

ISSUE 111



Mother Mary, readers.

KINGDOM

REVELATOR

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"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16). There is no greater love than this, that the Father gave His only Son so that He may lay down His life for our sake. Jesus could not imagine a heaven without us, so He became incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man. We have a God who not only created us but also loved us so much that He didn't step back from dying on the cross for our salvation.

Jesus did all the hard work by dying on the cross and now it's our turn to be faithful to Him. In every tabernacle in the world, Jesus awaits us, desiring for us to spend some time with Him. Although we don't deserve to be loved due to our sins, Jesus still sings a love song over us every day. What other religion has a God who longs to be loved by His people as our God? How can we ever pay back this reckless, unending and unfathomable love of Christ? No words can adequately describe this mystifying love of Christ. Let St Teresa of Avila's prayer echo through our minds and hearts today: Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes with which He looks with compassion on this world,

Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,

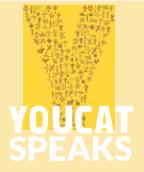
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are His body.

Editoria



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Why is Mary a Virgin?

www.ignatiuspress.com



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80 God willed that Jesus Christ should have a true human mother but only God himself as his Father, because he wanted to make a new beginning that could be credited to him alone and not to earthly forces. [CCC 484-504, 508-510].

Mary's virginity is not some outdated mythological notion but rather fundamental to the life of Jesus. He was born of a woman but had no human father. Jesus Christ is a new beginning in the world that has been instituted from on high. In the Gospel of Luke, Mary asks the angel, "How can this be, since I have no husband?" (= do not sleep with a man, Luke 1:34); the angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you" (Luke 1:35). Although the Church from the earliest days was mocked on account of her belief in Mary's virginity, she has always believed that her virginity is real and not merely symbolic.

PLANT APEACEFUL THOUGHT



Mary Lorelei Vicedo Aquino, from the USA, reflects on what we are lacking in our attitude towards others.

whoever will not receive you or listen to your words—go outside that house or town and shake the dust from your feet. Amen, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town" (Matthew 10:14-15).

Yesterday, someone asked me how to deal with an uncompassionate doctor. My question then was, "Why did you go to see the doctor? Was it not to help you to be healed - right? Did you go to your neurosurgeon to satisfy your emotional stress? Did you think how many patients he had dealt with that day, or what his day was like by the time he got to see you? It was probably overwhelming, so he may have needed your compassion. He has to deal with many sick people; you are not his only patient. Did you give him that kind of compassion?

Harsh But Truthful

I may have been harsh with my words and responses to her grieving soul, but the truth is, if we ask for compassion from others, shouldn't we show the same to them? I meditated on my response. It hurt me that I had to speak so truthfully, but we often see so much of what we need and fail to see what we are lacking. This failure causes us to sin and be detached from the one true Grace. The passages in Hosea 11:1-4, 8e-9 and Matthew 10:7-15 gave me shivers. If we fail to see its message to save our souls, it may be too late. No one knows how many more hours we have left.

Message of The Gospel

The daily gospel consistently answers our daily worries. We are so overwhelmed by our glorious selves that we sometimes fail to see what truly has value in this life. The gospel consistently encourages us to give compassion and mercy towards others. We often say we believe in God, and we love Him. What do our hearts, minds, and souls hold? What truly lies beneath? We

take for granted the teachings that will keep us holy and righteous before God.

This teaching of Jesus should also open our eyes. How fully do we receive and listen to the message of the Gospel? How attentive are we to the saving proclamation of God's Kingdom? To the extent that we are open, the floodgates of God's mercy flow forth. But to the extent that we are not, a lost experience is encountered. I encourage you to think through what we feed our minds. We become what it holds. Sins often start in our minds. Those fears, those insecurities, those pains were induced by our thoughts. If taken for granted. the ideas we feed in our minds can cost us our souls.

Choices We Make

If worries are something we can take care of, resolve them. If it is beyond our control, submit and surrender them to God. We are the caretakers of our peace. It is a choice we make day in and day out. Let us try to —

Plant a peaceful thought and reap an encouraging word.

Plant an inspiring word and reap a positive action.

Plant an engaging action and

reap an honorable habit.

Plant a righteous habit and reap a dignified character.

Plant an exemplary character and reap a holy destiny.

I tell you; the Gospel speaks truth and delivers salvation, and it is only when we listen and treasure them in our hearts, conform to the words and perform deeds worthy of God's grace, we will begin to reap peace, joy, and salvation through Christ Jesus. However, if we only listen to them during Sunday homily and do not put them into action, the time will come when we might not have the chance to apply them. The disciples who came to help us change our ways have already dusted off and proceeded without you in the journey to holiness. "Amen, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town."

Reflect, today, upon your being present in one of these towns. Consider the many ways that you have been closed to all that God wants to speak to you. Open your heart wide, listen with the utmost attentiveness, be humble before the message of the Gospel, and be ready to

"Watch your thoughts, they become words. watch your words, they become actions, watch your actions, they become habits, watch your habits, they become character. watch your character, for it becomes your destiny."

receive it and to change your life. Commit to being a member of the Kingdom of God so that all that God speaks to you will have a transforming effect upon your life. According to

St Francis of Assisi, sanctify yourself and you will sanctify the society.

