

KINGDOM



REVELATOR

CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ■ ISSUE 37

**HOLDING
ON TO HOPE**

**PENTECOST
& YOU**

The Official
Launch of the
**KINGDOM
REVELATOR**
Magazine in Australia

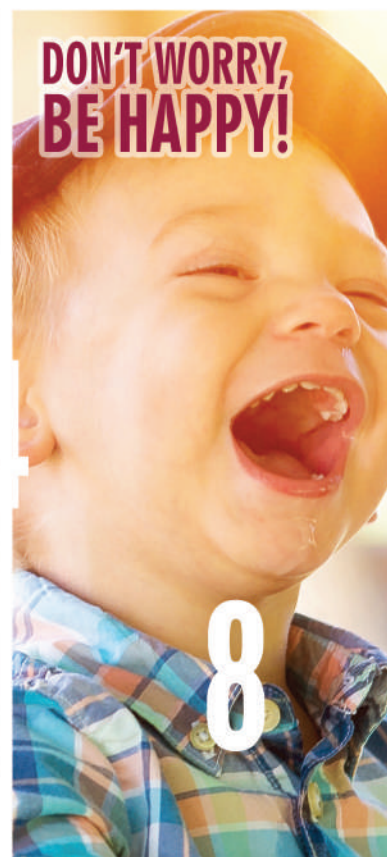
Three thousand copies of the magazine will be printed in Australia each month. They will be distributed free of charge to thirty educational institutions including Catholic and government schools, colleges and universities. They will also be sent to many Catholic parishes across all the states and territories of Australia.

**KINGDOM
REVELATOR**

The Australian edition of Kingdom Revelator Magazine was launched on 26th March 2017 by the Most Reverend Bosco Puthur, Bishop of the Syro Malabar Diocese of Australia & Apostolic Visitor of New Zealand during a Sehion retreat that was led by Fr Soji Olikkal and his team.



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the production of this magazine would
not have been possible.

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Editorial

Welcome to this new
issue of Kingdom
Revelator. Thanks to
everyone who has sent us their
personal stories and testimonies.
We really appreciate your help in
producing this magazine.

We never know what we will
read when we open your messages.
Last week I was struck very
powerfully by a short piece
written by one of our readers,
Jaison Lukose. I will let him tell
you his story:

I was working one day recently
and for some reason I just
couldn't stop thinking about
people who had hurt me. I was
constantly being haunted by past
memories and times when I had
been rejected. My mind was
raging with anger towards the
people who had hurt me.
Despite many prayers, I just
could not focus on my work.

Later that day as I was walking
down the supermarket aisle I
saw an old lady being pushed in
a wheelchair towards me. It was

quite a narrow aisle, so as
she approached, I stopped to
give way to the wheelchair. I
had been looking at the
shelves thinking of other
things but as she passed me I
looked down. On her face
was one of the most beautiful
and genuine smiles I have
ever seen in my life. At that
moment all the anger and
resentment in my heart just
melted away in that one
smile. It taught me a valuable
lesson on how much we can
change someone's life with a
simple smile. Smiles may be
simple but they are also very
powerful.

What a lovely thought and it
is true. I have set myself a
challenge - it is to remember
to smile more often and
when I am feeling happy, to
let my face show it!

As you read this issue I pray
that God will draw you closer
to Himself and fill you with
His love.

KINGDOM

REVELATOR

PENTECOST & YOU



Steve Levary, a former editor at the Scottish Catholic Observer in Glasgow, Scotland, explains the importance of Pentecost in our lives.

Pentecost is often described as the birth day of the Church. It is a very special occasion but, as with all the great feasts of the Church, it is not limited to one day a year. It is something to be lived. St Augustine described us as "Easter (Resurrection) people and alleluia is our song!" To be able to sing out that song we need the experience of Pentecost. We need to experience Pentecost every day to be able to cry out that Jesus is Alive.

Our Calling

As Christians we are called to be evangelists. This is not "your mission, should you choose to accept it." That's for a mission impossible. Our mission is most definitely possible, we don't need any qualifications and it has no age restrictions. It starts at Baptism, when we are given the gift of faith. Jesus said in Mark 9:23, "All things can be done for the one who believes." Jesus was speaking to the father of a boy who was possessed by demons and the father's response should be our daily prayer, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).

How then does living the experience of Pentecost help us in our call to evangelise and live out our Christian calling? Jesus told us Himself in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). This is the same Holy Spirit, the same gifts and the same power that we received at Baptism and in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

“We need to experience Pentecost every day to be able to cry out that Jesus is Alive.”

The Descent Of The Holy Spirit

The Risen Lord spent 40 days with His disciples between the Resurrection and the Ascension, then He told them to go to Jerusalem and wait. So, having been prepared for their mission by their Master, the Risen Christ, the Apostles waited for the power, to bring about the birth of the Church and start her on her mission of spreading the Good News of Christ to the ends of the earth. The first Pentecost fell on the Jewish festival of Weeks, Shavuot, that celebrated when Moses received the Torah, the Ten Commandments, on Mount Sinai, (Exodus 19). The people were told to go to a certain place and wait while Moses went up the mountain, where there were peals of thunder, lightning, trumpet blasts and the mountain shook. God's own hand wrote the law on tablets of stone which Moses brought down to the people.

On the day of Pentecost, the disciples with Mary our Mother, knew God was at work, "Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them" (Acts 2:2-3). The signs were there, a strong wind, a loud noise like a trumpet blast and fire, just like there was on Mount Sinai. The fire was a sign of God's presence which rested on each one of them. This time the fire was not some distance away but came to them personally.

