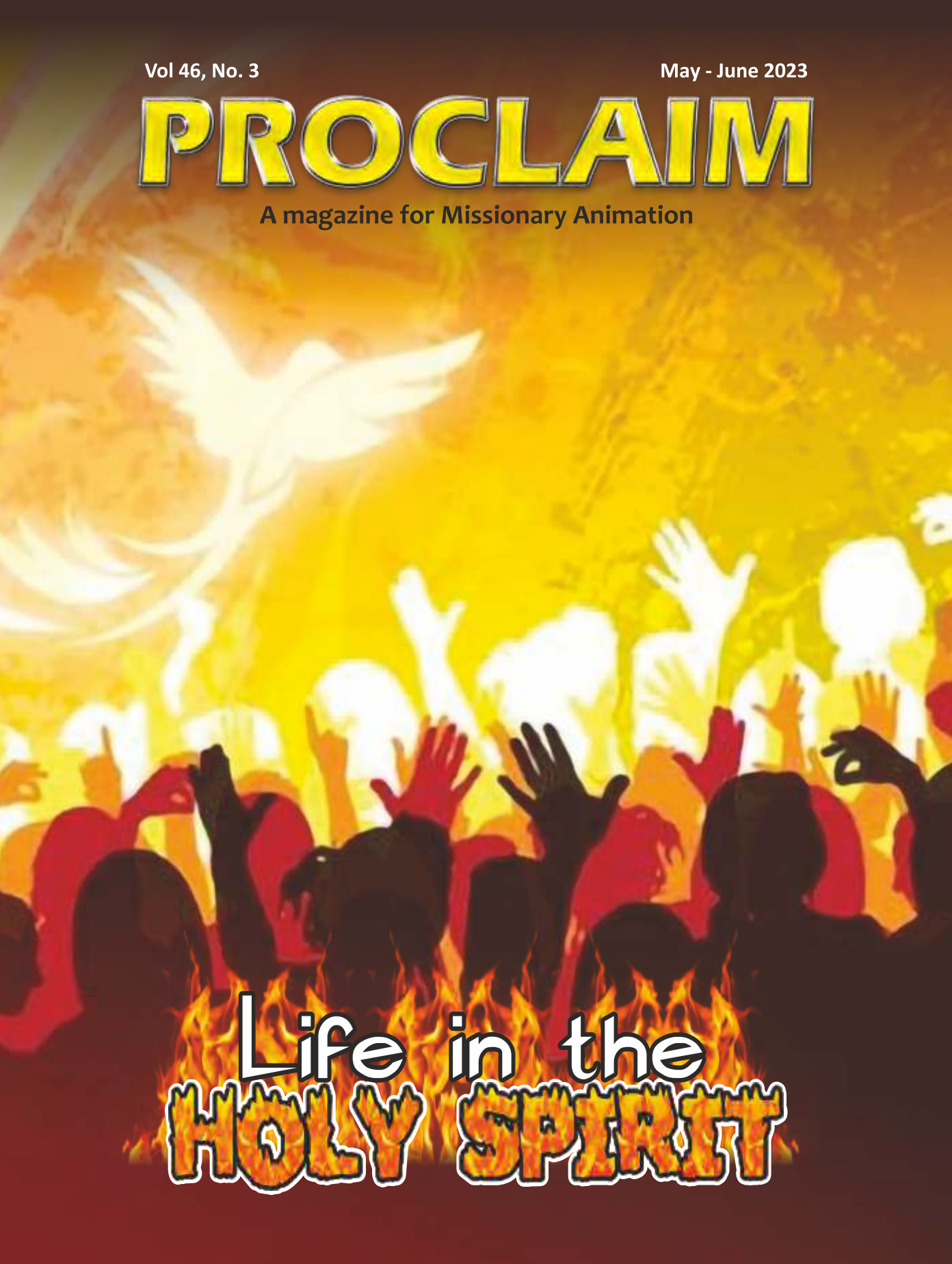


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PROCLAIM

A magazine for Missionary Animation



Life in the
HOLY SPIRIT



Catholic Enquiry Centre, Bengaluru



*A Day of Animation
for CEC Volunteers &
Thanksgiving Celebration
for Rev. Sr. Clare*

25th April 2023 at
CRI Brothers' Institute, Bengaluru



PROCLAIM

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**St Mariam Thresia**

26 Apr 1876 - 08 Jun 1926

(Feast: 08 June)

Founder of the Congregation of the Holy Family

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

The Spirit-filled evangelisers

Life is hard. It becomes harder when we are abandoned by people on whom our future depends. The disciples felt abandoned when Jesus, their master, was brutally murdered on the cross. They felt that they did not have a future. They were afraid of appearing in public because they thought that would endanger their life.

There are at least two reasons for their flight and concealed existence at that time: the first one is their failure - i.e. betrayal, abandoning the master, and therefore they are crippled with guilt. The second one is the weakness that arises out of the Master's death. They abandoned their master and at the end they felt being abandoned. They did not understand why it happened and did not know how to proceed further in the absence of the Master. The Resurrection of Christ, however, changed everything. Their eyes were slowly opened and they were able to see that the Lord is the Messiah (Lk 24: 45).



Though the resurrection of Jesus gave them some hope and they had started to gather people in the houses and prayed together, yet they were under the grip of guilt, and therefore still hesitant to trust in the forgiveness of the Lord. Hence, they were not strong in the faith to go out and preach. Our Lord knew very well that they would become weaker if he was not present with them. Therefore, He promised them that He would send the Advocate from the Father, as a helper and a companion (Jn 14: 16; 15: 26 & 16:13), who will testify to the truth, remind them of what he taught and lead them into all the truth. Now after the resurrection, once again, Jesus promises them that they will be baptised not with water but with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1: 5).

The promise is fulfilled on the 50th day after resurrection: “Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability” (Acts 2: 3-4). Pentecost 'rekindled in them the fire of Love' and only then the revival of Jesus' mission in the heart of the disciples takes place. In order to understand it better, we could seek guidance from the Pope's homily last year.

He says that the Holy Spirit is the consoler, who, once the sin has been confessed, helps us to get rid of guilt caused by our sins: “Peter had denied him; Paul had persecuted Christians. We too think of our own mistakes. How many of them, and so much guilt! Left to themselves, they had no way out. Left to themselves, no. But with the Comforter, yes. Because the Spirit heals memories. How? By putting at the top of the list the thing that really matters: the memory of God's love, his loving gaze” (5 June 2022). Hence the disciples got rid of their guilt by repenting and trusted in the forgiveness of the Lord. Once the guilt is removed by the Spirit of Jesus, they become happy.

Thus, having helped them to regain their happiness, the Holy Spirit opens their eyes to see the world and to go beyond their narrow-mindedness. The Pope says: “Without the Spirit, they were alone, by themselves, huddled together. With the Spirit, they were open to all. In every age, the Spirit overturns our preconceived notions and opens us to his newness. God, the Spirit, is always new! He constantly teaches the Church the vital importance of going forth, impelled to proclaim the Gospel.”

We, the baptized, also abandon Christ and feel being abandoned. The Pentecost enables Christians to be true, free, joyful and evangelizing Christians who could share the joy of forgiveness, the freedom and the love of Christ to the people beyond every border. May the Spirit guide as all!

Fr Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu
National Director (PMO-India)

From walking sorrowfully to running joyfully

Pope Francis' Easter Vigil homily, delivered on April 8 in St Peter's Basilica.

