

# KINGDOM REVELATOR

CATHOLIC MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ■ ISSUE 77

Journeying with  
*The Lord*

HAVE YOU BEEN  
MISUNDERSTOOD?

YOUTH  
OF GOD'S  
KINGDOM

PRIESTHOOD  
AN EASTER JOY



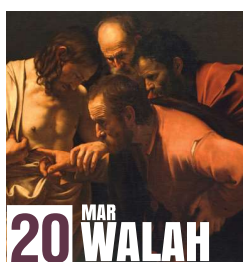
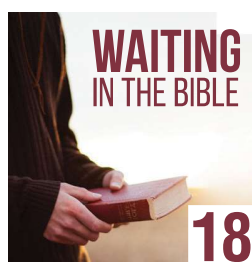




Mother Mary,  
Pray for our Readers

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# What is the essence of every liturgy?



**171: Liturgy is always in the first place communion or fellowship with Jesus Christ. Every liturgy, not just the celebration of the Eucharist, is an Easter in miniature. Jesus reveals His passage from death to life and celebrates it with us. [CCC 1085]**

The most important liturgy in the world was the Paschal Liturgy that Jesus celebrated with His disciples in the Upper Room on the night before His death. The disciples thought that Jesus would be commemorating the liberation of Israel from Egypt. Instead, Jesus celebrated the liberation of all mankind from the power of death. Back in Egypt it was the “blood of the Lamb” that preserved the Israelites from the angel of death. Now He himself would be the Lamb whose blood saves mankind from death. For Jesus’ death and Resurrection is the proof that someone can die and nevertheless gain life. This is the genuine substance of every Christian liturgy. Jesus Himself compared His death and Resurrection with Israel’s liberation from slavery in Egypt. Therefore, the redemptive effect of Jesus’ death and Resurrection is called the Paschal mystery. There is an analogy between the life-saving blood of the Lamb at the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt (Exodus 12) and Jesus, the true Paschal Lamb that has redeemed mankind from the bondage of death and sin.

*SACRAMENT: (Latin sacramentum = military oath of allegiance; the usual translation for the Greek mysterion = mystery): Sacraments are holy, visible signs instituted by Christ of an invisible reality, in which Christians can experience the healing, forgiving, nourishing, strengthening presence of God that enables them to love in turn; this is possible because God’s grace works in the sacraments.*

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## Editorial

Considering that a whole year is being dedicated to St Joseph in the Catholic Church, it’s worth pondering over what makes St Joseph stand out from the “rest of the crowd.” A simple and young righteous man was given the responsibility of protecting the infant Jesus and he acted courageously in the face of danger, saving baby Jesus from every evil. No weapon fashioned against the child Jesus was able to harm Him under the supervision of this God-fearing man.

A young Joseph might have had many plans about his life, but a man rooted in faith acted on the promptings of an angel who appeared to him in his dreams. God’s ultimate plans took precedence to Joseph’s aspirations. Awake or asleep, Joseph’s heart and mind were always united with God. Joseph always obeyed God’s prompting even though God revealed His plans in his dreams.

It’s not easy to give up our dreams and aspirations in order to follow God’s plan. Yet we see in Joseph, a man who was willing to lose his identity for God. With the constant companionship of the Son of God and the Queen of Heaven, who can be considered more blessed in this world than Joseph! Even today, God wishes to honor him and so no wonder He is invoked by the whole Church during these unprecedented times.

This Easter let us strive to imitate St Joseph and ask for the grace to be united to God in every step of our lives. Happy Easter!



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# PRIESTHOOD

## AN EASTER JOY



*Fr Francis Sunil Rosario,  
from India, shares the joy of  
priesthood in the midst of an  
ever-challenging world today.*



**E**aster gives meaning to our many crosses in life. Easter of 2019 was particularly significant in my life, as it coincided with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my priestly ordination.

St Peter says, "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4: 10). As a young adult, I had many dreams and aspirations I wished to accomplish in life. Now, after 40 years of priesthood, I can boldly say that I have seen many of these dreams and aspirations come true. For me, it has been a long journey through many deserts, many ups and downs. However, without doubt, I have never been alone in this journey. The Risen Lord has accompanied me all through them, and He walks with me in my daily life with small and big crosses. He sends 'Simon of Cyrene' to carry heavy loads when I am unable to carry them by my own strength. Nevertheless, my priestly journey has been a beautiful experience. It enacts in my life, the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ - 'It's no more I, but Christ who lives in me.'

The experience of a contemporary writer acknowledges well my own personal journey in priesthood: "I stand in awe of the interior journey that I am being called to. I stand in awe of the depths of the love within the people that I journey with, in awe of their love for me as a man, Christian and priest. I stand in awe of the Church in the profoundness of its Christ-presence in the world – the Church, with all its strengths and weaknesses, still being a presence of Christ in this world here and now."

## **Alter Christus**

The call to priesthood, was a gift I received on the day of my First Holy Communion. I fell in love with the Eucharist on that day. I remember that night, after receiving Jesus, it was difficult to sleep. It was a night of deeper longing and a call to serve Jesus. It was the night of awakening to Jesus Christ. I had waited intensely to receive Him in the Eucharist. Thus, the process to be another Christ, 'Alter Christus' began to grow in me from that day I received Jesus in the Eucharist. It took several years of training, deep prayer and reflection, study and discernment, before I could say 'Yes' to Jesus. In the words of St Teresa of Calcutta, 'My call to be a priest is not to be successful, but to remain faithful to Jesus Christ'. That's the covenant I made on the day of my ordination.

“The process to be another Christ, 'Alter Christus' began in me on the day I received Jesus in the Eucharist.”

Fidelity remains at the core of the priest's calling; there is no day he is off or no time he is away from it. In other words, a priest cannot reject his vocation when it is not convenient for him. Once ordained, a priest is a priest 24 X 7, for all

eternity. In the words of the late Basil Cardinal Hume, "I am not thinking anything particularly dramatic. I am thinking of all the frustrations and disappointments of everyday life, the anger we can experience when we feel ignored and unappreciated or the appointments that become disappointments, many unaccomplished dreams of life".

## **Dying to the World**

In the act of prostration during ordination, the priest dies to himself for the world. Our priestly identity is reflected in our priestly fidelity. A poem attributed to Saint Norbert says:

"O priest, who are you?

Not through yourself, for you are drawn from nothing.

Not to yourself, since you are the mediator of humanity.

Not to yourself, for you are married to the Church.

Not to your own, for you are the servant of all.

You are not you, for you are God.

Who are you, then?

You are nothing, and everything."

