, which is made real in our lives only by the defenceless love of God for us and our response by imitating that love in our everyday lives.

"We are not the sum of our weakness and failures; we are the sum of the Father's love for us and our real capacity is to become the image of His Son." (Pope St John Paul II World Youth Day, 2002) ●



THE SHINING STAR OF OUR LIVES

To my dear Mama Mary,

This is your child writing to you. I can call you my Mother because Jesus gave you to me as He lay stretched out on the cross, enduring the greatest suffering out of His love for me. There He said to the disciple, John "Here is your mother." And the disciple took her into his home. (John 19:27) In the same way, I take you into my heart. Mother, you can see how much work needs to be done to make my heart a pleasing dwelling place for your Beloved Son, Jesus. There is so much rubbish that needs to be thrown out to give your Son complete ownership of my heart. Please ask Jesus to cleanse my heart with His Most Precious Blood, the Blood which was shed for me, to redeem me. Only then can I become the person your Son wants me to be.

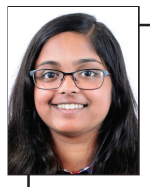
Jesus suffered so much for me and you were with Him through every step of His suffering. Your soul was pierced when you saw how He was tortured and mistreated by those He came to save. The King of the Universe freely chose the way of suffering and death for me, a sinner. "He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces He was despised and we held Him of no account." (Isaiah 53:3)

Your Son died the most painful death to save me and I am sorry that I continue to hurt Him, Mother. You continue to suffer when you see my sins wounding His Sacred Heart in the most agonising way. My Mother, your greatest desire is for everyone to love your Son. Please pray for me, that I may love Jesus with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind and with all my strength. Help me, my dear Mother, to kiss the wounds of your Son and not wound Him more with my sins. Mother, you are full of grace, ask your Son Jesus to fill me with that same grace so that I can love Him more.

I know that I can do nothing by myself. "By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10). St Thomas Aquinas says of you my dear Mother, "As mariners are guided into port by the shining of a star, so Christians are guided to heaven by Mary." Be with me every moment of my life, to draw me ever closer to your Son, so that one day, I can behold the glorious face of Jesus in Heaven and be held in His loving embrace.

Always yours,

Your child.



By Rosemary Joy, a 18 year old student from the UK.

THE LIFE OF PRAYER

Prayer is the basis of our relationship with God and sustains our spiritual life. Jeslin Joseph explains what this means and how she has improved her prayer life.

Vocal Prayer

I don't know about you but I used to pray most often when something went wrong or when I had to make a difficult decision. As Christians it's only natural for us to call out for God's help in these situations. We know that God is always there to hear our prayers, but how often do we stop to listen to His answer. I didn't realise that prayer was supposed to be a two-way conversation. When we speak to our family and friends we don't just say what we need to say and then leave. We stay and listen to hear their thoughts and opinions. Too often when we say our prayers, we quickly say what we want and then rush off to get on with our daily tasks. We don't take the time to wait and listen to what God might have to say to us. Before I went to sleep at night I always thought that I was praying but really I was just unburdening my problems and worries. I wasn't giving God a chance to respond to me. I didn't give a thought to what

He might want to say to me. It felt like I was taking advantage of His goodness and I realised that I needed to change my way of praying.

Contemplation

I was very good at vocal prayer, making my requests to God but I needed to develop my relationship with Him through contemplation and meditation. Contemplative prayer is simply the raising of our hearts and minds to God in silence, allowing Him to speak to our hearts. St Therese of Lisieux said, "For me prayer is a surge of the heart, it is a simple look towards Heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy." I needed to spend some quiet time in prayer thanking Him for His goodness and asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten me.

Meditation

I also realised that the best way to

hear what God wants to say to me is through reading the bible. Holy Scripture is the word of God and there are many answers to our prayers in the bible. Reading and meditating on the Word of God draws us closer to the Lord and deepens our faith and trust in Him. Reading and memorising passages is relatively easy. Reflecting and acting upon God's words in Scripture is more difficult but it will change our lives.

Spend Time With God

If we want to connect with God more profoundly, we have to spend more time with Him. We can build up our loving relationship with the Lord by arriving early for Mass to spend a few precious minutes preparing our hearts to receive Him. We can spend more time reading the Bible, in quiet reflection of His goodness, in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary and by seeking Him in prayer throughout our day. "My little children, your hearts, are small, but prayer stretches them and makes them capable of loving God. Through prayer we receive a foretaste of heaven and something of paradise comes down upon us. Prayer never leaves us without sweetness. It is honey that flows into the soul and makes all things sweet." (St John Vianney)



THE EUCCHARIST

John Hesketh, from Liverpool explains what happens when we receive Jesus in the Eucharist.



Thanksgiving

Every year, in November, Americans celebrate Thanksgiving, a national celebration that was designated by Abraham Lincoln in 1863. The first thanksgiving meal in America can be traced back to 1621, when the first Christians, also called pilgrims, arrived from England and settled in Plymouth, Massachusetts. These first settlers shared a harvest feast with local Indians in thanksgiving for the food that they found and for their survival after the long and dangerous

journey across the Atlantic.