"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability" (Acts 2:4). They were united in spirit glorifying God and working together, which is the reversal of what God did when man's pride led to the building of the Tower of Babel, "Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech" (Genesis 11:7). So, united as one body, the Church, they went out to the crowd and proclaimed the Good News. The Church gathered around Peter and publically proclaimed Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

On that first day there were about 3000 converts who heard the call to repent, and were baptised for the forgiveness of their sins and to receive the Holy Spirit. Where did that message come from? It came from the heart of each of the disciples. They knew what to say. When God gave the Commandments to Moses, the words were written on tablets of stone but at Pentecost the Word was inscribed in their hearts. As it is in ours by Baptism, "You yourselves are our letter,

written on our hearts, to be known and read by all and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts"

(2 Corinthians 3:2-3).

So we have the power and the words to spread the Gospel deep within us, written in our hearts

by the Holy Spirit. We are the message from God for other people. We don't necessarily have to speak, but simply live according to the Word praying to the Holy Spirit to guide us. We have received that same Holy Spirit, that same power and we should not be afraid to live our Christian life with conviction. Remember it is not mission impossible!

We are the
message from
God for
other people.

Written On Their Hearts

So what had happened? We know they had received the Holy Spirit as promised. They were exercising the gifts of the Holy Spirit with conviction. They were no longer a group of people locked away in an upper room: they were an authentic community united behind their leader, Peter, who had been chosen by Christ. This is the Church.

OUR GOD, A GOD OF TIME



Euphrasia Ngum-Ndi writes about her personal experience on the way to an interview.

On the 20th of October 2016, I had a job interview. I got up in the morning and did my usual praise and worship and glanced through my CV to finalise my preparation for the interview for a niche job. I left the house feeling confident and ready to face my Goliath, the interviewers. It was about midday and I walked across the cold, gloomy, quiet and peaceful park on my way to the train station. Suddenly I was approached by an unkempt looking man; he smelled of alcohol and appeared to be high on drugs. Surprisingly enough I didn't panic but kept my calm.

He approached me and said, "Good morning Ma'am" and I replied, "Good morning, and how are you today?" He responded, "I am fine and high on drugs." I paused, was speechless for a few seconds, and then I said to him, "Why do you take drugs?" He said drugs were the only thing that made him happy, as his wife of six years had gone off with his best friend. I paused for a few moments then I asked him how taking drugs was helping him. I was not sure whether that was the right question to ask.

Then I asked him, whether he had eaten anything that day. He replied, "Only the drugs." I reached for my purse to take out some money to give to him, but a small voice in my head said that he did not need the money. We kept walking through the park, then he stopped abruptly and asked my

name and how old I was and if I had any children. Hmmm..... I thought to myself, you did not ask if I was married but you are asking me about my children!! This felt weird but all the same I felt comfortable in answering his questions, so I told him my name, my age and told him that I don't have children yet.

He opened his bag and took out a small bottle of Nivea and handed it to me saying, "Here is a present for you", and I thanked him very much. We walked on a few steps and he took out another Nivea bottle and said, "Here you go." I reminded him that he had already given me one and he said, "This one is for your husband." I thanked him again. I wondered how he knew that I was married.

We kept walking in silence and just as we approached the gates of the park, he said to me, "I am going to leave you here, as I am not going to cross the road. Thank you so much for listening to me, not many people listen to me, good bye and hope to see you again in the park" and he left me. While walking away, alone now, I kept trying to make sense of what had happened. I had a strange sense of calmness in my heart about the experience but was left with unanswered questions. I was glad that I did not judge him.

I continued my journey. When I arrived at the venue, there was a lady sitting outside who asked me if

“He smelled of alcohol and appeared to be high on drugs.”



I had come for an interview. I said that I had and she asked me where I had come from and what my background was, so I told her. Then I asked her the same question and proudly she replied, "I am from this unit." I said, "Oh! That means you are an internal candidate" and she replied with a grin on her face knowing that she had an advantage over me. Then we waited in silence; I said a little prayer in my heart, "God you know me and You know why I applied for this job, let Your will and not mine be done but help me to accept the feedback however it might turn out to be." The interview was for a senior specialist position at a niche facility, where immune therapies are tried for the first time in neuro degeneration, it would be a dream to work in this unit. Many people had applied for the job including internal candidates and I thought to myself, who am I to

think that I might be offered this position?

It was my turn to be interviewed and I was met by two matrons and the medical director of the facility. As I was answering their questions both matrons were taking notes and smiling but the director looked worried. At the end of the interview, I was given an opportunity to ask questions. I had prepared four for the panel, three of which they could answer but the last one the director smiled at me and said that's a very good question but "I will have to come back to you on that one."

What God has ordained for you, no man can take away. It was 9am the next morning. In the middle of my praise and worship an unknown number called but I ignored it since I was deep in prayer. But the person continued to call. When the phone rang a third time, I answered it. It was one of the matrons who had interviewed me. She said, "Congratulations, we want to offer you the job and we look forward to you joining our team. You really

impressed us with your answers yesterday as it's difficult to find experienced people like yourself in London, so we are delighted that you want to join us." The last two day's experiences made me wonder as to what form does the Son of God come to us each day!

On the personal front, my husband and I have been praying for a child. We have been to many different hospitals and were told by the doctors that there was nothing they could do to help me get pregnant. They advised us to adopt a child. I accepted the job offer in October and agreed to start in January 2017. In January 2017, I was told that I was pregnant. That same month, out of the blue, my husband was offered a better paid job. Our God is a God of time, the one who is never late, the one who holds the future and He is worthy to be praised and glorified.



DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY!

One of the Sehion Youth Team member, tells us why we should not be worried.

