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Charismatics

Articles of Spiritual Enlightenment for Christians
 The San Francisco *Charismatics*, Volume 9, Number 1
 January 2002

Prayer & Revival

By J Edwin Orr

Not many people realize that in the wake of the American Revolution there was a moral slump. Drunkenness became epidemic. Out of a population of five million, 300,000 were confirmed drunkards. Profanity was of the most shocking kind. For the first time in the history of the American settlement, women were afraid to

go out at night for fear of assault. Bank robberies were a daily occurrence.

What about the churches? The Methodists were losing more members than they were gaining. The Baptists said that they had their most wintry season. The Presbyterians in general assembly deplored the nation's ungodliness. In a typical Congregational church, the Rev. Samuel Shepherd of Lenox, Massachusetts, in sixteen years had not taken one young person into fellowship. The Lutherans were so

languishing that they discussed uniting with Episcopalians who were even worse off. The Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New York, Bishop Samuel



Provost, quit functioning; he had confirmed no one for so long that he decided he was out of work, so he took up other employment. The Chief Justice of the United States, John Marshall, wrote to the Bishop of Virginia, James Madison, that the Church "was too far gone ever to be redeemed." Voltaire averred and Tom Paine echoed, "Christianity will be forgotten in thirty years."

A poll taken at Harvard had discovered not one believer in the whole student body. They took a poll at

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Prayer—Union and Communion by Fr. Rey Reyes

In our Christian life, there is a difference between union and communion. There is also a similarity. By virtue of our baptism and through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are in union

with God in a living, loving relationship and in communion with others who are also doing the same while becoming living branches attached to the divine vine, Jesus. Moreover, this union has to be kept and nurtured to survive the many trials and challenges in our life. We branches will only bear much fruit if we remain connected to the vine from where we draw

our life's sustenance through grace. And we do that through prayer.

The Catechism reminds us that "As Christian experience attests especially in prayer, the more docile we are to the promptings of grace, the more we grow in inner freedom and confidence during trials, such as those we face in the

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First Friday Mass

A Healing Mass
 In English & Spanish

7:30 pm (Rosary 7:15)
 January 4, 2002

St. Paul of the Shipwreck

Jamestown Ave. at 3rd St., SF
 Fr. Peter Sanders
 Principal Celebrant

The Miracle of Prayer by Johnnie Dowdy, RNC

One Sunday morning I heard my minister say if you want result from prayer, pray for thirty days without ceasing. I didn't know why it was thirty days, but I was willing to give it a try. The following became my daily prayer:

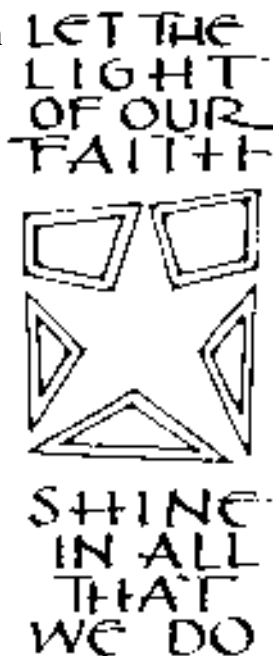
I am available, Lord, to be used by You each day. Guide me, precious Lord, and lead me in what I say and do. May my words and actions be a witness that You are living in me. To the one that is lonely, may I be a friend. To those with heavy burdens, help me to meet their needs.

Lord, I do not want fame or fortune. My prayer is that You will use me to glorify your name. I know I don't have much to offer,

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pressures and constraints of the outer world. By the working of grace, the Holy Spirit educates us in spiritual freedom in order to make us free collaborators in his work ...”(1742)

The parable of the vine and branches helps me understand the importance of the bishop’s directions during priestly ordinations that I attended in my Archdiocese in the Philippines. The bishop would always summarize commitment to priesthood as a commitment to prayer. “If ever you desire to keep a life-long commitment to your vocation to the Lord, and if you wish to become His faithful witnesses,” he would invariably say, “then you must be men of prayer!” He would end with these three words: PRAY, PRAY, PRAY! Good instructions for us all as it is through prayer that we nourish our intimate union with God, who is the source of grace. “The grace of Christ is not in the slightest way a rival of our freedom when this freedom accords with the sense of the true and the good that God has put in the human heart.” (1742)



Matrimony, I asked the couple to say something about what the Sacrament meant to them as a successful ingredient in sustaining their marriage vocation. The husband, who could hardly stand up from his chair, tried his best to speak. As he groped for words, a silence fell upon the congregation and all eyes and ears in the church were directed to him. He looked at his big family, smiled and said in a softly hoarse voice, "Don't forget to pray together." And he sat down. He could not have given better advice or a better testimony to what makes a union between husband and wife a communion with God for a successful marriage.

Being a priest in the Archdiocese of San Francisco for almost 4 years now, I can cite many differences in the way engaged couples are being prepared for their wedding here versus in the Philippines. For example, in the Philippines we don't usually hold wedding rehearsals the night before or, for that matter, any practice at all. When the whole wedding entourage gathers on the wedding day at the entrance of the church, the priest, an assistant or groom gives directions for the procession.

You can imagine the chaos when the entourage resembles the mob scene from the movie Exodus.

One morning I had three weddings. The first couple didn't arrive in time. I felt so restless for this would mean a delay for the succeeding weddings. The first couple finally arrived, they couldn't settle assigning who'd be doing the veil, the cord, candles, etc. “I can't wait any longer” I thought. My patience was almost at its end. So I approached the couple and as politely as I could, told them

“to get it together” and get the procession moving. I assume, trying to calm me, the groom responded, "I'm sorry about this Father, but don't worry, I'll do better next time."

As we are getting our life together in the Lord, he's not asking us to do better next time. He wants us to do our best this time! He wants us to be successful in whatever is our vocation. He wants us to be fruitful in our union with him and have a fruitful communion with one another. He wants us to come to him in prayer. For it is there that he speaks to us as often as we speak to him.

Fr. Reyes is a Parochial Vicar at St. Patrick's Church, San Francisco.

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a Protestant friend of mine remarked that Catholics should learn to pray in other than mantras so they can enjoy the intimacy with Jesus that comes with personal prayer. I knew exactly what he was referring to: the rosary. “Yes”, I countered, “But a mantra can lift one’s mind and heart to God, too.” “I agree,” he replied, “But wouldn’t it be better to pray as Jesus invited us to love—with all our mind, with all our heart and with our whole soul?”

He has a point. Christian prayer takes place in three settings: personal, group, and communal.

If we have learned to pray the rosary, which can be a personal, group and communal prayer, we can learn to pray in an intimate way, too.

Personal prayer, like anything at which we want to become good, takes practice. To practice personal prayer, you must make time for it in your daily schedule. Good personal prayer, like the prayer that Jesus taught us, contains meditation, conversation and contemplation.

