

STRICTLY NOT FOR SALE

MAY 2023
ISSUE

Unki

SUNDAY GOSPEL REFLECTIONS
& CATECHESSES



DOMINICAN NOVITIATE OF THE ANNUNCIATION
Manaoag, Pangasinan

What's on

MAY 2023

ISSUE

CATECHISM OF THE MONTH

Prayer to the Holy Spirit..... 1

CATECHESSES

St. Philip and James.....2

St. Vincent Ferrer.....3

St. Antoninus of Florence.....6

REFLECTIONS

What is Your Destination? 4

Never Be The Same..... 7

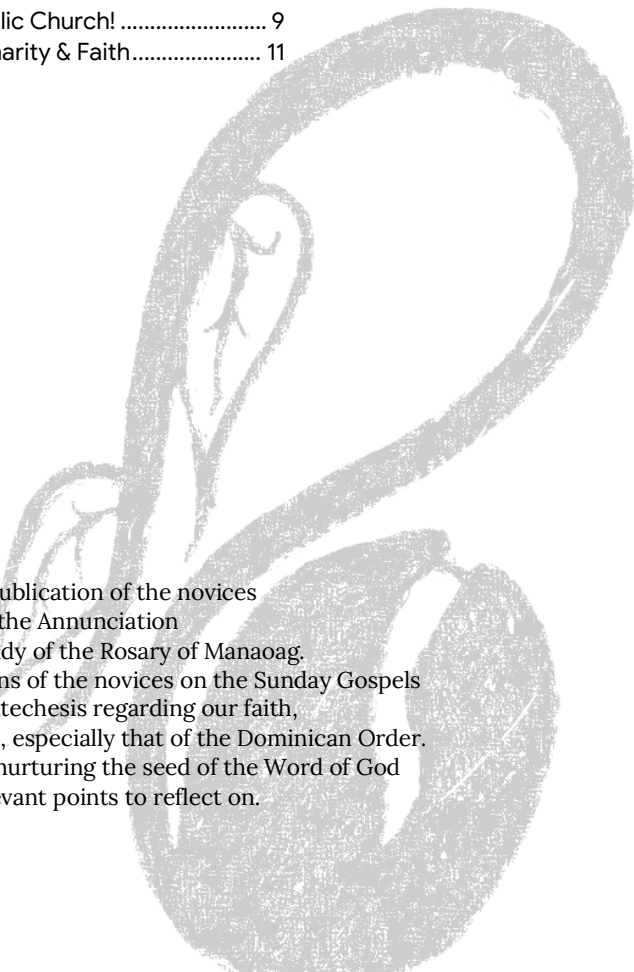
Up and Up to the Sky 8

Happy Birthday, Catholic Church! 9

Visitation: House of Charity & Faith..... 11

BINHI is the official monthly publication of the novices of the Dominican Novitiate of the Annunciation at the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag. Featured in it are the reflections of the novices on the Sunday Gospels of the current month, short catechesis regarding our faith, and the lives of selected saints, especially that of the Dominican Order.

BINHI aims to aid the faithful nurturing the seed of the Word of God by providing practical and relevant points to reflect on.



Catechism of the Month

"Prayers to the Holy Spirit"

CATECHISM OF THE MONTH by Br. Michael Dominic Baylongo Vasco



Why did Jesus send us, all the faithful, the Advocate after He ascended into heaven? It is written in the book of Psalms, "They have mouths, but they cannot speak. They have eyes, yet they cannot see." In the past, it was only the Apostles who were able to grasp the full glory of Jesus, because they were given the gift to bear witness to it, the others could not. But, when Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to the Church, he gave us the ability to see what the apostles saw, hear what they heard, and speak what they spoke. Thus, praying to the Spirit empowers us and assists us

in our weaknesses. He helps us with our everyday needs; it might be physical or mental, but most importantly, spiritual. The Holy Spirit is not just a source of truth, but also a helper that sustains us and encourages us to love and worship the Lord.

The Spirit is given to us as a gift so that we may become faithful children of God. We pray to Him for the sanctification of all we do, we say, and we think. However, oftentimes when we pray, we do not always know what we should pray for, and it becomes a meaningless or wordless grumbling, as St. Paul says. But the Spirit understands what we are praying for, because He knows what the heart desires. So, He intercedes for us before God according to His own will.