The night is drawing to a close and the first light of dawn is appearing upon the horizon as the women set out toward Jesus' tomb. They make their way forward, bewildered and dismayed, their hearts overwhelmed with grief at the death that took away their Beloved. Yet upon arriving and

never change", "better to live for today", since "there is no certainty about tomorrow". If we are prey to sorrow, burdened by sadness, laid low by sin, embittered by failure, or troubled by some problem, we also know the bitter taste of weariness and the absence of joy.



seeing the empty tomb, they turn around and retrace their steps. They leave the tomb behind and run to the disciples to proclaim a change of course: Jesus is risen and awaits them in Galilee. In their lives, those women experienced Easter as a Pasch, a passage. They pass from walking sorrowfully towards the tomb to running back with joy to the disciples to tell them not only that the Lord is risen, but also that they are to set out immediately to reach a destination, Galilee. There they will meet the Risen Lord; that is where the resurrection leads them. The rebirth of the disciples, the resurrection of their hearts, passes through Galilee. Let us enter into this journey of the disciples from the tomb to Galilee.

The Gospel tells us that the women went "to see the tomb" (Mt 28:1). They think that they will find Jesus in the place of death and that everything is over, forever. Sometimes we too may think that the joy of our encounter with Jesus is something belonging to the past, whereas the present consists mostly of sealed tombs: tombs of disappointment, bitterness, and distrust, of the dismay of thinking that "nothing more can be done", "things will

At times, we may simply feel weary about our daily routine, tired of taking risks in a cold, hard world where only the clever and the strong seem to get ahead. At other times, we may feel helpless and discouraged before the power of evil, the conflicts that tear relationships apart, the attitudes of calculation and indifference that seem to prevail in society, the cancer of corruption--there is so much--the spread of injustice, the icy winds of war. Then too, we may have come face to face with death, because it robbed us of the presence of our loved ones or because we brushed up against it in illness or a serious setback. Then it is easy to yield to disillusionment, once the wellspring of hope has dried up. In these or similar situations--each of us knows our own--our paths come to a halt before a row of tombs, and we stand there, filled with sorrow and regret, alone and powerless, repeating the question, "Why?" That chain of "why." The women at Easter, however, do not stand frozen before the tomb; rather, the Gospel tells us, "They went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to announce this to his disciples" (v. 8). They bring the news that will



change life and history forever: Christ is risen! (v. 6). At the same time, they remember to convey the Lord's summons to the disciples to go to Galilee, for there they will see him (cf. v. 7). Brothers and sisters, what does it mean to go to Galilee? Two things: on the one hand, to leave the enclosure of the Upper Room and go to the land of the Gentiles (cf. Mt 4:15), to come forth from hiding and to open themselves up to mission, to leave fear behind and to set out for the future. On the other hand—and this is very good—to return to the origins, for it was precisely in Galilee that everything began. There the Lord had met and first called the disciples. So, to go to Galilee means to return to the grace of the beginnings, to regain the memory that regenerates hope, the “memory of the future” bestowed on us by the Risen One.

This, then, is what the Pasch of the Lord accomplishes: it motivates us to move forward, to leave behind our sense of defeat, to roll away the stone of the tombs in which we often imprison our hope, and to look with confidence to the future, for Christ is risen and has changed the direction of history. Yet, to do this, the Pasch of the Lord takes us back to the grace of our own past; it brings us back to Galilee, where our love story with Jesus began, where that first call was. In other words, it asks us to relive that moment, that situation, that experience in which we met the Lord, experienced

his love, and received a radiantly new way of seeing ourselves, the world around us, and the mystery of life itself. To rise again, to start anew, to take up the journey, we always need to return to Galilee, that is, to go back, not to an abstract or ideal Jesus, but to the living, concrete, and palpable

memory of our first encounter with him. Yes, brothers and sisters, to go forward we need to go back, to remember; to have hope, we need to revive our memory. This is what we are asked to do: to remember and go forward! If you recover that first love, the wonder and

joy of your encounter with God, you will keep advancing. So remember, and keep moving forward. Remember, and keep moving forward.

Remember your own Galilee and walk towards it, for it is the “place” where you came to know Jesus personally, where he stopped being just another personage from a distant past, but a living person: not some distant God but the God who is at your side, who more than anyone else knows you and loves you. Brother, sister, remember Galilee, your Galilee, and your call. Remember the Word of God who at a precise moment spoke directly to you. Remember that powerful experience of the Spirit; that great joy of forgiveness experienced after that one confession; that intense and unforgettable moment of prayer; that light that was kindled within you and changed your life; that encounter, that pilgrimage. ... Each of us knows the place of his or her interior resurrection, that beginning and foundation, the place where things changed. We cannot leave this in the past; the Risen Lord invites us to return there to celebrate Easter. Remember your Galilee, remember it.

Today, relive that memory. Return to that first encounter. Think back on what it was like, and reconstruct the context, time, and place. Remember the emotions and sensations; see the colors and savor the taste of it. For, you know, it is when you forgot that first love when you failed to



Holy Spirit is the breath of each day

Holy Father's message to priests at the Chrism mass on 6th April 2023.

By Deborah Castellano Lubov

"Priestly maturity comes from the Holy Spirit and is achieved when He becomes the protagonist in our lives."

Pope Francis gave this reminder on Holy Thursday morning during the Chrism Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, as he urged priests to invoke the Spirit not only as "an occasional act of piety," but as "the breath of each day."

In his homily, the Pope thanked priests for their service, which often goes unrecognized, as he reflected on the Holy Spirit.

The Pope recalled Jesus saying, in today's readings, that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, and underscored that without the Spirit "there can be no Christian life; without His anointing, there can be no holiness."

Lost without Holy Spirit

Since the Spirit is at the centre, the Pope said, it is fitting that today, "on the birthday of the priesthood, we acknowledge His presence at the origin of our own ministry, and as the life and vitality of every priest."

Holy Mother Church, he recalled, teaches us to profess that the Holy Spirit is the "giver of life."

"Without the Holy Spirit," the Pope warned, "the Church would not be the living Bride of Christ, but, at most, a religious association..."

The Holy Father reiterated that we are "temples of the Holy Spirit" who "dwells in us." *"We cannot lock the Spirit out of the house, or park Him in some devotional zone! No, at the center! Each day we need to say: 'Come, for without Your strength, we are lost.'"* The Pope said that we can all say that the Spirit is upon us, not out of presumption, but as a reality.

"Dear brothers, apart from any merit of our own, and by sheer grace," Pope Francis said, "we have received an anointing that has made us fathers and shepherds among the holy People of God."

The Apostles' turnaround

The Pope recalled how Jesus chose His Apostles, and, at His call, they left their boats, nets, and homes.

"The anointing of the Word changed their lives," he recalled, saying with great enthusiasm, saying "they followed the Master and began to preach, convinced that they would go on to accomplish even greater things." However, then came the Passover, the Pope stated, observing that at this moment "everything seemed to come to a halt: they even denied and abandoned their Master," recalling the denial of Christ by Peter.

However, the Holy Father highlighted, "It was precisely that 'second anointing', at Pentecost, that changed the disciples and led them to shepherd no longer themselves but the Lord's flock. It was that anointing with fire that extinguished a 'piety' focused on themselves and their own abilities.

"After receiving the Spirit, Peter's fear and wavering dissipated; James and John, with a burning desire to give their lives, no longer sought places of honour - our careerism, brothers; the others who had huddled fearfully in the Upper Room, went forth into the world as Apostles."



The Pope observed that something similar, to the Apostles' experience, happens in the priestly and apostolic lives of priests.