Meditation is mind praying, that is, focusing on God. Perhaps focusing by recalling some event in the Hebrew Scriptures and placing yourself there, imagining what it would have been like. Or take some saying of Jesus from the New Testament and exploring it prayerfully in your mind. Place yourself with him. What is he saying to you?

Conversation is heart praying. Simply talk with Jesus from the heart the way we would with a close friend. Tell him what you want him to know about you—your hurts and desires. Take time to listen to what he is saying to you.

Contemplation is soul praying. This method of praying is simply resting silently in Jesus’ presence, while imagining the Holy Spirit resting upon you, helping you feel Jesus’ presence. Then enjoy his presence as you would at sunset or the freshness of a summer

breeze. When you have mastered this form of prayer, the three elements will come together. You will hardly notice where one begins and the other ends.

Before starting, consider this advice from Fr. Dan Lord, the late Catholic youth leader: “Pray with a KISS”—keep it simple, saints. “Pray to God as your Father, to Jesus as your brother, and to the Holy Spirit as your constant companion.”

Where to start? The Jesuit theologian, Fr. Mark Links, has an excellent suggestion on how to develop a personal relationship with God in prayer. It is

easy to learn and takes just a few minutes of time, but can develop into a more in-depth prayer and contains the three elements of meditation, conversation and contemplation. He suggests that we take three minutes at the end of the day to practice this method. After a few days of practicing, those three minutes will gradually multiply into a personal prayer life with God.

In the first minute, call to mind something that happened during the day for which you would like God the Father’s forgiveness—sins of commission and omission. Perhaps some unkind action or a moment when you had foot-in-mouth disease. Ask God for his forgiveness. Review the day for those times when you could have been



Joe Landi

“Christ’s presence” to others and weren’t. Ask God to help you become more Christ-like.

In the second minute, express your sorrow to Jesus for not being more like him in your manner. From your heart, ask Jesus to help you, to give you the knowledge you need to be more like him and the wisdom to put that knowledge into action. Ask Jesus to help you become the person you would like to be. Ask and you shall receive.

In the third minute, contemplate on what you would like to do the following day. Reflect on where you would like the Holy Spirit’s help in making tomorrow a better day—not only for yourself, but for all those with whom you come in contact.

Prayer is an important aspect of being a Christian. We know that prayer acquires power if it is joined with fasting and almsgiving.

On January 24, 2002, the Holy Father has invited the representatives of the world religions to come to Assisi to pray for the overcoming of opposition and the promotion of authentic peace. “It is urgent that a common invocation rise to heaven from earth, to beg from Almighty God... for the great gift of peace,” he said.

In these troubled times, humanity needs to see gestures of peace and to hear words of hope. So, while you are developing your personal prayer life, also pray the rosary asking the Queen of Peace to sustain all the efforts to achieve peace.

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Princeton, a much more evangelical place, where they discovered only two believers in the student body, and only five that did not belong to the filthy speech movement of that day. They held a mock communion at Williams College, and they put on antichristian plays at Dartmouth. They burned down the Nassau Hall at Princeton. They forced the resignation of the president of Harvard. They took a Bible out of a local Presbyterian church in New Jersey, and they burnt it in a public bonfire.

How did the situation change? It came through a concert of prayer, but beginning with one person.

There was a Scottish Presbyterian minister in Edinburgh named John Erskine, who published a Memorial (as he called it) pleading with the people of Scotland and elsewhere to unite in prayer for the revival of religion. He sent one copy of this little book to Jonathan Edwards in New England. The great theologian was so moved he wrote a response which grew longer than a letter, so that finally he published it as a book entitled *A Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of all God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, pursuant to Scripture Promises and Prophecies...*

1792-1800

In New England, there was a man of prayer named Isaac Backus, a Baptist pastor, who in 1794, when conditions were at their worst, addressed an urgent plea for prayer for revival to pastors of every Christian denomination in the United States. Churches knew that

their backs were to the wall. All the churches adopted the plan until America, like Britain, was interlaced with a network of prayer meetings, which set aside the first Monday of each month to pray. It was not long before revival in the churches came.

When the revival reached the frontier in Kentucky, it encountered a people really wild and irreligious. Congress had discovered that in Kentucky there had not been more than one court of justice held in five years. Peter Cartwright, a Methodist evangelist, wrote that when his father had settled in Logan County, it was known as Rogue's Harbour. The decent people

in Kentucky formed regiments of vigilantes to fight for law and order, then fought a pitched battle with outlaws and lost.

There was a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian minister named James McGready whose chief claim to fame was

that he was so ugly that he attracted attention. McGready settled in Logan County, pastor of three little churches. He wrote in his diary that the winter of 1799 for the most part was 'weeping and mourning with the people of God.' Lawlessness prevailed everywhere.

McGready was such a man of prayer that not only did he promote the concert of prayer every first Monday of the month, but he got his people to pray for him at sunset on Saturday evening and sunrise Sunday morning. Then in the summer of 1800 come the great Kentucky revival.

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Books

Closing the Gap by Jay McGraw
In this changing world, parents and teens have become disconnected. McGraw's observations helps families tear down walls and welcome each other back into their lives. His insight offers families fresh solutions.

Wisdom *The Feminine Side of God.* by Daniel Berrigan, S.J.. Continuing his highly acclaimed series of spiritual and social commentaries on the books of the Bible, Berrigan offers an original and timely reading of the Wisdom of Solomon and their contemporary relevance.

Living Justice *Catholic Social Teaching in Action* by Thomas Masaro, S.J. is a resource for those who want a thorough, thoughtful, and very clear presentation of the Church's teachings on Social Justice...our best kept secrets!

Restless In The Promised Land—*Catholics and the American Dream* by Jim Cullen is a look at the complexities of the rise of Catholicism in this country and its relationship to the American Dream. Some of the most provocative commentary on the Dream in American culture came from people, like the author, who happened to be Catholic and proud of it.

Is this movie suitable for Children?



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Furnished by *You!* Magazine

Manna Skateboards Inc. is a really cool company that was founded in 1994 in Seattle, Washington by Gary Hart. In June of 1999, John and Romona Garretson partnered with Gary, and Manna became incorporated. Since that time Manna Skateboards has been busting at the seams and its products sell in over 150 retail shops in the U.S.-including well known skate shops "The Institute" in Santa Ana, California and "Eastern Skate-board Supply" in Wilmington, North Carolina. Manna products are also sold all over the world, including Europe, Canada, and soon, Australia.

But what makes this company so cool? Well, first of all, they sponsor four pro-skaters, three amateurs and have a flow team of six. Not only that, you get to see Jud "Farmboy" Heald pull a big, fat noseblunt transfer and Tim Byrne flip, casper, & primo when you go to a competition or demo. You can also see video clips on the Manna website at www.mannaskateboards.com.

