

COMPANY

by Br. John M. Samaha

One of the marvelous treasures Catholics possess is their understanding of and devotion to Mary, Mother of the Lord.

While many who embrace other Christian beliefs also claim this treasure, how unfortunate that some believing, God-fearing people do not cherish the wonderful gift of Mary in their lives. To know and love Mary and to give her prominence in our faith-life is a special gift of God. Jesus Christ himself has given us the example of how to cherish this gift of his mother and ours. And he invites our cooperation with her to continue to present him, our Redeemer, to all people.

In Mary we find the ultimate vocation story. Luke's report in chapter one of his gospels is simple and direct. God did not command Mary's cooperation in his plan of salvation; he invited her. She quietly and confidently acquiesced in unwavering faith.

Mary in Scripture and the Arts

What a waste that some believers carelessly overlook this great gift of God, or brush it aside. We should be reaching out to her to help put us in closer touch with her Son.

All Christians, not just Catholics, know and revere the Virgin Mary in the New Testament. How can she be overlooked in Scripture? Here we encounter the appearance of an angel to tell her she is to be the mother of Jesus, the promised Messiah; the birth of Jesus in a stable; the fretful mother looking for her child during a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem; her intervention at the wedding feast in Cana; her deep sorrow at the foot of the cross; her calming presence awaiting Pentecost. Theologian Lawrence Cunningham has observed: "The New Testament portrait of Mary is, like everything in the biblical text, artlessly simple, tantalizingly enigmatic, and religiously inexhaustible."

To appreciate how inexhaustible this New Testament verbal portrait is, simply trace the development of Marian theology and devotion since her earthly life. From Christianity's origin, both its leaders and its followers have engaged in frequent, passionate, and thoughtful consideration of Mary's role in the mystery of Christ and of the Church. Professor Cunningham reminds us that the pursuit of deeper and more complete understanding of Mary "help to explode the often repeated charge that Mariological beliefs are late accretions to Christianity."

The universal acclaim of Mary

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January 2005
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Priest on Board by Fr. Joe Landi



For Catholics,

attending Sunday Mass is at the heart of our devotional life. For those Catholics who may have forgotten, the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us, "Sunday is

the day ... to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church" (CCC2177). Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin. (CCC2181)

There are few excuses for not attending Mass but sometimes finding

a place to attend Sunday Mass while on vacation or traveling can be difficult. In some places, Catholic Churches are few and far between.

In other places, they don't exist. But sometimes it can be easy. For example, vacationing on some cruise ships, Catholics are in Catholic Heaven—Mass and Bingo every day—provided they've chosen the right cruise line, i.e., one savvy enough to understand that some Catholics will book with them just because Mass is offered.

More cruise lines have come to the awareness that daily as well as Sun-

day Mass, is good business—something that Holland-American Lines has known for at least 40-years.

For priests, celebrating or concelebrating Mass daily, or at least on Sunday while vacationing, is part of our spirituality even though the requirement that priests celebrate a Mass daily ended with the change in Canon Law after Vatican II.

For me, a day without the Eucharist is a day without the Son's shine, so I try to concelebrate Mass while traveling. In doing so, I have been welcomed warmly wherever asking to concelebrate

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is the apostolate of the laity an innovation of our own times, a new discovery?

Yes and no. No, because the apostolate has always been a duty inherent in baptism, and the early Christians understood this so well that they carried the Gospel to the world of their days. The first to proclaim their joy at the discovery of Christ were Roman soldiers, slaves, business men. They it was who carried the Gospel throughout the empire. For the Church is not an abstract reality; the Church was each one of these men and women; the Church is you, me, all of us together. Or, better still, it is Christ, alive and at work in each one of us. It is the duty of each of the faithful, therefore, to be Christ among his brethren, to allow Christ, through him, to continue His existence as the saviour of His brethren. No Christian who restricts himself

...” Very good, so long as we are under no false impression as to the meaning of that word “serve”.

For the full reply is this: “God made us to know him, love him and serve him and to make him known, loved and served.” That is what Christianity is, no less. The Church has always known it, but we are apt to forget it.

What is new, on the plane of the apostolate, is the organization of the vast body of the laity in the service of the extension of God’s visible kingdom. In this field an immense effort is still needed to exploit the powers which lie dormant there. In every Christian there is a dormant “Christ-power”. It must be brought out, strengthened, given its proper setting, given an opportunity to be fully effective. The combined efforts of all the different organizations of the apostolate are aimed at bringing out this latent power and making it yield a hun-

and the Our Father was said in chorus.

A sharp reminder of a nation’s undying faith; a poignant prayer whose very name was unknown to the little girl. Here is an image of the mute appeal which rises



from the world around us. It is the Christian’s duty to be the witness, not the silent witness, but the faithful witness of Christ’s resurrection. It is his duty to speak the words of salvation to those who seek, those who do not know, those who are wandering in the darkness.

“You can’t save your soul like you save money,” said Peguy. “You can only save it like you lose money, by spending it.” This is the lesson the Church wants her children to learn once more. If you receive a call to the apostolate in whatever form, do not harden your hearts but respond to it; for the faith, if it is to live, must be passed on and spread abroad. And the world has still more need of it than you have; if it is to live, it must have reasons for living and hoping. “Today,” wrote Saint-Exupery to a general who was a friend of his, “I am profoundly sad. I am sad for my generation, which is devoid of all human substance. Ah, General, there is only one problem in the whole world: how to give back to human beings a spiritual meaning to life, a concern for spiritual things.

It is absolutely necessary to tell people about this.”

—Condensed from *Christian Life, Day by Day* by Leon Joseph Cardinal Suenens. English Translation © Burns & Oates Ltd., 1963. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. The late Cardinal Suenens was an ardent supporter of the Charismatic Renewal and the former Archbishop of Malines-Brussels

The Apostolate of the Laity

by Leon Joseph Cardinal Suenens

to the practice of certain virtues and adheres to certain precepts of his own choice is worthy of the name. If you ask point-blank: “What is a Christian?” you get the reply, as likely as not: “He is a man who goes to Mass on Sundays, makes his Easter duties and abstains on Fridays.” That is only half a Christian, a dwarfed Christian. The ordinary, normal Christian is the man who, in addition to this, is actively engaged in the salvation of his brethren.

A Christian, therefore, is an apostle

We must come back to this duty if we want to live up to our true purpose and not be false to our baptism. No one is a Christian for himself alone, and the lesson in the catechism, where the question is asked: “Why did God make you?” must be clearly understood. The reply is: “to know him, love him and serve him.

dred per cent return. We are sometimes told that the world is no longer ready to hear the Christian message. The truth is that we are not ready to carry it to the world. Hidden in the heart of man is an immense longing for God, a hunger and thirst for God. Let there be no doubt about that. From time to time, in spite of all the Iron Curtains, we can see how acute and how agonizing this longing is.

The world’s appeal

I have read recently the account given by a schoolmistress who escaped from socialist-era Hungary. In her class, although it was forbidden under severe penalties to utter the name of God, she had this experience:

One day, she asked if anyone would like to come out and recite a little poem, anything they liked. One little girl put up her hand to say a poem which, she said, she recited every night to her grandmother. And the little girl began: “Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name ...” She had scarcely begun before all the rest joined in,

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Priest on Board

From Page 1



Catholics on board the MS Princendam who attended daily Mass...every day

except at the church at Loyola University in New Orleans. I was informed by a Jesuit priest in icy tones cold enough to freeze the Mississippi, "We don't allow concelebrating priests." I was speechless. It was one of those situations where one thinks of lots of snappy retorts hours later.

