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AUGUST 2023

ISSUE

Pinhi

SUNDAY GOSPEL REFLECTIONS
& CATECHESIS



DOMINICAN NOVITIATE OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Manaoag, Pangasinan

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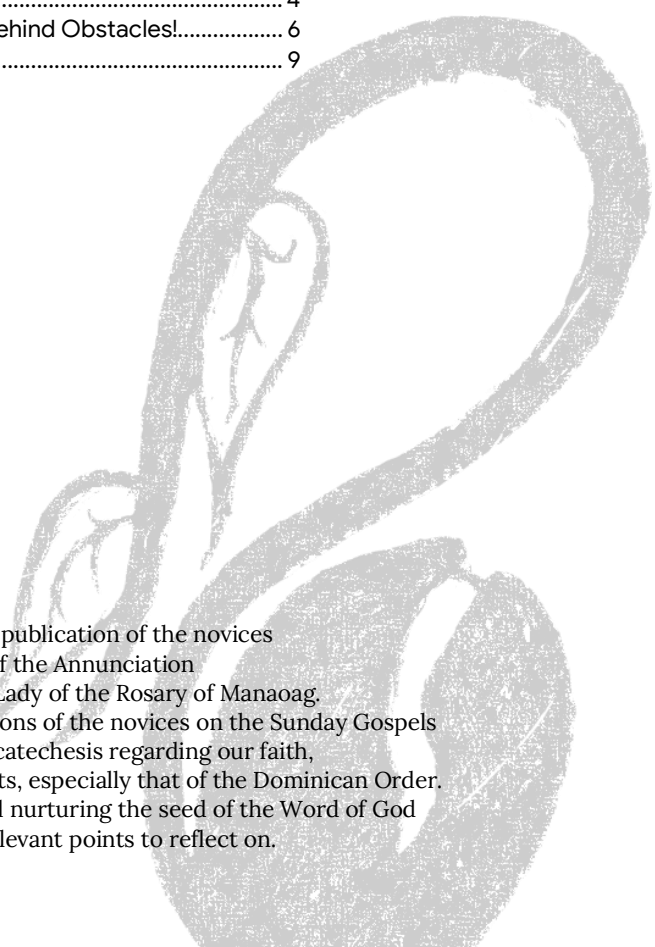
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BINHI is the official monthly publication of the novices of the Dominican Novitiate of the Annunciation at the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag. Featured in it are the reflections of the novices on the Sunday Gospels of the current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

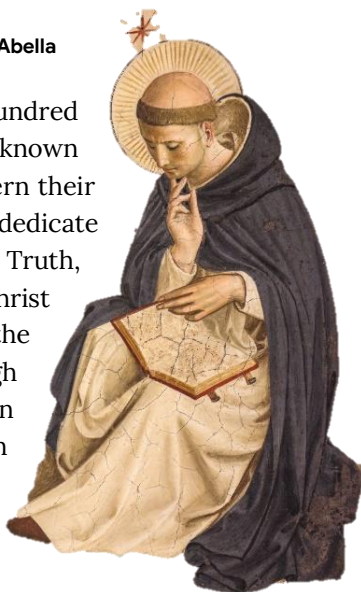
Catechism of the Month

“Our Holy Father Saint

Dominic”

CATECHISM OF THE MONTH by Br. Jose Fransisco D. Abella

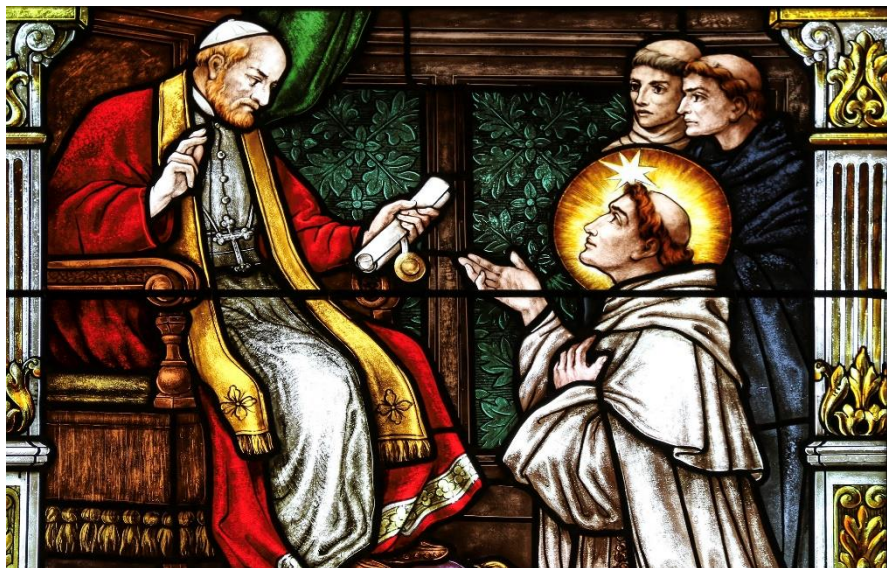
VERITAS (Truth) – For more than eight hundred years, the Order of Preachers or commonly known as the Dominicans has endeavored to pattern their way of life following this motto as they dedicate themselves in preaching the Gospel of Truth, sharing in the apostolic way of life that Christ Himself had taught, and ministering to the needs of our brothers and sisters through various forms of preaching. Such dedication for contributing to the saving of souls of men in the life of the Church was initiated by the Order’s founder, St. Dominic de Guzman, whose feast day we celebrate every August 8.