Manna Skateboard, Inc. sponsors the best skaters and makes top quality products, but this is not their greatest accomplishment. Most importantly, Manna is a company that is determined to make a

difference in this world for Jesus Christ. The word Manna actually means "spiritual food." Yes, all props go to J.C. for this skate company. This year alone, Manna's skaters have been touring non-stop across the U.S. and Canada and did a 2-1/2 month tour performing demos at major Christian festivals and concerts last summer.

Manna Skateboard Inc.'s mission statement captures the essence of what Manna is about: "Manna Skateboards exists to be a light in the world by providing quality, God-inspired skateboard products and meeting the needs of others through prayer, friendship, and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

So, if you want to buy cool skate stuff from a company that nose-blunts for Jesus, go to your local skate shop and look for Manna products.

Pro Skaters

- Jud 'Farmboy' Heald (Maine)
- Tim Byrne (Missouri)
- Anthony Carney (California)
- Scott Yamamura (Washington)

Amateur Skaters

- Heath Sherratt (California)
- Brian Hutcherson (Georgia)
- Danny Morrin (New Jersey)

Flow Team

- Mike Cruz (California)
- Ryan Cross (Texas)
- Rob Dolman (North Carolina)
- Jared Lee (North Carolina)
- Dave Nelson (Nebraska)
- Sierra Fellers (Florida)

by cam gonzales
You! Magazine Staff

Dear Jenny

I am a 15-year-old girl seriously considering becoming a nun, but my family doesn't take me seriously. I don't want to make a mistake. How can I KNOW? -Unsure

Dear Unsure,

The lives of the saints are filled with stories about young people who wanted to enter religious life but whose families objected. Maybe your parents are not taking you seriously because at 15 they think you may not be ready to make such a "life changing" decision. But if you truly are serious about a vocation to the religious life, your family will come to see your fervor over time. Pray that God will be with them and help them to understand and support you.

Try talking to them about saints like Therese of the Little Flower whom God called to serve Him around your age. At 14, she went to the Pope to specially request she be admitted to a Carmelite convent. Not too long after,

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A Heavenly Experience

Excerpt from the article "Marquis' Great Adventure: An ongoing saga of Marquis' amazing trips through Heaven."

Patron Saints of Cooks: St. Martha & St. Lawrence

Marq: So you two are the patron saints of cooks, right?

Martha: Sure are. Here dear, try some of these pastries.

Marq: Mmmff bmmfmdhh arrijjf.

Martha: What was that dear? I didn't catch it.



Lawrence: I think he's trying to ask you, 'why you?' Right, Marq?

Marq: (nods) Mmmfff.

Martha: You mean you don't know? I was one of Jesus' pal's during His time on earth. He came over many times for a good home-cooked meal.

Martha: Now Lawrence, you know I have to keep active, serving people in little ways. That's the way I serve my Lord.

Marq: My point exactly...

Lawrence: Sure Marq. I'll tell you why I'm the patron of cooks. Glad you asked.

Marq: OOPS. Sorry. Please, go ahead. Fries?

Lawrence: Thanks. In my

case, I got the job for being the main course.

Marq: (choking on some fries) What?!

Martha: He's trying to tell you that he was BBQ, broiled, toasted...

Lawrence: I think he gets the point.

Marq: They weren't cannibals were they?

Lawrence: No, Marq, they were Roman torturers



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but I will give You my all. Guide me to be what You want me to be. Amen”

On the twenty-first day of this prayer, CPR took on a new meaning for me. I was working an extremely busy twelve-hour night shift in Labor and Delivery. I had just sat down for my first break when a phone call came from my friend working in the Emergency Room. I barely recognized her urgent voice.

An eighteen-year-old boy had been brought to the ER for alcohol and drug overdose. The young man was very close to death and they had done all they could do to help him. The father of this boy was requesting a priest or minister and they were having difficulty locating one that could come to the ER quickly. My friend stated, "We know you're a Christian and we need you to come and try to comfort this father. Please come and help."

Reluctantly, I said I would come down. As I waited for the elevator my thoughts became very judgmental and frustration welled up inside me.

Then I remembered the prayer I'd been praying. I walked into the ER and approached the father. Taking his hand, I silently led him to the chapel. Before I could even say, "I am not a minister," this six-foot, two-hundred-twenty-pound man sank into the chair and became a broken-hearted child.

Through his non-stop sobbing he spoke, "Christian, pray for Raymond. I remember the first time I held my boy. I felt so proud and I just kept saying, 'I have a son.' As the years passed those tiny feet became bigger and walked away from his family's love and entered a

strange, hardened, and destructive world. Tonight, too much alcohol and an overdose of drugs are taking his life.



"It's as though he wants to rebel against everything his family stood for. He knew what he was doing was wrong.

Sometimes he seemed so afraid, but he wouldn't stop. Now it is too late. Christian, you have to pray for Raymond!"

His large hands trembled in mine and as I looked into his eyes, I mourned with him. Silence fell between us, as I searched for the words that would comfort this crumbling tower of a man. I felt so inadequate. I wanted to scream, "Lord it has only been twenty-one days since I began that prayer! I am not ready for this!"

Time was running out and I knew I couldn't stall any longer. I clutched his hands, now wet with tears, and began to pray. The words came easy, much to my surprise.

When I finished praying with him, I went to Raymond's bedside. I took his cold, lifeless hand and once again began to pray. "Lord I am asking

for a miracle and I know You can do it."

I stayed with them both until Raymond was taken to Intensive Care. I visited Raymond on a daily basis and continued to pray for him. Eight days passed with little improvement. On the ninth day I entered the ICU and a miracle had taken place. Raymond was awake and talking with his father.

CPR had taken on a new meaning for me: "Christian Pray for Raymond".

As I left the ICU with tears falling down my face, I realized, today is the 30th day of my prayer.

Now I not only believe in miracles, I depend on them.

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Things Will Never Be The Same by Fr. John S. Rausch

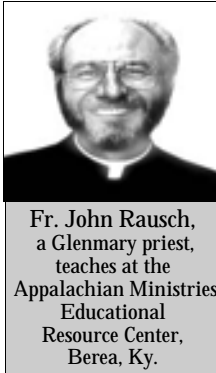
After the September terrorist attack commentators and analysts seized a vague proverb to describe the future: *"Things will never be the same."* Heightened airport security now introduces longer lines, random baggage checks and closer scrutiny of carry-on luggage. Letters delivered to government offices in Washington routinely get screened for anthrax spores. Foreign nationals suspected of ties to terrorism find their civil rights abridged with indefinite imprisonment or trial by military courts. In our desire for security Americans appear ready to accept some change as inevitable.

If "things will never be the same," then we face some choices. One choice focuses on propping up the material lifestyle and consumption patterns we promote in America. In the short run public policy will require greater military defense, fewer civil liberties and more political independence in foreign affairs. But, another choice charts a different direction after some critical thinking examining how our affluent lifestyle affects the poor of the world and the vulnerability of creation.