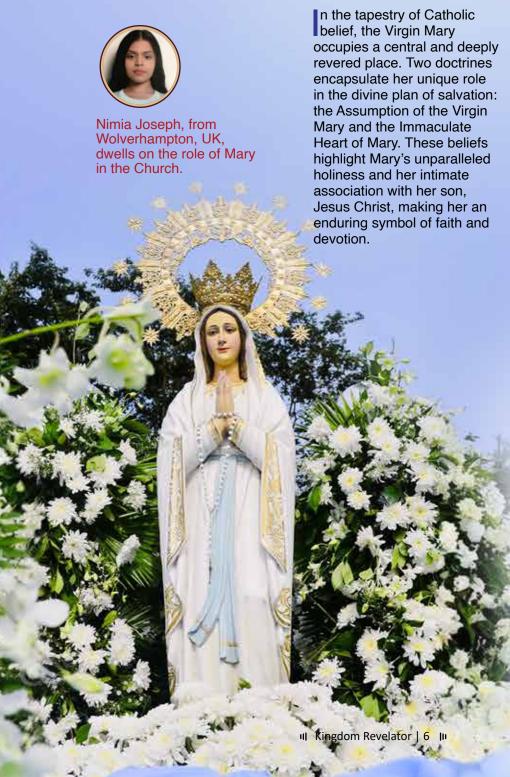
PRAYER OF THE SOUL

My compassionate Lord, your firmness and chastisements are an act of your utmost mercy for those who are hard of heart. Please soften my heart, dear Lord, and when I am stubborn and closed, please rebuke me in Your great love so that I will always turn back to you and your saving message with all my heart. Jesus, I trust in You.

I submit to God's dominion over all my entities, so I can continue to be the visible or tangible expression of His power and presence. May God in His everlasting mercy, reveal His glory and attributes through His works that His word manifests in my life and my family.



Pillars of Marian Devotion



A Heavenly Glorification

The Assumption of the Virgin Mary, celebrated on August 15th, is a dogma that holds that Mary was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory at the end of her earthly life. This belief, formally defined by Pope Pius XII in 1950 through the apostolic constitution "Munificentissimus Deus," underscores the special grace bestowed upon Mary due to her role as the mother of God.

While the Assumption is not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, it is deeply rooted in the tradition and faith of the Church. The theological foundation rests on Mary's unique participation in the life of Jesus. From her Immaculate Conception to her presence at the Crucifixion, Mary's life was intimately entwined with the redemptive mission of Christ. As such, her Assumption is seen as the natural culmination of her sinless life and her perfect cooperation with God's will. CCC 974 says, "The Most Blessed Virgin Mary, when the course of her earthly life was completed, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven, where she already shares in the glory of her Son's Resurrection, anticipating the resurrection of all members of his Body."

"A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars."

Revelation 12:1

This dogma also reflects the eschatological hope of the Church—the belief in the resurrection of the body and the promise of eternal life. Mary's Assumption provides a foretaste of the destiny awaiting all faithful Christians, affirming that those who share in Christ's sufferings will also share in His glory.

A Beacon of Pure Love

The devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary complements the Assumption by focusing on Mary's interior life—her virtues, her love for God and humanity, and her profound suffering. The Immaculate Heart is a symbol of her pure, maternal love and her unwavering fidelity to God's plan.

This devotion has roots in Scripture and tradition. In Luke 2:19, we read that Mary "kept all these things, pondering them in her heart." This verse highlights her contemplative nature and her deep understanding of the mysteries of Christ. The Immaculate Heart is often depicted pierced by a sword, recalling Simeon's prophecy in Luke 2:35 that a sword would pierce her soul, symbolizing her

share in the sufferings of her son.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary is celebrated liturgically on the Saturday following the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, underscoring the close connection between the hearts of Jesus and Mary. This devotion invites the faithful to reflect on Mary's virtues and to strive for purity of heart and steadfast love.

Role in Salvation History

Mary's role in salvation history is multi-faceted and profound. As the Theotokos, or Mother of God, she gave birth to Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, making her an essential participant in the Incarnation. Her Immaculate Conception,

Mary's Assumption
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glory.

defined as dogma by Pope Pius IX in 1854, affirms that she was preserved from original sin, prepared by God's grace to bear the Savior.

Mary's fiat, her "yes" to the angel Gabriel (Luke 1:38), exemplifies perfect obedience and faith, allowing God's plan of salvation to unfold. At the Crucifixion, she stood by Jesus, sharing in His suffering and embodying the role of the New Eve, whose obedience contrasts with the

disobedience of the first Eve.

The Power of Marian Prayers

Marian devotion is expressed through various prayers and practices that honors Mary's unique role and seeks her intercession. The "Hail Mary" draws from the greetings of Gabriel and Elizabeth, asking Mary to pray for us. The Rosary, a meditative prayer, reflects on the significant events in the lives of Jesus and Mary, fostering deep contemplation and spiritual growth.