Two options at times of crisis

"We too experienced an initial anointing, which began with a loving call that captivated our hearts and set us out on the journey; the power of the Holy Spirit descended upon our genuine enthusiasm and consecrated us. Later, in God's good time, each of us experienced a Passover, representing the moment of truth. A time of crisis..."

For the anointed, the Pope said, this stage is a watershed. "We can emerge from it badly, drifting towards mediocrity and settling for a dreary routine, in which three dangerous temptations can arise: The temptation of compromise, where we are content just to do what has to be done; the temptation of surrogates, where to find satisfaction we look not to our anointing, but elsewhere; and the temptation of discouragement - that is the most common-, where dissatisfaction leads to inertia."

The great danger

This here, Pope Francis said, is the great danger: "While outward appearances remain intact, 'I am a priest,' we close in upon ourselves and are content just to get by. The fragrance of our anointing no longer wafts through our lives; our hearts no longer expand but shrivel, disillusioned and disenchanted." And priests risk their identities as pastors of the people, to becoming clerics of the State.

Yet, he reminded them, this crisis also has the potential to be a turning point in our priesthood.

For it can become, Pope Francis said, the "decisive stage of the spiritual life, in which the ultimate choice has to be made between Jesus and the world, between heroic charity and mediocrity, between the Cross and comfort, between holiness and dutiful fidelity to our religious obligations."



At this moment, Pope Francis announced that at the end of the ceremony, a writing by Fr. René Voillaume, who founded the Little Brothers of Jesus and was inspired by the life and writings of saint Charles de Foucauld, entitled *La Seconda Chiamata* ("The Second Calling"), would be offered to all priests present, as a tool to remind clerics how they are called, once again, to let the Holy Spirit transform them.

Setting out on a new journey

The Pope called it a moment of grace when, like the disciples at Easter, we are called to be "sufficiently humble to admit that we have been won over by the suffering and crucified Christ, and to set out on a new journey, that of the Spirit, of faith, and of a love that is strong, yet without illusions."

This happens, he said, with the help of the Holy Spirit, and requires that we admit the reality of our own weakness. "That is what the Spirit of truth tells us to do; he prompts us to

look deep within and to ask: Does my fulfilment depend on my abilities, my position, the compliments I receive, my promotions, the respect of my superiors or co-workers, the comforts with which I surround myself? Or on the anointing that spreads its fragrance everywhere in my life?"

"Dear brothers, priestly maturity comes from the Holy Spirit and is achieved when He becomes the protagonist in our lives."

"Once that happens, everything turns around," Pope Francis insisted, "even disappointments and bitter experiences, and sins,



since we are no longer trying to find happiness by adjusting details, but by giving ourselves completely to the Lord who anointed us and who wants that anointing to penetrate to the depths of our being!

"Brothers," he exhorted, "we discover that the spiritual life becomes liberating and joyful, once we are no longer concerned to save appearances and make quick fixes, but leave the initiative to the Spirit and, in openness to his plans, show our willingness to serve wherever and however we are asked. Our priesthood does not grow by quick fixes but by an overflow of grace!"

The Spirit cleanses and heals

If priests allow the Spirit of Truth to act within them, the Pope said, they will preserve His anointing, because "the various untruths with which we are tempted to live, will come to light." And the Spirit who "cleanses what is unclean," will tirelessly suggest to priests "not to defile our anointing."

The Holy Spirit alone heals our infidelities, the Pope said, noting that the Spirit "is that interior teacher to whom we must listen, recognizing that He desires to anoint every part of us."

The Pope urged his fellow priests to preserve their anointing by not only invoking the Spirit as an occasional act of piety, "but as the breath of each day."

"Consecrated by Him," the Holy Father said, "I am called to immerse myself in Him, to make His life penetrate my darkness, so that I can rediscover the truth of who and what I am. Let us allow ourselves to be impelled by Him to combat the untruths that struggle within us. And let us allow ourselves to be reborn from Him through adoration, for when we adore the Lord, He pours forth into our hearts His Spirit."

The Holy Father warned against division and polarization. "Let us take care, please," he said, "not to defile the anointing of the Holy Spirit and

the robe of Mother Church with disunity, polarization, or lack of charity and communion." He also condemned when priests live double lives or are two-faced.

The kindness of the priest

Harmony, the Pope stressed, is not one virtue among others, but more, noting we must preserve it on a personal level.

"Let us ask ourselves: In my words, in my comments, in what I say and write, is there the seal of the Spirit or that of the world? Do I think about the kindness of the priest: if people see, in us too, people who are dissatisfied

and discontented, who criticize and point fingers, where else will they find harmony? How many people fail to approach us, or keep at a distance, because in the Church they feel unwelcomed and unloved, regarded with suspicion and judged?

"In God's name, let us be welcoming and forgiving, always! And let us remember that being irritable and full of complaints does not produce good fruits, but spoils our preaching, since it is a counter-witness to God, who is communion in harmony." It displeases the Holy Spirit, he said.

Gratitude for the hidden good you do "Dear brothers, I leave you with these thoughts that come from my heart and are in my heart, and I conclude with two simple and important words: Thank you."

"Thank you for your witness and for your service. Thank you for all the hidden good you do, and for the forgiveness and consolation that you bestow in God's name. Thank you for your ministry, which often is carried out with great effort, misunderstandings and little recognition."

Pope Francis concluded by saying, "May the Spirit of God, who does not disappoint those who trust in Him, fill you with peace and bring to conclusion the good work he began in you, so that you may be prophetic witnesses of His anointing and apostles of harmony." ♦



Where did Jesus go on Holy Saturday?

By Philip Kosloski



After Jesus died on the cross, **what happened next?**

We all know that Jesus rose on the third day, but what happened in between? In fact, we profess every Sunday that Jesus, “descended into Hell,” or as it is sometimes translated, “descended to the dead.”

The *Catechism* offers some clarity on this much-misunderstood topic.

Scripture calls the abode of the dead, to which the dead Christ went down, 'hell' – Sheol in Hebrew or Hades in Greek – because those who are there are deprived of the vision of God. Such is the case for all the dead, whether evil or righteous, while they await the Redeemer: which does not mean that their lot is identical, as Jesus shows through the parable of the poor man Lazarus who was received into 'Abraham's bosom': 'It is precisely these holy souls, who awaited their Savior in Abraham's bosom, whom Christ the Lord



delivered when he descended into hell.' Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him.

'The gospel was preached even to the dead.' The descent into hell brings the Gospel message of salvation to complete fulfillment. This is the last phase of Jesus'

messianic mission, a phase which is condensed in time but vast in its real significance: the spread of Christ's redemptive work to all men of all times and all places, for all who are saved have been made sharers in the redemption.

While the *Catechism's* words bring light to this hidden period in Jesus' life after death, there is an ancient homily from Holy Saturday, not attributed to any source, which animates the scene brilliantly and can help us enter into the mysterious events following Good Friday. Below is printed the full text of the ancient homily.

What is happening? Today there is a great silence over the earth, a great silence, and stillness, a great silence because the King sleeps; the earth was in terror and was still, because God slept in the flesh and raised up those who were sleeping from the ages. God has died in the flesh, and the underworld has trembled.



Truly he goes to seek out our first parent like a lost sheep; he wishes to visit those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. He goes to free the prisoner Adam and his fellow-prisoner Eve from their pains, he who is God, and Adam's son.

The Lord goes in to them holding his victorious weapon, his cross. When Adam, the first created man, sees him, he strikes his breast in terror and calls out to all: 'My Lord be with you all.' And Christ in reply says to Adam: 'And with your spirit.' And grasping his hand he raises him up, saying: 'Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.'