Recently I purchased some jogging shoes. I asked the clerk for sneaks made in America, so we opened box after box of New Balance shoes. Curiously, size seven of model #636 was made in China but the same model in my size bore the label: "Made in USA of Imported Materials." Both sizes sold for the same price, \$59.95.

The clerk asked if I bought American to keep jobs in the U.S. I responded that global corporations move jobs for many reasons and simply buying American does not guarantee retaining manufacturing jobs. My reason relates to the workers. In America we have the office of Wage and Hour and the Occupational Health and Safety Administration. In China factories may use forced or child labor and workers frequently make

\$2 a day in unhealthy working conditions. An unfettered market promises the cheapest price, but hides the social costs. "Things will never be the same" if we become socially conscious consumers asking some ethical questions and buying with a conscience.



Fr. John Rausch, a Glenmary priest, teaches at the Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center, Berea, Ky.

On my back porch I have bags of pop cans and plastic jugs. Glass jars and bottles come in clear, green and brown. Every few weeks I haul the recyclables to a collection point in town. As I separate the plastic, glass and aluminum, I review my level of consumption and reaffirm my responsibility for the earth and the global society. Our economic system emphasizes comfort and convenience, yet our throw-away society ignores the effects of over consumption on creation. To produce a pop can from recycled aluminum requires only 5% of the energy needed to produce it from raw bauxite. "Things will never be the same" if we consume with a connection to the earth and the global society.

Henry David Thoreau preached, "Simplify, simplify, simplify!" My friends, Jan and David, avoid the rat race by living on a modest income and growing a large garden. For the winter they can over 60 quarts of tomatoes, 20 quarts of green beans and stock the freezer with broccoli, cabbage and a variety of fruits. Their lives have room for God, family and work. In contrast, the economic system encourages eating on the run, shopping for frivolous things and over scheduling activities.

"Things will never be the same" if we slow down, become more relational with our families and nature, and enjoy the ordinary things of life. Ultimately our lives will have less clutter and our quality of life will flow in harmony with people throughout the world and all creation.

Caller ID

Isn't it amazing how God works in our lives! On a Saturday night several weeks ago, this pastor was working late, and decided to call his wife before he left for home. It was about 10:00 PM, but his wife didn't answer the phone. The pastor let it ring many times. He thought it was odd that she didn't answer, but decided to wrap up a few things and try again in a few minutes.

When he tried again she answered right away. He asked her why she hadn't answered before, and she said that it hadn't rung at their house. They brushed it off as a fluke and went on their merry ways.

The following Monday, the pastor received a call at the church office, which was the phone that he'd used that Saturday night. The man that he spoke with wanted to know why he'd called on Saturday night. The pastor couldn't figure out what the man was talking about. Then the man said, "It rang and rang, but I didn't answer."

The pastor remembered the mishap and apologized for disturbing him, explaining that he'd intended to call his wife and must have dialed the wrong number.

The man said, "That's OK. Let me tell you my story. You see, I was planning to commit suicide on Saturday night, but before I did, I prayed, 'God if you're there, and you don't want me to do this, give me a sign now.' At that point my phone started to ring. I looked at the caller ID, and it said, 'Almighty God'. I was afraid to answer!"

The reason why it showed on the man's caller ID that the call came from "Almighty God" is because the church that the pastor attends is called Almighty God Tabernacle.

Yes, God works in mysterious ways, his wonders to behold.

Dear Grace by Grace MacKinnon



Grace MacKinnon, a syndicated columnist, writer, and public speaker, holds an MA in Theology and teaches in the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas.

Q: Why do Catholics call Mary the "Mother of God"? Wasn't she created by God? Does this title mean that she existed before God?

it is the beginning of a new year and this makes it very appropriate that we think about Mary, the one through whom Christ our Savior came into the world. New Year's Day is the day the Church celebrates the divine motherhood of Mary, which is based on the teaching of the Gospels, on the writings of the early Fathers, and on the express definition of the Church. It is a beautiful title for Mary.

What many do not realize is that this is a name that Christians have been using in reference to her for almost seventeen centuries. In order to understand how we can call Mary the Mother of God, we must first realize and accept the fact that our faith is grounded in mystery. There is much we do not understand now, but one day we will. That which we do understand, however, comes to us from what God has revealed.

The Bible tells us that Mary "brought forth her first-born son" and that He was called Jesus (Matthew 1:25). We also read in the Gospel of John that Jesus is the Word made flesh. The Word, Who was God, assumed human nature in the womb of Mary (John 1:15). We are referring here to the mystery of the Incarnation, the Word becoming flesh. Jesus Christ (the Second person of the Holy Trinity, One in being with the Father) entered this world, taking on human flesh and a human soul. Jesus is true God and true man. Because we believe that Mary was truly the mother of Jesus, and that

Jesus was truly God from the first moment of His conception, then it makes perfect sense that Mary is truly the Mother of God.

We must be careful and make clear that we are not saying that Mary created the divine person of Jesus. Mary gave birth to Jesus, the God-Man. When God "assumed" or "took on" a human nature, it was the result of His perfect will to do so. He chose to be born of her. Therefore, it cannot be said that Mary created God or that she existed before God. We simply mean that a woman is considered a man's mother when she has conceived and given birth to him.

St. Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, who defended this teaching, stated that "it was not that an ordinary man was born first of the Holy Virgin, on whom afterwards the Word descended. What we say is that, being united with the flesh from the womb, (the Word) has undergone birth in the flesh, making the birth in the flesh His own..." Therefore, the Blessed Virgin Mary is rightly called Mother of God (*Theotokos*).

Q: Is it permissible during Mass for a priest to replace the Nicene Creed with his "own" version of what we believe?

if you are talking about a priest making up his own creed (profession of faith), then the answer is no.

This would never be permissible because it would not be the authentic and authoritative expression of the faith of the Catholic Church. The Catechism tells us that the Creed "was not

made to accord with human opinions, but rather what was of the greatest importance was gathered from all the Scriptures, to present the one teaching of the faith in its entirety" (CCC# 186). Even though the purpose for changing the words of the Creed might be to help people to better understand it, there is still the risk of causing confusion or the possibility of falling into error.

According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, "The symbol or profession of faith in the celebration of Mass serves as a way for the people to respond and to give their assent to the word of God heard in the readings and through the homily, and for them to call to mind the truths of faith before they begin to celebrate the Eucharist. Recitation of the profession of faith by the priest together with the people is obligatory on Sundays and solemnities. It may be said also at special, more solemn celebrations" (#43, 44). Other forms of the Nicene Creed may be used but only those that have been approved by the Church.

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On the Lighter Side

My friends Nancy, a Catholic, and her fiancé, Chris, a non-Catholic, were attending pre-nuptial sessions in preparation for marriage in the Catholic Church. At one meeting, the priest turned to Chris and told him, "Since you are not Catholic, we shall have the ceremony without Eucharist."

Later that day, Chris was noticeable upset and Nancy asked him what was wrong.

