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SEPTEMBER 2023

ISSUE

Pinkhi

SUNDAY GOSPEL REFLECTIONS
& CATECHESIS



DOMINICAN NOVITIATE OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Manaoag, Pangasinan

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SEPTEMBER 2023

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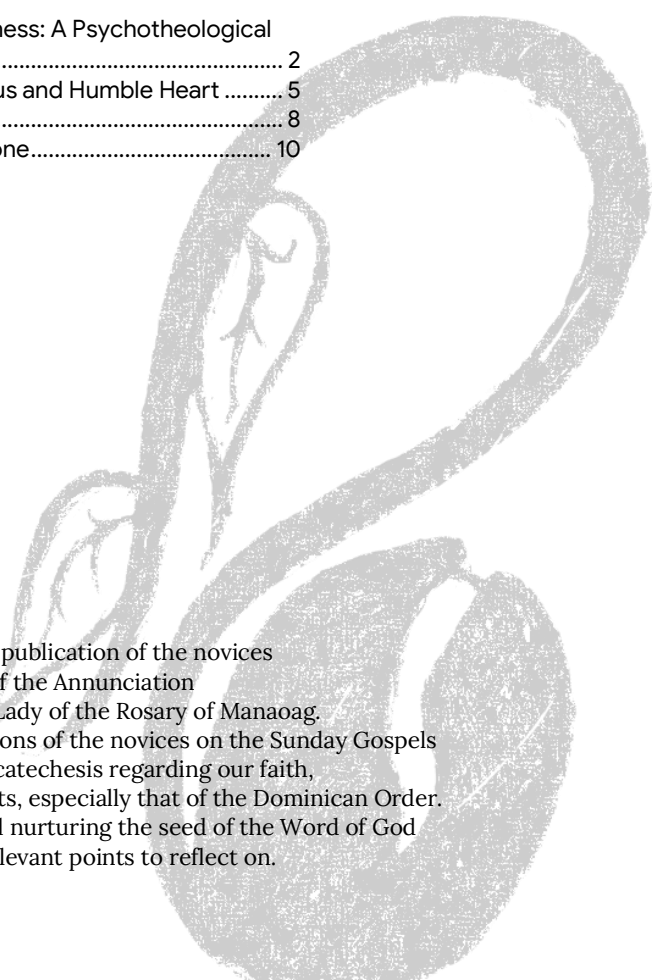
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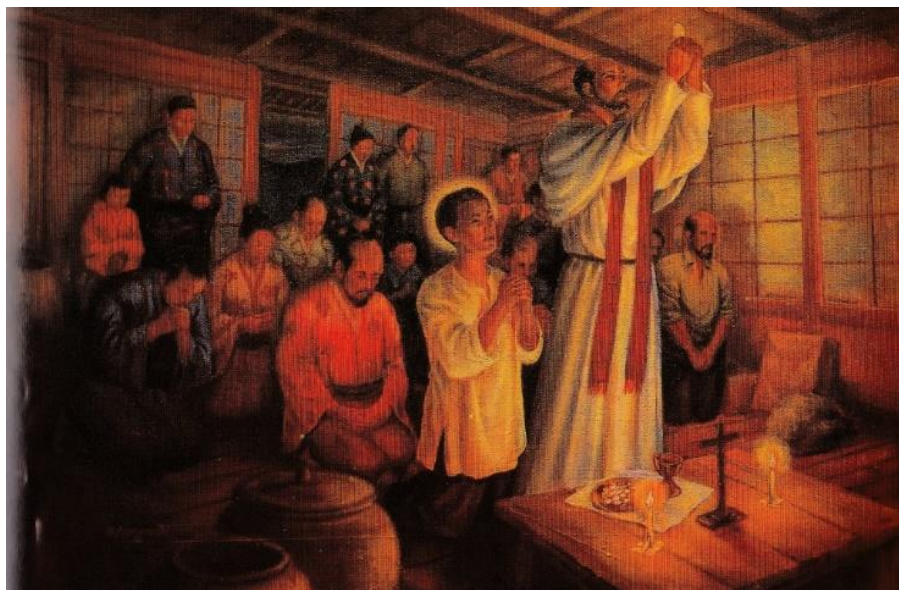


