

KADOSH MARIAN VOICE



APR/MAY/JUN 2020

Holiness Firmness Truthfulness Faithfulness



ABOUT KADOSH MARIAN MINISTRIES

Kadosh “In Jewish thinking, “The Holy One, blessed be He” (hakkadosh, barukh hu) is one of the most commonly used designation for God.” **Marian** “is a given name, Hebrew meaning of Marion is the precious one or unique from the word or Mariam”

Kadosh Marian Ministries is a non-profit organization headquartered in UK and spread all over the World. Currently working with and within the Catholic Church, adhering to the norms, traditions, ethos and values. We are established since July 1994 as an approved Charitable Trust under the UK law with the responsibilities: -

- Conducting certificate oriented theological courses duly awarded by various international accredited universities.
- Conducting Charismatic Renewal services to revive the trooping spirit of the flagging faithful.
- Administering Sacraments by the ordained Catholic Priests and Bishops.
- Promoting devotion to Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary.
- Conducting guidance, counselling and healing through deliverance services to the needy, lonely and the afflicted ones.
- We participate to feed 200 poorest people daily.
- We participate to provide pension to 75 widows monthly.
- We participate to provide scholarship for 302 children yearly.
- We visit refugee camps and provide food, clothes and medicines to them.
- We contribute to build five homes for the poor families in a year minimum.

Join with us, slake the thirst, and enjoy the abundance of Spirit of the Sovereign Lord – Immanuel. And all the above charitable activities are routed in consultation with Catholic Priests and Bishops .

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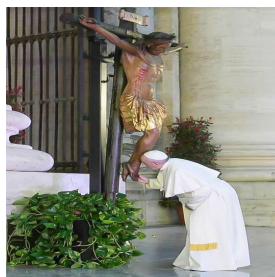
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Editorially

This edition covers the quarter from April to June 2020.

Some of our regular readers from abroad have extended their kindest compliments for the exemplary standard demonstrated in our publications and commented on the excellence of the quality articles consistently maintained. We are ever thankful to them as well as to the contributors and authors and as a matter of fact, it is these rich compliments that provide us with powerful inspirations to maintain the rich contents in the forthcoming editions.

One of the readers just casually asked me whether the '**Yom Kippur**' being the most holy day for Jews had any relevance or significance in a Christian context, as it is attributed to them personally. My answer was in the affirmative and I told him we will deal with it in the current edition. Hence a few words as follows.



In Hebrew & Arabic '**Yom**' means '**day**' while '**Kippur**' means '**atonement**'. The word atonement can be segmented to read as 'at-one-ment' with God. This is a day of fasting and prayer and has roots in Leviticus XV1, where it states that Aaron had to draw two lots for two goats and allot one to Yahweh and the other to Azazel. Aaron had to offer up the goat whose lot was marked for 'Yahweh' and offer it as a sacrifice for sin. The goat whose lot was marked for 'Azazel' shall be set before Yahweh, still alive to perform the rite of atonement over it, sending it out into the desert of Azazel.

Azazel is symbolically the scapegoat which carries away the burden of sins of the Jewish people. Azazel means removal and symbolises the removing the sins of the people entirely. This goat is carrying the blame for others and that is how the word 'scapegoat' came into the English usage with its present import.

John Milton uses this name for standard - bearer in his "Paradise Lost 1, 534". In Mohammanan demology '**Azazel**' is the counterpart of the devil, cast out of Heaven for refusing to worship Adam with his name changing to Eblis (Iblis), meaning despair.

"On the tenth day of the seventh month you must fast and refrain from work, the native and stranger who lives among you. For, this is the day on which the rite of atonement shall be performed over you, to purify you. Before Yahweh you will be clean of all sins. It shall be Sabbath rest for you and you are to fast. This is a perpetual law". This day is the tenth day of the seventh month. This does not mean 10th day of the month of July, as some people misunderstand. It occurs only in the month of September-October, a period which is prior to the intercalary addition of January and February.