We must never forget that the Holy Spirit dwells within us as the sanctification of our thoughts, words, and deeds, our guide to entering God's Kingdom, and our source of wisdom and understanding. He is the one who will bear witness to the truth and provide us with peace, joy, and love.



MAY

3

Saints Philip and James

CATECHISM by Br. Augusto B. Cuaño, III

St. Philip appeared in the gospel to be an enthusiastic person. He brought Nathanael to Jesus, telling his friend that he had discovered the person Moses had written about. A few years later, it was Philip who made arrangements, with the help of Andrew, to have a group of Greek Gentiles brought to Jesus. Philip also had a practical, down-to-earth, mind. He was the apostle who observed that feeding the 5,000 hungry men would cost plenty of money. It was Philip who asked to show the Father when Jesus spoke about him at the Last Supper. Yet, Philip the apostle was not to be confused with the deacon Philip mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles who preached in Samaria and baptized the Ethiopian.

St. James the Less, who was Alphaeus's son, is believed to have been born in Caesarea. In comparison to Philip, he is less frequently referenced in the New Testament. James is sometimes stated as the Less, which could be an



indication that he was a smaller man or that he was younger than the other James. St. James continued to spread the gospel after Jesus died, and he is thought to have attained the position of

Jerusalem's first bishop. He died there as a martyr around the year 62 A.D. According to tradition, James wrote the epistle that bears his name.

Philip and James were both apostles who devotedly served Christ at the very beginning of the Church. It is believed that the reason why Sts. Philip and James share the same feast day because their relics were transported to Rome at the same time in early May of 560 A.D. They were put in a basilica that was built for them, not far from Rome's center. Since then, this Basilica is being rededicated to the Twelve Holy Apostles.

MAY

5

Saint Vincent Ferrer

CATECHISM by Br. Vincentius Teguh Samudra

St. Vincent Ferrer was born in Valencia, Spain, on January 23, 1350. He was the fourth child of William Ferrer and Constantia. This couple had compassion for the poor. There was an occasion when Vincent was still conceived, his mother gave alms to an old woman, then that old woman said, "It is an angel you have within you."

Later we will know that the son in her womb is well-known as the Angel of Judgment. Aside from giving affection to the poor, Vincent was also taught by his parents to care about religious life since childhood the passion of Christ always became the object of his most tender devotion. He fasted every Wednesday and Friday and spent much time under the cross. Those were two habits which he always observed even until he became a friar. Regardless of his excellent spiritual life, Vincent's intellectual life was not left neglected. He studied philosophy at the age of twelve and theology three years after it.



After finishing his study, Vincent joined the Order of Preachers. In the order, he suffered many temptations, even to the point that his parents asked him to become a secular priest. Despite those trials, through his prayer and faith, especially prayer to Our Lady and his guardian angel, Vincent triumphed over his difficulties and finished novitiate. He was ordained in Barcelona in 1379.

In his life, Vincent faced two robust trials: papal schism and the plague. The former happened in the late 1300s. He fought tirelessly for peace and unity within the church. He persuaded Pope Benedict XIII in Avignon to end the schism. This intense work caused him hard ill. Yet, the miraculous visit of the Lord together with St. Dominic and Francis healed him and enabled him to preach more ardently.

The Black Death plague evoked moral laxity. Many priests were ordained wantonly and Christians' faith was weakened as well. Thank God, Vincent,

with his novel strength which he gained after the miraculous visit of the Lord, preached zealously throughout Europe for the salvation of souls. Myriads of Jews and Moslems were converted to Catholics. As a matter of fact, those people who did not speak Spanish at that time testified that they understood every word that Vincent said.



What did he preach? He was preaching about the Apocalypse or Last Judgment. That's why he is depicted holding the book, more specifically the Book of Revelation. In that book is written: *Timete Deum et date illi honorem quia venit hora iudicii eius*, which means "Fear God and give honor to him, because the hour of his judgment is coming." Moreover, he is also depicted having wings on his back, and his right hand pointing up to heaven. It fulfills what was told by the old lady to his mom: it is an angel within you. Indeed, St. Vincent Ferrer is also known as the Angel of Judgment. He died on April 5,

1419, in Brittany, French. St Vincent Ferrer, pray for us.

MAY

7

What Is Your Destination?