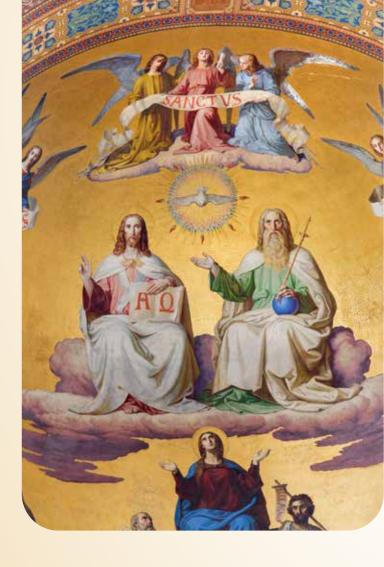
The "Hail, Holy Queen" and the "Memorare" are powerful invocations of Mary's mercy and intercessory power, while the "Angelus" commemorates the Incarnation, reminding the faithful of Mary's pivotal role in salvation.

Our Guiding Star

The Assumption of the Virgin Mary and the devotion to her Immaculate Heart are cornerstones of Marian theology and devotion. They highlight Mary's unique role in God's plan and her ongoing spiritual motherhood over the Church. Through these beliefs, the faithful are drawn closer to Jesus, inspired by Mary's example of holiness, obedience, and love.

As we meditate on the mysteries of the Assumption and the Immaculate Heart, we are reminded of our own call to holiness and the promise of eternal life. In Mary, we find a model of perfect discipleship and a powerful intercessor who continually leads us to her son, Jesus Christ. Her life and her heart, immaculate and assumed into heaven, shine as beacons of hope and love in our spiritual journey.

Mystery of The Holy Trinity





Molly Mathew, from Houston Texas, USA, shares her insight on the Holy Trinity.

xploring the topic of the Holy Trinity was always very confusing and challenging in my spiritual journey. It often ended up with frustration and unanswered questions. There were many days when I meditated for a spark of hope and answers to my questions; I waited for a revelation. One day while meditating on this beautiful topic I told Jesus that I loved Him. Then I asked myself if I loved Jesus more, would Abba Father get angry, or should I love the Holy Spirit more; to whom should I tell my complaints and prayer requests first - to the Father or to the Son or to the Holy Spirit; or to whom will I give praise and glory first - to the Father or to the Son

To whom
will (tell my
complaints
and prayer
requests first?
To the Father
or to the
Son or to the
Holy Spirit?

Jesus; who should I share my joy and love with first or to give praise and glory first?. With these questions, I was truly struggling in my mind to understand the secret of the sacred mystery of the Holy Trinity.

We recently celebrated the Feast of the Holy Trinity, so I thought of writing these few lines to help others who are struggling with these unanswerable questions, and to share the joy of new revelations that I received through beautiful examples from nature, God's own creation.

One day I was walking by the lakeside near my

neighbourhood. It was sunny and hot. Some instinct from my mind prompted me to look at the sun. Can you imagine the sun without warmth and light? We cannot imagine the sun without light, heat, or energy. We cannot separate the sun and its warmth and the light which it generates. In the same way we cannot separate Abba Father or the Son Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit from the Trinity. The three are one; how they are one is a mystery! In John 10:30, Jesus tells us, "The Father and Lare One."

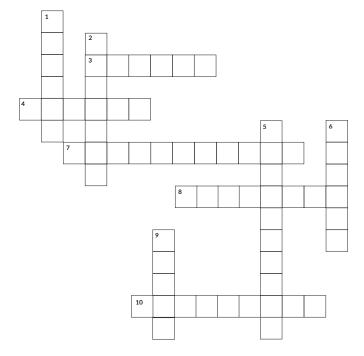
To enhance a better understanding, I have another perfect example from nature. Look at the Rose Flower! It has the most amazing fragrance and beautiful color. Can you imagine a rose flower without its color or its fragrance? Its color and smell make the flower complete. Right? In the same way, The Holy Trinity is complete and perfect when the three are in one: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and no one can separate them. John 17:22 says, "The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one,"

Each one has its own role to make it complete and perfect. In the same way, we cannot imagine the Holy Trinity without Abba Father or Jesus or without the Holy Spirit, but together they make the Holy Trinity. This is the essence of the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Let us understand the secret of this sacred mystery and give all glory to the Triune God. Let us experience and enjoy the beauty of the Holy Trinity. "The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you." (2 Corinthians 13:13).



Cross Word

By Heinz Sony, Luton, UK



Across

- The disciple who brought Peter to Jesus.
- 4. The king who threw Daniel into the lion's den.
- 7. He was the king of Salem who blessed Abraham.
- 8. The son of Saul who became close friends with David.
- 10. He climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus?

Down

| 1. | The prophet who confronted David about |
|----|--|
| | his sin with Bathsheba. |
| 2. | Peter walked on water in the sea of |
| 5. | Jesus delivered the on the |
| | Sermon of the Mount. |
| 6. | She was the mother of Samuel. |
| 9. | Prophet was swallowed by a big |
| | fish. |

Help///y Under the second of t



Rajni Manoj, from Derby, UK, narrates the awe-inspiring incident from the Gospel of Mark and what it teaches us.

eter, James and John had just witnessed the most magnificent sight at the top of the mountain; Jesus' clothes became more dazzling bright than anyone on earth could make them. There appeared with Jesus Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. They were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" Suddenly, when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, only Jesus. Astounded by the sight of the transfiguration, the three men accompanied Jesus down the mountain (Mark 9:2-8).