BINHI is the official monthly publication of the novices of the Dominican Novitiate of the Annunciation at the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag. Featured in it are the reflections of the novices on the Sunday Gospels of the current month, short catechesis regarding our faith, and the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

“St. Lorenzo Ruiz and Companion Martyrs”

CATECHISM OF THE MONTH by Br. Dennis C. Amarante



“The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church” – such words by the second century theologian Tertullian ring true for the Catholic Church in Japan. Its establishment and continued existence is to be credited thanks to the great efforts of countless missionaries and ordinary faithful who labored for the preaching of the Gospel among the Japanese. The most exalted among them are those who were persecuted and martyred during the 17th century by the Tokugawa *shoguns* who ruled the country. Emboldened by the desire to ensure the survival of Christianity in the country by ministering among the dying Christian community, many missionaries bravely went to Japan even if such would mean their sure death. As a result, they were subjected to horrible tortures before being executed through a method known as the “gallow and pit.” Regardless of the tortures inflicted upon them, they did not apostatize but remained firm in their faith.

Among these martyrs are sixteen individuals who were either members of the Dominican family or associated with it. They were martyred during the years 1633-1634 and 1637 in Nagasaki. Their memory is commemorated

every September 28. Many of them were involved in ministering among the faithful in the Philippines. They are as follows: Fr. Domingo Ibáñez de Erquicia, OP (Vicar Provincial of the Holy Rosary Province and professor at the University of Santo Tomás), Br. Francisco Shomeyon, OP, Fr. Jacobo Kyushei de Santa Maria, OP, Miguel Kurobioye (a catechist), Fr. Lucas del Espiritu Santo, OP (professor at UST), Br. Mateo Kohioye del Rosario, OP, Magdalena of Nagasaki (member of the Third Order of St. Dominic), Marina of Omura (member of the Third Order of St. Dominic), Fr. Jacinto Jordan Ansalone, OP, Fr. Tomás Hioji de San Jacinto, OP, Fr. Antonio González, OP (professor of theology at UST), Fr. Guillaume Courtet, OP (professor of theology at UST), Fr. Miguel de Aozaraza, OP (missionary in Bataan), Fr. Vicente Shiwozuka de la Cruz, OP, Lazaro of Kyoto (a leper), and Lorenzo Ruiz (a Filipino layman). Ruiz, along with Frs. Gonzalez, Courtet, Aozaraza, and Shiwozuka de la Cruz; and Lazaro, were executed on September 29, 1637.

Lorenzo Ruiz, the protomartyr of the Philippines, was born in Binondo, Manila sometime between 1600 and 1610 to a Chinese father and a native mother. He was educated in the Dominican church in Binondo, where he served in various capacities. In his adult life, he became an *escribano* or notary. He then became a member of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary. He was included in the mission to Japan after he was falsely accused of being involved in a criminal case.

Lorenzo Ruiz and the other fifteen martyrs were beatified by St. John Paul II on February 18, 1981 at the Quirino Grandstand in Manila. They were canonized by the same pontiff on October 18, 1987 at St. Peter's Square. With his canonization, Lorenzo Ruiz became the first Filipino saint.