Dominic was born to Felix de Guzman and Jane de Aza around 1170 in Caleruega, Castille (present-day Spain). He had two brothers, namely Anthony, who became a priest in a hospice; and Mannes, who became a friar of his future Order. Some accounts detailed that prior to his birth, her mother Jane dreamt (other accounts noted that it was a vision) of a dog carrying a flaming torch running around the world, which signified that his son will be a distinguished preacher. Also, during his baptism, a right eight-pointed star was said to have seen on his forehead, which signified that he will bring light to the unbelievers.

When he was around six years old, he was sent to his priest-uncle Gonzalo de Aza in Gumiel d’Izan for his preliminary studies where he learned to read Latin. Later on, he was sent to the University of Palencia where he devoted his life studying scriptures and theology. Years followed and he was ordained as a priest and became a canon regular of the cathedral of Osma upon the invitation of Diego de Acebo, its bishop, who saw his potential as a faithful priest.

In 1203, he was sent to a diplomatic mission in Denmark with Bishop Diego. While on their way, they encountered heretics known as Albigensians who became active in southern France. Dominic, together with the Bishop, was later commissioned by the Pope Innocent III to assist the Cistercians in preaching against the Albigensians. Later on, he decided to form and organize a group with a papal commission to preach for the salvation of souls and to counteract this heresy. Throughout the years of Dominic's preaching, he was able to convert some of the heretics back to the Faith. He was even able to establish a convent for nuns in Prouille, France.



On December 22, 1216, Dominic received *Religiosam Vitam*, a bull from Pope Honorius III which confirmed the establishment of the Order. The Order eventually flourished following the convocation of several chapters (meetings) held together by its members which laid down its rules. Dominic became its first superior or Master, occupying the position for five years. On August 6, 1221, Dominic died in Bologna. Pope Gregory IX, who was a friend of Dominic, canonized him on AUGUST 3, 1234.

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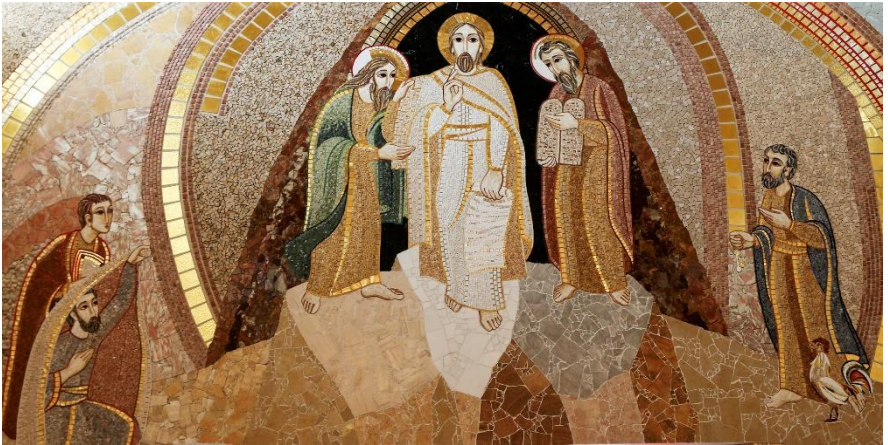
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Inspired by Divine Magnificence

REFLECTION on the FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD
(Mt 17:1-9) by Br. Dennis C. Amarante

One usually feels a sense of awe and wonder when one visits old structures like churches. Perhaps some of us feel the same when we first set foot to this shrine in honor of Our Lady.