For my vacation last year, I signed on as guest chaplain on a Holland America Ship, the M S Princendam out of Ft. Lauderdale, for a free 28-day Amazon/Caribbean adventure. In return for free passage, I was responsible for celebrating daily Mass for guests, Sunday Mass for the crew and providing the usual pastoral care and sacraments that Catholics expect from their priests. It was a rewarding experience in meeting cruise guests. Some, who are committed Catholics, attended daily Mass. They represented several countries. Also on board were some American Catholics-in-name-only (Cino) who couldn't make it even to Sunday Mass because it was too early--8:00 am, or too late--5:00 pm. The 5:00 pm Mass interfered with their cocktail hour.

On the second week of the cruise, at one table during my table-hopping evening dinners, a Cino couple from Cincinnati went to great lengths to tell the others and me how generous they have been to their local Catholic church building campaign. Unabashedly, they informed us that they "had intended to attend the Mass last Sunday, but since it was vacation, decided to sleep in." In 28 days they never made it to Mass once.

Rather than the roads in heaven, perhaps they are under the impression that the road to heaven is paved by gold. What's that saying about the road to hell?

Look for the sign in the back window of the ship... Priest on Board

The Filipino crew was a joyful lot of committed Catholics. They had guitar music and singing at their 11:00 pm Mass. Many were getting off work from their low paying jobs at that hour, but some were getting up in the middle of the night to cheerfully do their Sunday duty. They truly strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (CCC2182). They were also a stark contrast to those wealthy Cinos who couldn't drag themselves out of bed for an 8:00 am Mass.

A couple of years ago the Committee on Migration of the United State Conference of Catholic Bishops encouraged the development of the Apostleship of the Sea of the United states of America in "response to cruise guests, crew members, cruise line companies, Bishops of the USA and Catholic priests who have requested quality pastoral care from an approved priest aboard ship." Reading between the lines by a reliable source, AOSUSA was in response to a cruise line which reportedly was using rent-a-priests who had been defrocked, married or otherwise impaired causing "scandal" to those Catholics who attended their "mass".

AOSUSA is pressuring Cruise lines to use only priests who have joined their organization after having permission from a Bishop or Religious Abbot/General/Provincial.

So the next time you are traveling by cruise ship, tell them you are Catholic and want to have a priest on board so you can attend daily and Sunday Mass. You will be helping yourself and a priest have a faith-filled vacation.

--Fr. Joe Landi is the Editor of the Charismatics and a Parochial Vicar at St. Cecilia Church, San Francisco.



A Book Review

Sr. Patricia Proctor

The idea was simple enough. Ask people to write a brief account of their personal experience

of the importance of the Eucharist in their life.

Collect 101 of these stories and publish them as a book. The response was overwhelming. After 201 accounts were received, a halt was called. It seemed as though everybody had something they needed to say about the Eucharist. Everyone wanted to proclaim the impact Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament had had in his or her own life.

This book is a collection of personal stories gathered by an amazing American Poor Clare, Sister Patricia Proctor. In fact if anybody could be

Eucharist, she has a dual strategy. She has already opened a new website, www.vearoftheeucharist.com and is attracting attention before it is even completed.

201 Inspirational Stories of the Eucharist is a delightful,

heartwarming book. One story compellingly leads into another. Each is so short that reading more is almost addictive. Every one of them is utterly genuine and sincere, many giving extraordinary examples of God's intervention through the Eucharist. It is a book with which everybody can identify. Through the anecdotes of others, I found myself saying, "Hey, that's me!"

The book is so easy to read that it is equally appropriate for busy people with little time to spare and also as a bedside book for those who like to read something peaceful and reflective before going to sleep.

Its language is simple, direct, memorable, personal and real. It is a genuine catechesis as

people who have found faith share their experiences and understanding with the reader. It is a beautiful testimony to the way in which God works quietly and unobtrusively in people's lives, but also shows that sometimes his intervention is like a bolt from the blue.

Every page has a quotation from the recent Church documents on the Eucharist. This allows those who don't have time to read indigestible documents written in "Vaticanese" to feed on small morsels instead.

This book is a very valuable contribution to the Year of the Eucharist because it shows the presence of Christ in his people, but also his people in Christ.

--A Review by Sister Janit Fearn from the Catholic Times, UK. available at <http://eucharist101.com/eucharist-media-room.html>

201 Inspirational Stories of the Eucharist

by Sister Patricia Proctor

described as the Publicity Agent of the Gospel, Sr. Patricia fits the bill.

From inside the Poor Clare monastery in Spokane she has set up some universally known websites, all under the umbrella of www.calledbviv.com. Thousands of people worldwide use her franciscancards.com for their e-cards. Her daily Peace Card has a mailing list of 15,000. With a Franciscan, all things are possible if it means bringing Jesus and people closer together. So Sr. Patricia is now also in the process of setting up a Catholic radio station, Spokane Catholic Radio, all with the support of her community, some volunteers and the backing of her local bishop.

Sr. Patricia has already written a bestseller, "101 Inspirational Stories of the Rosary" and now, for the Year of the



Explosion of Fire

--Holy Spirit Ministry

Edited by Fr. Peter Coughlin

A collection of articles and testimonies from thirty-five years of the Charismatic Renewal. Chapters cover Baptism in the Spirit, prayer meetings, changed lives, community living, gifts of the Spirit, papal statements, and evangelism. In-spiring, inspiring, instructive, and infectious sharings by a wide variety of contributors about living your whole life for Jesus through the power of the Spirit. Order on the web at www.renewed-life.org

\$10.95—Bread of Life Renewal Centre

The Faith of Mary

--Vatican II Insights on the Humanity of Mary

By Antoine E. Nacheff

Like us, Mary struggled to understand, pondering the events of her son's life and meditating on them in her heart as the Holy Spirit continued to enlighten her with respect to her own role in his mission. In this book, Father Nacheff relates Mary's life and faith to our own and shows us how we can grow in wisdom and grace by imitating her example.

\$12.95—Alba House

Public Witness

--The Pastoral Letters of the American Catholic Bishops

By Camilla J. Kari

This work allows readers to learn of the highlights and obscure portions of the pastoral letters without reading through several volumes of Victorian prose. Well-documented and accessible, this is suited for the scholar and the general audience.

\$21.10—The Liturgical Press

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Photos of women draped in bright sarongs leading children through a sandy barren landscape capture the plight of the refugees in the Darfur region in western Sudan.

Stories of rape and pillage told to aid workers through translators underscore the trauma and despair of a farming people forced from their land.

About 100,000 civilians have been killed in Darfur during the last two years with 400 villages destroyed and two million people forced to flee their homes. Neighboring Chad hosts 200,000 refugees and the human situation on both sides of the boarder appears desperate. Leading United Nations officials term this “the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.”

Developing a Spirituality of Solidarity

For people of faith the principle of solidarity calls us to respond to the sufferings of our neighbors wherever they live in the world. But Catholics concerned about Gospel justice sense a spiritual overload. Where to begin? The sheer distance and complexity of Darfur, plus the numbers and continued violence of the tragedy offer few realistic solutions.

Yet, from this seemingly impossible situation, believers must develop a spirituality of solidarity to move beyond their paralysis. The spirituality that makes solidarity real joins personal awareness with a communal response: Oh, God, save your people and how can we help?