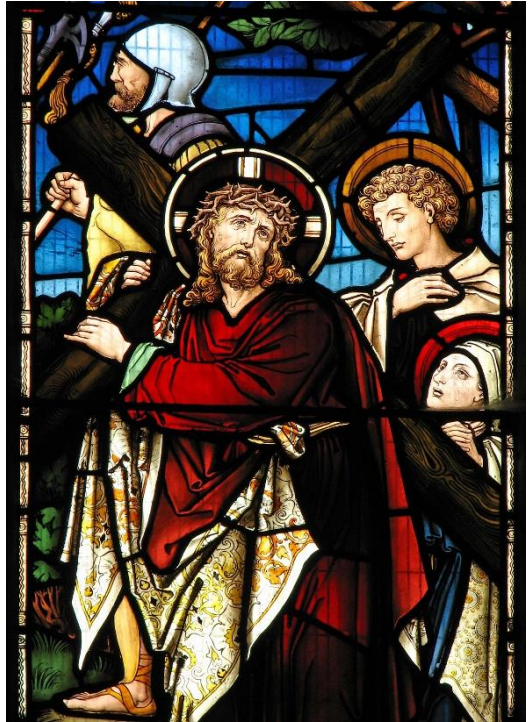


The Pursuit of Happiness: A Psychotheological Reflection

REFLECTION on the 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Mt 16:21-27) by Br. Jan Kevin S. Moises

The standards of the world tell us that happiness is found in acquiring status, power, and wealth. These are the measures of worldly success and pleasures. These desires stem from our ego's sense of insecurity. As a result, we build ourselves an exclusive kingdom, which protects the ego and appeases our insecurity. This unfortunately leads to a false sense of self. A self-preoccupied by worrying and control.

In the Gospel reading for today, Jesus tells us that “whoever chooses to save his life will lose it, but the one who loses his life, for my sake, will find it.” He presents us the truth: that the world cannot offer the happiness that we are longing for, for such happiness is based on perishable things, and therefore temporary. Consequently, building our own internal kingdom to protect the self is futile since it will only lead to frustrations and more anxiety. Rather, we have to let go and surrender to God.



The ego will always seek ways to defend itself. Thus, to appease the insecure and anxious ego, the Lord provides us the answer, a remedy: we have to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him. By doing so, the self becomes unbounded by the complexities of the world and from the obsession of control and power. We accept that life will have sufferings and difficulties. We are dependent beings to God's grace and providence. Ultimately, the body, mind, and soul find its peace – a peace which is a prerequisite for everlasting happiness.

AUGUST

8

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

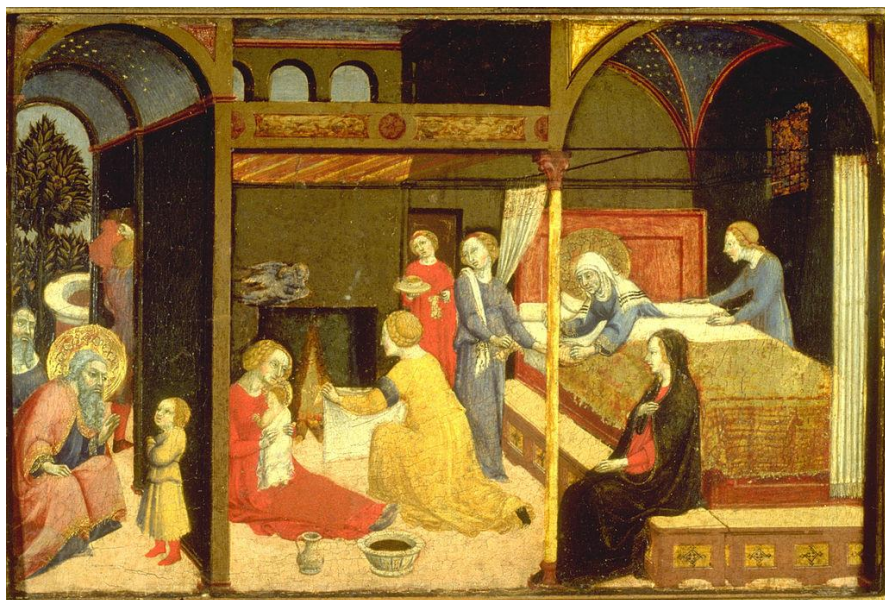
CATECHISM by Br. Michael Angelus Devaldi Pradnyadhikka

The nativity (birth) of the Blessed Virgin Mary is celebrated every September 8 in the liturgical calendar of Catholic Church. By celebrating this feast, the Church celebrates the mystery of God's incarnation through the Blessed Virgin. She was chosen by God to partake in the history of salvation by conceiving and bearing the Son of Man.