There are different reasons as to why many have such feelings – an awareness of the structure’s historical and cultural relevance, its reputation as a tourist destination, or its prominence as a pilgrimage site. In short, these structures evoke a feeling that something can be magnificent than the ordinary, that something is bigger than ourselves. Such structures are indeed different from the usual scenery that one sees every day. For people living in cities for example, visiting such structures is a refreshing experience after having been exposed to the urban jungle filled with tall skyscrapers and vast tracks of concrete all throughout their lives. Expectedly, such feelings of awe should inspire those who felt it to develop a more nuanced perspective on beauty and life. With regard to churches, it is expected that through the centuries-old devotion that it promotes and its aesthetic characteristics, one may be moved to have a deeper faith in the Lord and become a committed Christian.



Such expectations with regards to faith was perhaps in the mind of Jesus when He appeared in glory to Peter, James, and John as narrated in the Gospel reading for today. Perhaps for Jesus, by revealing His divine appearance together with Moses and Elijah, a feeling of awe and a strengthening of faith as an immediate effect will manifest in the apostles. However, such was not the case, for instead of being inspired, Peter in particular simply offered to make three tents for the three of them as if they are simply visitors. Then, after the Father has spoken, the apostles fell into the ground in fear. Such is indeed not an indication of awe and faith!

How should we react to divine magnificence? Definitely, not like the apostles. But, perhaps such reaction by them is normal and understandable for people who are unfamiliar of how to react in the midst of such magnificence – out of nervousness and fear because of something that one

cannot understand, one cowers into hiding. In particular, many of us feel unworthy and small because of our frailties that we think that we cannot be deserving of divine grace. But, as Jesus reminds the apostles, we too are reminded: “do not be afraid!” Let us not be afraid of being recipients of Christ’s divine grace. Let us not be afraid to be moved by Christ’s light to make His presence known to the people around us. Let us consider such encounters not as a reminder of our frailty, but as an inspiration for us to preach the truth that there is something greater than ourselves, that someone is greater than our limited capacities – Jesus Christ.

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Lord, Save Me!

REFLECTION on the 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Mt 14:22-33) by Br. Michael Angelus Devaldi Pradnyadhikka

Have you experienced being prepared for something, and yet became afraid or uneasy when you are about to do it? Perhaps, such happens because you were too anxious when you are about to do it that nervousness completely preoccupied your mind. If you want to look more deeply into it, you can ask yourself what are the thoughts that caused you to be nervous and tend to doubt. Perhaps, because we tend to overthink about the results which we do not know. As a result, we pressure ourselves at the back of our minds to obtain the best results even before executing the whole process. Our attention then is diverted into something other than how to execute the process itself.

In the gospel reading for this Sunday, Peter drowned into the sea while trying to come to Jesus who was standing there. He decided to go off the board because he wanted to make sure if it was Jesus or not. Unfortunately, he began to sink because of the fear of the strong wind. He began to doubt. As a result, he failed and capitulated to the disturbance and distraction that he experienced, leading him to be



drowned into the sea. However, realizing that he was drowning, he asked help from Jesus to save him. Jesus then stretched out his hand to take hold of him, even though he failed and gave up to believing wholeheartedly.

Although we have different beginnings, we Christian faithful are united in the desire to come to Jesus. At the beginning of our journey of faith, we had a great enthusiasm that we will reach Him immediately. Sometimes, we tend to think that we are closer enough to Him. However, it is not as simple as we think it is. In the middle of our journey, we will definitely face many trials and disturbances which will affect us spiritually, even to the point that we think of giving up. There will be a time that that we will feel desolated, just like Peter. However, even as we are on the point that we feel that we will give up, let us not lose hope that Jesus will help us to rise up again. That hope should be expressed by asking Jesus for His help. Peter himself asked help from Jesus to save him, realizing that he was weak. Like what He did with Peter, Jesus will do the same manner to us if we humbly ask for His help.

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Assumption of The Blessed Virgin Mary

CATECHISM by Br. Jan Kevin S. Moises

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is one of the four Marian dogmas of the Catholic Church. This dogma was declared on November 1, 1950 by Pope Pius XII. According to this dogma, the Blessed Virgin Mary, preserved from original sin, at the end of her earthly life was taken up body and soul. Mary, therefore, as the perfect Christian, received the fullness of the power of her Son's resurrection. The feast commemorating this dogma is celebrated by the Church every August 15.



The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary conforms to her Son,

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who resurrected from the dead. She joins her Son in heavenly glory with her body and soul. Her assumption reveals the eschatological resurrection of Christians. This makes the Blessed Virgin Mary the eschatological icon of the Church. Thus, Mary's assumption is the image and model of the completion of God's redemptive plan for the whole human race. In this way, we can see Mary and our pilgrim church linked together. Through our Blessed Mother's assumption, she gives hope to the Christian faithful of what will happen in the world to come – we become a new creation. The total person, our body and soul, will be taken up into heaven.

