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APRIL 2023

ISSUE

Unki

SUNDAY GOSPEL REFLECTIONS
& CATECHESSES



DOMINICAN NOVITIATE OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Manoaag, Pangasinan

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APRIL 2023

ISSUE

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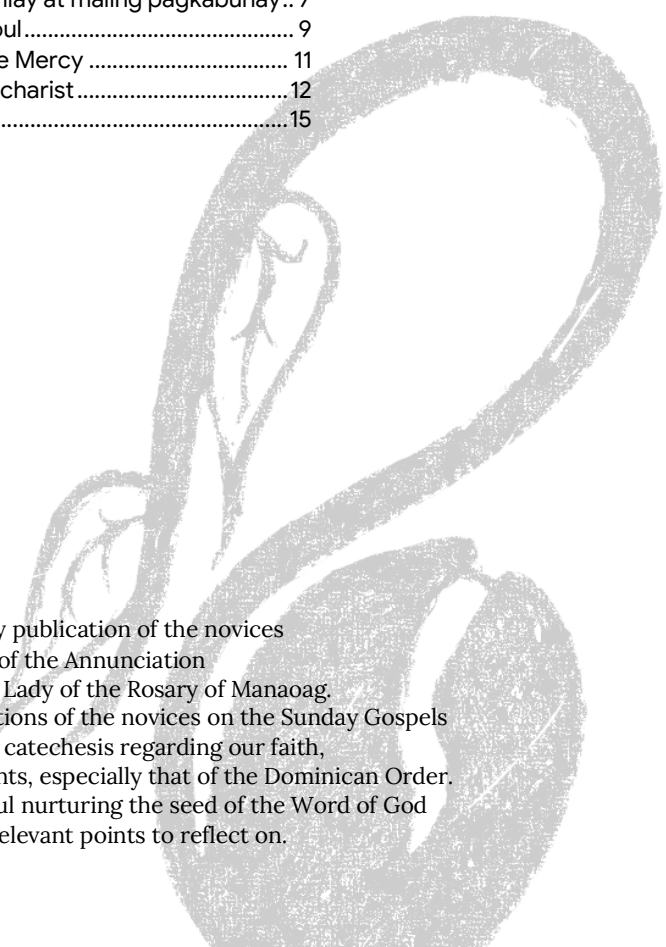
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BINHI is the official monthly publication of the novices of the Dominican Novitiate of the Annunciation at the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag. Featured in it are the reflections of the novices on the Sunday Gospels of the current 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

“Easter Season”

CATECHISM OF THE MONTH by Br. Ari Rufinus Tlonaen

The word Easter comes from the German word *Ostern*. Venerable Bede in the 8th century said that it was derived from *Eostre*, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring and fertility. In Latin and Greek, the word for Easter is *Pascha*, which refers to the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus, three days after his crucifixion.

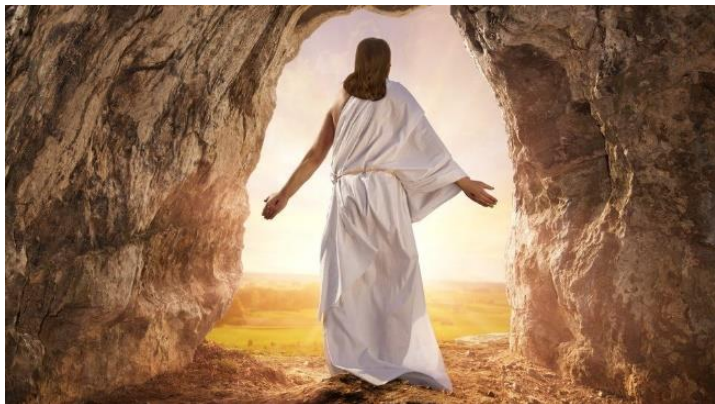
In the Christian calendar, the Easter season follows after Lent, a period of 40 of penance and fasting. It is preceded by the Holy Week, which starts with Palm Sunday and ends with Easter Sunday. The Easter Sunday itself is not simply one feast among the others, but the “Feast of feasts”, the “Solemnity of solemnities”, just as the Eucharist is the “Sacrament of sacraments”. St. Athanasius calls Easter “The Great Sunday”, because the mystery of the Resurrection permeates, with its powerful energy, our old time, until all is subjected to Him.