When the whole world is passing through a crisis, the holy priesthood has even greater challenges to face. While walking with Jesus through many deserts, many dark clouds, He keeps calling and showing me a new way. I can say now from experience that to keep the integrity of the priesthood in real-life situations is a real challenge today, but the faithful whom I serve as a priest inspires me and that gives me the strength to persevere. May God give us the joy of Easter and a fulfilling life in the Risen Lord!





# HAVE YOU BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD?



*Bibin Francis, from Birmingham, UK, reflects on how to react when you are misunderstood.*

**H**ave you ever experienced the pain of being falsely accused? If you have, then you will understand how deeply it hurts. Even though we know that it causes pain, yet at times we too inflict upon others the same pain knowingly or unknowingly. When we accuse someone falsely, they go through the same pain we once felt or even more severe pain. Some struggle to overcome that pain and the damage caused by it. People react differently in such situations; some people end up in

depression, some struggle to face it, some walk away, some of them resort to substance misuse and in extreme scenarios, some of them may even end their life.

## ***Proving your Innocence***

It's said that even animals can sense it, if they are misunderstood. Once when St Jerome was giving a lecture to his students in Bethlehem, a limping lion came to him. While everyone fled to safety, the saint welcomed the lion. He examined the injured foot and extracted the thorn. The foot was cured and the loyal lion stayed with him. There was a donkey in the same monastery, and one day the donkey went missing. The lion was accused of killing the donkey. The upset lion

began to search for the donkey. A few weeks later, the lion found the donkey among the camel merchants. The lion scared off the merchants and returned with the donkey to the monastery, proving his innocence. Even though the story sounds a bit exaggerated, it teaches us a valuable lesson.

## ***Examples from the Bible***

As a child, I was furious if I was wrongly accused or misunderstood. In such circumstances, I always tried to prove my innocence. And if my efforts failed, I used to get upset and tearful. Reading through the Bible I realized that many righteous characters in the Old Testament had been misunderstood by others. If we



look into their lives we can see how God stood by them and delivered them from their accusers and raised them up.

Joseph was jailed due to the false accusation made by Potiphar's wife, but God was with him

**"Never claim your rights. Bear with great calm and patience, everything that befalls you. Do not defend yourself when you are put to shame, though innocent. Let others triumph. Do not stop being good when you notice that your goodness is being abused. I myself will speak up for you when it is necessary."**

*(Diary of St Maria Faustina Kowalska, para 1701)*

and raised him up to be the vizier. The Israelites wrongly accused Moses of trying to kill them in the wilderness, but God helped him to lead them to the Promised Land. King Saul thought that David was trying to kill him, but the Lord raised David to the throne. While praying in the temple, Hannah was misunderstood by the prophet Eli, but God blessed her with Samuel. In Chapter 13 of the book of Daniel, Susanna was falsely accused by two elders, and God stirred up the Holy Spirit within Daniel to save her. When all these heroes of faith entrusted themselves to the Almighty God, the Lord turned their difficult situations into great blessings.

In the New Testament, we observe that within the three short years of His public ministry, Jesus had to face many false accusations. Though He was the Son of God, Jesus was falsely accused of being possessed by demons, working under the power of Beelzebul, and of gluttony. He was also accused of breaking the Jewish tradition by healing on the Sabbath. But we see that Jesus never reacted to any of these accusations in front of Pilate during His trial, instead He remained silent.

### ***St Marinos***

St Marinos the monk, who lived in the 5<sup>th</sup> century in Lebanon was falsely accused of raping an inn keeper's daughter and making her pregnant. The saint was expelled from the monastery and lived at the gate of the monastery begging, with the child he was accused of being the father to. Marinos silently accepted all the punishments and mockery. At the age of 40, the monk died. While preparing the body for burial, the Abbot and other monks were left speechless as they discovered that this monk was actually born a woman. The desire of a young motherless girl Marina, who joined her father to become a monk to save her soul, became fruitful. All the people who falsely accused her repented and a blind monk among them miraculously received his sight back. Matthew 5:11-12 says, "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account, rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven."

### ***Surrendering to God***

When misunderstood and falsely accused, we are often tempted to clear the air ourselves, but we need to fight against this temptation. When we accept this suffering and surrender it to God, believing that all things will work together for the good of those who place their trust in Him. If we fail in this, we are giving a chance to the enemy. In the Gospel of John Chapter 10:14, Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd and says that He knows His sheep. As we draw close to Jesus, we discover that He truly knows us more than anyone else. It is a tremendous blessing to realize that Jesus knows us comprehensively, at our very depths, and better than we know ourselves!

### ***Taking Refuge***

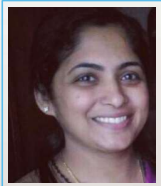
When we are falsely accused, it's worth remembering what Jesus said to St Faustina, "...never claim your rights. Bear with great calm and patience, everything that befalls you. Do not defend yourself when you are put to shame, though innocent. Let others triumph. Do not stop being good when you notice that your goodness is being abused. I myself will speak up for you when it is necessary," (paragraph 1701 in St Faustinas diary).

During this Easter Season, let us make every effort not to accuse anyone falsely. Ask Him for the grace to help us not to accuse anyone. If anyone falsely accuses us, let us forgive them and offer them to Jesus. Let us unite our suffering with Jesus and learn from Him. When you are falsely accused, take comfort in the One who has been accused the most, our beloved Jesus. "The Lord will fight for you, you have only to keep still." Exodus 14:14





# JEALOUSY



*Seena Jijimon, from Wolverhampton, UK, ponders over an incident in her life which led her to reflect on the constant love of God.*



## **Pandemic Chaos**

My husband was in India visiting his parents when the Covid-19 pandemic started. One day, amidst all the uncertainties, I was video chatting with him and there he was sitting with his mother. Both of them looked so happy. I was annoyed by this sight; here I was, struggling to juggle work and household chores, and trying to do everything on my own in the solitude of lock-down while they had no idea what I was going through! Every time the flights got cancelled due to the travel ban, my in-laws seemed to be very happy. I was upset thinking, "How can they do this to me?"

## **Inner Conflict**

Suddenly my inner voice spoke to me, "You are jealous! Are you jealous of your husband's parents that they are able to be with their son a bit longer?" I tried to reason with my inner voice by recalling the Scripture verses: Matthew 19:4-6, "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female; For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"? So, they are no longer two but one flesh, and "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." Eventually,

I abandoned myself to God's will and repented for the way I felt and said sorry to the Lord. I expressed my feelings to the Holy Spirit and asked Him to share my burdens and lighten my load. I thanked the Lord for my family, my sweet children, the means to provide for them and for all the blessings He had given us. I promised we would pray together and submit ourselves to His commands.