'I am your God, who for your sake became your son, who for you and your descendants now speak and command with authority those in prison: Come forth, and those in darkness: Have light, and



those who sleep:
Rise.

'I command you:
Awake, sleeper, I
have not made you
to be held a prisoner
in the underworld.

Arise from the dead; I am the life of the dead. Arise, O man, work of my hands, arise, you who were fashioned in my image. Rise, let us go hence; for you in me and I in you, together we are one undivided person.

'For you, I your God became your son; for you, I the Master took on your form; that of slave; for you, I who am above the heavens came on earth and under the earth; for you, man, I became as a man without help, free among the dead; for you, who left a garden, I was handed over to Jews from a garden and crucified in a garden.

'Look at the spittle on my face, which I received because of you, in order to restore you to that first divine inbreathing at creation. See the blows on my cheeks, which I accepted in order to refashion your distorted form to my own image.

'See the scourging of my back, which I accepted in order to disperse the load of your sins which was laid upon your back. See my hands nailed to the tree for a good purpose, for you, who stretched out your hand to the tree for an evil one.

'I slept on the cross and a sword pierced my side, for you, who slept in paradise and brought forth Eve from your side. My side healed the pain of your side; my sleep will release you from your sleep in Hades; my sword has checked the sword which was turned against you.

'But arise, let us go hence. The enemy brought you out of the land of paradise; I will reinstate you, no longer in paradise, but on the throne of heaven. I denied you the tree of life, which was a figure, but now I myself am united to you, I who am life. I



posted the cherubim to guard you as they would slaves; now I make the cherubim worship you as they would God.

'The cherubim throne has been prepared, the bearers are ready and waiting, the bridal chamber is in order, the food is provided, the everlasting houses and rooms are in readiness; the treasures of good things have been opened; the kingdom of heaven has been prepared before the ages.'

----- <https://aleteia.org/2017/04/15/> ♦

Continued from Page 4: From walking sorrowfully to running joyfully

remember that first encounter, that the dust began to settle on your heart. That is when you experienced sorrow and, like the disciples, you saw the future as empty, like a tomb with a stone sealing off all hope. Yet today, brothers and sisters, the power of Easter summons you to roll away every stone of disappointment and mistrust. The Lord is an expert in rolling back the stones of sin and fear. He wants to illuminate your sacred memory, your most beautiful memory, and to make you relive your first encounter with him. Remember and keep moving forward. Return to him and rediscover the grace of God's resurrection

within you. Go back to Galilee, go back to your Galilee.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us follow Jesus to Galilee, encounter him, and worship him there, where he is waiting for each of us. Let us revive the beauty of that moment when we realized that he is alive and we made him the Lord of our lives. Let us return to Galilee, to the Galilee of first love. Let each of us return to his or her own Galilee, to the place where we first encountered him. Let us rise to new life!

----- www.catholicnewsagency.com ♦

To hear His call to “come and see”

By Fr Merline Ambrose

Introduction

We are beginning our holiday. After a hectic schedule of preparation for the exams at school, we are looking forward to our long-awaited and much-deserving holiday. It is during these months, most of the students choose the path for their future. Amidst several vocations in the secular world, God has called us to three forms of special vocations: Priestly and religious life, single blessedness, and married life. “Vocation flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people”, Pope Francis. April and May are dubbed as vocation months with special emphasis on religious and priestly vocation. It is a month when the representatives of different religious congregations are aggressively campaigning to groups of young people through vocation symposiums, forums and informal meetings. Many of us worry about vocations in the Church. Will we have enough priests? Will there be sisters and brothers and consecrated men and women to serve the Church? Some even call it a crisis.

What is vocation?

What is a vocation? For most of us, this term is not something new since we have been hearing this word a hundred times. As we all know vocation comes from the Latin word “*vocatio*” which is translated in English as a “call” or “summons”. In other words, vocation is a call from God who is the source of every vocation in life. The call may vary depending on the plan of God for each person based on the talents and gifts he has received. Every person needs to discover his vocation in life, may it be marriage, religious or single blessedness.

There is no superior or inferior vocation because the best vocation is the one God wants you to have.

The word “vocation” should not be understood restrictively, as referring simply to those who follow the Lord through a life of special consecration. All of us are called to share in Christ's mission to reunite a fragmented humanity and to reconcile it with God. Each man and woman, even before encountering Christ and embracing the Christian faith, receives with the gift of life a fundamental calling: each of us is a creature willed and loved by God; each of us has a unique and special place in the mind of God. At every moment of our lives, we are

called to foster this divine spark, present in the heart of every man and woman, and thus contribute to the growth of a humanity inspired by love and mutual acceptance. We are called to be guardians of one another, to strengthen the bonds of harmony and sharing, and to heal the wounds of creation lest its beauty be destroyed. In a word, we are called to become a single family in the marvellous common home of creation, in the reconciled diversity of its elements. In this broad sense, not only individuals have a “vocation”, but peoples, communities and groups of various kinds as well. (*Message of his Holiness Pope Francis, 2022*).

A call within the call

Within this great common vocation, God



addresses a particular call to each of us. He touches our lives with his love and directs them to our ultimate goal, to fulfilment that transcends the very threshold of death. That is how God wanted to see our lives and how he sees them still. Michelangelo Buonarroti is said to have maintained that every block of stone contains a statue within it, and it is up to the sculptor to uncover it. If that is true of an artist, how much more is it true of God! In the young woman of Nazareth, he saw the Mother of God. In Simon the fisherman he saw Peter, the rock on which he would build his Church. In the publican Levi he recognized the apostle and evangelist Matthew, and in Saul, a harsh persecutor of Christians, he saw Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. God's loving gaze always meets us, touches us, sets us free and transforms us, making us into new persons.

That is what happens in every vocation: we are met by the gaze of God, who calls us. Vocation, like holiness, is not an extraordinary experience reserved for a few. Just as there is a "holiness of the saints next door" (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, nos. 6-9), so too there is a vocation for everyone, for God's gaze and call is directed to every person. According to a proverb from the Far East, "a wise person, looking at the egg can see an eagle; looking at the seed he glimpses a great tree; looking at the sinner he glimpses a saint". That is how God looks at us: in each of us, he sees a certain potential, at times unbeknownst to ourselves, and throughout our lives he works tirelessly so that we can place this potential at the service of the common good.



Vocation arises in this way, thanks to the art of the divine Sculptor who uses his "hands" to make



us go forth from ourselves and become the masterpiece that we are called to be. The word of God, which frees us from self-absorption, is especially able to purify, enlighten and recreate us. So let us listen to that word, in order to become ever more open to the vocation that God entrusts to us! And let us learn to listen also to our brothers and sisters in the faith, for their advice and example may help disclose the plan of God, who shows us ever new paths to pursue.

Religious or priestly vocation

What is a religious/priestly vocation? This type of vocation can be traced back as early as the New Testament, when Jesus affirmed that there are people who "made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it." (Matthew 19:12) The call to religious/priestly life is always God's initiative, i.e., for the sake of the Kingdom of God. That is why Jesus chose his twelve apostles who were his close collaborators in order to continue his mission of spreading the good news of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 10:1-4/Luke 6:12-16). The initiative always comes from God, hence priestly vocation is a gift from God to the Church and to the world at large.

----- To be continued ♦

Vulnerable children and venerable prophet

A child-friendly reading of 2 Kings 2:23-25

By Rev Dr Yesu Karunanidhi



Elisha went up from there to Bethel; and while he was going up on the way, some small boys came out of the city and mocked at him, saying, “Go away, baldhead! Go away, baldhead!” When he turned around and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the Lord. Then two she-bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two of the boys. From there he went on to Mount Carmel, and then returned to Samaria. (2 Kings 2:23-25)

A student at the catechism class, reading the above text, asked me, 'Why did the prophet curse the children in the name of the Lord? Why did God send two bears to tear up the little boys? Why was not the prophet more compassionate and forgiving to the mocking children?' Against the background of these questions, this essay attempts to do a child-friendly reading of the text.