The Mass

Catholics celebrate a thanksgiving meal each time we go to Mass. We are fed with the word of God through the Bible readings and with the Bread of Heaven and the food of eternal life through the Eucharist. Although we celebrate in the context of a meal, the Mass is also a memorial of the unique sacrifice of Jesus' Passover, offered once for all on the cross, and it is

made truly present for us through the Liturgy. "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

The Last Supper

During the Last Supper, Jesus gave thanks to His Father and then gave His own body and blood for us to eat and drink, in memory of Him. The word Eucharist means thanksgiving in Greek and every time we receive the Body and Blood of Jesus at Mass, we must say thank you to Jesus with our entire being for all that He has done for us.

"The Eucharist is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Father, a blessing by which the Church expresses her gratitude to God for all His benefits, for all that He has accomplished through creation, redemption, and sanctification. Eucharist means first of all thanksgiving." (Catechism of the Catholic Church - CCC 1360).

An Exchange

In the Eucharist Jesus gives us His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. This means that Jesus gifts himself completely to us without holding anything back. As we receive the Blessed Sacrament, in exchange we give Him everything that we have: our body, blood, soul and humanity. This exchange of life is comparable to what happens in marital intimacy and this is why Mass is understood as the union of Jesus, the Bridegroom, with His Bride which is the Church, us.

Be Like Mary

Before I became a Catholic, I would evangelise by telling people to accept Jesus into their lives as their Lord and Saviour. Now that I'm a Catholic I continue to believe this, but our Catholic Faith tells us that there is more, that we can get even closer to Jesus through the Eucharist. Mary is the perfect example because she was the first person to accept Jesus into her life as her Lord and Saviour, but she didn't stop there. After the Annunciation when Mary said 'yes' to accepting Jesus into her heart, she praised God saying "My soul magnifies

the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour." (Luke 1:46; 47). But what else did she do? Mary was full of grace, and after being overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, she received Jesus into her body. We call this the Incarnation and over nine months Jesus became fully human as well as fully divine in her womb. Mary carried Jesus, the Eucharist, in her womb, and when the time was right Mary gave Jesus to the whole world for its salvation.

Our Calling

The grace of the Sacraments is not just for ourselves. We have each been chosen by God to take Jesus out to the world. "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them" (John 6:56). In the Eucharist we are united with Jesus in order that we can take God's grace to our friends and neighbours through our loving words and actions and by passing on the Good News of the Gospel. In effect we become a Eucharist for the world. And in the midst of all of this we are called to give thanks to God at all times with praise and worship through the liturgy. All of this happens in every Mass. Thanks be to God!

A Challenge From Pope Francis

"In the Eucharist, Christ is always renewing His gift of self, which He made on the Cross. His whole life is an act of total sharing of Himself, out of love; thus, He loved to be with His disciples and with the people whom He had a chance to know. This meant for Him sharing in their aspirations, their problems, what stirred their soul and their life. Now, when participating in the Holy Mass, we find ourselves with all sorts of men and women: young people, the elderly, children; poor and well-off; locals and strangers alike; people with their families and people who are alone.

But the Eucharist which I celebrate, does it lead me to truly feel they are all like my brothers and sisters? Does it increase my capacity to rejoice with those who are rejoicing and cry with those who are crying? Does it urge me to go out to the poor, the sick and the marginalized? Does it help me to recognize in theirs, the face of Jesus? We all go to Mass because we love Jesus and we want to share, through the Eucharist, in His passion and His resurrection. But do we love, as Jesus wishes, those brothers and sisters who are the most needy?" (12th February 2014)





A TEENAGE MARTYR

‘Long Live Christ the King!’ was the battle cry of St José Sanchez Del Rio, a young martyr from Mexico. Tony Parayil Varkey aged 14, tells the story of this remarkable faith-filled teenager.

Background

In Mexico in 1927, President Plutarco Calles was fiercely opposed to the Roman Catholic Church and he began persecuting Catholics trying to make them renounce their faith. Many priests, religious and lay Catholics

were killed and churches were burned down. He banned any religious practices. Eventually the Catholics had to take up arms to defend the faith and civil war broke out. These defenders of the faith were called ‘The Cristeros’ because when they charged into

battle, they shouted ‘Viva Cristo Rey’ meaning, “Long Live Christ the King”.

Jose’s Childhood

José Sánchez del Río was born on 28 March 1913 in Sahuayo, in Mexico. From a young age, he



adored the Blessed Sacrament and encouraged his friends to have more devotion to Our Lord. When he heard about the battles that were being fought in his country, in which many Catholics shed their blood for their faith, he wanted to join the Cristeros. His brothers had

already joined the fight but José was considered too young for battle. Eventually he persuaded General Prudencio Mendoza, to allow him to join them as a flag-bearer.

Capture

In January 1928, during a skirmish, José was returning from delivering supplies to some soldiers on the front line, when he spotted General Mendoza standing in the middle of the battlefield desperately fighting off the enemy. Seeing that the general's horse had been killed, José made a sacrifice that would cost him his life. He galloped up to the General and gave him his own horse. The General got away, but José was surrounded by the enemy and captured.