## **Led by the Spirit**

I was gently guided by the Spirit of God to James 4:5 - "Or do you suppose that it is for nothing that the scripture says, God yearns for the Spirit that He has made to dwell in us?" God

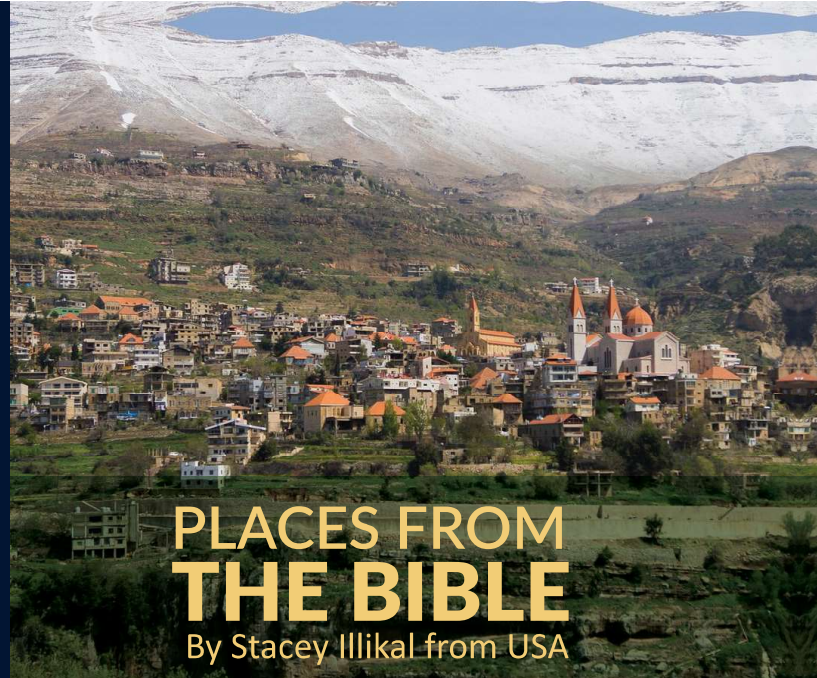


created man to be in communion with Him and desires that every human soul accept His plan for their life. St Paul reminds us that if we are led by the Holy Spirit, we will produce the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). On the contrary, if we are not in communion with God, we are driven by the desires of the flesh or the evil spirit. "Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, and things like these" (Galatians 5:19-20).

“THE LORD  
KNEW MY  
WEAKNESS AND  
STRENGTHENED  
ME WITH HIS  
GRACE.”

Jesus reminded me through these Scripture verses that my soul was being led by the evil spirit to produce fruits of jealousy, selfishness, enmity, and anger. Scripture tells us, "You cannot drink the cup of the lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy (1 Corinthians 10:21-22).

The Lord knew my weakness and strengthened me with His grace (2 Corinthians 12:9a). He inspired me to offer my pain and struggles for those who have lost their loved ones and for families who are separated for whatever reason. With St Paul, I can say, "I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me" (2 Corinthians 12:9b). After 13 long months, my husband was able to fly back home. Now I thank the Lord for being with me, guiding me and giving me the strength to carry forward patiently through that difficult situation in my life.



## PLACES FROM THE BIBLE

By Stacey Illikal from USA

# Lebanon

Lebanon, which is named after a mountain, comes from the Hebrew word "Laban", which means white. It is named after the word white because the mountain's soil had a light coloration to it, and the mountain was usually covered in snow. It is located in the Middle East and is bordered by Syria to the north and east, and Israel to the south.

Lebanon is mentioned in the Bible 75 times and is a part of many prophetic people's lives, including the Prophet Isaiah. In Isaiah chapter 29:17, it says, "Shall not Lebanon in a very little while become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be regarded as a forest?" Lebanon is thought of as the promised land in the Scriptures because the prophet Joshua led the conquest of the valley of Lebanon (Joshua 12:7). In the Scriptures Solomon used the cedar trees from Lebanon to construct and build the temple, known as the "Palace of the Forest of Lebanon" (1 Kings 5:5-6; 7:1-3). There were so many trees flourishing in Lebanon that the trees were often used as a symbol to show how beautiful and mighty the Lord's creation is: "The trees of the Lord are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted" (Psalm 104:16).

Lebanon's population is about 61.1% Muslims and 33.7% Christians. The natural resources such as timber and cedar tree, has helped Lebanon to prosper in its beauty and richness.





# YOUTH OF GOD'S KINGDOM

*Rachel Thomas, from Australia, invites you for a journey focusing on the exemplary lives of young people who were instruments in God's hands for the sake of His kingdom.*

During our teenage and adolescent years, we attempt to find some sense of identity. We face constant peer pressure, challenges and competition. Young people have energy and hearts that are filled with a vision of the future. During this time, one should identify one's unique gifts and talents and use them for God's glory, instead of living under a constant struggle of unhealthy comparisons, jealousy and fear which will only hold back success and prosperity. Let's explore the Bible to understand the special call by God to the youth.

Genesis Chapter 4 says that Abel, son of Adam, a keeper of sheep, offered the best sheep as a sacrifice to God. God looked with favor on Abel's offering and this created jealousy in his brother Cain. Abel was killed by his own brother. Abel had a short but meaningful life, which was offered as a sacrifice.

Daniel Chapter 13 tells us the story of Susanna who was falsely accused of adultery

by two judges. She was saved by young Daniel, who was inspired by the Holy Spirit. He saved the life of an innocent and virtuous woman, and he condemned the evil judges for their wickedness against a noblewoman of God.

Isaac was a young lad who accompanied his father Abraham who intended to offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham's faith saved his son's life (Genesis 22:3-19).

Joseph, a young boy, was sold as a slave and was betrayed by his brothers. He ended up in prison for resisting the sexual advances of his master Potiphar's wife (Genesis Chapters 37-39). God rewarded his faithfulness and honesty, and he was appointed as the Governor of Egypt.

Miriam, the sister of Moses was a quick and fast thinker; she saved her brother's life and thus the

entire nation (Exodus 2:1-10).

Jonathan was a young man when he gave up his throne for his best friend David, and willingly spent the rest of his life in the shadow of his friend, David (1 Samuel 18 1-4; 1 Samuel 23:16-18).

Samuel was a young boy when he was called by God to become a prophet (1 Samuel 3:10).

Esther, a beautiful young queen, pleaded with the King for the lives of God's chosen people (Esther 8:3-6) St Paul's nephew, a young boy, warned him about a plot against his life. (Acts 23:16-22)

All these young people had a burning desire to walk with God, to know Him and to establish a deep and undying relationship with Him. "My son if you have sinned do so no more and for past sins pray to be forgiven. Flee from sin as from a serpent that will bite you if you go near it. Its teeth are lion's teeth destroying the souls of men" (Sirach 21:1-2). Let us discover our gifts and use them for the glory of God's kingdom. Let us experience the joy and peace that comes only from God and strive to build a better world.