The literary context of this disturbing text is as follows: Prophet Elijah ascends to heaven at the river Jordan leaving the

baton to Elisha. The Spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha. Elisha performs the first miracle of making the water wholesome by throwing salt into it. He is now on his way to Bethel (in Hebrew, 'house of God'). Most probably, Elisha wished to go there to belong to the sons of the prophets. No less than 42 children coming out of the city mock at him. The Hebrew expression used here is *qatan na'ar* ('little child'). The expression underlines the youth and the immaturity of the subjects. The reference to the prophet's baldness was likely an ordinary sort of insult: baldness on the back of the head, historically, was considered a blemish among the Israelites as well as among the Romans. Baldness was regarded by the lower orders as a kind of disgrace; for as it was one of the usual consequences of leprosy, so it was accounted a sign of personal and mental degradation. They said Elisha 'to go up', may be like Elijah to ascend to heavens. Elisha curses them in the name of the Lord. Immediately two she-bears come from the woods and tear up 42 little children. Now, the prophet goes to Mount Carmel. After being cruel to little children, ironically the prophet goes to pray to the compassionate God.



The author uses this event to bring fear among the hearers of the word; he wants to convey to his audience that Elisha was the true prophet of God. But, to do that, is it justifiable that he perpetrates violence on the little children for their naughtiness? Does their un-thinking childish act deserve such a cruel punishment?

This event of little children being torn up by the bears transforms Elisha. This transformation is seen in the latter part of the book. According to the story (cf. 2 Kgs 4:8-37), Elisha passes through Shunem. There he is hosted by a wealthy childless woman. Elisha promises her a child. She bears a son. When the child becomes a 'na'ar', he collapses in the field and dies on his mother's lap. The Shunammite woman rushes to the prophet who sends his servant Gehazi to resuscitate the child. Upon insistence Elisha goes with the woman and brings the dead son back to life.

In the healing story of Naaman the leper, the event is initiated by a little girl (na'arah) (cf. 2 Kgs



5:2). Later Naaman's skin is restored like the flesh of a young boy (cf. 2 Kgs 5:14). Elisha shows mercy and compassion to his greedy servant Gehazi (cf. 2 Kgs 5:20-27). Even his bones give life to a dead person (cf. 2 Kgs 13:21).

The character of Elisha transforms totally after the attack on young children by the bears. Elisha, who was short-tempered, abusive and death-bringing, turns out to be more compassionate, understanding, and life-giving.

The prophet begins to understand the vulnerability of life. His understanding makes him a venerable prophet.

The children are vulnerable in the hands of the adults. They become objects of violence, abuse, and threat. They are impetuous, unthinking, and hasty. However, they could be looked at with compassion, and exhorted proactively.

The 'little children' in 2 Kgs 2:23-25 are used as a literary tool to convey a message of warning to the elders. However, it shall be asserted that no children – and no human persons – could ever be 'used' to teach others a lesson. Every encounter with children is a moment of transformation for us, as it was for Elisha.

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Types of Revelation – II

By Fr Anthony Netikat, CM



The divine or supernatural revelation is transmitted to humanity through the written Scriptures and Apostolic Traditions. The Sacred Scripture / Bible consists of 73 books comprising the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Bible that we have today was received by the Church about 2000 years ago. The author of this inspired book is none other than God Himself. It was through the special intervention of and inspiration of the Holy Spirit that the human agents wrote down these books which contain all that is required for salvation. “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3: 16-17). These revealed truths are not to be interpreted by each one according to his own whims and fancies but rather by those who have the proficiency and authorisation to do so. “First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Peter 1: 20-21).

The truths revealed by God are contained in the Bible and the Apostolic Tradition, and the

Church holds both of them aloft as Word of God. These two are the running streams from the same source of spring of the self-same divine revelation. The Bible cannot stand without oral traditions and vice versa. Both of these supplement each other; they do not contradict each other. In other words, the Word of God has two traditions, written and oral. The Lord has entrusted these to the Church. Let us hear St John: “But there are so many other things that Jesus did; if everyone of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (Jn 21: 25). In other words, the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles were initially oral and these are called oral apostolic traditions. Some of these oral teachings were later written down and these came to be called the New Testament.

Revelations could be public or private:

a) Public revelation: Initially, God revealed Himself to mankind at different times and in varied ways but in the fullness of time He spoke to us through His Son, His only Word. To express it in another way, as far as the salvation of the human beings is concerned, God has said everything in Jesus Christ and in Him we have the fullness of divine revelation. “Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he spoke to us by the Son whom he appointed heir of all things, though



“The God of Jesus Christ” by Benedict XVI

The following is a book review of Pope Benedict XVI's book, *The God of Jesus Christ: Meditations on the Triune God* (see below for bibliographic information). For more reviews on Pope Benedict (previously known as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger before taking the office of papacy) [click here](#).

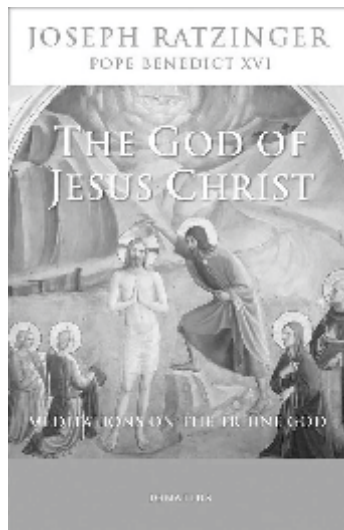


Ratzinger's task in *The God of Jesus Christ* assumes that something is wrong with the state of theology—it is becoming more and more void of spiritual power that can “address man in his personal life” (9). To remedy the situation and build “a bridge between theology and proclamation, between theology and piety,” Ratzinger wants to “transfer” the doctrine of the Trinity from a “theoretical proposition” about God to “spiritual knowledge” (9). He also wants to do something similar with the Nicene affirmation that Jesus “came down from heaven” and “became a man” (9).

The prayer of Jesus plays a major role in Ratzinger's attempt to build this bridge. This is because Jesus' prayer, as Ratzinger understands it, is the clearest indicator of the nature of Jesus' sonship. The reason Jesus is called “the Son” is because he remains dependent upon the power and love

of the Father, and this dependence is his “highest dignity” (72). That Jesus “came down from heaven” means that he simply received and relied upon the life the Father had prepared in advance for him (67). Ratzinger uses the interpretation of Psalm 40 [39]: 5-7 found in the book of Hebrews to conclude that Jesus released his life and handed it back over to the Father—and this is what sonship is all about (67). Being a Christian, then, means imitating this kind of forfeiting of our lives to God and receiving God's presence to dwell in us (68).