Let us see the relevance of the word "Atonement" in the Christian context and concept. Atonement is the centre of gravity in Christian life and thought in the New Testament. According to apostolic preaching and doctrine the significance of Christ lies supremely in his death - death on a cross. In the New Testament this event (death) is never viewed in isolation from his person, his ministry and his teaching, nor viewed apart from his resurrection. As a matter of fact,

keeping in mind the Calvinistic formulation, His Death exegetes his teaching and together with his sin-free, miracle working ministry of love constitutes the active obedience of life without which the passive obedience of suffering would have been nugatory or of trumpery value. His death is interpreted not as a martyrdom, brought to pass by a miscarriage of justice, but as the offering of a redemptive sacrifice once and for all. The Greek word used in this context is '**Ephapax**' meaning 'once and for all' (Heb 10: 1-14). This redemptive sacrifice on the cross, in the whole range of its results is commonly known as the 'Atonement'.

Let us see a few viewpoints concerning the historic theories of Soteriology. In Greek 'soterion' means salvation. Soter means 'saviour'. Hence Soteriology is the study of salvation with reference to Christ.

A formulated theory, denominated as patristic, attributed to Alsalm sums up that redemptive deed of Jesus is a peculiar i.e. atoning sacrifice by which God's honour is satisfied and his holy judgement is propitiated. According to Abelard, the cross is a moving demonstration of forgiving love, magnetising and eliciting man's love in response to God's agapaic self-oblation.

Irenaeus (ca130 ca 200) taught that Jesus Christ as second Adam recapitulated human experience, died as a ransom, wrested man from the grasp of the Devil, and so opened up the possibility of an incorruptible life for mortal sinners. This was a dominant, orthodox and traditional theory which prevailed for a period nearly a thousand years. However Origen disagreed with this view. According to Origen the ransom provided by Christ was paid not to God but to devil. Augustin (354-430) in his 'Enchiridion and on the 'Trinity' discussed the atonement, venturing in his sermons to picture the cross as mousetrap baited with the saviour's blood. He also stressed the value of Christ's death as a satisfaction offered to God's justice using terms like 'fall, original sin and justification'. John Damascus (675 ca 749) chronicled the old interpretations of Christ's death as a ransom to God, as a kind of fishing expedition which snared the devil and a victory which destroyed death, liberated captive sinners and brought to light, life and immortality. According to Greek fathers Christ's soteriology, Jesus is saviour not simply because he is a victor and a conqueror but because he is also a Revealer, Benefactor, Physician, Victim and a Reconciler.

Jesus said that he has come not to abolish law but to fulfil it - in justification (a legal term) God does what is legally right. Thus we could see that He refuses to waive the demands of law. Rather in love, He himself meets the law's demands through the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Instead of making the law void, He establishes it. Let us refer to Romans 3:31 - "*We are giving the Law its true value*". The atonement is a work done outside man, wrought for him at a point in history and only after that it applied to him. A work which possesses value for God and that reconciles God to man before man reconciles to God. In other words, the reconciliation of God with man is ostensibly antecedent and the reconciliation of man with God is precedent. A point to be noted is that the atonement did not alter God's nature, but it certainly altered his relationship with the sinful creature, and that it embodies unfathomable mysteries. Alen Richardson asserts that atonement in the New Testament is a mystery not a problem. One can make theories and offer them as solutions of the problems. But none can ever theorise about the deep mysteries of redemption.

Catechism of the Catholic Church quotes St Paul ; '**God put forward expiation by his blood**'. By this he means that in Christ's humanity '**God was in Christ reconciling world to himself**', (CCC 433). This propitiatory was on the wood of a cross ensuring the redemption with blood shed for the whole humanity by an innocent lamb.