The Healing of a Boy with a Spirit

When they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them and some scribes arguing with them. When the crowd saw Jesus, they were immediately overcome with awe, and ran forward to greet Him. He asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?"

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Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak, and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they were unable to do so." He answered them, "You faithless generation, how much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to Him. When the spirit saw Him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about,

Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to Him. When the spirit saw Him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about,

"Truly I tell you if you have faith as small as a mustard seed you can say to this mountain.

Whose from here to there, and it will move. Vothing will

foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, help us! Have compassion on us!"

Jesus said to him, "If you are able! All things can be done for the one who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out, "I believe; help my unbelief!" When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saving to it, "You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!" After crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand. When he had entered the house. His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "This kind can come out only through prayer." (Mark 9:14-29)

Perseverance in Prayer

Imagine if the father of the boy had given up hope of the boy being healed after the unsuccessful efforts of the disciples, the boy would have continued in that pitiful state! But this father was not to be discouraged as the life of his child was at stake and he had nowhere else to go. He had heard about the great miracles Jesus was performing among the people and was hoping against hope to get to Jesus and attain this favour. Although he was unsuccessful in attaining healing for his son elsewhere, he kept on seeking help until he found the Lord. Rather than being discouraged by the failures, he had his eyes fixed on Jesus. Jesus had taught them about the need for perseverance in prayer in the Gospel of Luke, "So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened" (Luke 11:9-10).

Most people are not like this father; often they give up on prayer when they do not see their prayer bearing fruit. Disappointed and disheartened they often lag in zeal and even doubt the existence of God. This is when we must remind ourselves of the very words of Jesus, "This kind can only come out through prayer." No matter how big the problem is, believe that there is nothing impossible with God (Luke 1:37). Be persistent in prayer until you see the results, because the Lord's arm is not too short to save. nor his ears too dull to hear (Isaiah 59:1).

THED I VINE PRESENCE





Fr M Jude, from the UK, shares his thoughts on the abiding presence of God in us.

od's presence is Geverything. God's presence is worth more than life itself to the true worshipper (Psalm 51:11). We all need and depend on God's presence. What power and unshakeable confidence grows in us from a calm and sure awareness of the abiding presence of God. No wonder Moses cried out to God: 'If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here' (Exodus 33:15). It is that presence that Elijah experienced in a still gentle wind, assuring him of God's support and giving him a fresh vision for his prophetic ministry (1 Kings 19: 11-13). God's presence in its tangible form or manifestation (Exodus 40:34-35) is so powerful that it could melt the mountains like wax (Psalm 97:5). His precious presence contains the fullness of all the goodness we can ever desire and is a

force for transformation and empowerment.

Fellowship With God

The human person is designed to gravitate towards the presence of God and in the original plan of God, the human person had ample opportunities for fellowship with God in the closest possible way (Genesis 3:8). After humanity's fall into sin (Genesis 3), the greatest loss was not the banishment from the Garden of Eden, but the access to God's presence.

Since the fall of humanity, the human person is drawn to every possible indication of God's presence. Consider the millions of people who frequent pilgrimage and religious sites around the world. What is the most attractive thing about these places, if not the possibility of encountering God's presence? The hunger for God's presence is itself a noble one but oftentimes this hunger is misdirected.

It is quite human to imagine that God's presence is more likely to be in the hurricanes, earthquakes and fires around us, than in a still gentle wind (1 Kings 19: 11-13). Like Martha, we can easily ignore the presence of God and instead get caught up in our own activities (Luke 10: 38:42), be too carried away by effects rather than by causes, be too drawn to every or any semblance of divinity, always on the lookout for any new Christian celebrity who claims to have supernatural powers. This can be worsened by the tendency to dismiss ourselves as unworthy of any true meaningful relationship with God or even to discount God's ability to commune with us. Then there is a desperation for and an addiction to intermediaries, in persons, things and objects. If I see this person, if I do this thing, perhaps God will appear, God will notice. If I gather some more relics, visit some holy places, get prayed over by that person, perhaps God will notice, and so on.

Although respect and admiration for holy persons, things or places are not bad in themselves, if they are not well regulated, they can degenerate into idolatry. The



idolatry of effects rather than a worship of the true God, can make us addicts of sensations rather than true worshippers and seekers of God. Our trust and faith in a God that sees all, loves even more, and runs ahead to embrace us, even in our sinfulness and despite ourselves, will remain undeveloped.

More Witnesses of God

We need more witnesses of God's presence in the world today (Acts 1: 8). When Jesus asks us to be His witnesses, He is saying that because of us, fewer will doubt His existence and goodness. He is inviting us to be evidence of His goodness and love.

We need ministers of God's presence who will, by their lives and words, evidence the reality of God's presence in today's world; ministers who will point to Jesus, the presence of God in the world. For God is seen through Jesus (John 14:9, John 12:45). He was and is the revelation and habitation of the fullness of God, the Father (Colossians 2:9). He manifested

God's presence
is not something
we go to get
in a location,
it is something
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location.

divinity by His brilliant, transfigured self and caused the voice of the Father to echo in approving sounds attesting to this divine sonship (Matthew 17:1-5, Matthew 3:13-17).