First, the spirituality of solidarity engages the situation by asking what is happening.

What is Happening in Sudan?

Basically, Sudan’s central government has armed and supported a militia, the Janjeweid, to fight on its side against rebel insurgents in Darfur. The Janjeweid, a colloquialism trans-

lated as “horsemen with guns,” or “evil horsemen,” represents a mob of armed thugs more than a militia that has rampaged through villages and towns killing men and boys and raping women.

Drawn mainly from pastoral peoples of different tribes, the Janjeweid are attacking the farmers in the Darfur region to gain access to land and water for their herds. Another element: the government, located in the northern part of the country, wants to maintain strict Islamic control over all inhabitants of Sudan, which includes large numbers of Christians in the south where huge oil reserves are located.

Help is Not Forthcoming from Other Nations

Sending a sufficient number of U.N. peacekeepers appears the most expedient solution to the problem, but currently a few dozen African advocacy and involvement believers

Spirituality Transforms Tragedy into Ministry

The spirituality of solidarity transforms what first appears an overwhelming human tragedy into a ministry of connectedness. By study, advocacy and involvement believers



In Solidarity with the Prince of Peace by Fr. John S. Rausch

Union monitors are only documenting abuses. Nations, it is said, have interests not principles. Even the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in its 1991 statement, “A Call to Solidarity with Africa,” says, “Sadly, race and geographical proximity as well as economic and political factors, it seems, can disproportionately shape our nation’s foreign policy.” They warn the United States against writing off the world’s poorest continent.

become a community of compassion while they invoke the healing power of God through prayer.

—Fr. Rausch is a Glenmary priest who teaches, writes and organizes from Stanton, Kentucky, in central Appalachia.

Help from Humanitarian Sources

While believers advocate for a political end to the war, they can support those who are part of the solution. In Darfur no fewer than 25 non-gov-



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Why is it easier to love your pet dog than to love a cockroach skittering across the floor? It's all a matter of relating.

Call your dog to your side, and with happily wagging tail Fido will eagerly approach you, always ready to enjoy your friendly petting. The cockroach, on the other hand, is neither approaching nor approachable.

Relating by Trust or Distrust

The dog and the cockroach have several things in common,

the presence or absence of love in the human-to-animal relationship. (Hence the proverbial encomium of a dog as “man’s best friend.”) The dog is lovable because it is trusting of a kindly master. Why does the dog trust? Essentially it is because it perceives its master as benevolent—a *benevolent person with benevolent power*, expressed in *benevolent action*. That is to say, the dog makes it easy for the master to love him reciprocally, because he perceives the master as a loving *person* who manifests his love-activated *power* in loving *action*.

The More We Love, the More We Trust—and Vice Versa

The analogy is evident when the topic of study is our spiritual life. Loving God as our divine Master is the quintessence of the spiritual life—that is, holiness. It has as its prerequisites that by our faith we

it at his feet, where he eagerly and playfully waited for the next throw of the stick. The dog’s trust, in its naivete, was undisturbed by the man’s displeasure—so much so, in fact, that it dispelled that displeasure. In the face of God’s displeasure when our pursuit of holiness is retarded by sin, our trust in him and his merciful love dissolves his wrath, as the dog’s trust melted the annoyance of the man in the garden. With this, the Lord accepts us again into his warm and loving friendship, assuring us that our faltering holiness has been restored, for “the law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul” (Ps 19:7).

Trust Has Many Expressions

Just as love has many forms of expression, including consideration, gift giving, hugging, kissing, and so on, so also is trust multifaceted

Pathways of Trust, Shortcuts to Holiness

by John H. Hampsch, C.M.F.

however. First, they both regard you as a living reality although one regards you as a safe person and the other as a threatening person. Second, they both have a sense of expectancy in relating to you, although one by way of goodwill, the other by way of fear. Third, they both have an implicit awareness of your power, although one is aware of your power to please, the other of your power to harm. The three qualities or terms of interaction are all positive in the dog but negative in the cockroach. The result is that the dog relates to you by way of trust, the cockroach by way of distrust.

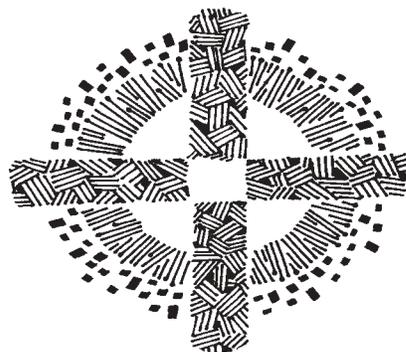
Trust Equates with Love

Notice that the presence or absence of trust is equated with

accept God as a benevolent (loving and lovable) person with benevolent (love-activated) power, expressed in benevolent action (his loving providence as it relates to us). The immediate outcropping of this trilogy in its fullest expression is *trust*. Trust in God is not the essence of holiness: love is the essence of holiness (see 1 Jn 4:16). Yet the trust that results from our love for God is the criterion for our holiness, and the ultimate sign of its authenticity. The more we love, the more we trust, and conversely, the more we trust, the more we love. This holds true in all of our relationships with God—even when he is disappointed in us.

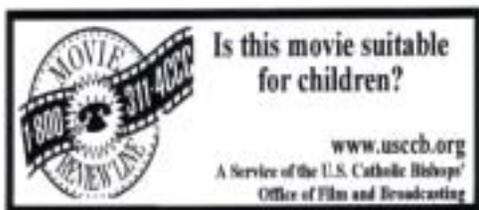
Trust in the Lord Pleases Him

Recently I saw a man throw a stick at his neighbor’s dog to stop him from messing up the flowerbed. Yet the man’s heart melted when the dog gleefully picked up the stick in his mouth and, with wagging tail, brought it back to the man, dropping



in its manifestations. In this book I have attempted to delineate 101 ways of practicing trust in God. God’s generosity is reminiscent of the ice cream stores that feature a wide variety of ice cream. The variegations of the virtue of trust are just another of the many ways that God’s goodness is reflected. They provide us with a multitude of ways to grow in holiness—a variety of paths that lead to union with our Creator. They are some of the many graces he has promised to bestow, on us to help us enjoy a superabundant spiritual life (see Jn 10:10). Let us enjoy them with zest!

--Condensed from *Pathways of Trust* ©2004 John H. Hampsch, Servant Books. Available at www.AmericanCatholic.org





We are in a new season where God is depositing into the hearts of His

people a growing hunger and desire to minister to Him, to seek and to hear the desires of His heart.

We hunger to fulfill God's agenda and not ours; to pray His will and timing; Above all, to again come to the place where we know Him intimately and are aware of His leading. This is a time of Grace where I believe the Lord is saying, "I want the heart of my Church. I want my Bride."

God has prepared us for this season as He did with Joshua in Zechariah 3:1-7. He has removed our filthy garments and has clothed us in festal garments. God is removing from us garments soiled from weariness in our prayer life and placing on us festal garments for His new work. He is giving us a new understanding about intercession and with that, an authority and assurance to join Him in this work.

What is Prayer?

To understand intercession, we must first understand prayer. I define prayer as a conversation with God, a time where we seek Him, spend time with Him, talk to Him and above all, listen. In this intimacy we dialogue, pray, communicate with God. Sometimes we think we have to have the right words when we talk to God. It is not about the right words, it is about the attitude of our hearts. Do we really believe that we can cry out to God and He will answer? Do we believe that He will listen to us? Most importantly, do we believe we can hear Him? *But without faith it is impossible to please him, for anyone who approaches God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.* (Heb 11:6 NAB).