Let us therefore remember the words of St Rose of Lima to the effect that "**there is no ladder to go upward to heaven except by the Cross of Christ.**"

Let us also therefore pray like the thief hanging on the right hand side of Jesus whilst on the Cross: "**Jesus remember me while you enter into your kingdom**". Let us finally reflect, acknowledge and sing with the following lines:

***Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood
Sealed my pardon with His blood
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!!!***



Adv. Earnest Peter Kandathil
Chief Editor

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The Acts of the Apostles narrates three times the story of Paul's conversion: 9,1-19; 22,6-16; 26,12-18. Today interpreters would like to call these depictions more as Paul's vocation narratives than as conversion narratives. What his conversion meant for Paul, as presented in Phl 3,4-8, we have seen in the previous number of this journal.

Now, every vocation has two aspects:

- I) **THE LORD PUTS A PERSON IN RELATION WITH HIMSELF AND CONFERS A MISSION ON THAT PERSON,**
- II) **WHICH PUTS HIM/HER IN RELATION WITH OTHERS.**

In the first narration by the author himself in the chronological order of events (Acts 9,1-19), it is clear that Paul is made his own by Christ (see Phil 3,12), and he is going to be his "chosen instrument," (Acts 9,15)

BUT THE LORD SAID TO ANANIAS,
"GO! THIS MAN IS MY CHOSEN INSTRUMENT
TO PROCLAIM MY NAME TO THE GENTILES."
ACTS 9:15 NIV

The story is repeated in Acts 22,6-16 by Paul himself at Jerusalem, after his arrest provoked by the hostility of the Jews. Paul addresses his fellow Jews and tries to tell that his vocation was really from God. He tells them what Ananias had told him about his call, **"THE GOD OF OUR ANCESTORS HAS CHOSEN YOU TO KNOW HIS WILL, TO SEE THE RIGHTEOUS ONE AND TO HEAR HIS OWN VOICE; FOR YOU WILL BE HIS WITNESS TO ALL THE WORLD OF WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN AND HEARD"** (Acts 22,14-15). Then Paul narrates the story of his trance in the temple, in which he was told of his mission far away among the Gentiles (see Acts 22,17-21).

On another occasion Paul found it opportune to recount the story of his vocation, during the two years of his imprisonment in Caesarea (26,12-18). The Roman Governor Festus allowed Paul to defend his case before King Agrippa and Princess Bernice. Paul tells them what the Lord had told him in the vision on the road to Damascus: "I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The Lord answered, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles-- to whom I am sending

you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me'" (Acts 26, 15-18). Indeed the story of Acts starting from chapter 9 is a narration of how Paul accepted his vocation and conducted his mission. Interestingly in chapter 26, while narrating the story of his vocation Paul was even trying to convert King Agrippa (see Acts 26,24-29).

A few observations may be made on the vocation of Paul

(i) **IT WAS A SURPRISING THING.** It is amazing that Paul an unrelenting persecutor was called to be a tireless apostle. In fact every vocation is a surprise, as it is the work of God, an initiative of God; it is not based on one's merit, but pure grace.

(ii) **VOCATION OF PAUL WAS SOMETHING, WHICH WAS PREPARED BY GOD.** It was the God whom he and his fellow Jews had believed, who had prepared his call. It is said, *"The God of our ancestors has chosen you..."* In the letter to Galatians Paul speaks in explicit terms about his vocation: "But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles ..." (Gal 1,15). Vocation is not an isolated fact in the history of a person, but a stage in the marvelous story of God's love evolving in a person.

(iii) The expressions chosen by Paul in Gal 1,15 **SHOW HIS APPRECIATION OF HIS VOCATION**; in fact he alludes to the vocation of prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah in these words: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jer 1,5); "The LORD called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb he named me. I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isa 49,1.6).

We too are participants in this type of a vocation. God put us in relation with his Son so that we may also bring the Good News of his love to all the parts of the world. We cannot but then sing the praises of the Lord in thanksgiving.

For reflection: Read the texts indicated above.

CAN WE HAVE A LOOK INTO OUR OWN VOCATION?



CALLED TO BE SALT & LIGHT

(MATHEW 5:13-14)

¹³ "You are the SALT of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴ "You are the LIGHT of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.