Often it is worrying about things that stops us feeling satisfied with our lives. Whether it is taking exams, playing sports or going for interviews, as students we tend not to accept the free gift of peace that comes from God. We can refuse God's help by relying on our own strength. Whatever our worries, "Will I remember everything?", "Will the questions I have revised really come up?", "Will I run out of time?" We have a burning fire inside of us, a.k.a the 'HOLY SPIRIT' and we must

**“
You did not receive
a spirit of slavery
to fall back into
fear, but you have
received a spirit of
adoption.**

Romans 8:15

”

not quench this fire as St Paul warns us. He tells us how we can achieve this, by rejoicing always, praying without ceasing and giving thanks at all times, no matter what (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

Don't Quench The Fire

St Paul tells us to rejoice always. This rejoicing is only possible if we have the Spirit of the Lord burning within us. This fire of the Holy Spirit is what the disciples received at Pentecost (Acts 2) when they were praying together with Mary and they never looked back. The word of God says, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you”. In Romans 8:15 it says, “You did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption.” The Holy Spirit through whom we are adopted as children of God is what enables us to call God, our Father. When we realise

that He alone is our helper then as queen Esther says, we will flee to the Lord with our anxiety (Esther 14:1).

Let Jesus Take The Load

We can cast all our anxieties on Him when we believe how much He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). Matthew 6:27 says “Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?” The Holy Spirit teaches us not to worry striving for things in this world (Luke 12:29) because we can be assured that our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). Pope Francis encourages us young people to read the Bible regularly because the words of Jesus are there, not merely to make us happy, but so that our joy may be complete (John 15:11). Imagine, being able to sit at the feet of the apostles and hear the stories of Jesus. This was exactly what St Polycarp was able to do! St Irenaeus a disciple of St Polycarp, who followed

Polycarp to Rome once said, “The glory of God is a human being fully alive.”

Finding Peace

We are created for greatness and to aim higher in order to shoot for the stars. St Augustine said that God has created us for Himself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Him. So go to Him and He will give you peace because His burden is light (Matthew 11:30). There is nothing too heavy for Him to bear for us. The Psalmist is sure of this peace and tranquility. Psalm 23:2 says, “He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my life.” This comfort can only be received when we accept Jesus as our shepherd and allow Him to be in control of our lives.

No More Fear

Jesus is constantly inviting us to go to Him and when we do we will become fully alive. “If you hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with Me” (Revelations 3:20). So, we can be certain that He will sustain us when we cast our burdens on the Lord (Psalm 55:22). In order for us to build this relationship of ‘burden casting’ we have to hear His voice and follow it, by reading the Bible regularly and allowing God to speak to us through it. If you have a real problem with worry then read Matthew 6:25-34 daily for reassurance. “Do not be afraid little flock” (Luke 12:32), it is our Daddy’s pleasure to give us the Kingdom. After all this citizenship is what we all strive for, right?



HOLDING ON TO HOPE



Rosemary Joy, a 17 year old student from the UK, talks about the importance of hope in our lives.

Difficult Situations

Have you ever been in a situation where you've thought, "Only God can help me now." Or maybe you're going through such a situation right now. If you are, I want you to know that there is hope, hope that can shed light into even the darkest corner of your life. None of your problems has the power to destroy you. You may be in such great pain that you feel like you cannot go on. Or maybe you are distressed and feel that no one understands you. It could be that you

**If God is for us,
who is against us?** **Romans 8:31**

“
**You may be
fighting a
battle that
no-one
knows about,
not even your
family or
closest
friends.**”

are shedding tears at night but hiding all your hurt behind a smile during the day. You may be fighting a battle that no-one knows about, not even your family or closest friends. You may be feeling completely broken and alone. Whatever it is that you're going through, you can have hope and this hope has a name - Jesus.

Powerful Companion

Whatever is taking your peace away and troubling you, you can and you will overcome it. "In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!" (John 16:33). Jesus is speaking these words to you. The God who holds the universe in His hands, the One who conquered death, and who loves you more than you could ever love yourself, wants to fight your battles for you. If God is for us, who is against us? (Romans 8:31)

The sovereign power of God means that He has complete control over everything. If you choose Him to be the Lord of your life then there is nothing that the Almighty and all-loving God cannot help you with. He can do the impossible in your life. If you really understood this truth and believed it nothing could ever shake you. "Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult" (Psalm 46:1-3). Don't ever give up hope; you are child of a God, who shed every drop of His blood for you. No matter how hopeless your circumstances are, you can be assured that the King of the Universe is on your side. He is holding you close to His chest and no matter what happens, He will never leave you or forsake you. He will always be your loving Father; nothing can change His love for you.

A Beautiful Treasure

Along with your Heavenly Father, you also have a Heavenly Mother who wants to nurture you and protect you from all harm. St Bernard of Clairvaux said, "While she holds your hands, you cannot fall." He was talking about the hands that held the hands of the Infant Jesus as he learnt to walk and also the wounded, blood-soaked body of her most beloved Son and our Saviour at Golgotha. The Mother of Jesus, who is also your mother, wants to hold your hands, and teach you, just like she did with Jesus. Remember that you do not cry alone because you have a mother who wants to comfort you. Jesus wants you to accept the most beautiful treasure that is His Mother, as your own, so that she can comfort you. "In trial or difficulty I have recourse to Mother Mary, whose glance alone is enough to dissipate every fear."
St Therese of Lisieux





John Hesketh, a National Catholic Speaker from Liverpool, UK, wonders if its time for a wake up call to our sleeping souls.

IT'S TIME TO WAKE HIM UP!

Temptations

St Augustine gave in to many temptations when he was young, and was very rebellious. He enjoyed doing bad things, just because they were sinful. One of his weaknesses was to steal pears from his neighbour's tree; not because he was hungry, but for the fun of it.