*Instead of living under a constant struggle of unhealthy comparisons, jealousy and fear, one should identify one's unique gifts and talents and use them for God's glory.*



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# Journeying with The Lord



*Anne Iurascu, from Ireland, shares how her life was transformed after coming to know Jesus.*

Over the past year during the lockdown, I've realized what a long, slow process my journey with the Lord has been, and how it always feels that I am only at the beginning of my journey. I've also learned not to be concerned about my progress, for along the way there is no end to the treasures He blesses me with. He never seems to tire of guiding me; he never rushes me and doesn't show any impatience. Philippians 1:6 tell us, "I am quite confident that the One who began a good work in you will go on completing it until the Day of Jesus Christ comes." I thank Almighty God that I am seeing the fruition of this Scripture verse in my life. 1 Thessalonians 5:24 promises, "He who called you is faithful, and he will do it."

The first time I encountered Jesus was in a nearby Parish, through a visiting priest with the gift of healing. I went only at my mother's insistence, but when the priest was praying with me after Mass, I saw not his face, but Jesus' compassionate, merciful face as he gazed lovingly and quietly at me.

My life wasn't instantly transformed, but it was the beginning of a very slow transition.

It was a few years later that I really came home to my faith and found what I had been searching for. At a charismatic prayer meeting called Avila, while I was at my lowest point, drowning in sin and arrogance, I experienced the loving presence of the Lord during the Praise and Worship session. This experience was so peaceful that I wished I could be there always. Judith 16:14 tells us, "May the whole of your creation serve you, for you spoke and all things were made, you sent forth your spirit and it shaped them. No one can resist your voice."

Through "Life in the Spirit" seminars and many holy priests, retreats and anointed lay-people, I know the Lord is gently leading me closer to Him, slowly, but with many beautiful breakthroughs. At the AFCM (Anointing Fire Catholic Ministries) Awake retreat in Co. Clare, through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I received a great healing from the guilt I had been carrying. Upon hearing of the cruel way





I spoke about myself, the priest told me that from that day, I would be transformed into a beloved daughter of the Lord. I have the certainty now that everything that happens in our lives will be according to His will if we surrender to the Lord. "I know that you are all powerful; no plan of yours can be thwarted" (Job 42:2).

Because of the Lord's providence during the pandemic, I was able to attend an online AFCM retreat, Way to Holiness, led by Fr Reji Mani and team. I am quite certain that I would never have been able to attend such a retreat in person. For years I had been plodding along

spiritually but longing to have a deeper awareness of God dwelling within me, to understand more about the nature of eternal life, His Word, and wanting to be able to love Jesus more, often doubting my knowledge and love for Him. By God's grace, even though I attended the retreat while walking around the kitchen with headphones on, going for a walk with my baby, home-schooling the children, the Lord spoke powerfully to me through this retreat.

Before I first became a mother, I hadn't a clue what motherhood

was all about. I knew I'd 'love' the baby but was anxious about whether I would be able to really love my baby in a selfless way (since I had up to then mostly loved in a selfish way). When the baby arrived, however, everything just fell into place. I embraced parenthood and the strength the Lord gave me to cope with the changes it brought in my life. In the same way, the Lord showed me that by His grace I am also capable of loving Him. I feel assured that I can step up to whatever I am called to as He molds me and because that is what I was created for! Even if I fail to live up to my own expectations, or those of others, while I must heartily repent, I know I will not lose my status as a precious daughter, since Jesus bought this privilege for me through His Passion and Death on the Cross. Having gone to great lengths to save me, He patiently waits for me, allows me to seek him, and despite my continual failings, will not abandon me.

**"THE ONE WHO  
CALLS YOU  
IS FAITHFUL,  
AND HE WILL  
DO THIS."**

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:24**

God will carry out His plan for me in His time. I know also that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide me so that I can know and love Jesus better. He promises us, "I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for peace and not for disaster, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).





# HOLY SPIRIT

## A STRONG GUSH OF WIND



*Allan Jomon,  
from Australia,  
explains the role  
of the Holy Spirit  
in our lives.*

Imagine yourself exercising outdoors on a hot, sunny day. You feel exhausted and want to rest for a few minutes. All of a sudden, a strong gush of wind flows over you. How would you feel? You sense your energy being replenished and you feel refreshed and rejuvenated once again. The Holy Spirit can act just like a strong gush of wind over the struggles in our lives.

When we are going through a lot of suffering and difficulties in life, we long for some type of escape from all the pain. We seek many methods in order to live a peaceful life. We try to distract ourselves with various hobbies such as reading books, watching TV or even just sleeping for a while. However, all these methods are temporary and don't satisfy us. The Holy Spirit does quite the opposite.

By receiving the Holy Spirit, our lives change completely. We will become stronger in Spirit and won't feel burdened by any problem that comes into our lives. Why? It is simple. Jesus is with us. As St Paul said, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). Jesus always urges us to accept Him as our Lord and Savior. He knows that we won't be able to live our life to the fullest without the Holy Spirit. God's plan

will become perfect within us, when we receive this special Gift.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He told the disciples not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for the Helper. Jesus refers to this Helper as the Holy Spirit. Mother Mary was also with the Apostles while they were praying and praising the Lord. Suddenly the whole room began to shake, and tongues of fire descended on the Apostles. They were filled with the Holy Spirit. Keep in mind that this was after Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended into Heaven. The authorities were looking for the Apostles as they planned to arrest them. The Apostles were terrified for their lives. However, as soon as the Holy Spirit came upon them, they were renewed in their faith and became fearless. They received a strong conviction that the Lord was with them. "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God" (Romans 8:14).

**“By receiving the Holy Spirit, our life changes completely.”**

This is the power of the Holy Spirit. Wondrous things will happen in our lives when we receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts. We may be crushed emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually, and, just like the apostles, we may be hiding from

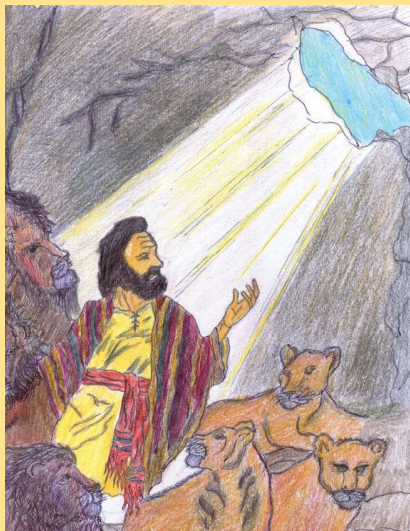
the fears that haunt us every day. But once we feel that strong gush of wind in our lives, we will be completely changed, and we will feel like a new creation in Christ. We will be zealous and strong for the Gospel. We won't be able to stop until we are satisfied. In Christ we are complete. Without Him, we are broken and shattered. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised a Special Helper to His disciples, "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you" (John 14:26). We received the Holy Spirit through the Sacraments of the Church. We need to constantly seek the help of the Holy Spirit in every aspect of our lives.