Hence, throughout this Easter season, the chanted Alleluia and the lighted Paschal Candle keep alive the solemn and memorable celebration of the Easter Vigil. The biblical readings and prefaces remind us that the risen Christ is always present among us and that we recognize Him in the proclaimed

word and the breaking of bread, the Eucharist.

After Easter Sunday, the next fifty days of the Easter season begin until

Pentecost Sunday.



Two important feasts blossom in this season: Ascension and Pentecost. After forty days, Christ ascended into Heaven bringing up with Him the redeemed human race, and, on the days of Pentecost, he sent down the Holy Spirit upon the Church. This spirit enables us to continue among us the

work of salvation through the proclamation of the Word of God and its good example.

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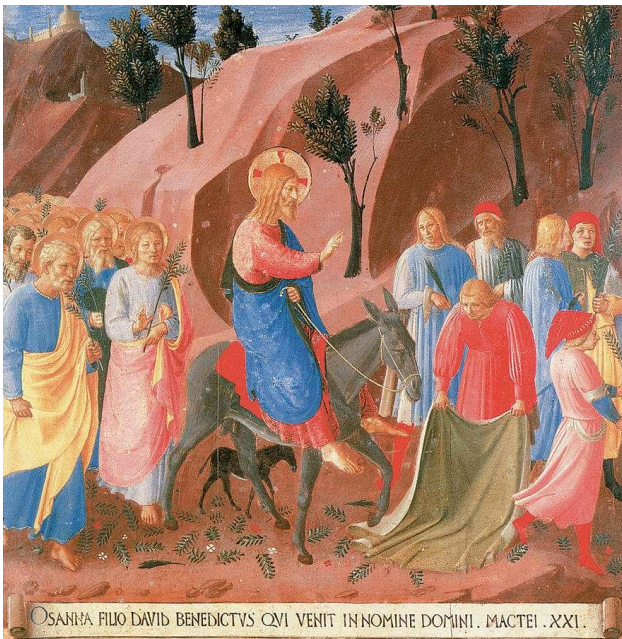
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The Lips

REFLECTION on the PALM SUNDAY of the Lord's Passion (Mt 26:14-27:66) by Br. Henry Saw Min Khaung Htet

Palm Sunday, also known as Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem is a Christian moveable feast that falls on the Sunday before Easter. The feast commemorates Christ's entry into Jerusalem, an event mentioned in each of the four canonical Gospels. Palm Sunday also marks the first day of Holy Week. In most liturgical churches, it is celebrated by the blessing and distribution of palm branches (or the branches of other native trees), representing the palm branches which the crowd scattered in front of Christ as he rode into Jerusalem; these palms are sometimes woven into crosses.

This day is remarkable for narrating a very long gospel during the Eucharistic celebration which is taken from the account Matthew 26:14 - 27:66. It can be summarized into five special events: the Passover meal of Jesus with his disciples, his prayer at the Garden of Gethsemane, his arrestment and trials, his Passion, and lastly, his crucifixion and death.



Upon the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, people were shouting with joy and welcoming, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Sadly, these same people, or maybe a majority of them, turned out demanding, "Crucify him!" Not only them but Judas and Peter also betrayed and denied Jesus. That

would be the most painful thing for Jesus because they were his disciples. From their lips, words of praise, but later, betrayal and denial came out. What a deceitful lip!

Knowing all those things in advance, Jesus prepared in Gethsemane. With a closer look at the gospel, we will notice that despite he knew he would be betrayed by the same people whose lips glorified him, Jesus treated them with a calm and clear mind. He did all the tasks he needed to do. Jesus ate! Jesus prayed! And Jesus obeyed to be crucified! What a faithful lip!

The distinct feature of Palm Sunday Liturgy is that instead of having the usual form of the Gospel reading, we, the congregation hear and ponder the long narrative of Jesus' betrayal, suffering, and death. One thing that comes into my mind, during that time, are we contemplating and feeling sorrow for

our betrayals to Jesus? Or are we doing the same thing as those people did 2,000 years ago? The same lips that praised Jesus became the lips that persisted to crucify him! Are our lips deceitful or faithful?