May the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary be a constant reminder of our final destination as members of the Church. Let us anticipate this pledge to be united with the risen Christ, both body and soul.

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There is a Treasure behind Obstacles!

REFLECTION on the 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Mt 15:21-28) by Br. Athanasio Jonathan Angkhasa Ginting

I have a friend who is very fervent and devoted to the Catholic faith. I would always see him every Sunday when I attend Holy Mass. He joined almost all the ministries in our parish. He even liked to volunteer himself if the parish needs some help. He is technically not a parish worker, but our parish priest would even jokingly call him as one of the employees of the parish. This leads me to think that the church is a second home for him. He was actually a Muslim back then. When he decided to convert to Catholicism, his family resisted his decision. It was indeed a shocking decision, especially in a country that is predominantly Muslim, and this became his trial. Fortunately,



because of his love for Jesus and the Catholic Church, he was able to bear those challenges.

In the Gospel reading for this Sunday, Jesus met a Canaanite woman. The woman was asking for His mercy because her daughter was possessed by the devil. Jesus seemed to ignore her at first, and His disciples even asked Him to chase her away. He even said that He was sent only for the “lost sheep of Israel.” But, instead of leaving Jesus, the woman did not hesitate to plead to Jesus, begging Him to heal her daughter. Jesus eventually heard her pleas, amazed by her faith. Jesus thought that even though she was a Gentile, she had a great faith. For many of us who have been baptized since infancy, maybe we are more familiar with our faith. But, the more familiar one is with the Faith, the greater temptation there is for one to become lax with it. Perhaps such happens because since childhood, everything about the Faith was taught, making one bored. As we face that struggle, may we learn from those Catholics who were baptized years after their birth. We can learn from them on how to find the love of God and to love God amidst difficulties and uncertainties.

There are two virtues that we can learn from my friend and the Canaanite woman. The first one is courage, as showed by the woman. She was fearless and firm with her faith that Jesus will answer her prayer. That courage led her to the point that she surrendered her entire life to Him. The second one is patience. Despite the fact Jesus didn't notice her at first and even people asked her to leave, the woman persisted and remained until she got an answer from Jesus.

May the example of the Canaanite woman enable us to be courageous and patient in our witnessing as Catholics. When we see the needy, the sick, and the afflicted, may we have the courage and try our best to serve them. No matter what people say, may we have the patience to endure, for our faith is greater than mocking or jeering. May we also be unceasing in praying. Sometimes, we might think that God does not hear our prayer, but such thinking is only a trial from the devil. Therefore, let us resist it and pray unceasingly. Let us give God due praise, and He will surely grant our prayer in the right time.

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Saint Rose of Lima

CATECHISM by Br. French Alfred M. Maaño

Born in Lima, Peru on April 20, 1586 as a daughter of Gasparo de Florez and Maria de Oliva, Isabel de Oliva, also called Rosa or Rose, displayed extraordinary sanctity from childhood. She is said to be lost in ecstasy before the crucifix even though as an infant. She loved to be united to the sufferings of the Blessed Savior by her fervent penances. Rose's mother did not know what to do to her child who seems to love suffering above all things. She wanted Rose to be proud of her beauty by dressing her up in pretty clothes, but Rose was ever indifferent to them. Rose's mother would find herself testing the patience of Rose, only to find out Rose's immovable obedience to her despite of everything. When her age of marriage came, her mother wanted Rose to be the most beautiful bride in Lima. But Rose had no intention of marrying; she already vowed to consecrate herself to God. Unable to win over her child, she decided to send Rose to a convent. But Rose had a different plan. She did not intend to become a nun in the convent. She instead wanted to become a Dominican tertiary (present-day Lay Dominican) living at home – a decision her family did not understand.



Rose prevailed over her family – she received the Dominican habit and lived in the family home. There, she made a small hut where she would spend her days and nights doing penances, praying, and receiving mystical visions. Her diet consists of hard bread, water, and bitter herbs. Her bed would be studded by rocks and broken glass. She would wear a silver crown with spines underneath her veil, and cords around her body. At night, she would carry a heavy cross barefoot. Despite of all these heavy penances, she did not become a burden

to her family. She supported her family by making embroidery work and raising flowers. In fact, she supplied the Lady altar of the church with her garden flowers. Rose was also known for her care for the poor and sick in Lima. She also prayed to be a martyr, and interceded for missionaries in the New World. On August 24, 1617, the whole of Lima mourned for the death of this saintly woman.