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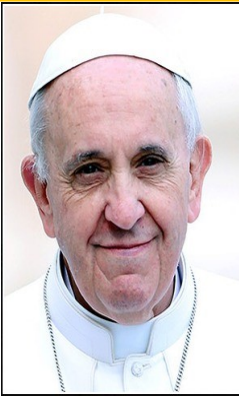
Jesus often used common metaphors, imageries and parables in his teachings in order to make his points clear to his followers. "Salt" and "light" are the two well-known metaphors he employed to depict the fundamental qualities that he expects from all his followers.

SALT OF THE EARTH (Matthew 5:13)

In the ancient world salt was used for flavouring and preserving and it was also seen as a purifying and cleaning agent. Even in our times it is one of the most sought after commodities of daily life. To be the salt of the earth means, every follower of Jesus is called to play an active role in the society by giving taste and flavour to the life of the people: the flavour of joy, peace and hope. Not only every individual follower but also the Church, the community of the believers is called to be the salt of the earth. The community of

the faithful can retain its taste and thus fulfil its mission to the earth only when it remains rooted in the source of its life Jesus Christ.

On 09.02.2020, **Pope Francis** explained in his angelus-address the meaning of the metaphor of the "salt" in the following words: *"Salt is the element that gives flavour, and that keeps and preserves foods from corruption. Therefore, the disciple is called to keep far from society the dangers, the corrosive germs that pollute people's life. It's about resisting sin, moral degradation, by witnessing the values of honesty and fraternity, without yielding to the worldly enticements of careerism, power and wealth. A disciple is "salt" who, despite daily failures — because we all have them —, rises from the dust of his mistakes, beginning again with courage and patience, every day, to seek dialogue and encounter with others. A disciple is "salt" who doesn't seek consensus and applause but makes an effort to be a humble and constructive presence, in fidelity to the teachings of Jesus, who came into the world not to be served but to serve. And there is such need of this attitude!"*



The Family is the salt of the earth
and the light of the world, it is the
leaven of society.

— Pope Francis —

Salt losing its saltiness is something unnatural. According to Betz, salt losing its saltiness is like water losing its wetness. It means that for a disciple of Jesus, losing “saltiness” is equivalent to a person who has lost his/her essence of life, i.e, **Christainess** or a person without any Christian values, thus unable to contribute any taste to the life of the people. However, a Christian without any Christian values is almost impossibility like the salt without saltiness or water without wetness. The life of a disciple of Jesus need not be always a bed of roses. One might refer to another proverbial image: **“BEHOLD, I SEND YOU AS SHEEP IN THE MIDST OF WOLVES”** (Mat 10:16/ Luke 10:3; cf. John 10.12; Acts 20:29; 1 Pet 5:8). Yet the life of the faithful disciples is not that of passive and helpless victims, but that of movers and shakers: it is a life of “doers”. The disciples are placed in troubles, difficulties and hard choices. This is the place where **“THEY MUST SEEK THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS”** (Mat.6.33). If they fail, they will be trampled down (5:13, 7:6) or washed away by the storms of history (7:24-27).

LIGHT OF THE WORLD (Mathew 5: 14)

Light ever shines and dispels the darkness. The vocation of Jesus is to shine, produce light (enlighten) and remove the darkness of sins, ignorance and poverty of all kinds from the society. Light is a very significant metaphor in the bible. **“GOD IS LIGHT”** (1John 1:5) and Christ is described in the fourth Gospel as **“THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD”** (John 8:12, 9:5, 12:46). In Paul, the metaphor also extends to Christians, who are described as **“CHILDREN OF LIGHT”** (Eph 5:8, 1Thess 5:5). Light is thus associate with God, his messiah, his people, the law, the temple, Jerusalem, and the accomplishment and experience of salvation. Paul writes of **“THE LIGHT OF THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF CHRIST”** (2 Cor 4:4). Of Christians he writes that in this fallen world they **“SHINE AS LIGHTS”** (Phil 2:15). When Jesus declares that the disciples are the light of the world, he means



that they as recipients of the kingdom, represent to the world the truth of the salvation that has come. Thus as in the proceeding maxim about the salt of the earth, here too the message is that the disciples are (and will continue to be) indispensable. If the world is not to be left in darkness, the disciples must fulfil their calling to represent the kingdom. They now are the light (v. 16) whose shining thus becomes the hope of the world.