We need heralds who can be God's presence to others, in different and unique ways. It is tempting to abandon a church, a prayer group or a prayer meeting thinking: I can't feel God's presence here. God's presence is not something we go to get in a location, but something we bring to a location. It is not a geographical reality; it is mainly a spiritual reality. Ministers of God's presence help us to deepen our awareness of God's presence. Conscious awareness

of God's presence is a mighty force for transformation. Attentive awareness of His presence can be very life-giving and positively life altering.

Guarantees His Presence

The world needs to know that God loves to make Himself present to everyone. He is a God who appears before He is invoked. He is a God who manifests Himself before He is noticed. He is a God who takes the initiative to knock before the door is opened. God's awesome and indescribable presence knows more routes within our lungs than the air we breathe. God is so generous with His presence that He guarantees His presence at any gathering in His name (Matthew 18:20).

So, the ministry of the Divine Presence is intended to bring ourselves, and others into a deeper relationship with Him and to trust in the work of the ever-present God, ever active in silence, working out His will even through the ugly events of life, bringing ourselves and others to trust in the presence of Jesus even when it appears that He is asleep (Mark 4:38-40).

To receive the peace, confidence and blessings that the ever-abiding presence of God provides. We need to nurture a sense of His presence through silence, prayer and the study of God's Word. The deeper our sense of God's presence in us is, the more others will be able to access God's presence. Of course, we must not ignore the presence of God in others, as God sometimes manifests His presence through others around us.

Sacrament



Sr Elsa Sabs, from Coral Springs, Florida, USA, sheds some light on the importance of Holy Eucharist in our lives.

he Church draws her life and light from Holy **Eucharist.** The 2nd Vatican Council proclaimed that the Eucharistic Sacrifice is the source and summit of Christian life and contains the entire spiritual wealth of the church. The Lord present in the Sacrament of the Altar is the full manifestation of His boundless love for humanity. We should draw strength, consolation and support from this Sacrament. The Eucharistic Jesus is the source of our joy, and source of our zeal as Christians. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "I am the bread of life that has come down from Heaven" (John 6:51). Jesus is hidden in the Holy Eucharist, but He is really and truly present there.

Holy Eucharist

In the Eucharist, we come together to share in the sacrifice of Christ. In this Sacrifice we receive the blessings of the Lord and participate in His self-giving sacrifice. The Eucharistic Jesus is the lamb who takes away the sins of the world.

We receive grace upon grace in the presence of Jesus as St Paul says, "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

The healing power of Jesus is present for us in the Holy Eucharist. Let us not be



The Foundation of Christian life

ashamed to approach Him so that He may heal us both physically and spiritually.

Jesus is waiting for us in the Holy Eucharist to shower all the blessings and graces we need. Let us humble ourselves to approach Him for all the blessings we stand in need of. When we receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, we achieve the following things:

- Jesus becomes the center of our hearts. The Eucharist helps us to focus on Jesus, by speaking to Him, asking Him questions and seeking directions from Him.
- The Eucharist helps us to have solidarity with Jesus, solidarity in our families and it will strengthen us to have solidarity with the sick and needy. The Eucharist helps us to be obedient to God's will.
- Jesus is the foundation of our Christian Life. He must be our companion and we must walk with Him. If we walk with Him, He will

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provide for our needs. When Jesus is the center of our lives, we will be able to see and hear Him. We will be able to see Him in our brothers and sisters. Jesus is always full of compassion and mercy. When Jesus is in our lives, we will always be moved with compassion and mercy towards others, and will be able to show God's love.

"The Eucharist is the sacrament of love: it signifies love, it produces love. The Eucharist is the consummation of the whole spiritual life." St Thomas Aquinas

May the Holy Eucharist renew us and fill us with joy. Let us express our Eucharistic love through Adoration and reparation.

MEET THE POPE

Pope Sylvester 1 33rd Pope



By Henoch Sony, Luton, UK



Papacy

He was the Bishop of Rome from 31st January 314 until his death on 31st December 335. His predecessor was Pope Miltiades, and his successor was Pope Mark. He was the first Pope of Rome to reign entirely under the liberty of the Church, guaranteed by the Edict of Milan in 313. He lived a life devoted completely to Christ and contributed to the development of the liturgy. He is included in the list of top ten longest reigning popes for his time and is remembered for the Council of Nicea, the Baptism of Constantine, and the triumph of the Church.

Legacy

Pope Sylvester I, built a church where he was buried after his death on 31st December 335 A.D. His remains were buried in the cemetery of St Priscilla church (on Via Salaria). Pope Paul I transferred Pope Sylvester's relics to the Basilica of San Silvestro in Capite in 762 A.D. His feast day is 31st December and he is the patron of the chivalric order called the Militia Aurata, or the Golden Spur.

Early Life

Pope Sylvester 1 was born in 285 AD in Avellino, Italy to Christian parents Justa and Rufinus, and raised as a devoted Christian. He worked as a priest in Rome during Emperor Diocletian's severe persecution of the Church.