"There was a pear tree near our vineyard, loaded with fruit that was attractive neither to look at nor to taste. Late one night a band of ruffians, myself included, went off to shake down the fruit and carry it away, for we had continued our games out of doors until well after dark, as was our pernicious habit. We took away an enormous quantity of pears, not to eat them ourselves, but simply to throw them to the pigs. Perhaps we ate some of

By giving way to someone else's evil, you suffer shipwreck.

them, but our real pleasure consisted in doing something that was forbidden.”

Ref: The Confessions of Saint Augustine

His mother, Monica, spent her life praying for his conversion. Now, both Monica and Augustine are really important Saints in the Catholic Church and they can both help us when we feel far from God. What makes them powerful? They both understand how strong temptations can be and that it takes time to overcome certain weaknesses. Augustine became a Bishop in North Africa and is known by most people for his sermons. He is known as a gifted speaker because he spoke from his heart with much experience.

Our Hearts Are Restless

Augustine knew what life was like without God, and once he allowed Jesus into his heart, there was no turning back.

His famous saying is, “You made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you.” So

what advice does Saint Augustine have for us today? He lived in the 5th Century, so what can his teachings offer us now in such a technologically advanced world? It’s simple: It’s time to wake up.

Time To Wake Up

What causes you to fall asleep? Augustine used the story of Jesus asleep in the boat during a storm: “Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping” (Matthew 8:24). In relating this passage to our lives, Augustine said:

“You have been insulted - it’s a high wind; you are angry - it’s a wave. So as the wind blows and the waves break, the boat is in peril, your heart is in peril, your heart is tossed about. When you hear the insult, you are eager to avenge it; you do avenge it, and by giving way to someone else’s evil, you suffer shipwreck. And why is that? Because Christ is asleep in you. What does it mean that Christ is asleep in you? That you have forgotten Christ. So wake Christ up, remember Christ; let Christ stay awake in you, think about Him” (*The Works of Saint Augustine, Essential Sermons*).

So why is Christ asleep in you? Probably for the same reason he is asleep in me. Distraction! I try my best to live out my faith every day and I know that prayer is the answer to feeding my faith but there are times when I get caught up in the distractions of family, friends, work, sports, TV etc. But if I am completely honest, I have to admit that my sins are the biggest reason for ignoring God in my life. The more I sin, the less I want to pray, and the more ashamed I feel. Prayer forces me to face the truth about my own weaknesses and insecurities. St Paul put it very well, “It is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but

“
The more I
sin, the less I
want to pray,
and the more
ashamed I
feel.”

everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you” (Ephesians 5:12-14).

The Answer

So there is the answer. We must be honest with ourselves about our distractions and sins and then we can be honest with God. A really good way to do this is with a prayer journal. Just talk to God on paper, almost like you’re writing him a letter. God already knows our sins and Jesus has already forgiven us for all the wrong we have done. We need to be honest with ourselves and writing prayers down can help with our struggles. Prayer is always the answer, and the more we pray the easier it becomes. The moment I accept Jesus’ divine mercy and forgiveness and tell Him I am sorry (In Confession if necessary), for the wrongs I have done, then He will awaken in me His own life and I will begin to find peace and new strength. ◻

THE RESURRECTION FACT OR FICTION?



Part VI of the series by Sunil James, a fourth year medical student from the UK.

The resurrection of Jesus is the distinctive point that separates Christianity from other religions. The Resurrection is disputed by many as not being a historical fact. It is generally accepted as a historical fact that after Jesus died on the cross he was laid in a tomb nearby. Now we can think about historical reason for believing He rose from the dead. To do this we have to look at four theories:

Mythic Theory

Some people claim that the resurrection was fabricated by early Christians. Something must have happened to cause the apostles and the disciples to preach the risen Christ. St Paul who persecuted Christians taught Jesus's resurrection after the Lord appeared to him. In 1 Corinthians 15, he tells us the Resurrection is central to the Good News and then goes on to list the people to

Paul had no reason to invent an account that would lead to his execution.

whom Jesus appeared. This, the historians believe, was written just three years after Pentecost.

“Would they have chosen one that made them look foolish?”

Preaching the resurrection got the early Christians into real bother to say the least. Paul tells us it put his life in danger. That raises the question if the apostles were going to fabricate a story, would they have chosen one that made them look foolish and endanger them? This is called the ‘criteria of embarrassment’ which is a tool used for judging the accuracy of historical accounts. Paul had no reason to invent an account that would lead to his execution. We can take it that the Resurrection of Christ was a firmly held belief common to all of the first followers of Jesus. The idea of it being a fabricated story was not within their thinking.

Conspiracy Theory

These theories abound in our world today and it is no different throughout history when people considered the Resurrection. As mentioned it was thought it was a made up story for gain. This immediately raises the question what did they gain? Wealth? No. Power? No. They gained persecution and ultimately, for the apostles, martyrdom.

They were not preaching a mighty king in terms of the world but rather a Messiah who died a shameful death on a cross. In fact, Paul, a respected Jew and persecutor

of the Church, had nothing to gain from this conversion other than loss – this loss he considered as “rubbish” so that he could gain Christ (Philippians 3:8) and not just Christ but the resurrected Christ.

The Testimony Of Women

If the story of the Resurrection was made up then it would not have included the testimony of women. In the culture of the time, the testimonies of women were not accepted or trusted. Josephus, a Jewish historian, wrote, “Let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex.” In the story, the first witness to the Resurrection was a woman. If someone was going to make up a story for gain they would not take chance of it being built on a statement that would not be believed.

“**The first witness to the Resurrection was a woman.**”

Hallucination Theory

It has been suggested that the disciples were so troubled and heartbroken after Jesus’ death; they imagined the Lord rose from the dead. Immediately we think of the number of people to whom He appeared. Five hundred people, all hallucinating the same thing, at the time, immediately makes you question this theory.