**“The Holy Spirit is the living water "welling up to eternal life" in the heart that prays. It is he who teaches us to accept it at its source:**

**Christ. ”**  
(CCC 2652)

*Prayer: O Lord, pour out Your Spirit on each of us and help us to feel the fire that only You can give. We pray that Your Spirit will come into our dejected and sinful selves. Purify us with Your fire and take all our iniquities away. Help us to become a new creation in Christ and give us the strength to live for You and You alone. Mother Mary, just as you prayed with the Apostles, pray for us too. Help us to accept God's plan for us and give us the strength to accept His Spirit which He freely gives to us. Come Holy Spirit!* ◆◆◆





# MEET THE PROPHET DANIEL



*BY Henoah Sony,  
Luton, UK*

## WHO WAS DANIEL?

Daniel was a righteous man of princely lineage and lived about 620–538 B.C. The name Daniel means ‘God is my judge’. He was a celebrated Jewish scholar and master interpreter of dreams who was exiled to Babylon after the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. He is famous for successfully interpreting the proverbial ‘writing on the wall’ and miraculously surviving the lions’ den. Themes in the Book of Daniel include heroism, remaining true to God in the midst of an adverse and idolatrous culture, and God’s protection of His faithful ones through His angels.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

The Chaldean king Nebuchadnezzar conquered the Land of Judea in 3319 (442 BC) and destroyed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, and Daniel and his friends were deported to Babylon. Daniel was endowed with an incredible gift of wisdom. In the book of Daniel Chapter 13, we read about how Daniel was stirred by the Spirit of God to save a young woman who was falsely accused of adultery. Daniel’s faithfulness to God landed him in a lion’s den, but God sent an angel who ‘shut the lions’ mouths’ (Daniel 6:22), thereby miraculously sparing his life. God gave Daniel, an extraordinary gift of interpreting visions and dreams (Daniel 1:17). Before concluding his book, Daniel also refers to a severe ‘time of trouble’ (Daniel 12:1), which is referred to as a ‘great tribulation’ in Matthew 24:21.

## GOD’S MESSAGE THROUGH DANIEL?

Daniel reminds us that God will not abandon His people; he declares that God is “the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments” (Daniel 9:4). Suffering through exile does not prevent people from remaining faithful. In Daniel we see God exercising his sovereign wisdom over all worldly affairs, including the actions of the most powerful individual rulers of his day. By placing fidelity to God’s law ahead of personal advancement and success, Daniel reveals how truly wise he is. The book of Daniel plays its role, along with every other Old Testament book, in preparing people for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

## IS DANIEL’S MESSAGE STILL APPLICABLE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY?

Daniel and his friends lived in a hostile environment in which their fundamental loyalty to God was deeply tested. Their presence in Babylon, serving in the king’s court among a foreign people, is a picture of what it means for believers all around the world to live in similarly hostile environments. Daniel was brave and stood up for what he believed was true, while remaining faithful to God. In a world of clashing ideologies and godless worldviews, it is easy to lose faith and hope that the truth will prevail. But the book of Daniel rebukes our weak faith amidst adverse circumstances. Daniel encourages us to choose the right path in life. Daniel teaches us that we should have an unwavering faith in God, even in hopeless situations.

# ARISE



*Molly Mathew, from Houston, USA, shares a valuable lesson she learned from a Balsam plant.*

On a late Friday evening, I came back from work and parked my car in the driveway, as usual. As I began to unlock my front door, I had the sudden realization that all of my balsam plants were dying due to the scorching heat. The main stems of the plants were arched low to the ground and all their leaves looked defeated - as if they were lacking energy due to severe dehydration. It was as if I could hear the silent cry of those plants for water, so vital for their survival. So, after my evening tea, I stepped out into my garden and watered all my plants.

The next day I awoke and got ready for morning Mass. As I was coming outside, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that all my Balsam plants were looking fresh and alive! Their main stems were now standing strong and straight and their leaves were no longer wilted downwards. At last, my precious Balsam plants were once again healthy and pleasant to gaze upon.

## ***Busy Schedule***

This casual experience inspired me to re-examine my life by comparing it with these plants. The balsam plants had taught me a beautiful

lesson: sometimes in our lives, we too are just like plants. We lack both energy and power, become weak due to our busy schedules, hard work and lack of rest. We get exhausted mentally, physically, and spiritually. If we are not eating well, forget to drink enough water, or fail to exercise, we become physically ill. As such, if we lack in communication and social interactions, especially amidst the COVID -19 pandemic, we may soon find ourselves in a bubble of isolation, resulting in severe anxiety and depression.

In the same way, knowingly or unknowingly if we lack in our prayer life by not attending Holy Mass or receiving the sacraments, we are directly weakening our spiritual health. It is vital to water our lives with Holy Mass, the Holy Eucharist, the Sacraments, the Word of God and prayer. Jesus Christ is our source of strength and energy. Psalms 18:1-2 says, "I love you, Lord, my strength; Lord, my rock, my fortress my deliverer; My God, my rock of refuge, my shield, my saving horn, and my strong hold."

**JESUS  
CHRIST  
IS OUR  
SOURCE OF  
STRENGTH  
AND ENERGY.**

Let us renew our life this upcoming year by strengthening ourselves physically, mentally and spiritually. Let us look around at nature and thank God for everything He has provided to keep us happy and healthy. Let us thank the balsam plants for teaching us a beautiful lesson and allowing us to learn to "enjoy the flowers."







## APP



### Hallow

Catholic Meditation app offers guided meditation sessions to help us grow in faith & spiritual lives and find peace in the Lord.



## MOVIE

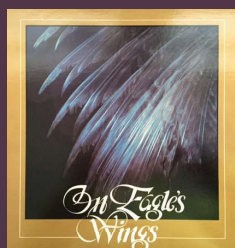


### The Passion of the Christ

The Passion of The Christ focusses on the last twelve hours of Jesus' life. Director Mel Gibson says, "This is a movie about Love, Hope, Faith and Forgiveness. Jesus died for all mankind, suffered for all of us. It's time to get back to that basic message. The world has gone nuts. We could all use a little more Love, Faith, Hope and Forgiveness."