Pope Francis explains to us the meaning of this verse in the following words: Light dispels the darkness and enables one to see. Jesus is the light that has dispelled the darkness, but it still remains in the world and in individual persons. It’s a Christian’s task to dispel it, making the light of Christ shine and proclaiming His Gospel. It’s a radiation that can stem from our words, but it must spring especially from our “good works” (v. 16). A disciple and a Christian community are light in the world when they direct others to God, helping each one to experience His goodness and His mercy. A disciple of Jesus is the light when he is able to live his faith outside restricted spaces, when he helps to eliminate prejudices, to eliminate slander, and to have the light of truth enter in situations vitiated by hypocrisy and lies. **To give light, but it isn’t my light, it’s Jesus’ light — we are instrument so that Jesus’ light reaches all.**

Conclusion:

With the metaphor of salt and light, Jesus narrates the qualities of life which every Christian should possess in order to make the world a better place to live in; a place where justice and peace reigns and all people love in harmony and joy. By these statements, Jesus expresses his expectation from every one of his followers, what they should be and what they should do (being and doing). Only a person who is united with Jesus can live like Jesus for he has said **“SEPARATED FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING”** (Jn.15:5b) It is our intensive prayer life that empowers us to become authentic and committed followers of Christ in the world where we can be true “salt” and “light”. We are called to BE salt and light. Only when we can “BE” the salt and the light, then we will be able to produce

LENTEN SEASON FOR A BETTER WORLD



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It is both human and divine to be deeply caring about what we love most. **GOD LOVES THIS WORLD THE MOST** (Jn 3:16). God cannot turn away from this world just as the world cannot turn away from God. It is like the umbilical cord that connects a mother and her baby. God and World share the warmth of an unbreakable bond. The relation cannot cool off. If it becomes indifferent and cold, the essence of Godliness will be lost. Spirituality keeps the balance of this universe. It is the duty of man to implement God's will. This is the message of the Bible.

Jesus was always with the people. Many people said

many things about him. The leaders used the people to prepare the gifts for Jesus: Calvary and the Cross! Poor people! They rejected, insulted, abused their own (Jn 1:11)! They defaced his glorious face (Is 43:4). Alas! The tragic end of a man who loved people, a man who loved God! **WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT YOUNG MAN?** The energy of youthful 33 years! It must be the question of our prayer and penance. Why was he who came to save us, sent to the cross? Who crucified him? For whom? For what? Did the Father of the Son send him to the cross? Was he crucified for the glory of God? Was the Father like Shylock of Venice happy to see his Son being tortured to death?

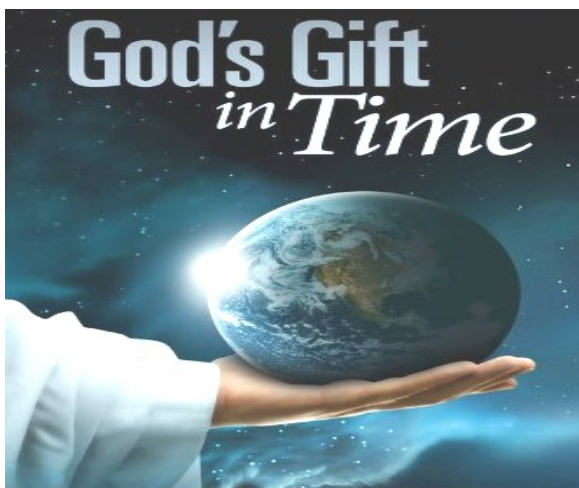
These questions will help direct our thoughts.