With faith we are to seek God. With faith we listen to Him reveal His will, desire and agenda. With faith that we hear His acceptance of us, His expressions of love towards us. Faith is a

decision we make. We decide to enter into a dialogue with God. We decide to fellowship with Him, to listen, to believe and to act as He directs. This intimacy with God is the foundation for intercession that will flow out of our worship of Him.

God Speaks and We Hear

Listening in prayer always requires faith. We need to enter into prayer with expectancy and a knowing that He speaks and that we are able to hear. We must trust in the Holy Spirit within us to teach us to listen to His voice. Decide today to listen and expect to hear from God. Rest in knowing that He will not speak contrary to His word and the teachings of the Church. As charismatics, our prayer language, tongues, is key to hearing God. When we pray in tongues, we empty ourselves of our preconceived ideas, and clear the way to hear the voice of God. *(For) if I pray in a tongue, my spirit is at prayer but my mind is unproductive.* (1 Cor 14: 13 - 15).

In intercession, it is essential that we obey what we have heard as the Holy Spirit will reveal enemy tactics, prayer strategies, and plans of action. In intercession, we need to be sensitive to the voice of God so as to respond accordingly to His will and direction

intimacy with the faithful God, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, Moses drew strength and determination for his intercession. (2577).

What is Intercession?

Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary defines intercession as prayer, petition, or entreaty in favor of another. The Catechism of the Catholic Church offers the following definition in its discussion on the Age of the Church:

Intercession is a prayer of petition which leads us to pray as Jesus did. He is the one intercessor with the Father on behalf of all men, especially sinners. He is "able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." The Holy Spirit "himself intercedes for us . . . and intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." (2634).

Intercession is a selfless act of asking on behalf of another, praying not our own interest but the interests of others. Intercession is often defined as "standing in the gap" for others. Literally, the intercessor stands between God and the person or situation being prayed for to bridge the gap with prayer. It is important to note that the Catechism states that those who intercede enter

Intercessory Prayer by Rose M. Payan, Ph. D.

Intimacy Leads to Worship and Intercession

Intercession flows from an intimate relationship with God. In knowing Him, we acknowledge His greatness, His holiness, and His love. We ascribe worship to Him and Him alone. In being intimate with God, we abide in Him. It is in this abiding, that we pray according to His will. *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.* (John 15:7). As we become intimate with God, the focus of our attention is not on us but on Him. We come to Him to listen to what is on His heart; we want to know what is on His mind. We ask Him what will minister to Him. What does He desire? This attitude is an attitude of worship. As we abide in him and know what is on His heart, we pray His will. This is foundation for intercession. The Catechism tells us that Moses drew strength for intercession for others from his intimacy with God. *From this*

into the present day ministry of Jesus.

Jesus' Continual Intercession

We take comfort in knowing that even now Jesus is continually making intercession on our behalf. Not only did Jesus offer himself as a sacrifice for our sins but also He is continually making intercession for us. *Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.* (Hebrews 7: 25). Jesus is continually "standing in the gap," praying on our behalf before the Father. He is ever making intercession for us. When we yield ourselves to the ministry of intercession, we enter into a ministry that is close to God's heart. When we intercede, we join in with the ministry being done in heaven, we do on earth that which is done in heaven. Because intercession is so close to God's heart, He loves to train

Catholic Radio Hour
KEST 1450AM
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January is a substantial need of a public relations overhaul.

After the gaiety and good times of the holidays, January seems to stand in stealthy wait, saying *The Fun is Over*. The month is associated popularly with lots of football (good) and New Year's Day hangovers (bad) and New Year's resolutions (good for you but bad news).

The New Year's resolution is an amazingly durable yet almost inevitably useless tradition. These well-intended resolutions are a tribute to our human awareness that areas of our life need improvement, yet they are also evidence of our human weakness when,



St. Paul, Conversion,

and Us

By Mary Chang Flynn

frequently, there is so little of that hoped-for improvement. Well into February, the checkbook sits unbalanced, the dog sits unwalked, and *much*, much more importantly, perhaps serious efforts at living Christian virtues and developing a genuine prayer life still remain unattempted.

Real Change Happens Only with the Lord

Yet lack of follow-through on resolutions is certainly not a sign that one should simply stop making resolutions. It is far more likely to be a sign that those resolutions are being set up and attempted through our human efforts alone. The larger truth is that we require the Lord's limitless guidance and love in order to run our lives profitably because (as is often forgotten) He is the creator of those lives; He is the author of any meaningful change, large or small, in those lives. For our resolutions at any time—not just at the start of a new year—to succeed, we must listen attentively to the Lord in the Person of His Holy Spirit. We must work with Him. God reminds us lovingly,

“Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build. Unless the Lord guard the city, in vain does the guard keep watch” (Ps 127:1). More to the point, He tells us, “I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5).

Very appropriately for January, there is no better example of our need for the Lord to reside in any lasting changes in our lives and the breathtaking power He brings to those changes than St. Paul, whose conversion we celebrate on January 25th. We hear so often of Paul's storied shift from Saul, fire-breathing persecutor of Christians to St. Paul, Christian apostle and martyr, that one tends to take the extremely dramatic change in Paul's life for granted without adequate attention to the wonderful cooperation between Paul and the Holy Spirit to bring about the conversion that reshaped the world forever.

From Saul to St. Paul, in the Holy Spirit

The Lord Jesus initiates the conversion on the road to Damascus as the future apostle rides on his way to capturing and imprisoning more Christians when the Lord asks out of a flash of light, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” (Ac 9:4). Saul emerges blind and shaken from this event; the Lord sends the disciple Ananias to pray over him. Ananias lays his hands on Saul and prays “that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” (Ac 9:17). Newly filled with the Holy Spirit and having regained his sight, Saul responds by cooperating fully with the Lord: he is baptized immediately and “beg[ins] at once to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God” (Ac 9:20). The awesome solidity of Saul's shocking conversion is tested and proven right away, as plots to kill him are promptly hatched but leave him completely unafraid and unmoved in his powerful witness to the Lord, even as the disciples in Jerusalem with whom he seeks fellowship initially fear and reject him owing to his Chris-

tian-persecuting past.

The Lord and Saul—soon to be Paul—collaborated beautifully in this world-changing conversion. Jesus' surreal encounter with him on the Damascus road would have yielded no fruit, much less the spread of Christianity to the Gentiles, without Saul's wholehearted cooperation with the Holy Spirit upon being prayed over. Likewise, if Saul had (very improbably) decided to give Christianity a whirl on his own, it is unlikely that he would have lasted very long walking the demanding and (as he knew personally) dangerous Christian way.

Making Paul's Cooperation with God, Our Own

This great apostle went on to advise, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Co 11:1). We imitate Paul by being acutely attentive to and cooperative with the Lord's direction. Even when considering a change in our lives that is obviously pleasing to Him, such as striving to develop a real spiritual life, it should not be something we attempt as a do-it-yourself project; it must still be the Lord who advises us how to go about it, just as He directed Paul upon his baptism in the Spirit. When considering a change in our lives where the Lord's will is unclear to us, it is essential to listen for His voice in order to discern what that will is and how we are to respond to it. Sometimes, He may advise quietly in the “tiny whispering sound” (1 Kgs 19:12) that spoke to Elijah in which God was so powerfully present that the prophet “hid his face in his cloak” (1 Kgs 19:13). In contrast, He may advise thunderously, as was Paul's experience. God is the architect of such encounters; it is He who will design their character.