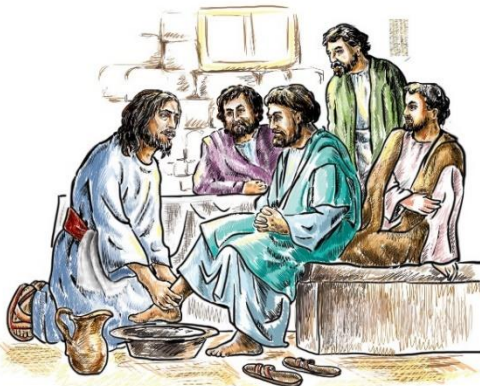
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Service

REFLECTION on the HOLY THURSDAY of the Lord's Supper (John 13:1-15)) by Br. Michael Dominic Baylongo Vasco

Today we celebrate one of the most complex and very important celebrations in the Catholic Church, that is Holy Thursday or Maundy Thursday. This marks the beginning of the Easter Triduum of our Lord's Passion, Death, and Resurrection which will commence in the evening. It was at this moment that the very first Eucharistic celebration took place during the Last Supper of Jesus with His disciples when He gave His body and blood. It was also at this moment that the very first ordination happened. Jesus ordained the Apostles who later testified to the truth, fulfilling the mission of Christ. In the morning before the



celebration of Holy Thursday, the priests with the bishop usually have the chrism Mass wherein the blessing of the catechumen, chrism, and anointing oils takes place. But what about washing of the feet?

When Jesus was about to wash the feet of the Apostles, Peter said that he would not let it happen. But what did the Lord say in reply? “If I do not wash you, you can have no part of me.” Jesus was teaching us the value of being His apostle, which was the service. The washing of the feet showed us the humility that the Son of God Himself did by being of service for His brothers and sisters and not the other way around. It also taught a genuine act of love that transcended entitlement to oneself, thus showing a sincere concern for our fellowmen. Jesus became an example that as He had washed the feet of His Apostles, so we must do the same. In other words, as Christians, we need to serve one another. We ought to live a life of service not only to those who need it but to everyone.

Maundy Thursday is a call for us to go back and remember what this celebration means to us. It is not only knowing about whom Jesus is but more about becoming like Jesus, thus fulfilling His mission in the process. The first Eucharistic celebration reminds us of Jesus



offering himself as the Passover sacrifice, the sacrificial lamb that brought salvation to the world. The first ordination teaches us that it is from Jesus Himself and His apostles that people are given the gift of priesthood, and it requires us to fulfill every duty it entails as Jesus Himself had fulfilled it. But all in all, it teaches us the value of being a Christian, being a disciple of Jesus, which is humility in service. And where can we see this example? From Jesus Himself and the saints, especially the martyrs who reached even the point of giving up their lives.

Therefore, love one another as Christ has loved you. Humble yourself for He, who is much greater than you, has humbled Himself. He has cleansed your iniquities so that you may partake of salvation. Learn to value Jesus by valuing yourself and others.

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Death Is My Friend

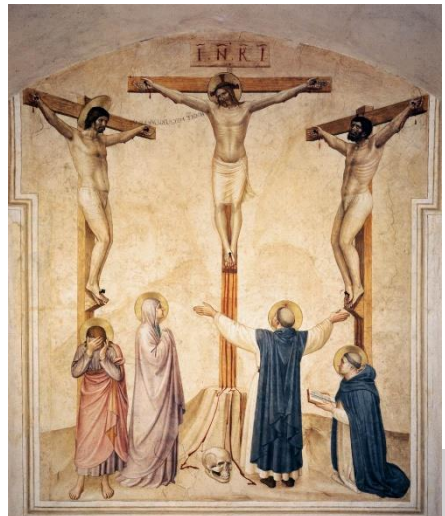
REFLECTION on the GOOD FRIDAY of the Lord's Passion (John 18:1-19:42) by Br. Vincentius Teguh Samudra

Today, we commemorate the day when our Lord was crucified or also known as Good Friday. With reference to the tradition of the Jews, on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Jews should sacrifice the Passover Lamb. This tradition takes place on the fourteenth day of the first month of their calendar, which is the month of Nisan. Based on the four synoptic gospels, on this day Jesus was arrested and brought to be judged before the Sanhedrin, and in the morning by Pilate. Though Pilate found in him no wrong, the Jewish crowds persisted that he should be crucified. Hence, Jesus was sentenced to death in the most disdainful way, crucifixion. Indeed, it was on Nisan 14 that Jesus was killed, exactly like the Passover lamb which was slaughtered on the evening of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. He was the Lamb of God which was sacrificed for us.