In 1671, Rose of Lima was raised to the altars as a saint. She is the first saint to be declared from the Americas and from the New World. She is the patroness of South America, especially Peru. Pope Pius XII made her the secondary patroness of the Philippines.

In Rose, we find a perfect example that holiness is not confined in churches and convents. We can also be saints in our home, and in our daily work.

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Quality of Faith

REFLECTION on the 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time (Mt 16:13-20) by Br. Stefano Adi Nagoro Sembiring

Who is Jesus? For us Christians, we have no doubt to say that He is God, the Messiah. But do we really manifest our faith in Him? We go to church, but we do not really pray. We attend the Holy Mass, but we do not really celebrate it sincerely. Sometimes, we do not even have any intention of praying, it just so happens that we want to meet our friends or our partner, or join our family or parents going to the church. Inside the church, although the Holy Mass is being celebrated, but our minds are full of thoughts and imagination. We even ask ourselves “What am I going to do after this Mass?” The Holy Mass is long because our love for Jesus is short.

The Gospel reading for today is reminding us that if we know that Jesus is God, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, and the source of our lives; then we should give the best of ourselves to Him. Jesus gave the keys of heaven to Peter, and made him the extension of His



hands in the world because Jesus knows that Peter would give his best. This leads us to ask these questions “Have we given our best to Jesus? Have we become the extension of Jesus’s hands in the world?”

We cannot be the extension of Jesus’ hands if we do not participate in the Holy Mass like we should do as faithful believers, or if we know that Jesus is God but we do not pray to Him like we should do. We need to pray, attend the Holy Mass, receive the words of God, and to receive the Holy Communion wholeheartedly in order to gain love from Him. In turn, we can be grateful for the love of God, and we can start to spread that love to others, becoming the extension of His hands in the world. With that, we will have a good quality of faith.

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Saint Augustine

CATECHISM by Br. Lloyd Eldrick T. Cuevas

All persons, especially sinners, are capable of becoming saints. This August 28, we celebrate the memory of a person who was once a sinner but now a revered saint in the Church – St. Augustine of Hippo. His life and his conversion story are a perfect inspiration for us who are taking the path of holiness.



Augustine was born on November 13, 354 in Tagaste, a small town of Numidia, North Africa. His mother is Monica, who is also a well-known saint; and his father is Patricius, a pagan who eventually converted into the Faith on his deathbed. During his childhood, he was catechized by her mother, preparing him to receive the sacrament of baptism. However, he became sick, leading to the

postponement of his baptism. During his youth, he was trained to become a scholar. He became knowledgeable in the writings of Cicero, Aristotle, and other pagan philosophers. At the same time, he became enamored with worldly desires. According to Murray, a well-known author of the lives of the saints, “he [Augustine] was led into this mire of iniquity as much by the

dangerous example of others as by idleness and reading of immodest plays in Terence. He did not pray; he did not avoid the occasions of sins.” A promising life was indeed spent amidst the darkness of sins.

Witnessing the fall of a son to sin is excruciating for a mother’s heart. As a result, Monica spent around seventeen years praying and fasting for the conversion of her son. Her constant prayer eventually bore fruit, and Augustine underwent a great epiphany when he went to Milan. When Augustine reached Milan, he listened to the sermons of St. Ambrose, the archbishop of that city. At first, he listened out of the desire to gain knowledge, but eventually such influenced him towards conversion. The grace of God worked on him mysteriously, and from being heretic he became a Christian. He received the sacrament of baptism from St. Ambrose himself in 387.



After his conversion, he spent his knowledge in helping the Church. He was eventually ordained a priest in 390 by Valerius, the bishop of Hippo. After five years, despite of his apprehensions, he was appointed coadjutor bishop of Hippo, and eventually became bishop. He served as bishop until his death on August 28, 430 amidst the Vandal invasion of the city.

Throughout his life after his conversion, he has written countless writings on the Faith. Such works are enlightening and essential to us Christians. His famous works are *Confessions* and *City of God*. Excerpts of his work are read during the Office of Readings. Because of his contributions, he was named

as a Doctor of the Church, and is considered as one of the four great Doctors of the Western Church.

The Order of Preachers is celebrating St. Augustine’s memory as a feast because of its adoption of his Rule as the backbone of its way of life. St. Dominic and his brethren adopted the Rule of St. Augustine during the Order’s first formative Chapter in 1216. Such was made because of St. Dominic’s familiarity with the Rule during his ministry as canon regular in Osma, its flexibility compared to other Western rules, and its compatibility with the apostolic and active nature of the Dominican way of 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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