Once a decision to make changes is forged according to the Lord's guidance, then we are to act in accordance with His power, as Paul did, in order to live out and persevere in those changes—to be “clothed with power from on high,” (Ac 24:49) in the words of Christ Jesus Himself, describing the action of the Holy Spirit upon his disciples. This is the boundless, loving power of the Holy Spirit that produces lasting change potent enough to transform the world, and certainly potent enough to transform us exactly as God orders—if we allow it. May at least a small part of St. Paul's conversion experience become our own.

--Mary Chang Flynn is a member of St. Cecilia Parish, San Francisco and does Layout and Design for the *Charismatics*.

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Four Catholic mothers were having coffee and bragging about their sons. The first relates, “My son is a priest. When he walks into a room, everyone stands and calls him ‘Father’”.

The second mother chirps, “My son is a bishop. When he enters a room, people stand—including the priests and say respectfully, ‘Your grace’”.

The third mother, glowing with pride says, “My son is a cardinal. When he walks into a room, everyone—including priests and bishops stand and call him ‘Your Eminence.’”

The fourth woman sips her coffee in silence, while the first three give her the ‘eye’. “What about your son,” one finally ventures to ask. “What is he?”

“My son?” she replies. “Oh, he is not in ministry. However, he is 6’2”, has blond hair, blue eyes, broad shoulders, dresses right for every occasion, and is movie-star handsome. When he walks into a room, everyone swoons and the women say, ‘Oh, my gawd!’”



St. Peter decided to speed-up entry through the Pearly Gates and asked the assembled to form three lines... “Single”, “Married”, and “Married, not hen-pecked”.

Everyone got into the first two lines except one lone man in the “Married, not hen-pecked” line.

St. Peter went up to him and asked, “Are you sure you are in the right line?”

“Yes”, came the reply. “My wife told me to stand here.”

One night, a burglar broke into a house he thought was empty. He tiptoed through the living room but suddenly he froze in his tracks when he heard a loud voice say: “Jesus is watching you!”

Silence returned to the house, so the burglar crept forward again. “Jesus is watching you,” the voice boomed again.

The burglar stopped dead again. He was frightened. Frantically, he looked all around. In a dark corner, he spotted a bird cage and in the cage was a parrot. He asked the parrot: “Was that you who said Jesus is watching me?”

“Yes,” said the parrot. The burglar breathed a sigh of relief, and asked the parrot: “What’s your name?”

“Clarence,” said the bird. “That’s a dumb name for a parrot,” sneered the burglar. “What idiot named you Clarence?”

“The same idiot,” replied the parrot, “who named the Rottweiler Jesus.”

The ship’s chaplain, strolling the promenade-deck, noticed a couple he knew to be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary sitting in deck-chairs, holding hands.

“I see you two are turning this into The Love Boat,” he joked in passing.

“Oh! We’re not holding hands, Father,” replied the wife with a wink. “I’m just checking his pulse to see if he’s still alive.”

Phonetic Dictionary

(Use to understand the speaking Bush)

Pay Un: A thang used to cook in .

Pan: A place where one serves a life sentence.

Hayud: Where you put your hayut.

Hay Und: The thing that holds your five fingers.

Bob War Fants: Used to keep cattle in a pasture.

War Plars: Used to cut Bob War Fants

Rat Cheer: In this very place

Rat Tare: A little south of Rat Cheer.

Merkan Cissen: Some-one born in the USA

Maon: Like in “I have maon Cawur.”

Lard: Like in “Praise the Lard.”

Mals: A measure of distance

Punchard Tar: Something that goes flat when you don’t hav a spaur in the cawur.

Tant: A thang that holds a revival or a circus.

Born: A thang for livestock on a rayanch.

Woosh: Like in “Ah woosh yud be muh sweethort.”

Whurr: Like in “Whurr’s muh hayut.”

Whan: Lkie in “Whan you comin tuh seeme?”

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Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi

The biggest decisions are those that involve life-long vocations.

These are, primarily, marriage and religious vocations to serve God as a priest, sister, or religious brother. In many cases, a call to live singly is also a life commitment that follows the same kind of intense discernment as other vocations.

Discerning a call to one of these vocations provides a special challenge to decision-making. They are calls to a permanent state in life. They can be examined carefully beforehand; some kinds of religious life can even be lived temporarily without committing oneself to them. But neither marriage nor the religious life can be “tried out.” Neither can be discarded once entered into. They are the biggest of major decisions.

A Vocation is a Naming

The word vocation means “call,” but the English word “call” is too weak to capture the full meaning of the word. The vocation call is more like the biblical nam-



ing, as in Adam’s naming the animals in the garden. There’s something definitive about it. When God calls you to a vocation, he defines you for life. He possesses you, exerts His authority over you.

At the same time, a vocation is a call to freedom. It doesn’t remove your free will. To the contrary, it enables you to become free. Many people see a vocation as something limiting — locking oneself up in a seminary or convent, or restricted for life by marriage vows to one partner. But it is not limiting at all. A vocation is a call to freedom, a response to the deepest desires of one’s heart.

Our spirits are oppressed when

we fight a call from God. When we have a vocation, the freedom comes in following it. “When the Son frees you, you are free indeed” (Jn 8:36).

Discernment of All Vocations in the “Rich Young Man”

The story of the rich young man in Matthew is often used as a model for discussion of religious vocations. However, it can be applied to discernment of *all* vocations—to the married and single life as well. This encounter between Jesus and the young seeker raises most of the important issues in the discernment of vocation.

The young man is looking for a bargain: “What good must I do to gain eternal life?” Eternal life is a great prize; tell me what to do to gain it and I’ll do it.

Jesus answers, as he always does, by drawing the questioner deeper into the mystery of God. The “good” you are talking about is the means to the end. It isn’t really what you are after. “There is only one who is good,” he points out.

Making a Decision for Life

by Michael Scanlan, T.O.R.

And that is God Himself.

Jesus then moves on to the means to this end: keep the commandments. The young man, still bargaining, asks, “Which ones?” Jesus replies: “You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother”; and ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Foundation of All Vocations: a Call to Holiness

In his discussion of this passage in his encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* John Paul II points out that Jesus is not saying that these commandments are the only ones you must keep. He picks out some important ones as a way of tell-

ing the young man that he must keep the whole law — the whole teaching of Moses. Indeed, by implication, Jesus is telling the man to observe the Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount, and all of His teaching, which is set forth for us in the New Testament.

Here is our first principle of discerning a life vocation. The foundation of any vocation is a general call to holiness and knowledge of God. We are all after eternal life — that which lasts. We are pursuing that which continues to exist when everything else blows away. To achieve this, Jesus is saying, we need a relationship with God. We don’t pursue eternal life. We pursue *He who is eternal*.

In His prayer to the Father at the Last Supper, Jesus says this plainly: “Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ” (Jn 17:3).

God the Object of Every Vocation

The object of every vocation is God. It’s not building a better society, renewing the Church, having a family, fulfilling yourself, helping people, or confronting new challenges. All these things may be involved in a vocation, but the primary objective—the goal of the priest or sister, husband and wife, single lay man or lay woman — is to love God.