"I don't understand," he said. "How can we have the ceremony without me?"



a candidate for state office once ran on this simple platform: He didn't want any foreign languages taught in school. If English was good enough for Jesus, he felt, it was good enough for the state.

An elder priest, speaking to a young priest, said: "I know you were reaching out to the young people when you had bucket seats put in to replace the first four pews. It worked. We got the front of the church filled first."

"The young priest nodded, and the old one continued, "And, you told me a little more beat to the music would bring young people back to church, so I supported you when you brought in that rock 'n roll gospel choir."

"So," asked the young priest, "What's the problem?"

"Well," the elder priest responded, "I think you've gone too far with the drive-through confessional and the flashing neon sign that says, "Toot'n Tell or Go to Hell!"



A very proper matron while standing in the security check line at the airport is overwhelmed when she hears a new immigrant say to his companion, "Emma comma first, I comma next, two assa comma together, I comma again, two assa comma again, I comma one more time, pee-pee twice, then I comma for the last time."

Thinking it must be some kind of code, she calls over a policeman standing nearby and demands that he arrest the immigrant. The cop looks at her, puzzled and says, "For spelling Mississippi?"

Ten Signs You May Not be Reading Your Bible Enough

10) The Lector announces the reading is from Galatians ... and you check the table of contents.

9) You think Abraham, Isaac & Jacob may have had a few hit songs during the 60's.

8) You open to the Gospel of Luke and a WWII Savings Bond falls out.

7) Your favorite Old Testament patriarch is Hercules.

6) A small family of woodchucks has taken up residence in Psalms.

5) You become frustrated because Charlton Heston isn't listed in either the concordance or the table of contents.

4) Catching the kids reading the Song of Solomon, you demand: "Who gave you this stuff?"

3) You think the minor prophets worked in the quarries.

2) You keep falling for it every time when Father tells you to turn to First Condominiums.

And the No. 1 sign you may not be reading your Bible enough:

1) The kids keep asking too many questions about your usual bedtime story: "Jonah the Shepherd Boy and His Ark of Many Colors"

"A joyful heart is the health of the body..."

Proverbs 17:22

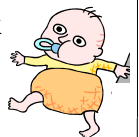


the other day, a truck delivering ten thousand Roget's Thesauruses ran into a pole. The driver was shocked, startled, taken aback, thunderstruck, and caught unaware.

Jack's mother ran into the bedroom when she heard him scream and found his two-year old sister pulling his hair. She gently released the little girl's grip and said comfortingly to Jack, "There, there. She didn't mean it. She doesn't know that hurts."

She was barely out of the room when the little girl screamed. Rushing back in, she asked, "What happened?"

"She knows now," Jack replied.



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Eleven thousand people came to a communion service. McGready hollered for help, regardless of denomination.

Out of that second great awakening, came the whole modern missionary movement and its societies. Out of it came the abolition of slavery, popular education, Bible Societies, Sunday Schools, and many social benefits accompanying the evangelistic drive.

1858-
1860

Following the second great awakening, which began in 1792 just

after the death of John Wesley and continued into the turn of the century, conditions again deteriorated. This is illustrated from the United States where the country was seriously divided over the issue of slavery, and secondly, people were making money lavishly.

In September 1857, a man of prayer, Jeremiah Lanphier, started a businessmen's prayer meeting in the upper room of the Dutch Reformed Church Consistory Building in Manhattan. In response to his advertisement, only six people out of a population of a million showed up. But the following week there were fourteen, and then twenty-three, when it was decided to meet everyday for prayer. By late winter they were filling the Dutch Reformed Church, then the Methodist Church on John Street, then Trinity Episcopal Church on Broadway at Wall Street. In February and March of 1858, every church and public hall in down town New York was filled.

Horace Greeley, the famous editor, sent a reporter with horse and buggy racing round the prayer meetings to see how many men were praying. In one hour he could get to only twelve meetings, but he counted

6,100 men attending. Then a landslide of prayer began, which overflowed to the churches in the evenings. People began to be converted, ten thousand a week in New York City alone. The movement spread throughout New England, the church bells bringing people to prayer at eight in the morning, twelve noon, and six in the evening.

The revival raced up the Hudson and down the Mohawk, where the Baptists, for example, had so many peo-



ple to baptize that they went down to the river, cut a big hole in the ice, and baptized them in the cold water. When Baptists do that they are really on fire!

When the revival reached Chicago, a young shoe salesman went to the superintendent of the Plymouth Congregational Church, and asked if he might teach Sunday School. The superintendent said, "I am sorry, young fellow. I have sixteen teachers too many, but I will put you on the waiting list." So, he started his own. The name of that young man was Dwight Lyman Moody, and that was the beginning of a ministry that lasted forty years.

1904-1905

All around the world believers were praying that there might be another great awakening in the twentieth century. In the revival of 1905, I read of a young man who became a famous professor, Kenneth Scott Latourette. He reported that, at Yale in 1905, 25% of the student body were enrolled in prayer meetings and in Bible study. As far as churches were

concerned, the ministers of Atlantic City reported that of a population of fifty thousand there were only fifty adults left unconverted. In Portland, Oregon, two hundred and forty major stores closed from 11 to 2 each day to enable people to attend prayer meetings, signing an agreement so that no one would cheat and stay open.

At the First Baptist Church of Paducah, Kentucky, the pastor, an old man, Dr J. J. Cheek, took a thousand members in two months and died of overwork, the Baptists saying, "a glorious ending to a devoted ministry."

That is what was happening in the United States in 1905—a revival in the Christian Churches. But it was not only in North America. The revival swept Britain, Scandinavia, Germany, Australia, Asia, Africa, Brazil, Mexico, and Chile. As always, and everywhere, it began through a movement of prayer. So let us begin again!

Condensed from International Revival Network at www.openheaven.com. © 2001

Catholic Radio Hour



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Calendar of Events

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Dec 24 CHRISTMAS MASS AT MIDNIGHT with choir & orchestra under the direction of Russell Ferreira—
(Carols & Music at 11:30 pm)
Msgr. Mike Harriman, Principal Celebrant
with concelebrating priests.
St Cecilia Church, 17th Ave. at Vicente St., SF
Broadcast live at www.stCecilia.com

Dec 25 CHRISTMAS DAY MASS 11:00 am with choir & orchestra under the direction of Russ Ferreira
Fr. Joe Landi, Principal Celebrant
St Cecilia Church, 17th Avenue at Vicente, SF
Broadcast live at www.sfSpirit.com

Jan 3 HEALING MASS—Every Thursday in January, 8:00 pm
Immaculate Conception Chapel, 3255 Folsom St., SF
Rev. William Lavriola, Principal Celebrant
Contact: Jeannie Macchello 415/824-1762