In the 20th chapter in the gospel of John, we are told that Christ spoke to

the disciples who saw Him. Thomas even touched Him. They spoke to Him and He answered. He appeared to different people at different times, even eating with them. This involved the use of all their senses – sight, sound and touch.

Some say, it may have been the power of suggestion, but that only works if the people were warned beforehand that it was going to happen. So coming back to Paul, he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus while hunting down His followers. So it’s safe to say that we can rule this theory out.

Resurrection Theory

So where does this leave us? If it was not a premeditated, fabricated story for gain or power and not a mass hallucination, then it all leads us to conclude that Jesus rose from the dead. There are sound historical roots and witness testimonies so we can say He is Risen indeed.

This Is Our Hope

Hence we can believe in our minds as well as in our hearts that the Lord was raised from the dead. And for us this means as St Paul writes, “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you” (Romans 8:11). That is our hope of eternal life.





A HIGHWAY FOR THE LORD

Jaison Lukose, a Sehion youth minister from the UK, shares his thoughts on how to prepare the way for the Lord.

A voice cries out, "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isaiah 40:3). We may be familiar with this prophecy as it relates to John the Baptist, who "came as a witness to testify to the light" (John 1:7). Recently I heard a sermon in which the priest said that each one of us has a call to make a straight path for the Lord. A highway if you like!

One way that we can prepare a highway for the Lord was given to us by Jesus, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37). Isaiah goes on to prophesy,

"Every valley shall be lifted up and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level and the rough places a plain" (Isaiah 40:4). The construction of a new road often involves removing all the obstacles that are in the way.

Sometimes, when we hang on to our own ideas and plans we can be working against God's plan, which is much more likely to succeed. This limits what God can achieve working through us. If we are to prepare a highway for God we should be ready to let go of all the things, relationships and habits that prevent us from loving God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind.

We might think that Almighty God will force His way into our lives if He wants to, but that is not the case. He has given us a beautiful gift called free will. He expects us to prepare this highway for Him by keeping His commandments out of love for Him. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

"See, today I appoint you over

nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jeremiah 1:10). As children of God we have a calling to destroy the works of the devil. "For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

"Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all people shall see it together for the mouth of the Lord has spoken" (Isaiah 40:5). When we prepare this straight path for the Lord, He will come to us and reveal His glory as scripture promises. "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Lord Jesus, we pray for the grace to love You with all our heart, all our soul and all our mind. Amen.

“The construction of a new road often involves removing all the obstacles that are in the way.”

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

6. Gold, Frankincense and ____ . (5)
7. Not one of the Synoptic Gospels. (4)
9. The Miraculous Medal is attributed to Our Lady of the ____ ____ . (10, 10)
11. The colour of the priest's vestments on Palm Sunday. (3)
13. One of the seven deadly sins. (5)
14. The first word of the Sanctus. (4)
15. One of the three theological virtues. (7)
16. IHS represent the first three letters of this person's Greek name. (5)
17. This saint put together the first nativity scene. (7,2,6)



DOWN

1. This man ate meals of locusts and honey. (4,3,7)
2. The finale to the twelve days of Christmas. (8)
3. "The visible plan of God's love for humanity," according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. (3,6)
4. The official Daily prayer of the Catholic Church. (3,6,6)
5. The most recently living Doctor of the Church. (7,2,7)
8. The author of 'Introduction to the Devout Life'. (7,2,5)
10. He foretold the birth of Jesus. (6)
12. An alias of Karol Jozef Wojtyla. (4,4,2)



"Call to me and I will answer you"

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I THIRST

»» Testimony ««

Kendal Jordan from Florida, USA, shares her experience of visiting and volunteering at the Mother Teresa home in India.



One day my college classmate showed me a black and white photograph of St Teresa of Kolkata. She was dressed in her famous white and blue sari and rounding the corner of a staircase, her right hand resting on a wooden banister. Behind her was a large crucifix with the words "I Thirst." The spot seemed familiar, I suddenly realized that I had been there, and I had once rested my own hand on that banister in the very same way.

The scene was from the Missionaries of Charity (MC) Motherhouse in Calcutta (Kolkata), India, where as a freshman in 2012 I had been chosen alongside eleven other students to participate in Ave Maria University's first mission trip. Being able to make this visit to Kolkata was one of the perks of having Jim Towey as our university president. President Towey had been a dear friend and legal counsel to Mother Teresa for the last twelve years of her life and had retained a very close relationship with her successor and the MC's. Thanks to his connections, my classmates and I were welcomed into a unique mission experience with them in Kolkata. I was able to open the same doors as Mother, walk the same streets, and kneel on the same chapel floor every day for Mass and Eucharistic Adoration as Mother would have. Even though Mother Teresa's



canonization was still awaiting the confirmation for a second miracle at that time, I felt I was surrounded by the relics of a saint.

Yet looking at that black and white photograph, I also see the hurried pace and focused expression on Mother Teresa's face. She isn't smiling or even looking at the camera. Mother Teresa had never been interested in drawing attention to herself. Rather she wanted everything she did to direct others to Jesus. Instead of being amazed that I was touching her banister, I imagine Mother Teresa would urge me to be amazed about those moments when I was



touching Jesus. She would remind me that there was an encounter with Him, despite the language barrier I found at the MC's home for the abandoned. There I washed the rooms from floor to ceiling and then cradled the

heads of bedridden women in order to give them a drink of water. My encounter with Jesus continued when I was spoonfeeding and bathing the women whose hands had become crooked and fingerless by leprosy. And also when I was rolling on the floor laughing with the children who lived at a home for the handicapped. It was at this time I experienced their true living conditions. While I was in the slums of Motijheel, playing cricket with them, I noticed their dilapidated homes were no bigger than my bedroom closet.