We do this by establishing the foundations of the Christian life. These are the four sections of the Catholic catechism—the commandments, the creed, the sacraments, and prayer. Without these being alive in your life, without fidelity to the commandments and zeal for the faith, without a life as a Catholic and a Christian, you don’t have the foundation for a specific vocation. The rich young man says to Jesus, “I want to be your special follower.” Jesus replies. “Get your life in order first.”

--Condensed from **What Does God Want...a Practical Guide to Making Decisions** by Michael Scanlan, T.O.R. ©1996 Our Sunday Visitor, Franciscan University Press, Steubenville, Ohio.



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and grace those who are willing to do this work. He seeks those that will intercede.

Three Types of People God Seeks

There are three types of people God seeks. He seeks the lost. He seeks those that worship him in spirit and in truth, and He seeks the intercessor.

● *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.* Luke 19:10 (NAB)

● *But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him.* John 4:23 (NAB)

● *I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none.* Ezek 22:30 (NIV)

● *And He saw that there was no man, and was astonished that there was no one to intercede.* Is 59:16 (NIV)

Jesus is still seeking those that would join Him in intercession. I believe He is saying, "Come, join in. I will teach you. I will empower you. I will direct you. Follow the leading of my Spirit." How will we respond to His call? I exhort you to say, "Yes Lord, seek no more, here I am!" "I will minister with you Jesus." "I will stand in the gap for others." "I will speak your words." "Use me to Love your people."

Prayer

Father God, I thank you for this new season of intercessory prayer in our Church. I thank you that you are raising up intercessors who will be, as Moses, intimate with you. They will draw strength for intercession from that intimacy. Your intercessors will be those as in Psalm 149:6 *With the praise of God in their mouths, and a two-edged sword in their hands.*

Father God, teach us to see ourselves as warriors of prayer and praise. Teach us to boldly enter into your throne room and join Jesus in the ministry of intercession.

Father, keep us focused not on our abilities but on your ability. Keep us humble before you as we pray for your people. Above all, help us to intercede as Jesus intercedes, in Faith and with an attitude of Mercy and Love.

Remove from us Father any teaching on worship and intercession that is not from you. Prepare us for a new time and increase our hunger for you. Help us to let go of our formulas in worship intercession and ministry. Help us to open up to you and to give you full reign.

Above all, Father, forgive us for thinking that our prayers have been in vain. Help us to know that if we pray according to your will, it will be done. Help us to know that indeed the fervent, effectual prayers of a righteous man/woman do avail much. Amen.

--Rose Payán, Ph.D. is a praise and worship leader and bible teacher who has been active in Catholic renewal ministries for over 25 years. She is a longtime member of NORCAL Intercessors, whose purpose is to develop and equip leaders.

throughout history is nothing short of phenomenal. The greatest painters, sculptors, composers, poets, authors, and scholars repeatedly paid tribute to her, and did so rhapsodically.

To name but a few, consider the stirring poetry of Dante, the stirring music of Bach and Schubert, and the soulful art of Fra Angelico, Giotto, Murillo, Raphael and Michelangelo. They and many others have consistently sung her praise in the media of their expertise.

Negative Historical Impacts on Marian Devotion

Historically, we may cite two reactions that adversely affected our appreciation of and devotion to Mary. The Protestant Reformation is the first. In the words of Lawrence Cunningham, "Despite a lingering devotionism in the writings of Martin Luther, veneration of the Blessed Virgin was swept away with the same vigor and finality as monastic institutions, a celibate clergy, the Latin mass, and devotion to other saints. For the Reformation, devotion to Mary derogated from the true worship of Christ."

The Catholic Counter-Reformation was the second reaction, and it also proved unfortunate. In the attempt to combat what it considered the Protestant heresies, it "protested too much" For some counter-reformers, Marian devotion was made a litmus test of Catholic orthodoxy. They pushed devotion to Mary to the extreme, almost seating her on a throne next to God, or promoting bizarre devotional practices.

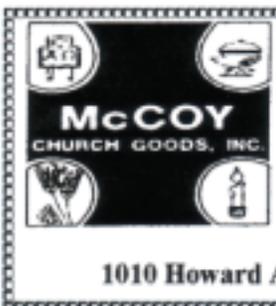
A consequent reaction resulted. Devout Catholics who mistook the extremism as authentic were turned off and turned away over the decades from the genuine devotion that is part and parcel of the glory and beauty at the heart of Catholicism. Paradoxically some of the extremists were theologically learned.

Along came the Second Vatican Council to restore the balance and set Marian devotion in proper order. The Council Fathers exhorted "theologians and preachers of the divine word to abstain from all gross exaggerations as well as petty narrow-mindedness in considering the singular dignity of the Mother of God."

After rejecting "sterile or transitory affection," and "a certain vain credulity," Vatican II situated Mary and Marian devotion firmly in the total context of Catholic faith. The outcome is a clearer understanding of Mary's role in salvation history, and a true desire to be nourished by the witness of her maternal love.

Christian life without Mary is inconceivable.

--Marianist Brother John Samaha, a former high school and adult education teacher in the U.S., including the Oakland Diocese and Lebanon, is now retired and residing at Villa St. Joseph in Cupertino, Ca.



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Every year in January, the Church invites us to participate in “the week of prayer for Christian unity”.

Are you sensitive to this search for unity? More important: Why and how do we live it?

Pope John Paul II recently reminded us that the Lord founded the Church “one and unique”. It is what we profess in the Creed: “I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church”. And yet, the Vatican II Council reminds us that many Christian communities represent themselves to men as the true heritage of Jesus Christ.

Remember always that unity is a special gift, a gift “that we carry in fragile clay vases” that may break.

How Good for Brothers to Live Together by Cathy Brenti

During the Last Supper, Jesus prays for his disciples “...so that all may be one, as you, Father are in me and I am in you” (Jn 17: 20-21). Unity is also the “treasure” that He gave them. A treasure that has two characteristics: On the one hand, unity expresses faithfulness to the gospel; on the other hand, as the Lord Himself indicated, it is a condition so that all may believe He is sent by the Father.

Saint Paul invites us to vigilance, perseverance and confidence, The Pope underlines all of the necessary virtues to ecumenism.

“Hope cannot but be raised from ecumenical encounters. At each encounter, the distance seems to reduce. Mutual confidence grows, a preliminary condition for understanding, coexistence and communion”.

A duty and an “urgency”

The search for unity is equally a duty for each one of us : “Aspiration to unity should not be missing in the daily life of churches and of ecclesial communities as well as in the life of each faithful”, says JP II, adding that “it is even a duty to praise the Lord for the path

already travelled, as much for the quality of fraternal relationships between the diverse communities, as for the results (the fruits) produced by theological dialogues”.

The prayer of Christ reminds us that it is necessary to welcome this “gift” and develop it deeper and deeper. The invocation “Ut unum sint” is at the same time an “imperative that compels us, a force that supports us, a salutary reproach facing our laziness and our narrowness of heart. Our confidence depends on Jesus’ prayer and not on our own abilities, to attain the full and visible communion of all Christians”.

We are “held”, according to each one’s vocation, to recreate the full communion, this precious treasure left to us by Christ. We should not try to escape.

Unatis redintegratio talks to us

about the heart conversion (no true ecumenism without personal conversion), holiness of life, common prayer, and mutual fraternal knowledge, as being many elements to consider and in which we should place our efforts.