## SONG

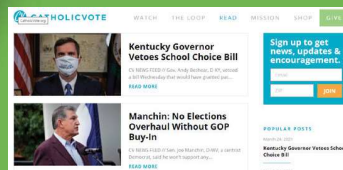


### On Eagle's Wings by Michael Joncas

# FIVE PICKS



## BLOG

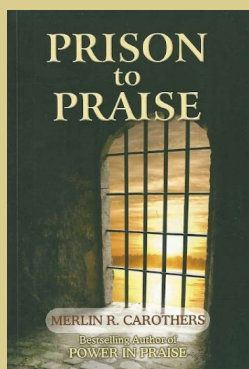


### Catholic Vote

The mission of Catholic Vote is to educate and inspire Americans of all faiths to prioritize the issues of life, faith, and family.



## BOOK

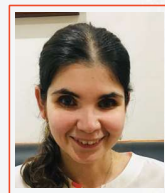


### Prison to Praise

by Merlin Carothers

Merlin describes how his life was transformed by finding faith in Christ. Using many stories from his own experience as a US army chaplain, he issues a radical challenge to praise God in all circumstances.

# WAITING IN THE BIBLE



*Simona Novakova, from Slovakia, dwells on how the quarantine helped her to realise that waiting patiently bears fruit.*

**W**hen we have to wait for something, we impatiently ask, "How much longer?" During the quarantine resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, we had this question in our hearts every day.

Let's look in the Bible at how our ancestors waited.

## **Noah**

The first example is Noah (Genesis 7:8). Noah was righteous before God; the Bible tells us that he walked with God. God was angry with all mankind and wanted to destroy all of them except Noah and his family, because He saw how prone to evil they were. Therefore, God instructed Noah

to build an ark in which he and his family were to take refuge from the great flood. In the Bible account, we come to understand that Noah must have been in the ark for 150 days. This is a very long time indeed! Certainly, the wait would not always have been pleasant, but Noah made sure he and his family remained faithful to the Lord at all times. Noah prayed, fulfilled his duties, and at the same time, monitored the surroundings to see if the waters had receded. When he was looking through the window of the ark, fear could have seized him, but he remained confident and trusted in the Lord.

## **Abraham**

Another example of waiting is Abraham (Genesis 12). He was 75 years old when God appeared to him and promised



to give him countless offspring. Abraham had waited a long time for a son. He may have been sad to see his other relatives having many children, while he remained childless. However, his great faith and deep trust in the Lord gave him joy, when in the end, he received a great reward.

### **Moses**

When Moses was called by the Lord to Mount Sinai, the Israelites were supposed to wait at the foot of the mountain until he returned. (Exodus 24). But after Moses was there for six days the Lord called him from the cloud on the seventh day, and Moses spent the next 40 days and 40 nights with Him. At first, the Israelites obediently waited, but then they began to doubt whether Moses would return. Had he somehow died? Had he forgotten them? They begged Aaron and the elders to make them a golden calf which they could worship (Exodus 32). They rebelled against God and began to worship an idol. This made God and Moses very angry.

### **Jonah**

Jonah was swallowed by a big fish, and was in it's belly for three days and three nights (Jonah chapter 2). While he waited for the Lord's mercy, he prayed with all his heart. He also promised to give himself completely to God, and to sacrifice everything for Him. He cried out to the Lord, begged to be rescued and suffered greatly because of his disobedience. And still the Lord was merciful to him.

### **Hannah**

Hannah, the wife of Elkanah (1 Samuel 1), was infertile and her rival offended her. She was very troubled and prayed devoutly to the Lord. Her waiting was accompanied

by pain and sorrow, but also a deep belief that the Lord would hear her. And the Lord gave her Samuel, the great prophet.

In the  
greatest  
pain, she  
prayed,  
hoped and  
trusted.

### **Jacob**

In Genesis 29, we read about Jacob, who served his uncle Laban. In return for seven years of his loyal service, Jacob requested the hand of Laban's younger daughter Rachel in marriage. However, Laban deceived Jacob, and gave him his older daughter Leah instead. Jacob then had to serve another seven years to get Rachel. Despite the betrayal, Jacob wasn't angry. Instead, he spent the additional time on duty, serving and waiting patiently, and eventually he received his reward.

### **Martha and Mary**

Another example is Martha and Mary (John 11), the family loved by Jesus. When their brother Lazarus was dying, his sisters sent Jesus a message to tell Him that the one He loved was sick. Despite this message, Jesus stayed where He was for another two days. How disappointed the sisters must have been! They couldn't explain why the Lord delayed His coming. They

felt an injustice, maybe they felt that Jesus didn't care about their suffering or maybe that He had forgotten about them. But Jesus was waiting to let His great power and love for them to shine.

### **Mary**

The Virgin Mary knew how to wait for Jesus' Resurrection. In her greatest pain, she prayed, hoped and trusted. Her immense love made her capable of heroic deeds. She was able to gather and pray with the Apostles (Acts 1:14). She managed to support them, even though she herself experienced the greatest pain. And she received a great reward.

We too experience different feelings during this lockdown period. Sometimes it is easy for us to accept God's will. At other times, it is very difficult because we are impatient and restless, and we may even feel indignant that we are subjected to this suffering. The Lord sees it all and understands our deepest thoughts and feelings. It is important to love during the waiting. I love the Lord, I know He is always with me and that is the most important thing. My life is de-cluttered and simplified due to the lockdown, so I can spend more time with Him. I also accept separation from the Church because I love the Lord and He wants it for me now. He didn't stop giving me His blessings through online Holy Masses and retreats. He blesses me even more now, because He knows that I need it.

### **Prayer**

*Mother Mary, help me to love the Lord more so that I can wait patiently out of love for Him and gracefully bear the suffering without losing hope. I give you my heart, dear Mother. You are my consolation, my sweet hope and support. Amen.* ♦♦♦♦