Later Life and Contributions To The church

The same of the sa

During the Pope's reign the city began its transition into its Christian era. With the construction of the great Constantinian basilicas including the Basilica of St Peter on the Vatican Hill, which was erected above a temple dedicated to Apollo, to mark the burial place of the first Bishop of Rome. Pope Sylvester worked closely with Emperor Constantine whom he healed of leprosy and who also collaborated on the Lateran Basilica and Baptistery. Today it is known as the Basilica of Saint John Lateran. Other buildings in Rome and the Holy Land were constructed with Constantine's support, including the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, the old St Peter's Basilica in Rome, and chapels built over martyrs' graves.

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Powe Than Me More Than "These"?



Lydia Bosco, from North Carolina, USA, reflects on the Gospel of John Chapter 21:15-17.

In John Chapter 21, we see that the resurrected Lord made breakfast for the disciples while He waited for them on the seashore. After breakfast, he asked Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." He asked the same question three times. Why did Jesus ask this to Peter alone and not to the other disciples? He knew

the great mission God was going to entrust Peter, whom He had chosen to build His Church. In this exchange, Peter became the first Pope of the Church. The greater the call, the greater will be the testing.

Question To Every Christian

Each question is a test to know who or what we love most. He will ask us what is most important to us. It could be our relationships, our possessions, our beauty, our career, or anything else which we are attached to. When God detaches us from these, sometimes it seems

like tearing our heart out.
It's not because He is cruel.
It's because He knows our
weaknesses and He also know
what is best for us. He knows
that if God is not our priority,
we will fall at some point in
our life. Jesus asked Peter,
"Do you love me more than
these?" Jesus asks the same
question to every Christian
- do you love me more than
these? It means He wants
to be loved by us more than
anything else. It's the first and

most important Commandment - to love God with all our heart.

Giving God first place balances everything, whereas giving priority to "these" will distort our lives. God knows this and wants us to be safe. That's why He gave it as the first and foremost Commandment. He will test us to know our love towards God. Whether you are a student or an athlete, testing is a must to prove yourself and win the prize, which will enable you to and move on to the next level. The same is true with spiritual

Pentecost. John 16:7 says, "but very truly I tell you it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you." All the disciples experienced the pain of parting with Jesus before Pentecost. They all left their loved ones, their jobs and finally also tasted the pain of separation from Jesus as He Ascended to Heaven, Only with the help of the Holy Spirit, can we love God with Agape love.

Pain of Separation

Mother Mary gave her precious Jewel, her one and only Son Jesus to God as a love offering through her Fiat and in doing so experienced this pain of separation as well. Abraham gave his one and only precious son Isaac as his love offering to God. We also see how God took everything from Job's life - his health, wealth, and children. But all these tests proved that they loved God more than "these". Always remember, no one and nothing belongs to us. Everything belongs to God. We came to this world without bringing anything and we will leave with nothing. Matthew 19:29 says, "and everyone who has given up houses or

brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property for my sake, will receive a hundred times as much in return and will inherit eternal life."

We can see that Mother Mary didn't lose Jesus. Abraham got Isaac back and Job was given 10 times more than what was taken. It is God who gives these treasures. So, when He takes them back, let's not complain because we know that He's doing so for our benefit. Abraham could have complained when God asked him to kill his one and only child; he could have asked God many questions: Isn't it You who gave this child to me, then why do You want to take him back? Aren't You the giver of life, not the taker? I didn't ask for a child it was you who promised me a child. You are supposed to be the promise keeper and not a promise breaker. But instead, he obeyed without uttering a word because he had strong faith in God. When we offer our treasure, God will return it in fullness without losing anything of it. So just like Job, we too can profess and prove our faith and love to God by saying, "the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

The greater the call, the greater will be the testing.

life. To grow to a higher spiritual level and to store treasures in Heaven, we need to be tested. Jesus conducted this test before Pentecost and Peter passed the test and was ready for the next level of anointing through



Dr Rachel, from Australia, ponders on how God uses ordinary things to reveal His glory.

od the Master of the universe uses simple and ordinary things to reveal His glory and accomplish His will. Everything is a possible instrument for Him to perform miracles to bring deliverance, salvation, healing and restoration.

STAFF OF MOSES

In Exodus 7:8-10, God tells Moses to take his staff and

throw it before Pharaoh the King of Egypt and it changed into a snake. God enables us to confront evil with boldness according to His will.

In Exodus 14:15-22, God tells Moses to lift up his staff and stretch out his hand over the Red Sea and divide it in two, and the waters became dry land, and the Israelites were rescued from the Egyptians. We must depend on God's guidance when we face obstacles.

When the Israelites were thirsty for water God asked Moses to strike on the rock at Horeb with his staff and water started coming from the rock. God is our provider; He feeds us until we are more than satisfied (Exodus 17:5-6).

PIECE OF WOOD

When the Israelites were traveling through the desert of Shur they were thirsty, but the waters at Marah were bitter, so God instructed Moses to throw a piece of wood into the water and it sweetened the water If we trust God when we go through bitter experiences in life, it sweetens our experiences (Exodus 15:25).

SALT

When the people of Jericho complained about the impure water and unfruitful land, the prophet Elisha threw salt into the spring and the water became pure. The Word of God can sweeten bitter spirits and make barren souls fruitful and productive, if we possess a humble spirit (2 Kings 2:19-22).