In *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, the Pope talks about the “urgency” to promote communion in the delicate domain of ecumenism. He himself, after the year 2000 Jubilee, considers that there have been several “prophetic and emotional signs, but there is still a long way to go.”

The means: prayer and dialogue

“In front of such a task, what can we do? Give up? No, because what is uniting us is stronger than what is dividing”, says the Holy Father

in May 2003. Then again on St Peter & St Paul’s day the same year: “Looking to advance in the dialogue of truth and charity, let us not be discouraged by the difficulties we may encounter. We must continue our efforts, fortify our desire for unity, aiming towards full communion and cooperation, and always presenting our needs to the Lord as well as our hopes and our failures, so that He can heal us in His mercifulness”.

“We must strive to clear each obstacle by continuous prayer, by perseverant dialogue. Even if the road towards unity is steep and strewn with obstacles and difficulties. Even if at times we doubt the power of Jesus’ word let them be one”. The good Pope John XXIII said: “I believe in dialogue, always, even when I can impose my will being the Pope”. Believe in it too!

Cardinal Etchegaray, the Pope’s regular messenger for peace, recently declared: “Dialogue is the basis of everything. Two persons cannot meet without dialogue. Dialogue is difficult, because in trying to understand the other one, we must make an effort and must respect each other”. With the help and grace of God, each one of us is capable of this effort and respect.

Let us pray with the Holy Father: “Lord, restore our knowledge of this glory that shines on Christ’s face, so that through our actions, our commitment and all our life, we may proclaim to the world that He is alive and that He is at work among us. -

-Courtesy ICCRS Newsletter, Vatican City

Coming Events

Jan 7 FIRST FRIDAY MASS of the Sacred Heart

St. Charles Borromeo Church

713 South Van Ness Ave at 18th St., SF

Fr. Nestor Alterado, Principal Celebrant

Jan 14-16 PRIESTHOOD DISCERNMENT WEEKEND

A weekend retreat for men considering the priesthood.

St. Patrick’s Seminary

320 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park

Contact Fr. Gerardo Menchaca 650/325-5621 x 302

Jan 16 SUNDAY CHARISMATIC MASS, 2:00 PM

St. Patrick Church,

756 Mission St. (between 3rd & 4th Sts.) SF

Contact Judy 415/826-7827

Feb 4 FIRST FRIDAY MASS of the Sacred Heart

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Someone said to me that Our Lady of Guadalupe is not the Blessed Virgin Mary. Is this true?

I can only imagine how surprised you were at hearing that, but rest assured, it is not true. Since the third century, there have been reported an uncounted number of appearances of the Mother of God – although not all have been recognized as authentic – and they have all been the same beautiful lady. In order to distinguish one apparition from another, however, Marv will almost always be referred to with a title that indicates the place where she appeared or some other significant aspect of the appearance.

Famous Apparitions

Among some of the most famous apparitions that have been recognized by the Church are the following:

1531 - Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico

On a hill outside Mexico City, the Blessed Mother appeared four times to a recent convert to Christianity, Juan Diego. Mary proclaimed herself “the Mother of the true God who gives life,” and left her image permanently upon Diego’s tilma or mantle.

1830 - Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Paris, France

In the chapel of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Mary showed herself three times to novice Catherine Labouré (age twenty-four), who said she was commissioned

by the Virgin to have the medal of the Immaculate Conception or “Miraculous Medal” made in order to spread devotion to Our Lady.

1858 - Our Lady of Lourdes, Lourdes, France

At the Grotto of Massabielle, the Virgin showed herself eighteen times to Bernadette Soubirous (age fourteen). Under the title “the Immaculate Conception,” she called for penance and prayer for the conversion of sinners.

1917 - Our Lady of Fatima, Fatima, Portugal



While tending sheep, Lucia de Santos (age ten) and her two cousins, Francisco (age nine) and Jacinta Marto (age sev-

Dear Grace... by Grace MacKinnon

en), reported six apparitions of Mary, who identified herself as “Our Lady of the Rosary.” Mary urged prayer of the rosary, penance for the conversion of sinners and consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart.

Mary’s Persistence

One may wonder why Mary is so persistent. Why has she come so many times and why does she keep coming back? Obviously, she has an urgent message to convey. Our Holy Father John Paul II beautifully explains for us, in his encyclical letter *Redemptoris mater*, that she who was chosen by God to be Mother of the Redeemer is also

the mother of all mankind “in the order of grace.” As a mother, therefore, she

joins us in our pilgrimage towards our heavenly destiny. Would any good mother ever forget her children, ever leave them abandoned? It is easy to imagine that in heaven she must plead with her Son to send her “one more time” to help her children find their way to Him. Every appearance she makes is for the ultimate purpose of turning us back to God. She loves us so much. How can we not listen to her? Jesus did.

The Local Bishop Decides

The local bishop is the first and main authority in apparition cases, which can be defined as instances of private revelation. Bishops evaluate evidence of an apparition according to very strict guidelines. If the bishop rec-

ognizes a Marian apparition, it means that the message is not contrary to faith and morals, and that Mary may be venerated in a special way at the site. But, because the Church does not require belief in a private revelation, Catholics are free to decide how much personal spiritual emphasis to place on apparitions and the messages they deliver. We should always remain open, however, to something that has been recognized as authentic by the Church.

--Grace holds an MA in Theology and is a syndicated columnist and speaker on Catholic Doctrine. ©Grace D. MacKinnon, 2005. Contact Grace at www.dear-grace.com



Vision Statement of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (Adopted January 2004)

The Lord is calling the Charismatic Renewal to be bold in a united voice to make an impact on the Church and society by proclaiming:

1. the priority of the Lordship of Jesus
2. the Father's love for all
3. the power of the Spirit in all we do
4. the radical call to a witness of holiness.

Creo que estamos en una etapa en donde Dios

esta depositando dentro de los corazones de su pueblo un deseo ardiente de servirlo, de buscarlo y escuchar los deseos de su corazón. Estamos hambrientos por llevar a cabo la agenda de Dios y no la nuestra; orando su voluntad y su tiempo. Por encima de todo, de regresar allugar donde sabemos que Dios conocemos íntimamente y estamos atentos para seguir su liderazgo. Este es un tiempo de gracia donde creo que El Señor esta diciendo, “Quiero el corazón de mi Iglesia. Quiero a Mi Prometida”.

Dios nos ha preparado para esta estación, así como Dios hizo con Josué, en

Zacarías 3: 1- 7 El ha removido nuestras ropas sucias y nos ha vestido de ropas



Oración de Intercesión

por Rose M. Payán, Ph.D.

de fiesta. Dios esta removiendo nuestras ropas del cansancio de nuestra vida de oración y vistiendonos de fiesta para su nuevo trabajo. El nos esta dando un nuevo entendimiento acerca de la intercesión y con esto, una autoridad y una seguridad de que Dios estamos acompañando en este trabajo.

Que es la oración?

Para entender la intercesión, debemos primero en tender la oración. Yo defino la oración como una conversación con Dios, un tiempo donde Dios buscamos, pasarnos tiempo con El, hablamos, y sobretodo Dios escucharnos. En esta intimidad oramos, dialogamos, nos comunicamos con Dios. Algunas

veces pensamos que tenemos las palabras correctas cuando hablamos con Dios. No se trata de las palabras precisas, se trata de la actitud de nuestros corazones. Realmente creemos que cuando alzamos nuestra voz El nos contestara? Creemos que nos escuchara? Pero lo mas importante de todo, creemos que lo escucharnos a El?