I encountered Jesus in everything we did there, whether it be while I was staying up talking with my classmates, offering up cold bucket showers, or helping to wash the dishes at our guest house. And one particular experience of the presence of Jesus on the cross was when on the designated day for fun and souvenir shopping, I actually ended up staying in bed with severe heat exhaustion.

I imagine these would be the moments that Mother would have encouraged me to be in awe of. And I also imagine her encouraging me to continue this same inspiration at home, seeing Jesus in my own family, in my classmates, in my teachers, in the waitress at the restaurant, in the cashier at the store, in the stranger who passes me on the street and so on. And to experience Jesus in my moments of suffering, discomfort or inconvenience. As Mother Teresa would often advise people, I think she would advise me too, to "find my own Calcutta". Instead of looking at a photograph or a building and marvelling that, "Mother Teresa was here," she would want me to look at my neighbour and at the little crosses

in my life and say to myself: "Jesus is here." She would want me to be sensitive to the presence of Jesus all around me, to focus on satiating His thirst for souls, starting with



“I was able to open the same doors as Mother, walk the same streets, and kneel on the same chapel floor every day for Mass and Eucharistic Adoration as Mother Teresa would have.”

my own. After all it was this perspective which led her to become a saint. And it is this perspective which will lead me and my neighbour towards sainthood as well.

ST MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE



Apostle Of The Devotion To The Sacred Heart Of Jesus

Sharlet Francis Xavier from Birmingham, UK explores the life of St Margaret Mary Alocoque.

Early Childhood

Margaret was born to virtuous God fearing parents, Claude Alacoque and Philiberte Lamyn, on 22 July 1647 in France. Margaret showed intense love for the Blessed Sacrament and preferred silence and prayer since early childhood. After receiving her First Holy Communion at the age of nine, she started practising in secret, severe corporal mortifications for the sake of the passion of Christ. When she was eleven, she was bedridden with rheumatic fever for nearly four years. At the end of this period, she had a vision of the Blessed Virgin and Margaret promised her to consecrate herself to religious life and she was instantly healed.

Hard Times

Her family fell into poverty soon after her father's death as they were cheated by a relative. She found consolation by spending time in front of the Blessed Sacrament during those difficult times and it brought her closer to Jesus.

He appeared bloodied and scourged.

When Margaret was seventeen, the family was restored from poverty and her mother wanted her to attend the social circle in the hope of finding a suitable husband. She instructed Margaret that she could serve God at home by penance and through some acts of charity towards

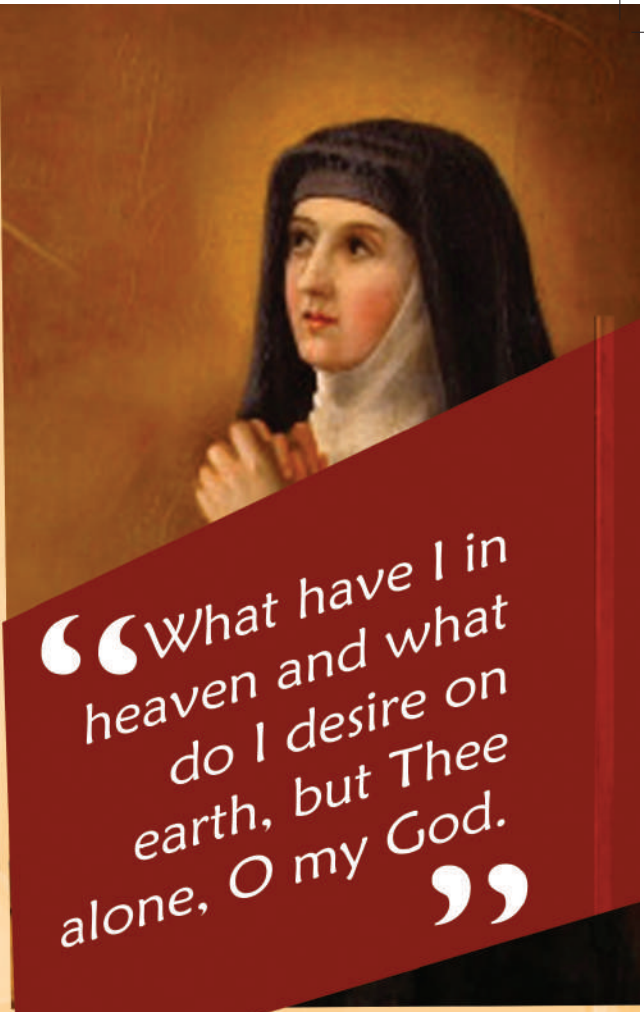
the poor. Half heartedly Margaret began to take part in the social events. One night upon her return from a Ball, she had a vision of Christ. He appeared bloodied and scourged. He reproached her for infidelity after He had given her so many proofs of His love. Yet He reassured her of His love due to her promise to Our Lady that she would consecrate her life to the Lord.

Vocation

On 25th May, 1671, she entered the Visitation Convent at Paray, where she had to repeatedly demonstrate her endurance to prove her vocation and after a year, she made her final vows. She was physically fragile but was gifted with intelligence and wiser discernment. In the cloister (secluded area in a convent), she chose for herself sufferings, which were often relieved or instantly cured by Jesus. She had tremendous love for the Lord and Jesus often appeared to her and spoke to her, telling her about His mission to establish the devotion to His Sacred Heart. However, these incidents attracted jealousy and criticism of the community towards Margaret. She was treated as a weird visionary and her superior commanded her to live a common life as others. But her obedience, humility and invariable charity towards those who persecuted her was remarkable. Later she was recognised even by those who had shown her the most bitter opposition.