Therefore, she was born without original sin – spotless, pure, and holy. She is the new Eve whom God promised to crush the serpent’s head when Adam and Eve fell into sin because of the temptation of the serpent.

The exact date of the nativity of the Blessed Virgin is unknown. The celebration was observed first in the East. Eventually, it was celebrated in the West since Pope Saint Sergius (687-701) ordered that the four separate feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary – the Annunciation, the Assumption, the Nativity, and the Purification – be celebrated in Rome. However, there is a probability that some parts of the West celebrated the nativity of the Blessed Virgin earlier, as evidenced by the mention of the celebration in records such as the Calendar of Saint Willibrord (c. 704) and the *Auxerre Hieronymianum* (c. 600).

The idea of celebrating the nativity of the Blessed Virgin separately was influenced by the fact that the nativity of Saint John the Baptist is celebrated separately from his martyrdom. People then realized that the feast of the Assumption should be commemorated separately from the feast of her birth.



Just like the date of her nativity, the birthplace of the Blessed Virgin is also unknown. In the West, people accepted the tradition which proposed Nazareth as her birthplace. However, a parallel tradition proposed Jerusalem as her birthplace, specifically in the neighborhood near the pool

of Bethesda, where a crypt under the Church of Saint Anne, which is said to be the spot where the Blessed Virgin was born, is now venerated.

SEPTEMBER

10

To Have a Courageous and Humble Heart

REFLECTION on the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Mt 18:15-20) by Br. Jose Francisco D. Abella



As members of the Christian faith, we have this responsibility that each of us must fulfil. However, for some reason, it is taken for granted most of the time and is being given less-importance nowadays. It is called fraternal correction. It is an act of pointing out and correcting someone's fault which he has done or may have done against us in a fraternal (brotherly) and private manner. Such is intended not to embarrass the person but to direct him towards what is good in order for him to improve his life and to have a clear conscience. It is not only a mere responsibility, but an expression of love toward our neighbour.

One of the central themes in the Gospel reading for this Sunday is fraternal correction and its connection to our prayer life. In the reading, Jesus exhorts us to point out and correct the fault of our brother or sister in private in order to set our hearts free from the clutter of grudges, hatred, and frustrations towards him or her who has at fault with us. After all, what our hearts contain will surely affect our disposition towards prayer. Thus, a clear and a peaceful heart makes a prayer effective and more intimate. It then becomes more genuine and pleasing before the Lord. Also, when prayers are done in common (as a group), we are assured of the abiding presence of Jesus as He had promised that He will always be there “where there are two or three who gathers in [His] name.”

At the same time, Jesus forewarns us that the results of such action may not yield a positive response from the other. Pride prevents them either from listening or from being open to correction. When we fail to such endeavours even if we have done everything, the good Lord encourages us to turn to Him in prayer. We have done our part, but there are situations that are really beyond our control. Let the Lord work on those problems – *si Lord na ang bahala*.

It indeed takes great courage to point out someone’s fault, and a great humility to accept someone’s correction. Let us then ask the Lord to grant us a courageous heart to stand up for what is right and to correct those who are at fault with us; and at the same time a humble one to be more open to forgiveness and reconciliation.

SEPTEMBER
14

Exaltation of the Cross

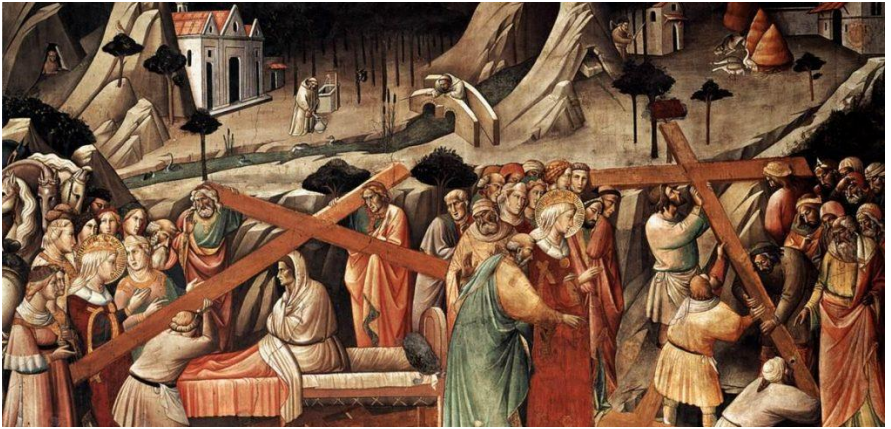
CATECHISM by Br. Athanasio Jonathan Angkhasa Ginting