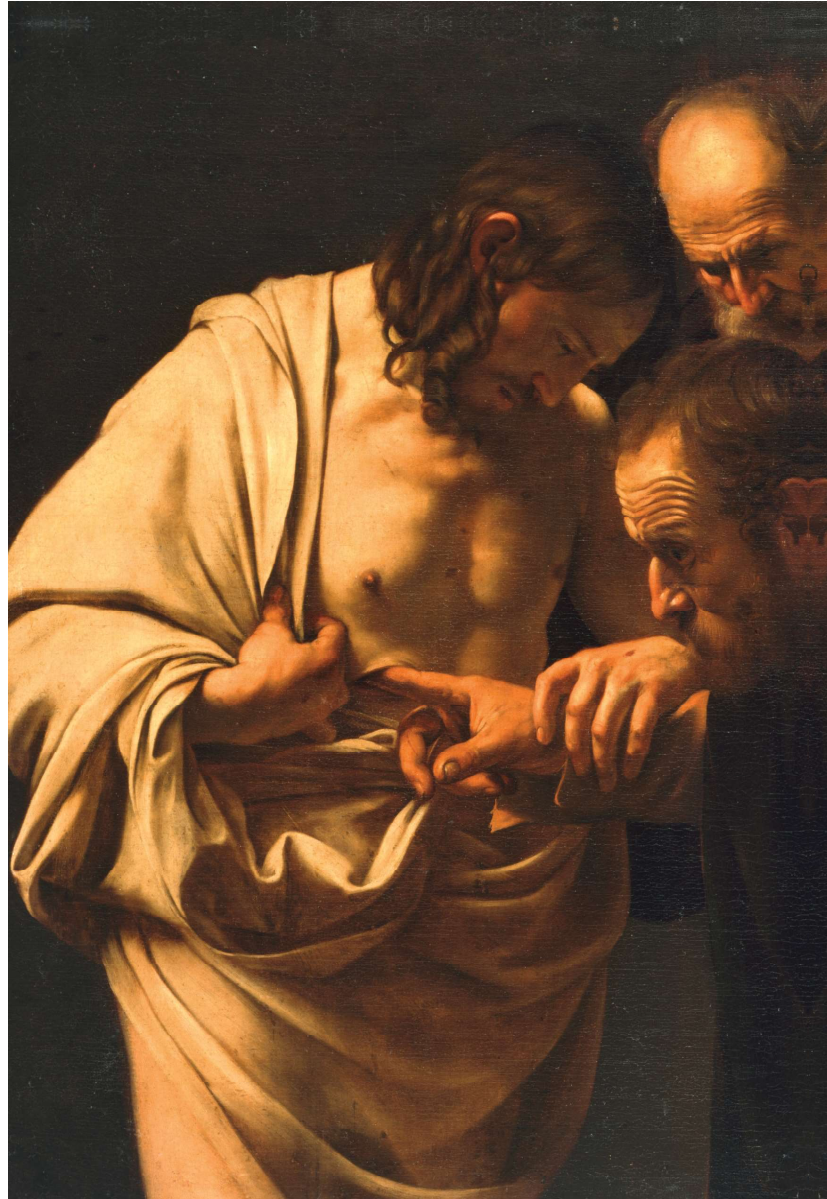
# MAR WALAH



*Sales Sebastian, a lay evangelist from Manchester, UK, encourages everyone to immerse in the mercy of Jesus and profess complete faith in Him.*

**M**ar Walah means, 'My Lord, my God' in ancient Syriac. St Thomas was the fearless disciple who wanted to be with Jesus when He decided to go to Judea, even though the Jews there were hostile to Him, as we learn in John 11:16, "Let us also go, that we may die with him". In the hours immediately following the arrest, crucifixion and death of Jesus, he was brave enough to go outside while the remaining Apostles, fearful for their lives, were locked in the upper room. Thus, St Thomas, the Apostle was not with the rest of the Apostles when Jesus first appeared to them after His resurrection. Consequently, Thomas expresses his deep desire to see, feel and touch his master, to increase his faith. We learn in Scripture how the Apostles had requested Jesus during His ministry to help them increase their faith, "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke 17:5). Thus, being one of Jesus' closest friends, St Thomas takes the liberty to want to see the resurrected Lord with his own eyes.

In Psalm 22:1, we hear the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" While Jesus was praying this Psalm upon the Cross, Longinus, one of the Roman soldiers, may have been standing there. Longinus is believed to be the one who pierced the side of Jesus, causing Blood and water to gush out. Tradition tells us that he regained his eyesight as a result of the precious Blood that flowed over him. "By



“I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces to the fountain of mercy. That vessel is this image with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You.”

(Diary of St Maria Faustina Kowalska, para 327)

His wounds we have been healed" (1 Peter 2 : 24). Today he is known as St Longinus in the Catholic church. This is last of the five wounds of Jesus into which our Lord invited St Thomas to place his finger, so as to increase his faith and upon doing so, Thomas exclaims, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

Just like St Thomas, Jesus is inviting each one of us to put our finger in this wound when our faith is failing. In 1931 A.D, Jesus appeared to St Faustina as the King of Divine Mercy and asked her to draw a picture of Him to be venerated as the Divine Mercy. "I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces to the fountain of mercy"



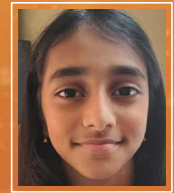


(St. Faustina's Diary para 327). In this image, the red rays emanating from the heart of Jesus represent the Blood of Jesus and the pale rays represent the water. In the Church, Divine Mercy Sunday is celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter.

Let us ask our Lord for a deep faith and complete childlike trust in Him. Then our Lord's blessings will be upon us as He promised in John 20:29 - "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe". Furthermore, Jesus declares, "Whoever believes in me, as scripture says, 'Rivers of living water will flow from within him.'" (John 7:38). Let us accept Jesus' invitation and put our finger in this wound and proclaim, Jesus I trust in you, Mar Walah.



# HOW GREAT IS GOD



Evelyn Koshy, USA

Who made the sky so wide and blue,  
And the clouds so silky and white,  
Who made the trees so tall and green,  
And the colorful petals on beautiful flowers?

Who made the ocean with the blue dark waves,  
And the land that spread so wide and firm,  
Who made creatures with life and breath,  
And cry out loud when they need your help?

Who made the sun so bright and yellow,  
And the moon with the large craters,  
Who made the stars that shine bright in the night  
like millions of fireflies dancing in the sky?

Who made the mountains that rise up in the sky,  
And the birds that fly up to the sky,  
Who sits on the throne in Heaven I say,  
Just who could it be?

Now I read the Bible and I see,  
It's God who is the one that made the universe,  
He is the one who sits on the throne in Heaven,  
He is the one who hears our cries and worries.

Before I go to bed, I pray...Dear God,  
You have given me so much that I don't deserve,  
I know that You have made this wonderful world,  
Please help me to be a good child of You.



# St Jacinta Marto & St Francisco Marto

(Child visionaries of Our Lady of Fatima)

*Shino Marin John, from Finland, shares the life of St Jacinta and St Francisco.*

## Early Life

Francisco, born in 1908, and Jacinta, born in 1910, were children of peasant farmers who lived near Fatima in Portugal. The siblings were illiterate and spent their days tending sheep with their cousin, Lucia Santos. They were well instructed in the Catechism and prayers of the Catholic Church.