The very meaning of being a Christian includes being, like Jesus, “God's son”—that is, “becoming a child” (35). In fact, “the very essence of what it is to be a man,” paradoxically, means “being a child” (71). But what does this mean? For Ratzinger, it means that we joyfully embrace the various ways in which we are dependent on others and in which our life is full of “advance gifts” (70, 36). The very fabric of life is, in a sense, inherited and preconditioned. For example, God does not consult us about whether we would prefer to be male or female, or whether we would prefer that there be more sexes than just two, or whether we would prefer to be given the gift of life—we simply burst into existence with features predetermined about ourselves, then remain completely dependent on the womb, breasts, and care of our mother (36). Our language and gestures by which we express ourselves are predetermined (70). Even “forms of thinking” are also “received” and “imprinted upon” the “human soul” (70-71). Rather than rebel against these “advance gifts” in attempt to reject the way God made things to be in order to delude ourselves into thinking we are somehow “autonomous” and



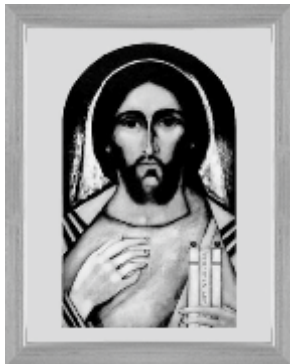
get to determine everything for ourselves, we should gratefully receive and be astonished at life as little children (73-74).

Jesus' prayer characterizes his life in the gospels; especially in Luke, who makes the choosing of the disciples a "fruit" of Jesus' prayer (80). The story of Transfiguration in Luke happens while Jesus prays. For Ratzinger, this means that the "inner foundation of the Resurrection is already present in the earthly Jesus" (81). Ratzinger concludes:

Luke has raised the prayer of Jesus to the central Christological category from which he describes the mystery of the Son. What Chalcedon expressed by means of a formula drawn from the sphere of Greek ontology is affirmed by Luke in an utterly personal category based on the historical experience of the earthly Jesus; in substantial terms, this corresponds completely to the formula of Chalcedon. (82)

This is also confirmed by the fact that Luke, according to Ratzinger, links the confession of faith with Jesus' solitude with the Father—that is, those who were with Jesus could see that he spent much time alone in fellowship and prayer with the Father and therefore understood that he was "the Son" (82). They understood that Jesus' dialogue with the Father was what really "drove" Jesus' existence (82). Through Jesus' resurrection, he admits "human existence" into this dialogue of love so that "we are in God" (84).

If Ratzinger's exegesis is right, he has indeed built a bridge from theology to "spiritual knowledge" of piety. That is, to the degree that Ratzinger's understanding of sonship can be seen to be the very emphasis of the biblical language and picture of sonship, to this same degree Ratzinger has built a solid bridge. His treatment of Luke's account of the calling of the Twelve is not eccentric, but based on recognized themes in Luke: the motif of "the mountain" as a symbol for closeness to God, Luke's emphasis on Jesus' reliance on the Father for his big decisions, when



Jesus prays "something significant usually follows" (Bock, 538-40, 866). The emphasis on both prayer and sonship in Luke's account of the Transfiguration makes Ratzinger's emphasis on Jesus' dependence as part of the "essence of his sonship" seem exegetically justified (81).

Other aspects of Ratzinger's exegesis are less convincing. He appears to be reading too much into

Luke's statement that Jesus was "alone" yet "with" his disciples (82). It seems more reasonable to agree with Bock's suggestion that Luke's mention of Jesus being "alone" simply means that he and his disciples were away from the larger crowds (Bock, 840). It is debatable whether Jesus' "seeing" the disciples while in prayer can be stretched to include all the conclusions Ratzinger draws: that the Church is "the" object of conversation between Jesus and the Father, that the Church is not just on Jesus' mind and heart, but is actually "present" with Jesus while he is on the mountain in prayer, that Jesus "sees" the church in the Father, etc. (80).

Personal Response

One of Ratzinger's theological preoccupations is to "rescue" theology or exegesis from being deprived of the kind of spiritual power it has the ability to unleash once informed by Christian faith. In his *Jesus of Nazareth* and "Biblical Interpretation in Crisis" for example, he





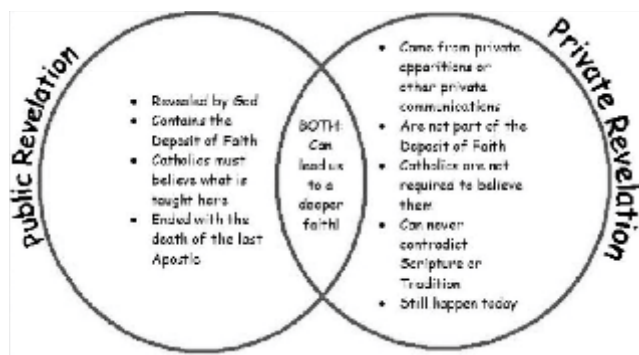
is trying to rescue exegesis from those who deprive it of its power to speak into the present by anti-supernatural assumptions (Jesus of Nazareth, xvi; “Biblical Interpretation in Crisis,” 16), and here Ratzinger is trying to rescue aspects of theology that have lost their ability to “address man in his personal life” (9). That is, he is trying to rescue

what will otherwise be relatively abstract theology that does not have any immediately obvious relevance for piety.

I deeply sympathize with Ratzinger's concern for Christians not to let biblical exegesis or theology become a mere academic or abstract enterprise. Knowledge puffs up. Ratzinger also has many genuine exegetical and theological insights worthy of consideration. Unfortunately, I find his genuine insights clouded with the multiplication of ambiguities, imaginative exegesis, and vulnerable argumentation (Where did he come up with his argument that it is impossible for a “twofoldedness” to ever exist? What does his explanation of this argument amount to? [35]). In spite of this overall judgment, the key argument of the present book about Jesus' sonship appears to be exegetically warranted and worthy of contemplation.

----- **Theo Philogue** ♦

Continued from Page 14: Types of Revelation – II



whom he also created the worlds: (Heb 1: 1-4). This is called public revelation. When ... Pope Benedict XVI was cardinal he stated that the public revelation refers to the revealing action of God directed to humanity as a whole and which finds its literary expression in the Old and the New Testament or in the Apostolic Tradition which is being transmitted by the Church. Since revelation culminated in Jesus Christ and the apostles, there will be no further public revelation. In short, public revelation remains closed with the death of the last apostle.

b) Private revelation consists in certain knowledge or message that God communicates to one or more individuals who are, in general, committed to His love and service. These phenomena had existed throughout the centuries. However, since private revelations do not belong to the deposit of faith there is no obligation to believe them. Their role is not to improve or complete Christ's definitive revelation. However, they may help us to live more fully our Christian commitment. Normally the Church does not involve itself in matters connected with this type of revelation. Nonetheless, as and when the church approves a private revelation it merely signifies that the contents of the such a private revelation are not contrary to the deposit of faith and morals, and that they may be followed without danger, or even with profit. To forestall deceptions, it is always advisable that the faithful follow the directives of the ecclesiastical authority.

(Concluded) ♦

SAINT OF THE MONTH - I

St Margaret Pole

1473 - 1541

Feast Day - May 28

You never know what you'll find when you go hunting around old churches. In 1876, a restoration crew was at work in the Tower of London's appropriately named Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula (St Peter in Chains). In the crypt, where so many executed prisoners were buried, they found the remains of a tall, elderly lady. And since only one elderly lady was executed in the Tower, it is very likely that these bones are the relics of Blessed Margaret Pole, whose feast day we celebrate on May 28.

Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, was born at Farley Castle, near Bath, on 14th August, in or about the year 1473, to George Plantagenet, Duke of Clarence, and Isabel, elder daughter of the Earl of Warwick (the king-maker). About 1491 Henry VII gave her in marriage to Sir Richard Pole, whose mother was the half-sister of the king's mother, Margaret Beaufort. At her husband's death in 1505 Margaret was left with five children, of whom the fourth, Reginald, was to become cardinal and Archbishop of Canterbury, and also the indirect cause of his mother's martyrdom.