On this day, September 14, the Catholic Church celebrates the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. This feast commemorates the great importance of the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It was on the cross that He was hung and nailed, leading to His death. Beside Him were two criminals, further degrading His dignity and making Him equal with wicked men. With His death on the cross, Christ changed the meaning of the cross from an instrument of death into an instrument of salvation. That is the principal reason why the Church is venerating Our Lord’s cross.

The history of the celebration of this feast day stretches back to the time of the Roman Empire.



In the fourth century, Emperor Constantine the Great converted to Christianity. The emperor's mother, Saint Helena, is said to be instrumental in his ascent to the throne and his conversion. She came from an ordinary family and was married to Constantine Chlorus, the predecessor of Constantine the Great. She is known for her devotion to the Christian faith and her generosity. In the year 330, she embarked on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. She got a vision about the location of the cross used to crucify Christ or commonly known as the "True Cross." It was within the temple of Venus that was erected by Emperor Hadrian. It is said that a sweet fragrant smoke rose from the temple. Helena had the temple destroyed and dug out. As a result, they were able to retrieve three crosses. In order to identify the True Cross, Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, had a mortally woman lay upon the crosses. The woman was healed when she was laid on one of the crosses, enabling them to identify it as the True Cross. The finding of the True Cross was then commemorated afterwards every September 14 both in the Eastern and Western churches.



However, the Western Church later moved the date of the celebration to May 3. This is because the celebration was eventually ascribed to the legend of the retrieval of the True Cross during the seventh century. According to the legend, Emperor Heraclius retrieved the pieces of the True Cross after fighting the Persians who burned the holy places in Jerusalem. When Heraclius was about to bring the pieces of the Cross in procession to the Holy Place, he could not advance further. He was then informed by Patriarch Zachary that such happened because he was clothed in splendour as opposed to Jesus' austerity. Afterwards, he showed the Cross to the people for veneration. Miracles occurred afterwards, with many people being cured from their sickness after touching the Cross. Eventually, the

celebration of this feast was moved back to September 14 after the Second Vatican Council.

SEPTEMBER
17

Maybe If

REFLECTION on the 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Mt 18:21-35) by Br. French Alfred M. Maaño

The Korean drama series *Our Beloved Summer*, starred by Kim Dam-i and Choi Woo-sik, captures the difficulty of forgiving after one has been hurt. The drama series tells the story of two former lovers who after a long time are forced to meet again after their hurting breakup. The story starts with the two trying every possible way not to see or insult the other only to keep their distance. Time, in their case, did not heal the wounds, and the distance they have created after their breakup never seemed to disappear. It is a story of trying to open up your mind to understand another's actions, of letting the person who have hurt you deeply enter your life once again.



Forgiving, as the *Our Beloved Summer* shows, is not easy. Some may even say that forgiveness does not do justice to the offended party. The offense has been done, and no amount of forgiving will make its consequences suddenly disappear. When Peter asked Our Lord in the Gospel reading for today, “How often must I forgive?” he could have said alternatively, “How long must I bear injury?” But the Lord wants us to realize that He, of all persons, was injured by sin. *He was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins (Is 53:5).* And that we too, are recipients

of His enduring mercy: *By his stripes we were healed (ibid).* When we suffer injury, we suffer it with Christ: *Rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ (1 Pt 4:13).*

Forgiving can indeed be demanding, but ask yourself why do you find it hard to forgive? Is it because of your inflated ego? Is it because you could not understand how someone could possibly hurt you? Try to forgive and to open the lines to the one who offended you. As *Our Beloved Summer* shows, it can be more rewarding to forgive. Maybe if we try, we would realize that we should have forgiven sooner.