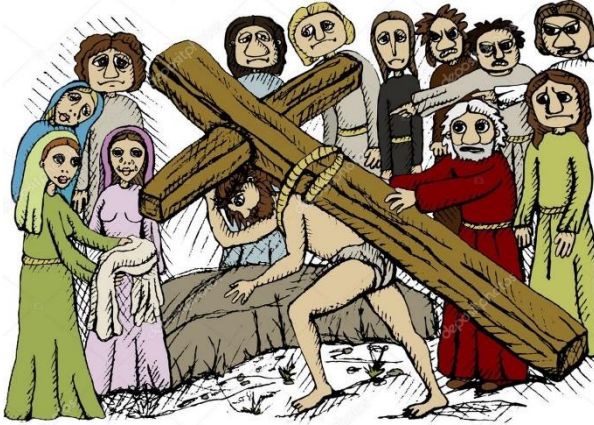


Regardless of the history of this important celebration, if we are trying to be critical, we might ask: Why is it named after Good Friday? Back then, our very own Savior, the Messiah who had been waited for centuries, died humilatingly on the cross in just one day without any attempt to defend himself. "Though harshly treated, he submitted and did not open his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep silent before shearers, he did not open his," said the Prophet Isaiah. For heaven's sake where was the good point of it? Why is it not marked as Sorrow Friday instead?

After I graduated junior high school, I entered a minor seminary to start my education as a senior high school student, but more importantly to foster my childhood vocation to be a



priest. As a newcomer during that time, my excitement to be religious was at its peak. I was so sure that I could undergo the whole four years of formation without any significant problems. An imagination that after seminary I would enter a religious order that suited me was boldly imprinted in my mind.



Time passed by until I realized that everything I expected, in the beginning, was truly the opposite. All my well-ordered plans happened reversely. For the first time in my life, I experienced desolation or spiritual dryness. I wished to be a priest, and I was

inside the seminary which was supposed to be a place that nurtured my vocation, yet God himself provided me with uncertainties which, eventually, led me to be more doubtful. To cut the story short, one time, I reached the summit of my despair, the lowest point of my downfall. In my fourth-year formation, the last school year in the minor seminary, I said to my formators and my parents that I would not pursue my priestly vocation. I wanted to go out. And what was God's response? Nothing!

Nevertheless, I still attended the final retreat of the fourth-year seminarians. Truly, I joined that retreat only for formality, since I did not have any more desire to continue my vocation. But then, it was there that I realized that my entire blueprint for my four years formation was entirely wrong. It was God who chose and called me, but it was I who tried to be the one who made the 'perfect' plan. Indeed, God intentionally led my vocation to die first. Why? So that he may teach me to rely on his plan alone. Once I forced myself to stand on my feet, but God pulled me back so that I may rest in his arm. That was my story about how I came to the awareness that death turned out to be something good, and even necessary.

I believe that each of us has our own stories regarding death or loss. It must be a hurtful experience, right? It was even more painful if we lost someone or something we loved the most. I remembered my grandmother, the one who took care of me, passed away when I was in grade 6. What was the 'good' of it and of those other tearful experiences that you suffered? If God

is good, why did we lose our loved ones? If God is good, why until this very moment there are still murders, wars, and many other evil acts? If God is good, why there is unhappiness on earth? Those are common questions whose answers are deeply theological: because God's 'good' is not our 'good'.

Hard enough to understand, right? It is fine. It took me years to understand why I should lose my grandma. For many months the question of my vocation crisis remained unanswered by God. Until now, I even still cannot get the meaning of the numberless bad things that happened in my life, but I believe this period of comprehending God's goodness is a life-long journey. It will find its complete answer when we meet the Source of All Goodness himself. God is the one who will clarify all our questions. He knows the proper time, the time when we are mature enough to grasp those things.