When Reginald died, the new king, Henry VIII, made Margaret a countess. He appointed her governess of his daughter. Henry VIII called Margaret the "holiest woman in England."

But King Henry VIII broke away from the Catholic Church when the pope would not permit him to marry Anne Boleyn (Henry was already married to Queen Catherine). He made himself the head of the

Church in England. He forbade the teaching of the Catholic faith and made it a crime for English citizens to refuse to attend the services of the Church of England.

Margaret told Henry that he was wrong. The king expelled Margaret from the royal court. He became even angrier when one of Margaret's sons, Reginald, a cardinal of the Catholic Church and the Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote an article denying Henry's claim to be head of the Church in England. Henry blamed Margaret. He had her arrested.



Margaret was questioned harshly to prove that she was a traitor, but there was no evidence. She had always been faithful to Jesus and the Church. None of this mattered to Henry. Margaret was sentenced to death. She was imprisoned in the Tower of London for two years before being executed. Outside

Margaret's prison, England was in turmoil, with the English people torn between loyalty to their king and dismay over the cruelty with which Henry treated his family and friends, and the destruction he was wreaking upon the Church.

Rebellions flared up across the kingdom in a futile attempt to force Henry to reverse his anti-Catholic policies. Although Margaret had nothing to do with these insurrections, Henry used the uprisings as an excuse to have Margaret executed. She was a staunch Catholic. She had remained loyal to Katherine and Mary. Her son had urged the Holy Roman Emperor to invade England and

SAINT OF THE MONTH - II

St Josemaria Escriva

1902 - 1975

Feast Day : June 26

Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer was born in Barbastro, Spain, on January 9, 1902, the second of six children of Jose and Dolores Escriva. Growing up in a devout family and attending Catholic schools, he learned the basic truths of the faith and practices such as frequent confession and communion, the rosary, and almsgiving. The death of three younger sisters, and his father's bankruptcy after business reverses, taught him the meaning of suffering and brought maturity to his outgoing and cheerful temperament. In 1915, the family moved to Logrono, where his father had found new employment.

Beginning in 1918, Josemaria sensed that God was asking something of him, although he didn't know exactly what it was. He decided to become a priest, in order to be available for whatever God wanted of him. He began studying for the priesthood, first in Logrono and later in Saragossa. At his father's suggestion and with the permission of his superiors at the seminary he also began to study civil law. He was ordained a priest and began his pastoral ministry in 1925.

It was during this period (on October 2, 1928) that Escrivá is said to have received a vision from God, which provided the inspiration for the foundation of his Opus Dei. From that moment, Escrivá claimed, he dedicated himself to the creation of an organization that would spread holiness and sanctify daily work.

The young movement began to grow quickly, attracting in particular university students. In the late 1930's, the Spanish Civil War brought great

hardships for the Church while Josemaria continued his work. His reputation for holiness, and thus his movement, began to grow in this time.

In 1946, Josemaria moved to Rome to obtain papal recognition of his movement from Pope Pius XII, which was granted the following year. Even as successive popes sent their blessings and affection, the work involved in expanding Opus Dei took a toll on Josemaria. Nonetheless, he is said to have never stopped smiling.



Josemaria welcomed Pope John XXIII's calling of the Second Vatican Council. His work in expanding the way to holiness for lay persons was seen by the Council Fathers as a precursor to Vatican II's renewed focus on the life of the laity. He worked swiftly to implement the Council's decisions into the life and worship of Opus Dei.

Beginning in 1948, full membership in Opus Dei was open to married people. In 1950 the Holy See approved the idea of accepting non-Catholics and even non-Christians as co-operators --- persons who assist Opus Dei in its projects and programs without being members. The next decade saw the launching of a wide range of undertakings: professional schools, agricultural training centers, universities, primary and secondary schools, hospitals and clinics, and other initiatives, open to people of all races, religions, and social backgrounds but of manifestly Christian inspiration.

During Vatican Council II (1962-1965), Monsignor Escriva worked closely with many of the council fathers, discussing key Council themes

such as the universal call to holiness and the importance of laypersons in the mission of the Church. Deeply grateful for the Council's teachings, he did everything possible to implement them in the formative activities offered by Opus Dei throughout the world.

Between 1970 and 1975 the founder undertook catechetical trips throughout Europe and Latin America, speaking with many people, at times in large gatherings, about love of God, the sacraments, Christian dedication, and the need to sanctify work and family life. By the time of the founder's death, Opus Dei had spread to thirty nations on six continents. It now has more than 84,000 members in sixty countries.

Monsignor Escrivá's death in Rome came suddenly on June 26, 1975, when he was 73. Large numbers of bishops and ordinary faithful petitioned the Vatican to begin the process for his beatification and canonization. On May 17, 1992, Pope John Paul II declared him Blessed before a



huge crowd in St. Peter's Square. Escrivá moved rapidly toward sainthood. After one of the shortest waiting periods in recent history (27 years), Escrivá was canonised by Pope John Paul II on 06 October 2002.

Source:

www.newadvent.org;
www.saintsresources.com;
www.catholic.org/saints;
<https://opusdei.org/en/saint-josemaria/> ♦

Continued from Page 18: St Margaret Pole



overthrow the king. And then it was found that some of the rebel leaders were Margaret's distant relatives.

Early in the morning on May 27, 1541, Margaret learned that she would be executed that day. She had never had a trial. This was a summary execution ordered by the king. Typically, large crowds turned out for the execution of a prominent person. But Henry's advisors knew that having an

elderly lady (Margaret was about 68 at the time) climb a scaffold in front of a throng of sympathetic witnesses would be a public relations disaster. Instead, in front of very few witnesses, Margaret was led out to a courtyard where a small headman's block had been set on the ground. She knelt and placed her neck on the block. The Tower's professional executioner was away, so a young novice was given the job. He blundered badly, hacking at Margaret's neck and shoulders until she was dead.

In 1886, 10 years after Margaret's relics were discovered beneath St Peter ad Vincula, Pope Leo XIII beatified her along with 63 other English martyrs.

Source:

www.newadvent.org;
www.saintsresources.com;
www.catholic.org/saints; www.ncregister.com ♦

Brigitte Bédard

From cocaine to God

By Mathilde De Robien



It's inspiring to hear the testimony of a person whose life has been so completely changed by Christ. After many years spent astray under the influence of drugs, emotional dependence, and a serious depression, Brigitte Bédard experienced a powerful conversion. From that moment on, she has never ceased to testify loudly and clearly that Christ has set her free.

She began using drugs at the age of 11. This addiction lasted 10 years, at the end of which she fell into another addiction—to sex and attention. “For another 10 years I was desperate, searching for my sexual orientation, looking to get some love through sex,” she tells Aletheia. “I had given up drugs, alcohol and even cigarettes, but I was still collecting conquests in love.”

Letting herself be loved ... by Christ

This continued until the day when, with her head full of suicidal ideas, she went to a retreat at the abbey of Saint-Benoît-du-Lac (in Quebec, Canada), at the invitation of a person she had met at a Cocaine Anonymous meeting. There, the ex-cocaine addict, atheist, and bisexual feminist (as she was at the time) spent the three days of the retreat pouring out her anger on a monk who would later become her spiritual father. “I yelled at him! For three days. Throwing all my rage at him. He listened to me without flinching. He didn't talk about Jesus, but he was Jesus,” she recalls. “He looked at me with love. He prayed over me. He laid his hands on me. And the Holy Spirit came down on me. I understood that I was God's beloved daughter, that Jesus was alive, truly risen. It was a revelation.”