SEPTEMBER

18

Saint John Macias

CATECHISM by Br. Stefano Adi Nagoro Sembiring

Saint John Macias was born in Ribera del Fresno in Extremadura, Spain on March 2, 1585. He is an orphan since his early childhood, and was adopted by his uncle. As a result, he adopted the surname *Macias*. Since he was a child, he was pious, spending his spare time in prayer, especially in the recitation of the rosary. It is said that the Virgin Mary and the Child Jesus would appear to him in visions several times. These visions inspired him to leave his native country.

In 1619, he embarked for the New World (Latin America), where many Spaniards went to aid in converting its native inhabitants to the Christian faith. After a long and hazardous journey, he finally arrived in Lima, Peru in 1623. He then underwent a conversion and decided to join the Order of Preachers in the same year. He entered the priory of Saint Mary Magdalene where he received the habit as a *conversus* (present-day cooperator brother) in 1622. He served as porter in the community for twenty-two years. It is said that on the night of his profession, he was physically attacked by devils by throwing him from one cloister to another. Such attacks continued for twelve years.



Like his friend Saint Martin de Porres, he was known for his love and care for the poor. He would always beg for the poor and make means to provide food for more than two hundred people who would come to him daily for help. He would also provide for their spiritual well-being, catechizing them and praying for their intentions. He is said to have liberated more than a million souls from purgatory, with some even coming back to thank him. As a result, many people, whether rich or poor, would come to him for food and advice.

John died on September 16, 1646. It is said that at the time of his death, the Virgin Mary, Saint Dominic, his patron Saint John the Beloved, and many other saints came to accompany him to heaven. He was beatified by Pope Gregory XVI in 1837, and was canonized by St. Paul VI on September 28, 1975. He is considered as the patron saint of immigrants and migrant workers.



Holiness is for Everyone

REFLECTION on the 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Mt 20:1-16a) by
Br. Dennis C. Amarante

Let us admit: we do not easily believe in the sincerity of those who in their old age has started to do acts of charity like serving the Church and giving alms to the poor. We do not believe in their sincerity especially if we witnessed how they lived their lives when they were younger. Such view is understandable, for because of our constant struggle to live a righteous life as early as our youth, we think that such expressions of sudden charity by the old is fake because it might be simply driven by their desire of “preparing” for a holy death. However, let us remember that to seek for holiness is a right that all believers are called to do – they may be in the springtime of their youth or in the twilight years of their lives. To serve the Lord is not a privilege for the young, but a calling for all – young or old, strong or weak.

This is a message that we can learn from the Gospel reading for today. In the reading, Jesus compared the Father to a landowner who gave equal wages to all his workers regardless of the duration of their working hours. Pondering upon it, one would understand the reason why the workers who toiled for the entire day complained about the landowner’s decision – when one serves devoutly for a considerable amount of time, a proportionate reward is warranted. But, like the landowner’s reply to them, we too are reminded that we are to receive our just reward, that we should never question the Lord’s mercy towards others, and that service to the Kingdom

is not merely rewarded based on considerations of time but on the person's sincerity and efforts. No matter how brief or late one's efforts are, as long as it is sincere and out of the desire to reform one's life according to the will of God, it is pleasing to the Lord.

It is difficult indeed to live a life of holiness especially in this age wherein transgressions against the Lord and neighbor are normalized and promoted. But, the call to authentic conversion, renewal, and divinely-inspired service never ceases: all of us, regardless of our age and status, are always called to pattern our lives according to the will of God. Therefore, let us never be afraid to respond to this call. Most of all, let us have an open heart in looking at people who responded to this call "late" – perhaps, it was only at that particular stage in their lives that they had the opportunity to change their lives for the good. As long as there is life, there is always an opportunity for holiness – such chance is accorded to all of us by Jesus when He offered His life for the salvation of mankind. If the Lord grants that chance, who are we to question it? After all, are we, because of our imperfections, not in constant need of such grace?





Saint Lorenzo Ruiz and Companion Martyrs

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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