Back to our celebration. If God is good, why did he let Jesus die on the cross? Because in his perspective, the death of his own and only Son was good, even the best, for humankind. I think that is why the Church marks this day as Good Friday. The goodness that which human mind cannot apprehend immediately. A wisdom that is beyond our understanding.

Therefore, let us pray that we may slowly understand God's good plan in our life.

May he turn our loss into profit and our sorrow into joy. Lastly, may we contemplate solemnly his death, so that we may triumphantly rejoice in his Resurrection. "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit."

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Pagninilay Sa Paghimlay At Muling Pagkabuhay

REFLECTION on the HOLY SATURDAY easter vigil (Matthew 28:1-10)
by Br. Augustu Bustamante Cuaño, III

Tuwing Sabado de Gloria ay ating ginugunita at pinagninilayan ang paghimlay ng ating Panginoong Hesukristo sa libingan. Tinatawag din natin ang araw na ito na "Black Saturday" bilang simbolo ng kadiliman, kalungkutan at pagluluksa sa kamatayan ng ating Panginoon. Pinapaalala sa

atin ng kadiliman ang mga nagawa nating kasalanan. Ang lahat ng mga sakit, hirap, at hapis dito sa mundo ay bunga ng ating pagkakasala. Kung hindi inialay ng ating Panginoon ang kanyang buhay sa krus, ay walang pag-asang may matatagpuan sa madilim na mundong ito. Sa araw na ito, matiyaga nating hinihintay ang pagkabuhay na mag-uli ng ating Panginoon sa kanyang kadakilaan. Ito ang magdamagang pagdiriwang ng Pasko ng Pagkabuhay o **Easter Vigil**. Sa gabing ito, atin namang ipinagdiriwang ang pinakadakilang kapistahan ng ating Inang Simbahan. Ayon kay San Agustin, ang pagdiriwang ng *Easter Vigil* ay ang “*ina ng lahat ng mga bihilya*” o “**the mother of all vigils**” kaya’t bilang Katoliko ay mahalaga na pumunta tayo ng simbahan at dumalo.



Ang magdamagang pagdiriwang ng Pasko ng Pagkabuhay ay sisimulan sa labas ng simbahan ng walang liwanag o mga ilaw dahil ang kadilimang iyon ay nagpapaalala sa atin ng kamatayan at paglilibing kay Hesus. Ang pagbabasbas ng apoy at ng isang malaking kandila na kung tawagin ay “*Cirio Pascual*” o Paschal Candle ay nagpapaalala sa atin na may liwanag sa gitna ng kadiliman na siyang pinahahayag ng **Exsultet**: *Si Kristo ay totoong nabuhay at siya ang ating liwanag na umaakay sa atin sa kaligtasan*. Ang mga mahabang pagbasa at mga salmo ay nagsasalaysay ng mga kuwento ng kaligtasan mula sa paglikha ng sangkatauhan hanggang sa kanyang muling pagkabuhay. Ito ay isang paalala na kung paanong ang ating Panginoong Hesukristo ay tumawid mula sa kamatayan patungo sa buhay, tayo rin ay



tinawag upang madaig ang kasalanan tungo sa biyaya ng Diyos Ama. Sa araw na ito sinasariwa din natin ang ating mga pangako sa binyag gaya ng pagtalikod sa masasamang gawa at matamasa ang mga mabubuting gawa ng

Diyos. Sapagkat ang ating kaligtasan ay naisakatuparan sa pamamagitan ng misteryo ng Paskwal; ang pagpapakasakit, pagkamatay at muling pagkabuhay ni Hesukristong ating Panginoon. Kaya tayong lahat ay nakikibahagi sa kapistahan ng kanyang Katawan at Dugo upang



mapabilang sa kanyang **sacramental presence** o "*sakramental na presensya*", na kung saan ang kanyang liwanag ay nananahan sa ating buhay.