Jan 4 FIRST FRIDAY MASS—of the Sacred Heart
—a Bilingual Healing Mass
7:15 pm Rosary—7:30 pm Mass
St. Paul of the Shipwreck Church
Jamestown Ave., at 3rd St., SF
(Use 3rd St. East Off Highway 101)
Fr. Peter Sanders, Orat., Principal Celebrant
For information, phone 415/564-PRAY
En Español, 415/ 771-6220

Jan 5 FAMILY CHARISMATIC MASS— 7:30 pm,
Epiphany Church-O'Keefe Hall, 845 Vienna St, SF
Contact: Emmie Yabut 650/756-4315

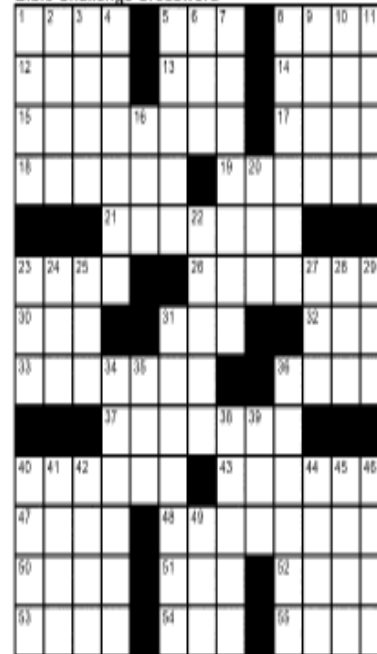
Jan 17 HEALING SERVICE—Thursday, 7:30 pm
Holy Angels Church Hall, 107 San Pedro Rd., Colma
Contact: Dulce 650/992-0717

Jan 20 SUNDAY CHARISMATIC MASS—2:00 pm
St. Patrick's Church, 756 Mission, SF
Contact: Judy Labaria 415/826-7827

Feb 1 FIRST FRIDAY MASS—of the Sacred Heart—
7:15 Rosary—7:30 pm Mass
Holy Name of Jesus Church
39th Ave. at Lawton St., SF
Fr. Joe Landi, Principal Celebrant
Contact: Nolan 415/564-PRAY

Bible Challenge

Bible Challenge Crossword



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- Across**
- Post Sandburg
 - As well
 - Sailing the Mediterranean
 - Sonovich cookie
 - "So God created rear in his image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them." Gen 1:27
 - "We wait in hope for the Lord, he is our ... and our shield." Psalm 33:20
 - One of Jesus' twelve
 - Reed instrument
 - World's largest desert
 - "Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be ..." Isa 12:2
 - Jesus raised him from the dead
 - Downwind
 - In heaven, they are made of gold
 - Sheep's bleat
 - ... Wednesday (beginning of Lent)
 - Mount necklace
 - Petals
 - Do be it
 - Nubachadnezzar was his king
 - Scheitl
 - Goat used for mohai
 - "Evil will ... the wicked, the foes of the righteous will be condemned." Psalm 34:21
 - "Yet their ... is strong; the Lord Almighty is his name." Jer 50:34
 - "Create in me a ... heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." Psalm 51:10
 - Foot digit
 - Frog genus
 - "Tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard ... you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." Mat 17:20
 - Advice columnist Lancers
 - Arrogant person
 3. 20th letter of the Hebrew alphabet
 - Verb
 - Quartz germinate
 - It gives a hoot
 - "I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness ..." Jer. 9:24
 - " ... is a vain hope for deliverance; despair all its great strength it cannot save." Psalm 33:17
 - Son of David (Gen 10:7)
 - One of Jesus' wives from the cross
 - Imitated
 - Retirement fund
 - Pelt
 - Analyze
 - Alphabet beginners
 - Tai language
 - "His eye has soon, no ... has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." 1 Cor 2:9
 - Shakespeare
 - Golf peg
 - "For the wages of ... is death, but the gift of God is eternal life ..." Rom. 6:23
 - Canadian province
 - "But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you volunteeredly ... the form of teaching to which you were enlightened." Rom 6:17
 - Small boy
 - "A king's worth is like the roar of a lion; he who ... him forgets his life." Psal 20:2
 - "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy ... and I will give you rest." Mat 11:28 (KJV)
 - "Wisdom makes ... wise man more powerful than ten rulers in a city." Ecc. 7:10
 - Vipers
 - Hint
 - "... for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his ..." Psalm 95:7
 - Arabian peninsula
 - Clinton's former AG
 - Palestinian, e.g.
 - Era
- Down**
- Deliveries requiring payment on receipt (abbr.)
 - Open ado

Sources referenced are NY Answers on Page 13

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Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me. I am worn out calling for help... (Ps 69:1-3).

What does it feel like to be stuck? Confined, limited, restricted, hemmed in, restrained, captive, no way out, tied down, enslaved, imprisoned, oppressed, powerless, bottled up, compulsive, addicted, in bondage. What else? Invite the Holy Spirit into feelings of being stuck: Father God, in humble trust I ask You to

send Your Holy Spirit into this bondage and my past history of being stuck. What prevents me from moving on? Help me acknowledge my feelings and respond in a way that pleases You. I give You permission to heal me. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.

Scripture Reflection:

Jesus went to the other side of the lake and found a man bound by an evil force. No one was strong enough to subdue him. He snapped every chain and broke the irons on his feet. Night and day he cried out on the hillside and cut himself with stones. With a word Jesus set him free. Then Jesus told him to "...Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how He has had mercy on you" (Mk 5:19). Jesus wants us to believe in His power to set us free from bondage, to receive the help He offers, and then share the good news with others.

Nancy's story: Nancy struggled with cigarette addiction for many years. She had a revelation one time that the addiction was rooted in deeply buried, unloved areas of her soul. As she gave herself room to grow into God's love, she was eventually able to stop smoking. Most of us will be in some kind of bondage until we encounter the love of Jesus. With His love saturating our soul we won't need the things we held onto so tightly.

Bring your feelings to God: Here I am, God, chained and stuck. I don't like it here. I've hidden my problems too long. [Identify specific issue.] Forgive me for any way I have offended You. Thank You for sending the truth of Your love to uproot the lies. [Keep talking.] In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen. Listen to what God might say:



"Beloved, talk to Me about what hurts the most. What do you really want? I will be for you what you need Me to be. My power is made perfect in weakness..." (2 Co 12:9). Let My love embrace the area that feels weak and unlovable. Allow Me to take you past the bondage into the truth of who you are in Me. Let Me nurture and protect you. I love you. How does this make you feel?" [Keep listening.] "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you—they will not sweep over you" (Isa 43:2).

Pray for others: Dear God, thank You for helping others who are enslaved and stuck. It could be the dark secrecy of witchcraft or occult activities. It might be drug or alcohol addiction, sexual perversion, criminal activity. Or maybe they are enslaved to unhealthy thought processes. Maybe it's addiction to shopping, eating, sex, work or money. Forgive them, God, and release Your power. [Keep praying.] In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen. "...my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Php 4:19).