From that day on, she decided “to put God at the center of her life.” As a single mother of two

children, she discovered friendship and the life of the Church. She made a pilgrimage to Rome, and got up every day at 4 a.m. to pray for an hour and a half. “I have a very strong temperament,” she says. A few years later, she met Hugues on the Internet. They got married on September 30, 2006, and have two children together. Hugues also has two children from a first union, so they form a large family.

Letting herself be loved ... by her husband

After having let herself be loved by Christ, she now had to let herself be loved by her husband. While the beginnings of their marriage were characterized by close unity, married life was far from being rosy.

“We each lived a little on our own; God was not at the center of our lives. It's not that because we're Christians we don't have problems,” she says. Caught up in the whirlwind of her busy job, she never missed an opportunity to testify about her conversion, traveled across the country to give conferences, and engaged with her husband in various forms of service in the Church. Her husband struggled with an addiction to pornography. They went through a marriage crisis that lasted two years, and were accompanied psychologically and spiritually by the *Chemin Neuf* community.

“What changed our lives was when we started praying as a couple every morning,” she says. “It was a way to put God at the center, to review our priorities. And what became a priority in prayer was our personal relationship with God. How far should our conversion go? Even to our bed! But there were many obstacles, given our past wounds, which prevented us from living a sexual communion.”



The Duck & the Devil



There was a little boy visiting his grandparents on their farm. He was given a slingshot to play with out in the woods. He

practiced in the woods, but he could never hit the target. Getting a little discouraged, he headed back for dinner. As he was walking back he saw Grandma's pet duck.

Just out of impulse, he let the slingshot fly, hit the duck square in the head, and killed it. He was shocked and grieved.

In a panic, he hid its dead body in the wood pile, only to see his sister watching! Sally had seen it all, but she said nothing.

After lunch the next day Grandma said, "Sally, let's wash the dishes." But Sally said, "Grandma, Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen. Then she whispered to him, "Remember the duck?" So Johnny did the dishes.

Later that day, Grandpa asked if the children wanted to go fishing and Grandma said, "I'm sorry but I need Sally to help make supper." Sally just smiled and said, "Well that's all right because Johnny told me he wanted to help." She whispered again, "Remember the duck?" So Sally went fishing and Johnny stayed to help.!

After several days of Johnny doing both his chores and Sally's... he finally couldn't stand it any longer.

He came to Grandma and confessed that he had killed the duck. Grandma knelt down, gave him a hug, and said, "Sweetheart, I know. You see, I was standing at the window and I saw the whole thing, but because I love you, I forgave you. I



was just wondering how long you would let Sally make a slave of you."

---- Original author unknown

The Lesson

Whatever is in your past, whatever you have done... and the devil keeps throwing it up in your face (lying, cheating, debt, fear, bad habits, hatred, anger, bitterness, etc.), ..whatever it is.... You need to know that God was standing at the window and He saw the whole thing..... He has seen your whole life; He wants you to know that He loves you and that you are forgiven.

He's just wondering how long you will let the devil make a slave of you. The great thing about God is that when you ask for forgiveness (confess your sins), He not only forgives you, but He forgets..... It is by God's grace and mercy that we are saved.



Bible Verses

"O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways" (Psalm 139:1-3).

"And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins." (Hebrews 8:12)

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:34-36) "But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness." (1 John 1:9)

Source: www.creativebiblestudy.com/the-duck.html ♦

Pope confirms procedures against sex abuse

Following nearly four years of experimentation and extensive consultation with bishops and the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, Pope Francis has definitively promulgated procedures to prevent and counter sexual abuse within the Catholic Church.

The updated version of the motu proprio *Vos estis lux mundi* was published on Saturday, and enters into force on 30 April. It replaces the previous version published in May 2019, and confirms the Church's desire to continue to combat crimes of sexual abuse.

Leaders of lay associations

The most significant change introduced in the new version of the normative text concerns the provisions in "Title II" which lay out the responsibilities of bishops, religious superiors, and clerics in charge of a particular Church or Prelature.

The updated text specifies that "the lay faithful who are or have been moderators of international associations of the faithful recognized or created by the Apostolic See [are responsible] for acts committed" while they were in office.



Various other modifications were introduced to harmonize the procedural text against abuse with other normative reforms introduced between 2019 and the present. These include the revision of the motu proprio *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* (norms amended in 2021), changes made to Book VI of the Code of Canon Law (2021 reform), and



the new Constitution on the Roman Curia *Praedicate Evangelium* (promulgated in 2022).

Vulnerable adults and abuse reporting

One notable modification regards the inclusion of "vulnerable" adults in the normative text.

The previous version referred to "sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person". However, the updated text speaks of "a crime against the Sixth Commandment of the Decalogue committed with a minor, or with a person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason, or with a vulnerable adult."

Another change concerns the protection of the person who submits a report of alleged abuse. Whereas the earlier text stated that no constraint of silence may be imposed on the person who reports alleged abuse, this protection has now been extended to "the person who claims to have been offended and those who were witnesses."

Additionally, the text strengthens calls to safeguard "the legitimate protection of the good name and privacy of all persons involved," as well as the presumption of innocence for those who are under investigation during the period in which determinations of responsibility are underway.

The updated version of *Vos estis lux mundi* also specifies that dioceses and eparchies must operate an "organisation or office" (the earlier version spoke in general about a "stable system") which is easily accessible to the public in order to receive reports of cases of abuse. It also clarifies

that the task of proceeding with the investigation lies under the responsibility of the bishop or



Ordinary of the place where the reported events allegedly took place.

Abuse of authority

The procedures introduced in 2019 set out precise guidelines on how to deal with reports of abuse and ensure that bishops and religious superiors—who now including lay people with responsibility for international associations—are

held accountable and are obliged through a universally-established legal precept to report abuse of which they have become aware. The document includes, and continues to include, not only abuse and violence against children and vulnerable adults, but also covers sexual violence and harassment resulting from the abuse of authority.

Therefore, the obligation to report also includes cases of violence against religious women by clerics, as well as cases of harassment of adult seminarians or novices.

----- www.vaticannews.va 26.03.2023 ♦

Continued from Page 21: From cocaine to God

Gradually, Bédard was able to present to God in prayer her difficulties, her fears, and her frustrations. She knew that God wanted to rebuild



her marriage, to restore it. She knew that He did not judge them and welcomed them where they were at. “It helped me to welcome Hugues where he was at, to welcome him as he was.”

Praying as a couple “forced” us to live in the truth

At that moment, a piece of advice from a psychologist left a deep impression on them: “You

have to take care of each other's wounds.” Thus, prayer helped them to remain anchored in patience, trust, sensitivity, and gentleness. “God taught us to love each other by ridding us of all the false ideas we had. Our failures were there to help us build love, and praying as a couple 'forced' us to live in the truth.”

That journey still bears fruit today. She joyfully testifies to these experiences through her participation on the television program *The Victory of Love (La Victoire de l'Amour, TVA)* and in the Catholic magazine *Le Verbe*, as well as in her latest book *I Let Myself be Loved ... and the Holy Spirit Carried Me Away (Je me suis laissé aimer... Et l'Esprit Saint m'a emporté)*.

----- aleteia.org ♦

Holy Father's Prayer Intentions

May 2023: For Church movements and groups

We pray that Church movements and groups may rediscover their mission of evangelization each day, placing their own charisms at the service of needs in the world.

June 2023: For the abolition of torture

We pray that the international community may commit in a concrete way to ensuring the abolition of torture and guarantee support to victims and their families.

Evangelization Convention - Trichy

Saturday, 22nd April 2023

Organized by **Commission for Evangelization, Tamil Nadu Region**