Sa pagkakahimlay ng ating Panginoong Hesukristo at sa matiyagang paghihintay sa kanyang muling pagkabuhay tanungin natin ang ating mga sarili, "*Kumusta nga ba ang aking relasyon sa Diyos at ang aking pananampalatayang Katoliko?*" Marahil ay abala tayo sa maraming bagay ta kadalasa'y hindi natin binibigyang-pansin ang ating pananampalataya. Magbalik-loob tayo sa kanya kung sakaling tayo ay nagkulang at naligaw ng landas. Mahal tayo ng Diyos, kung kaya't tiniis niya ang lahat ng paghihirap sa mundong ito at tinanggap ang kapalaran ng kamatayan para sa ikaliligtas ng lahat. Halina at magbalik-loob tayo sa Diyos, magbalik-loob tayo sa Simbahan.

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9

The Master of His Soul

REFLECTION on the EASTER SUNDAY of the Lord's Resurrection (John 20:1-9) by Br. Jhim Española Sambrano

Christós anésti ek nekrón, thanáto thánaton patísis, ké tís

en tís mnímasi, zoin charisámenos! Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life! This beautiful Paschal troparion of the Eastern Christians succinctly expresses the wondrous moment of the Resurrection. Today is the summit of our liturgical celebration where the





metaphorical inquiry of human salvation comes into a glorious response from the risen Lord of lords. Easter also called “Pascha” in Greek and in Latin, which is known as Easter Sunday of the Lord’s Resurrection. It is a liturgical festival and holiday celebration of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead which is narrated in the four Gospel narratives. It is mentioned as well in other New Testament writings as having occurred on the third day after his crucifixion by the Romans at Calvary c. 30 AD. It is the culmination of the Passion of Jesus which

is preceded by the Lenten season.

In the Nativity story, the fulfillment of prophetic proclamation is the Incarnation of the Word of God. On the other hand, the Easter Sunday narrative takes a pivotal role by means of actualizing the transfiguration, when Christ rises in his glorified body. As the celebration marks the new season of the Church calendar, it is prominently reminded us to partake of his glorious Resurrection by allowing ourselves to be transformed and be inspired by this miraculous event. This outstanding historical episode defies the power of death from governing the life of the people. Furthermore, it overthrows the fear from the heart of the people, replacing it with the rejuvenating hope of eternal life.

The New Testament testifies that the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, which Easter celebrates, is a foundation of the Christian faith. The resurrection recognized Jesus as the powerful Son of God in whom the world finds her salvation. It is cited as evidence that God will judge the world in righteousness. Thus, divine justice becomes a real quest for the followers of Jesus Christ to embrace suffering with the hope of a safe haven afterward,



keeping in mind that existence in the world can be considered as a pilgrimage toward heaven. Jesus was the firstborn from the dead and indeed he conquered death to become the master of his soul. The chasm of the

mystery of the afterlife becomes a serendipity proposed by the Lord. Life after death is no longer a blurry image of the spiritual world but a clear vision of the person of Jesus Christ.

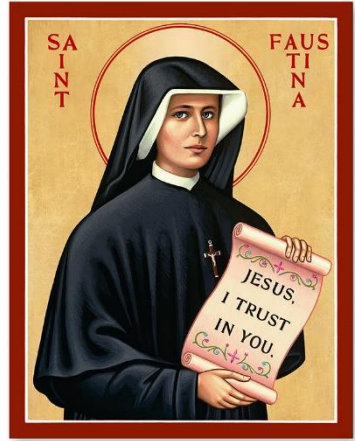
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Unfathomable Divine Mercy

REFLECTION on the DIVINE MERCY Sunday (John 20:19-31) by
Br. Kavin Senesh

The Divine Mercy is a Roman Catholic devotion to Jesus Christ associated with the believed apparitions of Jesus to Saint Faustina Kowalska. The devotion and venerated image under this Christological title refer to what Faustina's diary describes as "God's loving mercy". St. Faustina was granted the title "Secretary of Mercy" by the Holy See in the Jubilee Year of 2000. She had reported several apparitions during her religious ecstasy which she wrote in her diary and later published as a book, *Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul*. The three main themes of the devotion are; first to ask for and obtain the mercy of God, then to trust in Christ's abundant mercy, and



finally to show mercy to others and act as a channel for God's mercy towards them. As we celebrate the Divine Mercy, the primary focus of this devotion is to let ourselves feel the merciful love of God, thus defining that love mercy to flow towards others who need it. This abundance of mercy is very essential for all of us. This mercy will act as the mean of our inspiration and strength. How plenty is God's mercy for us? God's mercy is boundless. It is limitless. It is unmeasurable. It is prodigal. He is merciful because He loves us affectionately in the very first. Thus both, virtues postulate from His

immense condition of humanity. It always gives life, a life full of hope and meaning