REFLECTION on the 5th Sunday of Easter (John 14:1-12) by Br. Kevin Senesh

Life is short. We wish to have more adventures in our lives. It is an undeniable reality. As a response, we

choose and set certain destinations to go to. If we know well the way and have in mind where to go, it is easier to reach our destination. But if we do not, it will be a waste of time. So, we must know where we have to go and the way to reach there. In today's Gospel of John, Jesus acquaints himself



as the way, the truth, and the life. He is trying to emphasize to his listeners that he is the only way to come to his Father. Thus, it is a reason for them to trust Jesus.

In my personal experience, I figure out that Novitiate is part of his plan for me. Deepening my vocation is also a part of searching for his truth. The Dominican life helps me to draw closer to His life. In other words, by living in Dominican Novitiate, I know that I am walking according to his plans. I assuredly believe that his path is not a wandering road. It is a straight and certain road. But it does not mean that the road is short or easy. For instance, I didn't come directly here in the novitiate, I had to

undergo a different stage in formation in Sri Lanka such as aspirancy, where we stayed for three years. Then I went to the Philippines for the postulancy stage for six months. Then now, I have been staying for almost eleven months in the Novitiate. Furthermore, I believe that with Jesus I may be able to go forward and reach the plan of God.



Hence, today, Jesus invites all of us to believe in His path. He is the only way to Paradise. It may not be clear now, but later on, we may see it. We just need to put all our trust in Jesus because he is the way, the truth, and the life. He will guide us all to the end.

MAY

10

Saint Antoninus of Florence

CATECHISM by Br. Wewalage Dilan Nimeshka Fernando

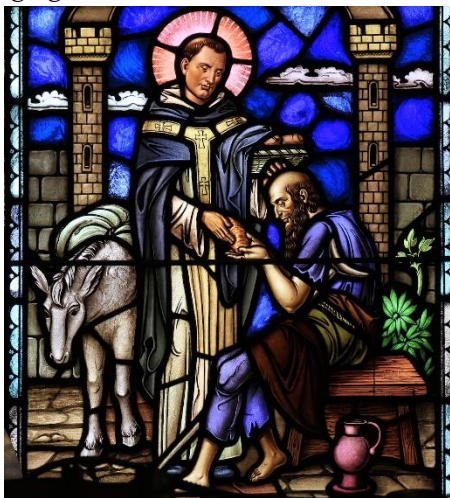
Antoninus Pierozzi was a son of a noble lawyer and notary of the Republic of Florence, Italy. He was born on March 1, 1389. It was said that his inclination toward piety was discernible, even from the cradle. His eager longing was to serve as a Dominican friar.

Unfortunately, Fr. John Dominic, prior to the monastery, found Antoninus too frail to withstand the rigorous nature of their reformed order. However, unwilling to extinguish Antoninus' youthful eagerness, after a year Fr. John admitted him into the Dominican Order.

In 1446, he was appointed archbishop of Florence by Pope Eugenius IV. Due to his reputation for wisdom, prudence, and administrative

ability, Antoninus was often called upon to serve in public affairs, both civil and ecclesiastical. He was remarkable for simple living and inflexible integrity. Antoninus is well known for his love and kindness to the poor and the needy. He supported the victims of earthquakes, famines, and plagues that devastated Florence in the 1450s. Not only for them but also for those who had fallen from wealth to misery yet were ashamed to beg, he had a special place in his heart. Finally, he acquired a saintly death on May 2, 1459.

Antoninus was affectionately called “father of the poor”, “the people's prelate” and “protector of the needy”. These titles of his good deeds serve as an assurance for him to enter paradise; titles which are more noble than all earthly diplomas and certificates. Indeed, as a result of his good deeds, he was proclaimed a saint in 1523.



MAY

14

Never Be The Same

REFLECTION on the 6th Sunday of Easter (John 14:15-21) by Br. Henry Saw Min Khaung Htet

In the gospel according to St. John, Jesus promised his disciples that he will ask the Father to give them another Helper who is the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' words, it is the Spirit of truth. He will be with them forever. The world cannot receive him but the chosen ones can receive.

Sending the Holy Spirit to the disciples is because of the love of God shown through Jesus Christ. Likewise, the Holy Spirit will help them to love Jesus. Loving Jesus is loving his commandments. Whoever keeps his commandments will also be loved by the Father in Heaven. The commandments of Jesus are all about love. This love is also the core of the Ten Commandments given to Moses by God the Father. If we love God, we will love our neighbors. We will not turn away by loving and worshipping earthly things. We will not defame His name. We will not commit murder, adultery, bear false witnesses, or commit stealing.