Francisco was more serious and musically gifted, while Jacinta, who loved nature and music, was more playful and active. They recited the Rosary every day after lunch.

## Apparitions

In 1916 the children were visited by the Angel of Peace on three occasions. Francisco and Jacinta, along with their cousin, Lucia also witnessed six apparitions of Mother Mary between May 13 and October 13, 1917. Francisco was eight years old and Jacinta seven years old at the time of the apparitions.

## Historical Context

At that time, World War I raged throughout Europe. Portugal was in political turmoil; the monarchy had been overthrown in 1910 and the new government had disbanded religious organizations. Portugal was experiencing strong anti-Catholicism. Churches and schools were seized by the Government and nearly 2000

priests, monks and nuns were killed by anti-Christian groups.

During this turmoil about 220,000 Portuguese civilians died, thousands due to food shortages, and thousands from the Spanish flu.

## Apparitions of the Angel of Peace

The Angel, who appeared to the children three times in prelude to Mother Mary's apparitions, identified himself as the Angel of Peace and the Angel of Portugal. The Angel taught them several prayers, such as the Pardon prayer and Trinitarian prayer. Following these visits from the angel, the children experienced a deepening of their faith which prepared them for the coming of the Blessed Virgin.

*"Sacrifice yourselves for sinners and say many times, especially when you make a sacrifice, 'O Jesus, this is for love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.'"*

*(Third apparition of Our Lady of Fatima, July 13, 1917)*

## Marian Apparitions - Our Lady of Fatima

During the first apparition, the Blessed Virgin identified herself as Our Lady of the Rosary. Mother Mary asked them to pray the Rosary and to make sacrifices for the conversion of

sinners. She also asked them to return to that spot on the thirteenth of each month for the next six months.

During her third visit, the Blessed Virgin told them a secret and showed them a vision of those suffering in hell. The children were changed as a result of this vision and Jacinta and Francisco took on voluntary mortifications to ease the suffering of sinners. Almost 90,000 people gathered for Mary's final apparition on October 13, 1917.

## Life after the Apparitions

Local authorities mercilessly questioned the children regarding the Blessed Mother's apparitions, but each of them courageously withstood the questioning. They were subjected to taunting and mockery, even from family members.

The children followed Mary's request for them to do penance for sinners, which they did by praying often, giving their lunch to beggars on occasions so that they went without food themselves, and abstaining from drinking water on hot days. They offered up their daily crosses for the conversion of sinners. Francisco had a strong devotion to the Eucharist, which included strict physical mortifications, while Jacinta was known for having a heart for the poor and the suffering.

## Veneration

The siblings were struck by the influenza epidemic that swept through Europe in 1918. Francisco died on April 14, 1919 at the age of ten, the day after he made his First Communion. Jacinta lived for nearly one more year, dying at the age of nine, after developing pleurisy.

Francisco and Jacinta were canonized by Pope Francis on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2017, during the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the apparitions. They are the youngest non-martyrs to be canonized in the history of the Church. Their feast day is celebrated on February 20<sup>th</sup>. ♦♦♦



# POPE'S *Voice*

*"This is important: to get to know people, listen, expand the circle of ideas. The world is crisscrossed by roads that come closer together and move apart, but the important thing is that they lead towards the Good."*

Pope Francis



## GLOBAL CATHOLIC NEWS

Compiled by Smitha George

### DALLAS CATHOLICS, FAITH-BASED AGENCIES PITCH INTO HELP MIGRANT TEENS



America: The Catholic faithful in the Diocese of Dallas moved into action to help 3,000 migrant teenagers as the federal officials announced that a downtown Dallas facility had been chosen to house up to 3,000 migrant teenagers. As the unaccompanied migrant teens began to arrive, Catholic Charities Dallas answered the call to assist with the process.



### SCOUTS AND PARISH KIDS WRITE MEDITATIONS FOR THIS YEAR'S VATICAN WAY OF THE CROSS

Vatican City: Pope Francis has chosen a scouting group from Italy and kids from a Roman parish to prepare the meditations for this year's Good Friday Stations of the Cross at the Vatican. A group of around 500 children from the First Communion and Confirmation catechism classes at the Rome parish of the Holy Martyrs of Uganda have also helped prepare the meditations. A group of 145 young people between the ages of eight and 19, has composed the meditations for the 2021 edition of the Way of the Cross with Pope Francis.



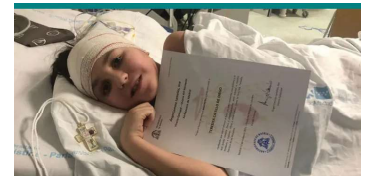
### POPE FRANCIS MAKES HISTORIC VISIT TO IRAQ

Iraq: Pope Francis has made a historic visit to Iraq in March, the first by a pontiff to the birthplace of the Eastern

churches from where more than a million Christians have fled over the past 20 years. The pope's visit is of highly symbolic value given the importance of Iraqi Christians in the history of the faith and their cultural legacy dating back to the time of ancient Babylon. The pope also visited Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the highest authority for Shia Muslims in Iraq.

### 10-YEAR-OLD BECOMES MISSIONARY BEFORE DEATH

Spain: A 10-year-old girl fulfilled her childhood dream of becoming a Catholic missionary from her hospital bed shortly before dying from a brain tumour in Spain. Teresita Castillo de Diego died in Madrid after three years of fighting a brain tumour. Fr Ángel Camino Lamela, Episcopal vicar of the Archdiocese of Madrid went to visit seriously ill Teresita before her operation. The young girl told the priest she loved Jesus very much and wanted to be a missionary. Later that morning Camino produced the official document installing Teresita as a missionary.



### FEAST OF MARTHA, MARY, AND LAZARUS ADDED TO CHURCH CALENDAR



Vatican: Pope Francis has added the memorial of saints Mary, Martha, and Lazarus to the General Roman Calendar, giving the siblings the combined feast day of July 29. The memorial of St Martha was already in the General Roman Calendar before the Second Vatican Council, but St Lazarus and St Mary had been originally left off due to uncertainty about the identity of Mary Magdalene which has been resolved in recent studies. The General Roman Calendar has the liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church, which denotes the dates of holy days and the feast days of saints commemorated annually.

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“  
In this you rejoice, even  
if now for a little while  
you have had to suffer  
various trials, so that  
the genuineness of your  
faith—being more precious  
than gold that, though  
perishable, is tested by  
fire—may be found to  
result in praise and glory  
and honor when Jesus  
Christ is revealed. ”

(1 Peter 1:6-7)



“  
Pain and suffering have come into your life, but remember pain, sorrow,  
suffering are but the kiss of Jesus — a sign that you have come so close to  
Him that He can kiss you. ”

(St Teresa of Calcutta)



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