Pero sin fe es imposible agradar a Dios, porque todo el que se acerca a Dios debe creer que El existe y que recompensa a los que le buscan. Hebreos 11 :6 (NAB)

Con fe hemos de buscar a Dios. Con fe hemos de escuchar como nos revela su voluntad, sus deseos y su agenda. Con fe hemos de creer que nos acepta y expresa su amor hacia nosotros. Tener fe es una decisión que hacemos. Decidimos entrar en un dialogo con Dios. Decidimos tener una relación con El, para escucharlo, creer y actuar como El nos dirija. Esta intimidad con Dios es

el fundamento de la intercesión que nos llevara a fluir en nuestra alabanza hacia El.

Dios habla y nosotros escuchamos

Para escuchar en oración siempre requerirnos fe. Necesitamos entrar en oración teniendo la certeza de saber que El habla y nosotros podemos escucharlo. Debemos confiar en El Espíritu Santo dentro de nosotros quien nos ensena a escuchar su voz. Decide hoy día escuchar y esperar oír de Dios. Descansa sabiendo que El no habla nada contrario a su alabra y las enseñanzas de La Iglesia. Como carismáticos, nuestro lenguaje de oración, las lenguas, son la nave para

escuchar a Dios. Cuando oramos en lenguas, nos vaciamos de nuestras ideas pre-consevidas, y preparamos el camino para escuchar la voz de Dios. (Pero) si oro en lenguas, estoy orando en una lengua extraña, estoy orando con mi Espíritu pero mi mente no participa. 1 Corintios 14: 13-15.

En intercesión, es esencial que obedezcamos lo que hemos escuchado, pues El Espíritu Santo revela las tácticas del enemigo, las estrategias para orar, y sus planes de acción. En la intercesión, necesitamos ser sensibles ala voz de Dios para responder a su voluntad y dirección.

La intimidad guía a la alabanza y a la intercesión

La intercesión fluye de una íntima relación con Dios. Conociendolo a El, sabemos de su Grandeza, su Santidad y de su Amor. Le rendimos la alabanza a El, y solamente a El. Así hacemos íntimos con Dios, habitamos en El. Es en esta intimidad en que habitamos, donde oramos de acuerdo con su voluntad. “Si ustedes habitan en Mí, y mis palabras viven en ustedes, pidan lo que quieran y se les sera concedido”. Juan 15:7 (NIV).

A medida que desarraigamos una intimidad con Dios, el foco de nuestra atención ya no esta en nosotros sino en El. Nos acercamos a El para escuchar que tiene en su corazón; queremos saber que hay en su mente, le preguntamos como podemos servirle. Que es lo que El desea? Esta actitud es una actitud de adoración. Cuando habitamos en El y sabemos que hay en su corazón, oramos su voluntad. Este es el fundamento de la intercesión El Catecismo nos dice que Moisés saco fuerzas para interceder por otros por su intimidad con Dios.

De esta intimidad con un Dios

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Oración continua

fiel, lento para la ira y grande en el amor, Moisés saco fuerzas y determinación para interceder. 2577

Que es la intercesión?

El diccionario Merriam- Webster define la intercesión como oración, petición o como una suplica hecha a favor de otro. El catecismo de La Iglesia Católica nos ofrece la siguiente definición en su discusión acerca de la Era de La Iglesia.

La intercesión es una oración de petición que nos neva a orar como Jesús oro. El es el único intercesor delante del Padre en favor de todos los hombres, especialmente de los pecadores. Jesús “puede en todo los tiempos salvar a todos aquenos que se acercan a Dios a través de El, porque Jesús es el que vive para hacer intercesión por enos. El Espíritu Santo intercede por nosotros.....e intercede por los santos de acuerdo a la voluntad de Dios”. 2634

La intercesión es un acto despojado de egoísmo a favor de otro, orando no por nuestro interés, sino por los intereses de otros. La intercesión esta frecuentemente definida como “interponerse o pararse firmemente en el umbral!” por otros. Literalmente, el intercesor se pone entre Dios y la persona o la situación por la cual se esta orando, como un puente de oración. Es importante señalar que el catecismo afirma que aquellos

que interceden participan del Ministerio actual de Jesucristo.

La intercesión perpetua de Jesus

Nos reconfortamos al saber como basta ahora Jesús esta continuamente haciendo intercesión a nuestro favor. No solamente se ofreció como sacrificio por nuestros pecados, pero El esta continuamente haciendo intercesión por nosotros.

Por eso también puede salvar por completo a los que por medio de El se acercan aDios, ya que vive siempre para interceder por ellos. Hebreos 7 :25 (NIV).

Jesús esta continuamente “haciendo intercesión”, orando a nuestro favor delante del Padre. El esta por siempre haciendo intercesión por nosotros. Cuando nosotros nos entregamos al ministerio de intercesión, entramos al ministerio mas querido del corazón de Dios. Cuando intercedemos, nos unimos con el ministerio que esta hecho en el cielo, porque hacemos en la tierra lo que ya esta hecho en el cielo. Debido a que la intercesión es tan cercana al corazón de Dios. El ama entrenar y derramar su gracia para aquellos que estan dispuestos a hacer este trabajo. El busca a los que desean ser intercesores.

Hay tres tipos de personas que Dios busca. El busca a los perdidos. El

busca a los que lo adoran en espíritu yen verdad, y El busca al intercesor .

Hay tres tipos de personas que Dios busca

Que el Hijo del Hombre vino a buscar y a salvar lo que se había perdido. Lucas 19: 10 (NAB)

Pero se acerca la hora, y ha llegado ya, en que los verdaderos adoradores rendiran culto al Padre en espíritu y en verdad; porque así quiere el Padre que sean los que lo adoren. Juan 4:23 (NAB)

Yo he buscado entre ellos a alguien que se interponga entre mi pueblo y yo, y que saque la cara por el para que yo no lo destruya. Y no lo he hallado! Ezequie122:30

Lo ha visto, y le ha asombrado ver que no hay nadie que intervenga. Por eso su propio brazo vendrá a salvarlos; su propia justicia los sostendrá. Isaías 59: 16 (NIV)

Jesús todavia esta buscando a aquellos que lo acompañen a interceder. Creo que El esta diciendo, “Ven y unete”. Yo te enseñare. Yo te daré poder. Yo te dirigire. Sigue la dirección de mi Espíritu”. Como voy a responder a su llamado? Yo les animo a decir,

“Si Señor, no busques mas, aquí estoy!” “Yo serviré contigo Jesus”. “Yo me pondré en intercesión por ellos”. “Yo hablare tus palabras”. “Usame para amar a tu pueblo”!

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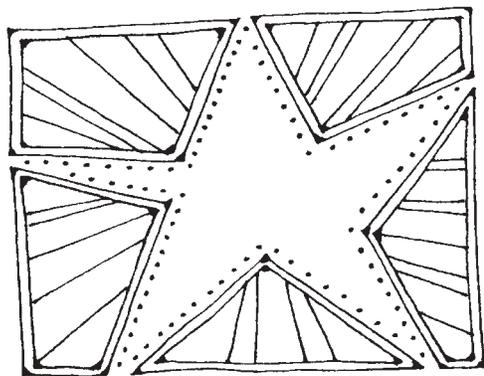
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