Visions

Margaret said that Jesus asked her to observe the eve of the first Friday of every month as the Holy Hour. She was often seen praying lying prostrate with her face to the ground from eleven till midnight. According to her, this was to share in the mortal sadness that Jesus endured during His trial and crucifixion when He was abandoned by His apostles in His agony. She said that Jesus encouraged her to ask people to receive the Holy Communion on the first Friday of every month. Jesus also expressed to her, His ardent desire to be loved by us. 'The feast of the Sacred Heart was appointed by Jesus on the Friday after eight days (octave) of the feast of Corpus Christi.' She was lovingly called by Jesus as 'the beloved disciple of the Sacred Heart'. The love for the Sacred Heart consumed her greatly and all her writings were based on it. Margaret is said to have had numerous visits and conversations with the Lord and was courageous to withstand all the humiliations for the sacred name of Jesus. During her final illness she refused any treatment and was heard frequently repeating the words, "What have I in heaven and what do I desire on earth, but Thee alone, O my God." She died on the 17th of October 1690, pronouncing the holy name of Jesus.



“What have I in heaven and what do I desire on earth, but Thee alone, O my God.”

Her Legacy

The Sacred Congregation of Rites, after years of detailed examination, approved a favourable decision on her heroic virtues. When her tomb was canonically opened in July 1830, her body was found intact. According to canon records, two instantaneous cures were reported at that very moment. Pope Benedict XV canonised Margaret Mary in 1920 and her feast is celebrated on the 17th of October. Today her body rests under the altar in the chapel at Paray, renewing the spirit of faithful pilgrims who visit her tomb from all over the world. Many favours and miracles have been obtained by the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. 

CROSSWORD ANSWER Across : 6. Myrrh 7. John 9. Immaculate Conception 11. Red 13. Greed 14. Holy 15. Charity 16. Jesus 17. Francis of Assisi

Down : 1. John the Baptist 2. Epiphany 3. The Church 4. The Divine Office 5. Thérèse of Lisieux 8. Francis de Sales 10. Isaiah 12. John Paul II



WHAT WOULD YOU DO?



Rajni Manoj, a teacher from the UK, reflects on a poem she read recently.

Recently I received a poem in my mail called 'If Jesus came to your Door' by Lois Blanchard Eades. I was deeply impacted after reading it. I immediately put aside what I was doing and began to ponder over it. If one day Jesus really knocked at my door, what would I do? Would I gladly welcome my heavenly visitor with out-stretched arms and invite Him into my home? I'm sure that I would offer him the best room to stay in and serve Him the best food that I could. I would be so excited at the sight of my Lord and like Mary I would sit at His feet and listen to Him speak the words of eternal life. Oh what a joyful day that would be!!

But then I thought, hang on, Jesus knows everything about us, even our deepest thoughts, so would I be comfortable with Him seeing me just as I am? Like Nicodemus, would I go and open the door and let Him in without a second thought? Or would I want to change anything about myself before I let Him in? Would I be embarrassed by the way that we speak to each other in the house while Jesus was staying with us? Would I be comfortable listening to

“
Oh what a joyful day that would be!
”

the same music with Jesus beside me and continue to read the same type of books? Would He be happy to know how I spend my leisure time?

Would I be able to sit at His feet and pour out my heart to Him and wash

His feet with my tears? And also forgive my trespassers and become like a child again to make Jesus happy? Or rather like Peter, profess my faith loudly and be willing to become the rock on which Jesus can build His church? Or would I, like the wife of Zebedee, the mother of James and John, ask Jesus to reserve the best place for my family in Heaven?

If Jesus ever came to your door, what would you do? Would you happily introduce your closest friends to Him and be glad to let Him stay forever or would you sigh with relief when He finally leaves? Would you take Him with you everywhere you had planned to go or would you change your plans while Jesus stayed with you? I'm sure Jesus would want to come in irrespective of how or what we are because He loves us unconditionally. But it would be interesting to know the things that we would do if Jesus really came to our door one day!