The promise of sending the Spirit of Truth is relevant nowadays. I have witnessed many personal encounters with the Holy Spirit in my life. It is tremendous and life-changing. How I wish that all the followers of Jesus Christ should acknowledge and allow this wonderful work in their lives. Certainly, life will never be the same.

MAY

21

Up and Up to The Sky

REFLECTION on the Solemnity of The ASCENSION of The Lord (Matt 28:16-20) by Br. Jhim Española Sambrano

It's the bird. It's a plane. No! It's Superman. I remember how this famous line from the movie Superman captivated my heart to become interested in superheroes. The man of steel flying across the sky as if the heavenly horizon is his life. I was dreaming to become like him and imagining someday this unreachable sky will become my abode of tranquility.

In this celebration of the Ascension of our Lord, we become nearer to the realities of heavenly affairs. Jesus Christ opens the sky for us so that we can foretaste a glimpse of this holy destination. In his descent into hell, he preaches the Good News to the limbo of forefathers, raising them from the darkness towards the light of heaven. Parallel to the previous one, in his ascension, he encourages us to lift our hearts and minds to



keep us away from the snares of death and attain everlasting life in His celestial kingdom. These polarized events of Christ's Paschal mysteries coincide with their purpose to bring the gospel to the ends of the world for the salvation of the souls. The former elevates the dignity of people of God into children of God, the latter brings the children of God into the rank higher than the angelic hosts.

Ascension Sunday teaches us that we are not meant for this world but for above. Jesus Christ is the prototype of God's salvific mission. He once descended to earth to live among us, and we believed him as the Son of Man. When he ascended into heaven, he raise us to achieve life with him and become children of God. Thus, the dream to make the sky our home becomes possible through the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

The peace we have wished for a long time comes near to us as a concrete concept of salvation. The paradise we are searching for is no more strange at all. Those things which were far beyond are now a visible reality that reflects our love for God.



As we embrace the Easter message of redemption and hope, we will encounter the Man of all seasons ascending into heaven. In that spectacular event, we will acclaim: *It's a bird. It's a plane. No! It's Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and Risen Lord.*



Happy Birthday, Catholic Church!

REFLECTION on the Solemnity of the PENTECOST (John 20:19-23)
by Br. Alexander Darren Everest Ang

Birthday is one of the most awaited moments in life. When I was a child, I was excited for that day owing to the celebration and the gifts prepared by my family and guests. Here, in the Novitiate, the birthday of a brother is also one of the most awaited celebrations. It will be prepared by the next birthday celebrant. Any kind of theme might be chosen to enliven the party. For example, dancing or singing, costume party, haunted celebration, etc. These are the visible signs of the joyfulness of our birthdays in the Dominican Novitiate. Nevertheless, what makes it such a *wonderful day* is the presence of our loved ones.

Today, the Church is celebrating the Pentecost.

Thousand years ago, fifty days after the resurrection, while the disciples were gathering in prayer with Mary when they were still afraid





of the Jews, the Holy Spirit came down upon them in tongues as of fire. Immediately, their anxieties turned to gladness, their cowardice to courage. They were filled with the Holy Spirit. It was the birth of the Church.

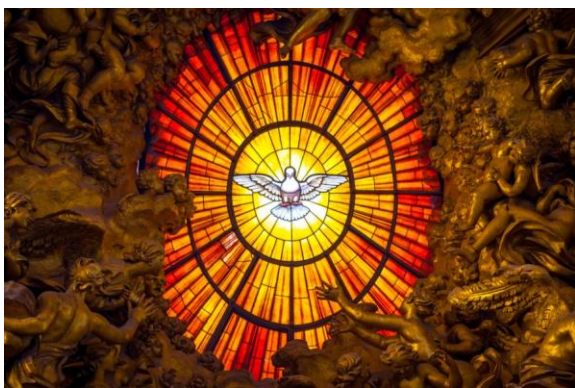
The Holy Spirit was the promise of Jesus as we just heard in the Gospel. Jesus would never leave His disciples alone instead He would send a Spirit who would accompany them in continuing His mission. This Spirit is journeying with the Church until this moment. This spirit unites all the Church's children as a family. That is why only the Catholic Church can

stand for many centuries, because of the presence of the Holy Spirit. This is the most wonderful gift from Jesus; a sign that he will never leave us until His second coming.