As we are pilgriming here on earth, we should constantly ask ourselves, how do I feel the presence of God's Mercy in my life through my family, friends, and my fellow brothers and sisters? How can I return this infinite mercy to others? These are the questions we should reflect on ourselves. Lastly, if God is very merciful to us, what is the reason for us not to be merciful to others? The more we experience God's mercy which acts in grace the more we should become perfect human beings.

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23

The Power of The Eucharist

REFLECTION on the 3rd SUNDAY of EASTER (John 24:13-35)
by Br. Alexander Darren Everest Ang

Have you felt disappointed? Have you experienced when your expectation does not meet reality? In my opinion, most of us have been in this state. What do we usually do next? Sometimes we regret it. We ask God, "Why does this happen?" Then, often times we give up.

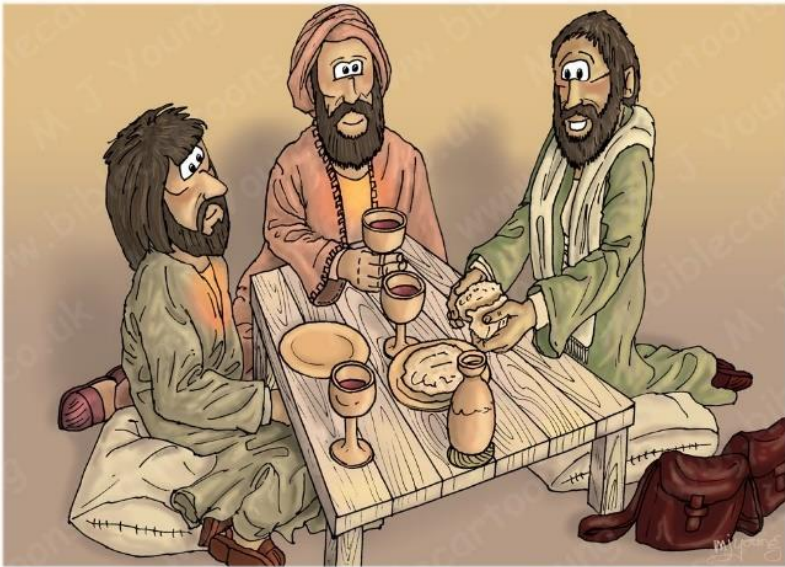
It happens in today's gospel when the two disciples who were going to Emmaus were expecting something greater from Jesus. They followed Him with the hope that He was the Messiah. They had hope that He would redeem Israel. On the contrary, Jesus was sentenced to death. He died unjustly. No more hope, no Messiah. On one side, they felt disappointed for what they had followed was something useless. On the other side, they were afraid because the scribes and Pharisees were looking for Jesus' disciples. As a result, they decided to go home. Along the way, Jesus appeared and approached them. They had a conversation with them starting from what



had happened in Jerusalem until a discussion about the scriptures. Afterward, they invited Him to stay with them. During dinner, Jesus broke the bread, and suddenly they recognized him. "Their eyes were opened." They were with Him. This encounter gave them the courage to return to Jerusalem.

Their eyes were opened when Jesus broke the bread. Are you familiar with this sequence? You can find it in the Eucharistic celebration. This is the time that we meet Jesus. When we feel disappointed, when life is hard, or when we are afraid, we shall come to Him in the Holy Eucharist, and tell Him our difficulties, obstacles, and anxieties. By the readings that we listen to, our hearts are burned. Then, it will reach its fullness when the bread and wine were transubstantiated to be His body and blood. That is the moment when Christ says to us, "Do not be afraid, I am with you." He is always with us, accompanying and guiding us. Ironically, sometimes we cannot recognize His presence. Our eyes are covered. However, through the encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist, He opens our eyes and hearts, and He gives us the courage to face our problems.

Therefore, let us go to Church, attend mass, and actively participate in it. Let us also invite our brothers and sisters to go together as a community of the faithful.