STICK

When Elisha and his servants were cutting trees to build a room, one of the servants dropped an iron axe into the river. The iron axe was borrowed, and when the servant cried to Elisha, the man of God. Elisha cut a piece of stick and threw it into the river and the iron axe came to the surface of the water and was recovered. This was not a violation of the law of physics; but we can see God reaching down into the river, picking it up and making it float. God restores our joy and peace when we repent and cry out to Him (2 Kings 6:1-7).

A SLING AND FIVE STONES

David used a sling and a stone to strike Goliath, who was threatening the Israelites, and killed him and won the battle against the Philistines because he claimed the name of the Lord of Hosts. God showed His awesome power and Lordship using insignificant objects (1 Samuel 17:41).

JAR OF OIL

The prophet Elisha helps a poor woman pay off her debts by asking her to collect vessels from her neighbors and to fill them with the only jar of oil she had. She miraculously filled all the vessels from her jar of oil. Then the prophet told her to sell the oil and pay off her debts. God pays our debts and meets all our needs according to His richness and glory (2 Kings 4:1-7).

JAWBONE

Samson the strong man slew a thousand Philistines with the

Everything is a possible instrument for Him to perform miracles to bring deliverance, salvation, healing and restoration.

jawbone of a donkey. The spirit of the Lord came upon him, despite his pride and immorality, when he repented and called upon the name of the Lord. Determination and endurance dramatically changed imminent defeat into victory (Judges 15:19).

SCARLET CORD

Rahab the harlot who had faith in God protected two spies who were sent to Jericho in advance of the Israelites taking over the land. She provided shelter for them and then allowed them to escape through a window using a scarlet rope, and which in return saved her and the family from invasion (Joshua 2:1-21).

WATER

At the wedding in Cana Jesus turned water into wine. He asked the servants to fill the jars with water and they obeyed without doubting. Obedience and trust brings miracles in life. Jesus the Son of God shed His blood for the salvation of the world and to restore joy and peace. (John 2:1-12)

CLAY

Jesus made a paste of saliva and mud and applied it to the blind man's eyes and then told him to wash in the pool of Siloam after which his sight was restored. Jesus is the potter, and we are the clay; He can heal and shape us into a beautiful creation (John 9:1 7).

CLOTHES

Handkerchiefs and aprons used by St Paul were applied to the sick and it brought healing and deliverance from diseases and evil spirits. The unique power of the Holy Spirit was expressed through consecrated objects to heal the sick and to break the occult bondages of sorcery, magic and superstition (Acts 19:12).

If God does remarkable miracles through inanimate objects how much more can He use us for His glory?. Even if we are uneducated, untrained or poor in worldly standards, we should repent, and open our eyes and look up to the merciful God who can bring healing, forgiveness and renewal in our lives, and use us as instruments to bring peace to the world.

THE GAZE *OF LOVE



Rosemary Joy, from Birmingham, UK, talks about the transformative love of Christ in the Holy Fucharist

here's a story about an old farmer who was often seen by St John Vianney sitting inside the church for long periods of time, simply looking at Jesus in the Eucharist. One day, St John Vianney asked the farmer what he did during these times. The simple response given was, "I look at Him and He looks at me." In this small sentence is hidden a deep meaning of what Eucharistic adoration is all about. It's meant to be a time of exchanging love, where our heart and the heart of Jesus can speak to each other without any words. In His free to pour out our feelings

and emotions to Him in a way we can't do with anyone else. "Pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us" (Psalm 62:9). Jesus in the Eucharist is a refuge for souls in any condition, for both those who feel strong and those who feel weary.

Overwhelming Yet Comforting

Spending time in front of Jesus in the Eucharist can seem overwhelming at first when we are not sure what we're supposed to be doing there. Do we pray the Rosary or read spiritual books or journals? While we can do all these things, we are also invited by Jesus to simply keep Him company. This is exactly what Jesus asked of His disciples in the garden of Gethsemane the night before His death. "So, could

you not stay awake with me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40). This question shows the humanity of Jesus, who longed for the company of His friends during the mental agony He was going through. Even today Jesus is asking us the same question. He is looking for friends who are willing to set aside time to be in His presence. His heart longs for love and friendship.

Highway to Heaven

The modern-day saint-to-be Blessed Carlo Acutis was deeply in love with Jesus in the Eucharist. He saw going to daily Mass and spending time in Eucharistic adoration as being the highway to heaven. A highway can be described as the main road that connects major towns or cities. We are pilgrims on earth journeying towards our true home in heaven. But we're never alone. Jesus in the Eucharist is the highway that connects us to heaven. During every Holy Mass, heaven comes down. There is nothing that can compare with the power of Holy Mass. That's

why St Padre Pio once said, "If people knew the value of the Holy Mass, there would be policemen at the door to regulate access to the church, every time that Mass is celebrated."

Pursuit of Happiness

Our hearts are often restless in the pursuit of happiness. We run to so many places trying to find satisfaction, and oftentimes these attempts prove futile because we are looking for something the world cannot give, a peace and joy that fills the soul of one's being. Only

"If people knew the value of the Holy Mass, there would be policemen at the door to regulate access to the church, every time that Mass is celebrated."