Let us reflect on how this Spirit works in our lives nowadays. In the morning, we are still able to wake up and continue our work. In the evening, we can sleep well until we welcome the next day. Moreover, our days are beautified by the presence of our families, relatives, friends, and loved ones. This is a life wherein the Holy Spirit works within it. Thus, our birthdays are one of the days when the Holy Spirit accompanies us. It is the special gift of Jesus to us, and that is why it should be celebrated as our thanksgiving.

Therefore, as God's children, let us celebrate this Pentecost joyously, the day when our Mother Church commemorates her birthday. Let us realize all the more the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives and especially in our Church.

Veni Sancte Spiritus!
Come, O Holy Spirit!
Happy Birthday, our
beloved Catholic
Church!



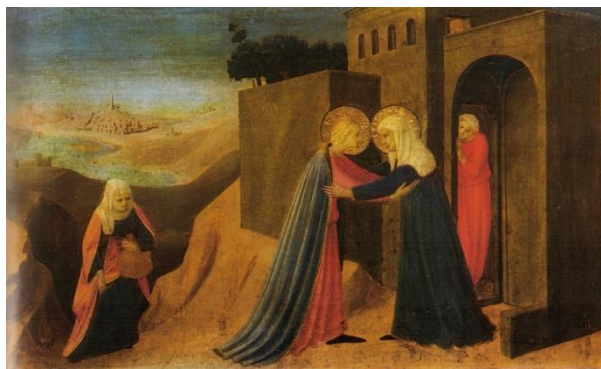
MAY

31

Visitation: House of Charity and Faith

REFLECTION on the Feast of The VISITATION of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-56) by Br. Ari Rufinus Tlonaen

Mary teaches us how her presence can be a house of charity and faith. On her visit to Elizabeth, Mary brought two wonderful things to Elizabeth. First of all, was charity. The presence of Mary blossomed charity in the house of

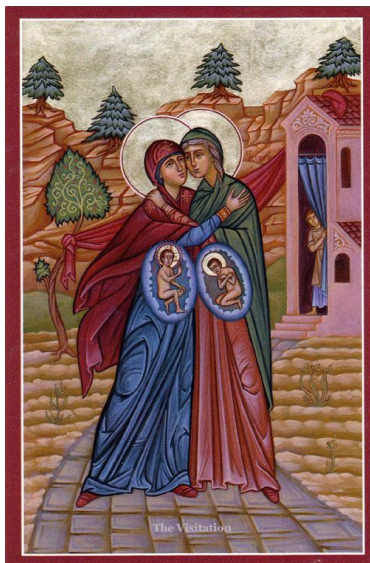


Elizabeth and brought much joy to her family. But more than it, Mary's visit is a sign of Mary's charity to humankind, with Elizabeth as its representation. Her presence in our daily life, through rosary or other Marian

devotion, brings us closer to the source of supreme charity, Jesus himself. Thus, every time we pray to Mary, we open our house to receive God's love.

The second gift was faith. Elizabeth, after being greeted by Mary, acknowledged the presence of the Lord and his mother which appeared in her saying, "How does it happen to me that the mother of our Lord should come to me?" The visitation of Mary enabled Elizabeth to express her faith. Overflowed with charity, her faith was enkindled even brighter. Similarly, every time we pray to Mary, we increase our faith in her son.

As a Dominican, I am formed to have an intimate relationship with Mary by praying the rosary every day and having another devotion to her. Personally, with the help of this prayerful environment in the novitiate and by closeness to Apo Baket, I am aided to open myself more to God's grace. And as I dispose myself to him, he gives me charity and strengthens my faith



Indeed, as we reflect on the celebration of the visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth, let us ask ourselves, “Have we opened our house, ourselves, to God’s grace like Mary and Elizabeth?” and “What are our preparations for God’s visitation in our daily life?”



13th Century

Dominican Blessing

May God the Father bless us,
may God the Son heal us,
may God the Holy Spirit enlighten us
and give us eyes to see with,
ears to hear with,
hands to do God's work with,
feet to walk with,
and mouth to preach the word of salvation with,
and the angel of peace,
to watch over us and lead us
at last, by the Lord's gift, to the kingdom.
Amen.

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