His Boldness

In prison José was tortured and beaten as the enemy tried to make him renounce his faith in Jesus. He was forced to watch the hanging of a fellow Cristero soldier. It was designed to break his spirit, but instead José told the condemned man that they would meet again in heaven very soon. During his time in prison, José continued to pray for strength, he prayed the Rosary daily and sought the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In a letter to his mother he stated that, "he was ready to fulfil the will of God, which was his ultimate desire." When he was led out to be executed the soldiers struck him with machetes, causing large bleeding wounds. As he endured the blows, with every strike, José cried out, "Viva Cristo Rey!" His torturers cut the soles of his feet and made him walk on rocky ground around the town. José screamed with pain at each step, but would not give in. The soldiers offered him a way out. They said that if he shouted out, "Death to Christ the King", then they would set him free. When he heard this

he replied "Long Live Christ! Long Live Our Lady of Guadalupe!"

His death

When they reached the place of execution, the soldiers began stabbing José with a bayonet. With each blow that he suffered José shouted out "Viva Cristo Rey!" Just before he died José knelt down and drew a cross in the dirt and kissed it. This annoyed the commander and he drew out his pistol and shot José in the head. He was killed on the 10th February 1928, aged 14.

Sainthood

The body of St José Sanchez Del Rio is enshrined above a side altar in St James the Apostle Church, in his hometown of Suhuayo in Mexico. In June 2004, Pope St John Paul II declared José a Martyr. In November 2005, José was beatified by Pope Benedict XIV. Following the approval of a miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed José Sanchez Del Rio on 16th October 2016, he was declared a Saint of the Roman Catholic Church by Pope Francis. His feast day is on February 10th.

Prayer

"The saints are men and women who enter fully into the mystery of prayer.... The seven witnesses who were canonized today also fought the good fight of faith and love by their prayers. That is why they remained firm in faith, with a generous and steadfast heart. Through their example and their intercession, may God also enable us to be men and women of prayer. May we cry out day and night to God, without losing heart. May we let the Holy Spirit pray in us, and may we support one another in prayer, in order to keep our arms raised, until Divine Mercy wins the victory."

(Extract from the Homily given by Pope Francis at the Canonisation of St José Sanchez Del Rio.)

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Thank you
for all your
support,
contributions
and prayers.

"The harvest is great, but the workers are few" Matthew 9:37.

"I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security."

Pope Francis



GLOBAL CATHOLIC NEWS

By: Smitha George

FILM STARRING POPE FRANCIS PREMIERS IN VATICAN



Vatican: Pope Francis's screen debut in a narrative feature film was premiered last month at the Vatican. The film entitled, 'Beyond the Sun' is an evangelical story about children searching for God. Starring as himself, Pope Francis appears in the movie urging children to talk to Jesus and to read the Gospels. All the film's proceeds will go to charities that support disadvantaged children in Argentina, the Pope's native country. The film is due for release at Christmas.

ABDUCTED CATHOLIC PRIEST RELEASED



Yemen: Fr Tom Uzhunnalil, an Indian priest kidnapped by Islamic militants, was released on September 12th after 548 days of captivity. He thanked everyone for their prayers. He flew to Rome from Oman after being rescued from an undisclosed location in Yemen. Pope Francis welcomed the priest with a hug. Fr Tom was captured by the militants in the Missionaries of Charity Chapel in Aden. Sadly the four nuns who were with him were killed.

US CATHOLIC PRIEST AND MARTYR BEATIFIED



America: Fr Stanley Rother, the first American born martyr in the history of the Church was beatified in Oklahoma City last month. The US priest was gunned down in Guatemala in 1981 shortly after deciding to return to his mission parish to help the local Tz'utujil people, despite knowing that his name was on a death list. He was declared a martyr by Pope Francis in December 2016.



FORMER BBC JOURNALIST AND EX-BARRISTER TAKE RELIGIOUS VOWS

Ireland: Former BBC political correspondent Martina Purdy and ex-barrister Elaine Kelly who swapped successful professional careers for religious life have taken a major step towards their calling. The two women who joined the Adoration Sisters in West Belfast took their first profession of vows three years after joining the Congregation. During the ceremony, they received the brown veil, ring and brown scapular (robe) of the congregation. The Bishop of Down and Connor, Noel Treanor was the main celebrant at the ceremony which was held at St. Peter's Cathedral on September 23rd.

AMERICAN STUDENTS PRAY FOR THEIR FRENCH ASSAILANT

France: American college students who were attacked with acid at a train station in Marseille have offered prayers for their assailant on social media. French authorities believe that the attacker was suffering from a mental illness and it was not terror related. "I pray that the attacker would be healed from her mental illness in the name of Jesus and receive the forgiveness and salvation that can only come from Him," said Courtney one of the students. The girls who are from Boston College, a private Jesuit school, were left with minor facial injuries after the attack.





"With all your heart honour your father, and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother. Remember that it was of your parents you were born; how can you repay what they have given to you?" (Sirach 7 : 27-28)

"Children should be grateful to their parents in the first place because they received their life from the love of their parents. This gratitude establishes a life long relationship of love, respect, responsibility and obedience rightly understood." (YouCat : 371)