THE VOICE OF THE VATICAN

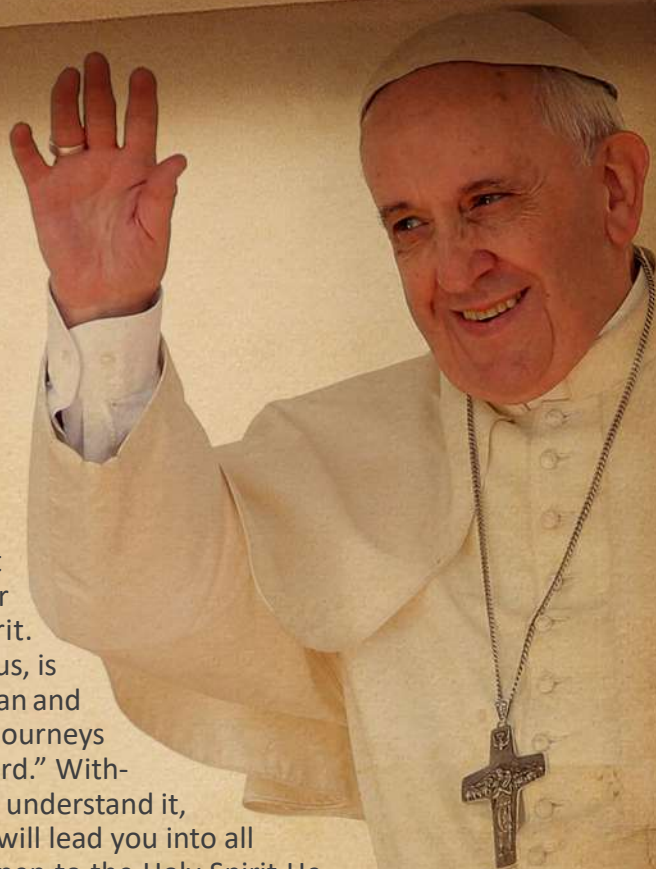
WORDS OF WISDOM FROM POPE FRANCIS

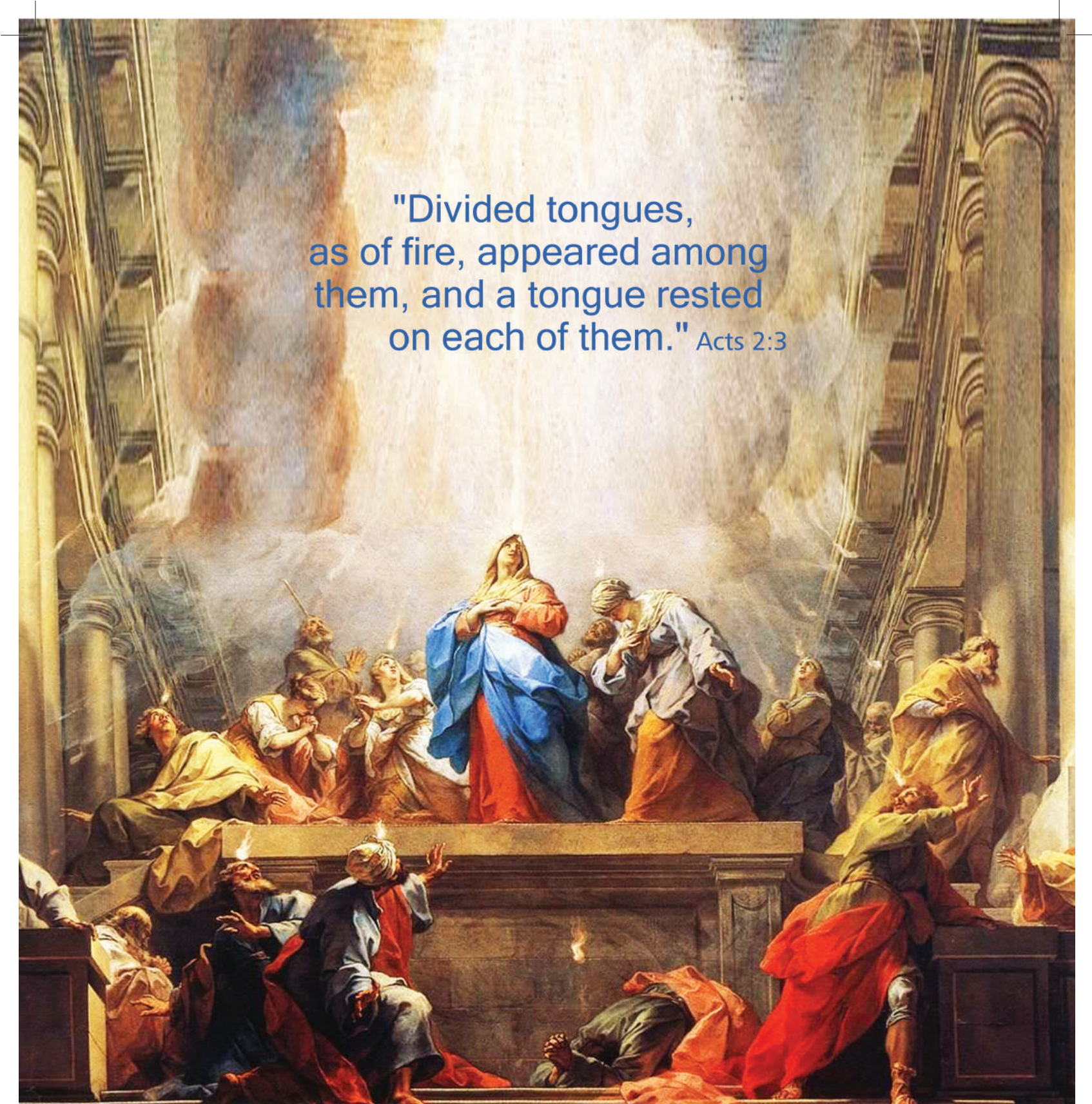
Recently as we approached the great Feast of Pentecost, Pope Francis told us that our hearts should be open to the Holy Spirit. He said that the Holy Spirit, Jesus' gift to us, is the travelling companion and guide for every Christian and for the Church as a whole. It is the Paraclete who journeys with us and teaches us to say that "Jesus is the Lord." Without the Holy Spirit, we would not be able to say it, understand it, or to live it. Jesus promised that, "The Holy Spirit will lead you into all truth". The Pope said that when our hearts are open to the Holy Spirit He will lead us to discover the truth. "He will bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you; He will teach you all things."

The Holy Spirit will never lead us astray. In the Acts of Apostles, there are numerous examples of people whose lives were transformed by the Holy Spirit. The Pope cited Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart so that the Holy Spirit could enter, and she became a great disciple of Jesus. It is in our hearts that we carry the Holy Spirit. But Pope Francis warned that if our hearts are closed then The Holy Spirit cannot enter. So how do we open our hearts? We can't, he said, only God can open our hearts, so that His Holy Spirit can enter into our lives.

We can find out if our hearts are truly open to the Holy Spirit by asking ourselves these questions. Do I regularly ask the Lord for the grace that my heart might be opened? Do I try to listen to the Holy Spirit, ask for His guidance and do the things that He tells me? Do I try to advance in the Christian life so that I can bear witness that Jesus is the Lord of my life?

Let us pray every day: Lord, open my heart so that the Holy Spirit may enter. I pray that He will guide me and show me Your will for my life. Help me to follow You more closely, to show Your love to others and lead me into the fullness of truth. Amen.





"Divided tongues,
as of fire, appeared among
them, and a tongue rested
on each of them." Acts 2:3

The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but
also profess it, confidently bear witness to it and spread it.
(Catechism of the Catholic Church - 1816)

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