Linda's prayer for your needs: Powerful God, You are the fire that burns away the terrible work of the enemy. In the Name of Jesus, I take authority over every evil influence and command it to leave them now. Let every oppression and bondage go. Every compulsion, every enslaving influence must depart in the Name of Jesus. Father, touch deeper levels of bondage, and reveal any deception. If there are wrong sexual ties,

sever the ties now. If they are stuck in blaming others, get them unstuck. Thank You for healing any physical or psychological dependence on habit-forming substances. Thank You, Holy Spirit, for bringing forth the fruit of self-control. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.

Begin to praise: Open your hands and release every bondage to Jesus. Take off your shoes, it's holy ground. Raise your voice and heart to God. His powerful presence is releasing a lovely miracle. "Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises" (Ps 47:6).

Something to think about: There was a time when I found it easier to be sick than to be well. Sometimes we fear change because the known problem is easier to cope with than the unknown victory. During one very black period in my life, I heard the Lord whisper, "Linda, choose life." "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. .. Now choose life. .. for the Lord is your life..." (Dt 30:19-20). A pathetic little response crept out from some deep strangled place in my soul: "Okay, Lord, I choose life." Lining up my will with His will was the key to His presence. His energy began to trickle through my system and I was soon able to function. Our choice and His ability. With the Holy Spirit alive in us we can choose what's right even when we don't feel like it.

Condensed from True Confession by Linda Schubert. To receive a copy of True Confession, send \$5.00 to Miracles of the Heart Ministries, P. O. Box 4034, Santa Clara, CA 95056

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Psalm 116-117, opens with an invitation to praise that is directed not only to Israel, but to all the peoples of the earth. An *Alleluia* should burst forth from the hearts of all the just who seek and love God with a sincere heart. Once again, the Psalter reflects a vision of vast perspective, nourished by Israel's experience during the Babylonian exile in the

6th century before Christ. At the time the Hebrew people met other nations and cultures and felt the need to announce their own faith to those among whom they lived. The Psalter portrays the concept that good flourishes in many places and can be directed toward the one Lord and Creator.

Hence, we can speak of an "ecumenism" of prayer that now holds in one-embrace peoples who are different by origin, history and culture. We are in line with the great "vision" of Isaiah who describes "at the end of days" the procession of all the nations towards "the mountain of the house of the Lord". Then the swords and spears will fall from their hands; they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, so that humanity can live in peace, singing its song of praise to the one Lord of all, listening to his word and observing his law.

Within this universal horizon Israel, the Chosen People, has a mission to fulfill. They should proclaim two great divine virtues, that they had experienced living the covenant with the Lord. The two virtues, that are the fundamental features of the face of God, the "good binomial" of God, as St Gregory of Nyssa said, are expressed with other Hebrew words which, in translation, do not convey the full richness of their meaning.

The first is *hésed*, a term repeatedly used in the Psalter, that I have commented on before. It points to the richness of the profound sentiments that pass between two persons, linked by an authentic and constant bond. It includes values such as love, fidelity, mercy, goodness, and tenderness. Between God and us, there is a relationship which is not cold, as is the case between an emperor and his subject, but alive like that between two friends, two spouses, parents and their children.

The second term is *eméth* and is a

synonym for the first. It is beloved of the Psalter, where it appears half of all the time that it is used in the rest of the Old Testament. The term itself expresses "truth", namely, the genuineness of a relationship, its authenticity and loyalty, that remain despite obstacles and trials; it is pure and joyful fidelity that knows no betrayal. It is no accident that the Psalmist declares that it "is faithful forever" (v.2).

The faithful love of God will never fail and will not abandon us to ourselves or to the darkness of nihilism, or to a blind destiny, or to the void or death. God loves us with an unconditional, tireless, never ending love.

It is the message of Psalm 116, brief as a sigh of prayer from the heart, but intense as a great canticle.

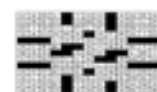
The words that it suggests are like an echo of the song that resounds in the heavenly Jerusalem, where a great multitude of every tongue, people and nation, sings the divine glory before the throne of God and the Lamb. The pilgrim Church joins in this canticle with infinite expressions of praise, often accompanied by poetic genius and musical art. We think, for example, of the *Te Deum*, which generations of Christians throughout the centuries have used to praise and to thank: "We praise you

O God, we confess you O Lord, all the earth venerates you, eternal Father". For its part, the short psalm that we are meditating on, is an effective synthesis of the perennial liturgy of praise with which the Church raises her voice in the world uniting herself to the perfect praise that Christ himself addresses to his Father.

Let us praise the Lord!
Let us praise him unceasingly.
But our lives must express our praise, more than our words.

We will hardly be credible if with our psalm we invite the peoples to give glory to the Lord, and we did not take seriously the Lord's admonition: "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 5,16). In singing psalm 116{117}, as in all the psalms praising the Lord, the Church, People of God, strives to become herself a hymn of praise.

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Un canto de alegría y de victoria

Por El Santo Padre Juan Pablo II

Cuando el cristiano, en sintonía con la voz orante de Israel, canta el salmo 117, que acabamos de escuchar, experimenta en su interior una emoción particular. En efecto, encuentra en este himno, de intensa índole litúrgica, dos frases que resonarán dentro del Nuevo Testamento con una nueva tonalidad. La primera se halla en el versículo 22: "La piedra que desecharon los arquitectos es ahora la piedra angular". Jesús cita esta frase, aplicándola a su misión de muerte y de gloria, después de narrar la parábola de los viñadores homicidas (cf. *Mt* 21, 42). También la recoge san Pedro en los *Hechos de los Apóstoles*: "Este Jesús es la piedra que

vosotros, los constructores, habéis desechado y que se ha convertido en piedra angular. Porque no hay bajo el cielo otro nombre dado a los hombres por el que nosotros debamos salvarnos" (*Hch* 4, 11-12). San Cirilo de Jerusalén comenta: "Afirmamos que el Señor Jesucristo es uno solo, para que la filiación sea única; afirmamos que es uno solo, para que no pienses que existe otro (...).

En efecto, le llamamos *pedra*, no inanimada ni cortada por manos humanas, sino *pedra angular*, porque quien crea en ella *no quedará defraudado*" (*Le Catechesi*, Roma 1993, pp. 312-313).

La segunda frase que el Nuevo Testamento toma del salmo 117 es la que cantaba la muchedumbre en la solemne entrada mesiánica de Cristo en Jerusalén: "¡Bendito el que viene en nombre del Señor!" (*Mt* 21, 9; cf. *Sal* 117, 26). La aclamación está enmarcada por un "Hosanna" que recoge la invocación hebrea *hoshia' na'*: "sálvanos".

Este espléndido himno bíblico está incluido en la pequeña colección de salmos, del 112 al 117, llamada el "*Hallel* pascual", es decir, la alabanza sálmica usada en el culto judío para la Pascua y también para las principales solemnidades del Año litúrgico. Puede considerarse que el hilo conductor del salmo 117 es el rito procesional, marcado tal vez por cantos para el solista y para el coro, que tiene como telón de fondo la ciudad santa y su templo. Una hermosa antifona abre y cierra el texto: "Dad gracias al Señor porque es bueno, porque es eterna su misericordia".