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St. Catherine of Siena, Virgin and Doctor of the Church

CATECHISM by Br. Ari Rufinus Tlonaen

Saint Catherine was born on March 25, 1347, in Siena, Italy. She was the twenty-third child of her parent's twenty-five children to Lapa di Pucio Piagenti and Jacopo Benincasa. From a young age, she decided that she wanted to give her life completely to God. This certitude seemed to have been linked with a vision of Jesus Christ which she saw over the



church of St. Domingo as she was walking home one day. Afterward, at the age of sixteen, in order to fulfill that vision and her promise, she took a vow of virginity, and then joined the “mantellate”, a group of Lay Dominican women. Her three years as a “mantellate” was spent at home with a quietude life of prayer. She went out only to participate in liturgical celebrations at the nearby Dominican church. During the 14th century, there was political chaos. Each city in Italy tried to be an independent state, thus one group clashed against another. It was a time of misery, famine, and

bloodshed. The papacy, in which she was going to play a very important role, was badly affected. When the papacy was divided into two places, Avignon and Rome, she wrote letters to the Pope at Avignon and begged them to return to Rome. In doing so, she did not vacillate to use the greatest liberty of language. It was known that she was even sent as an ambassador from the city of Florence to the Pope, and at another time she went to Queen Joanna of Naples in an effort to disengage her from the cause of anti-pope. She even wrote to the King of France encouragement to form a crusade and end the conflict in Christendom.



In January 1380, she was weak and unable to work actively anymore. She suffered greatly physically and spiritually in the last weeks of her life. On April 29, 1380, she died in the arms of her close friend, Alessa. Her body is entombed in the high altar of the Basilica of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome. She was canonized by Pope Pius II in 1461, proclaimed co-patron of Italy by Pope Pius XII in 1939, and declared Doctor of the Church by Pope Paul VI in 1970.

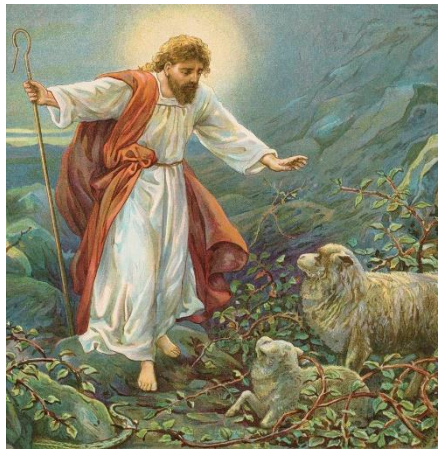


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Good Sheep

REFLECTION on the 4th SUNDAY of EASTER (John 10:1-10)
by Br. Wewalage Dilan Nimeshka Fernando

Today we celebrate the fourth Sunday of Easter. It is usually called "Good Shepherd Sunday". That Good Shepherd is none other than Jesus himself. With his staff, he tends the flock compassionately. With his rod, he guarded the herds bravely. He does not mind whether his sheep are dumb, smelly, or naughty. He does not pick only well-behaved or healthy sheep; he loves all his sheep equally yet abundantly, and he knows each of them by their name. Just like the responsorial psalm today, there is indeed 'nothing we shall lack'. Yet, in this Good Shepherd Sunday, let us question ourselves: If Jesus is our Good Shepherd, are we acting as good sheep?



The gospel today says, "The sheep follow him for they know his voice." Amidst the waves of technological evolution and the current of social media

influence, we are swayed here and there by undulant information. Numberless quick updates make us bumfuzzle. We do not know who to believe or where to go. We are overwhelmed with so many sounds. Until one day, we realize that we also forget the sound of our Good Shepherd who always calls us by name. We cannot distinguish anymore between the real and the fake, the good and the evil, the shepherd and the thief. Though the shepherd is good, the sheep still intentionally choose to go astray.



Brothers and sisters, Christ is indeed our Good Shepherd. He promises to lead and guide us and even lays himself down for the sheep. However, are we behaving like good sheep? Do we listen to his voice and follow him? Or are we starting to forget the sound of his voice and follow other voices? Are we listening to the word of the world instead of the word of the Lord.



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.

Grow

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