St Dadre Dio

Jesus in the Eucharist can fulfil this longing we have within our hearts. When we place ourselves in His presence, He can chip away the hardness of our hearts and make them soft again, giving us the ability to love like we should and experience the freedom that comes from living a life surrendered to God's will. No matter what the problem is. there is nothing that we cannot offer at the foot of the altar. When we do this, we can go back home assured of the truth that Jesus will intervene.

Prayer of St Faustina before the Eucharist:

O Christ, let me glorify Your goodness and mercy to the last moment of my life, with every drop of my blood and every beat of my heart. Would that I be transformed into a hymn of adoration of You. When I find myself on my deathbed, may the last beat of my heart be a loving hymn glorifying your unfathomable mercy. Amen.



CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Across: 3. Andrew 4. Darius 7. Melchizedek 8. Jonathan 10. Zacchaeus

Down: 1.Nathan 2. Galilee 5. Beatitudes 6. Hannah 9.Jonah

Antonia Mesina

Patron saint of martyrs & rape victims

Shino Merin John, Finland



Antonia Mesina was born into a poor family in Sardinia, Italy, in 1919 during the years between the First and the Second world wars. She was the second of 10 children born to the poor policeman Agostino Mesina and Grazia Rubanu. She had to leave school only after taking four years of elementary classes to help her bedridden mother who suffered from a heart condition, which prevented her from continuing to perform her domestic chores.

Antonia was obedient and hardworking and willingly and diligently performed her duties and took on responsibilities, despite her wish to remain in school and enjoy the fun of childhood. She cooked, baked, cleaned, washed clothes, cared for the children, carried water into the house and gathered wood for baking.

Spiritual experience

Despite the challenges she faced in her early life, Antonia showed a remarkable devotion to her faith from a young age. Antonia became a very active member of Catholic Action, an Italian Catholic organization for the laity, at the age of 10. With her lively and enthusiastic nature, Antonia even took on the role of a recruiter, encouraging others to participate in the organization as well.

She was well-liked by her peers and encouraged others to join Catholic Action (even on the day of her death)

"It helps one to be good to others." Blessed Antonia Mesina

because they received spiritual benefits from good works and received good Catechesis. Honoring Christ, and walking in friendship with Him, became her priority.

Later Life and Death

At the age of 16, after attending daily Mass one morning, while coming home from gathering wood in a forest with a friend,



Antonia was attacked by a teenage boy, Ignazio Catigu, from behind, who attempted to rape her. Her friend ran away, trying to find help.

Refusing to surrender her purity, Antonia valiantly fought off her assailant, fiercely resisting him until her last breath. Antonia was beaten and murdered by the teenager, and she suffered 74 strikes with a stone before she died. The last blow smashed her skull and disfigured her face. Her body was examined, and it was found that she had not been sexually abused. Catigu was soon apprehended and sentenced to death.

Veneration

On 5th October 1935 the Catholic Action member Venerable Armida Barelli – who had met Antonia once – met with Pope Pius XI and informed him of Antonia's activism and her murder. Antonia was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1987 as a martyr of purity.

Numerous miracles have been reported through her intercession and her feast day is celebrated on May 17th.

POPE'S Voice

"Let us all remember this: one cannot proclaim the Gospel of Jesus without the tangible witness of one's life."

Pope Francis



GLOBAL CATHOLIC NEWS



FIVE HOLY DOORS WILL BE OPENED DURING 2025 JUBILEE YEAR

VATICAN: The Dicastery for Evangelization issued a note on Thursday reaffirming that the Holy Doors of the 2025 Jubilee of Hope in Rome will be located at the four papal basilicas as well as at a prison. The five Holy Doors were specified by Pope Francis when he officially proclaimed the 2025 Ordinary Jubilee on the feast of the Ascension on May 9th.



US TELECOM COMPANY PULLS OLYMPICS ADS FOLLOWING THE LAST SUPPER PARODY

FRANCE: The drag-queen-led parody of the Last Supper featured during the opening ceremonies of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games sparked outrage around the world and has led C Spire, a US mobile phone and internet company, to make the decision to pull all its advertising from the Olympics.

LADY OF THE EAST' STATUE RISES IN SYRIA

TURKEY: A new landmark honoring the Virgin Mary will be inaugurated in a grand celebration that begins on August 1st and runs through August 4th in the town of Al-Hwash near the city of Homs, Syria. The site, named "Lady of the East," features several facilities, the most prominent being a colossal statue of the Virgin Mary, which will be erected during the celebration. Gazing upward, a 26-foot-tall white statue of the Virgin Mary made of iron and covered with reinforced fiberglass was brought from Lebanon three years ago.



SEOUL PAVES THE WAY FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY 2027

SOUTH KOREA: In celebration of the next World Youth Day (WYD), the Catholic Church in South Korea hosted a grand launch event at the Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul on July 28th. The occasion, which drew more than 1,000 young attendees, consisted of various events intended to reflect the theme 'Hope Ignites in Seoul. Success for WYD Seoul 2027.' World Youth Day is a 'worldwide encounter with the pope' that occurs every three years in a different country, serving as "an opportunity to share with the whole world the hopes of many young people who are committing their lives to Christ and his Church."

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