La palabra "misericordia" traduce la palabra hebrea *hesed*, que designa la fidelidad generosa de Dios para con su pueblo aliado y amigo. Esta fidelidad la cantan tres clases de personas: todo Israel, la "casa de Aarón", es decir, los sacerdotes, y "los que temen a Dios", una expresión que se refiere a los fieles y sucesivamente también a los prosélitos, es

decir, a los miembros de las demás naciones deseosos de aceptar la ley del Señor. La procesión parece desarrollarse por las calles de Jerusalén, porque se habla de las "tiendas de los justos" (v. 15). En cualquier caso, se eleva un himno de acción de gracias (cf. vv. 5-18), que contiene un mensaje esencial: incluso cuando nos embarga la angustia, debemos mantener enarbolada la antorcha de la confianza, porque la mano poderosa del Señor lleva a sus fieles a la victoria sobre el mal y a la salvación.

El poeta sagrado usa imágenes fuertes y expresivas: a los adversarios crueles se los compara con un enjambre de avispas o con un frente de fuego que avanza reduciéndolo todo a cenizas (cf. v. 12). Pero la reacción del justo, sostenido por el Señor, es vehemente. Tres veces repite: "En el nombre del Señor los rechacé" y el verbo hebreo pone de relieve una intervención destructora con respecto al mal (cf. vv. 10-12). En efecto, en su raíz se halla la diestra poderosa de Dios, es decir, su obra eficaz, y no ciertamente la mano débil e incierta del hombre. Por esto, la alegría por la victoria sobre el mal desemboca en una profesión de fe muy sugestiva: "el Señor es mi fuerza y mi energía, él es mi salvación" (v. 14).

La procesión parece haber llegado al templo, a las "puertas del triunfo" (v. 19), es decir, a la puerta santa de Sión. Aquí se entona un segundo canto de acción de gracias, que se abre con un diálogo entre la asamblea y los sacerdotes para ser admitidos en el culto. "Abridme las puertas del triunfo, y entraré para dar gracias al Señor", dice el solista en nombre de la asamblea procesional. "Esta es la puerta del Señor: los vencedores entrarán por ella" (v. 20), responden otros, probablemente los sacerdotes. Una vez que han entrado, pueden cantar el himno de acción de gracias al Señor, que en el templo se ofrece como "piedra" estable y segura sobre la que se puede edificar la casa

de la vida (cf. *Mt* 7, 24-25). Una bendición sacerdotal desciende sobre los fieles, que han entrado en el templo para expresar su fe, elevar su oración y celebrar su culto.

La última escena que se abre ante nuestros ojos es un rito gozoso de danzas sagradas, acompañadas por un festivo agitar de ramos: "Ordenad una procesión con ramos hasta los ángulos del altar".

La liturgia es alegría, encuentro de fiesta, expresión de toda la existencia que alaba al Señor. El rito de los ramos hace pensar en la solemnidad judía de los Tabernáculos, memoria de la peregrinación de Israel por el desierto, solemnidad en la que se realizaba una procesión con ramos de palma, mirto y sauce.

Este mismo rito evocado por el Salmo se vuelve a proponer al cristiano en la entrada de Jesús en Jerusalén, celebrada en la liturgia del domingo de Ramos. Cristo es aclamado como "hijo de David" (*Mt* 21, 9) por la muchedumbre que "había llegado para la fiesta (...). Tomaron ramas de palmera y salieron a su encuentro gritando: *Hosanna*, *Bendito el que viene en nombre del Señor*, *el Rey de Israel*" (*Jn* 12, 12-13). En esa celebración festiva que, sin embargo, prepara a la hora de la pasión y muerte de Jesús, se realiza y comprende en sentido pleno también el símbolo de la piedra angular, propuesto al inicio, adquiriendo un valor glorioso y pascual.

El salmo 117 estimula a los cristianos a reconocer en el evento pascual de Jesús "el día en que actuó el Señor", en el que "la piedra que desecharon los arquitectos es ahora la piedra angular". Así pues, con el salmo pueden cantar llenos de gratitud: "el Señor es mi fuerza y mi energía, él es mi salvación" (v. 14). "Este es el día en que actuó el Señor: sea nuestra alegría y nuestro gozo" (v. 24)

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Misa Del Espíritu Santo—Viernes, 4 de Enero 2002—7:15 pm

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Everybody knows who the president is, but when he speaks on television, he still has a couple of flags behind him. The round blue Seal of the United States is close by, often hanging on the lectern where he's speaking. The announcer says something like, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States." These signs and ceremonies reinforce the fact that an important person is speaking.

That is a little like what Matthew keeps doing early in his Gospel. He piles on one sign after another that means Jesus is a Very Special Person. For example: the Gospel of January 6, 2002, includes several of these signs. One is that the foreign wise men saw the star in the heaven and interpreted it to mean that a great leader had been born. Another is that they traveled all the way to meet this leader and bring him gifts. A third sign is that all this fuss over a baby made King Herod real, really uneasy!! (Remember that

Herod decided to kill Baby Jesus, but an angel warned Joseph and the family hid in Egypt until Herod died.)

The church calls the visit of the wise men an "epiphany," which means roughly, "God-showing." Look, says Matthew in his way, even foreign unbelievers acknowledge the kingship of Jesus.

The wise men are also called "magi," a word that means they had more than human knowledge or "magic." Matthew is the only Gospel that mentions the Magi's visit.

We are all part of God's plan—not a startling bit of news. But you need to remember that it includes you. With all your faults and sins, as well as your virtues and strengths, you are included in God's Plan. You are called by name.

That puts your faith and your life in a whole new light.

Let your Epiphany prayer be, "Jesus, help me realize when I'm having an "epiphany." I don't want to miss seeing you!"



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Life Questions (From Page 5)

Martha & Lawrence (From Page 5)

who were furious because of my Christianity and service to the poor in Rome.

Martha: So they strapped him down on a red-hot griddle, but the Lord gave him strength.

Lawrence: After a while on the rack I told the guards to turn me over, 'cause I was done on that side.

Marq: Get out!

Martha: He's serious, dear. His martyrdom was the catalyst for Rome's conversion.

Lawrence: The main thing to remember is that we're the patron saints of cooks because of our spirit of Christian service, not just the good food!

Marq: Amen!...and pass the doughnuts!

she was granted that request. Read her autobiography: "*The Story of a Soul*." It's excellent.



Finally, don't be so afraid of making a mistake. Instead, commit yourself to the Holy Spirit and let Him and your guardian angel take you each step of the way.

One way to know if your decision is right is that you will feel a great peace about it. Talking to a priest and making a retreat can also help.

God Bless, Jenny

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