1. MAN IS MOST IMPORTANT TO JESUS.



In every breath, asleep and awake, Jesus's sole purpose to bring the Kingdom of God to man. He thought deeply about the plight of the people. He engaged in conversations with God, in debates to help save humanity. His prayer book was made of the dreams, trials, tragedies and aspirations of people struggling to live. The human philosophy of Jesus who worked tirelessly till the end for humanity must fill our hearts. Orphans, destitute, neglected, refugees, widows etc all are images of Jesus the crucified (Exodus & Lk). How long should they suffer the unjust suffering? How long should they continue? Should truth be crucified? If we developed a human centered vision of life and of Jesus, it will be fruition of our penance.

2. THE EARTH IS FOR THE PEOPLE



Earth is the gift of God. We come from the earth and we return to the earth. We are named after our land. People without land lose their identity. Earth will not conquer man. In the final days, when the trumpets blow, men will rise from the soil. They will transform the earth. So it is people, not the earth that is important. Yet it is not possible to live without the land. Man cannot live without earth. We must see the con-

nection between man and earth instead of treating them separately as in the West.

3. VAULTS FOR TREASURE

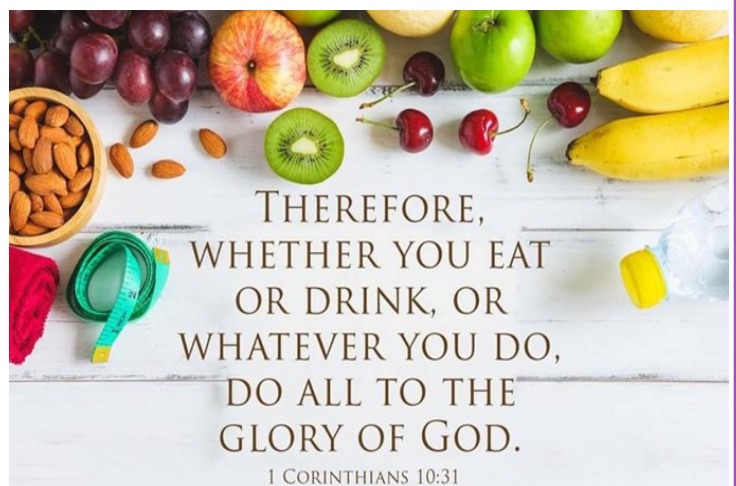


However carefully we may hide our personal treasures, we are reminded that we are dust, so eventually we will return to dust. Instead of hiding our wealth in bank lockers, we must distribute them among the poor, as their food, as their strength and as their upliftment.

4. EARTH MAY BE CURSED

Man is dust. Those who conquer undeserved land are sinning. It will bear witness against him. It will bring disaster. Such earth will hurt the pupil of the eye. Same fate awaits those who do not use and toil on their land. Those who have seized other's land must await their downfall. When we use land unjustly we create more poverty.

5. TO RISE FROM AND TO RETURN TO THE EARTH



Is it fair to tell the man who has no piece of earth to rest his head or to toil on that he is from the dust? How can he who has been denied land understand its joy and sanctity? To them we will say: Hey you famished and landless, your plight is miserable. But arise, awake and work hard for you too are children of God. What is God's is yours too. Claim what is rightfully yours. Not claiming it is also a sin. **When you realize this, the world become a better place.**



THE BEAUTY OF THE HILLS AND THE VALLEYS



K. J. Mathew : An educationist with vast experience in teaching and administration at various levels including prestigious schools in India and abroad. Started his professional life as a Lecturer in the prestigious St. Thomas College, Trichur, Kerala. Later he moved to Africa (Nigeria & Botswana). In Nigeria, he taught at Mary Knoll College and in Botswana he taught at Moeding College and also in the University of Botswana. After about 18 years, he returned to India and worked as Headmaster/Principal at several premier ICSE/ISC schools in South India. Notable among them are: Good Shepherd International School – Ooty, Mar Thoma Residential School – Tiruvalla, Kerala and Kalabhavan Talent Residential School – Cochin. He is the Founder Principal of Mysore Public School. Authored three books. He is a member of various Indian and foreign professional organizations and has attended several educational conclaves world-wide.

At the beginning of every New Year, we stand up on the verge of the unknown. There lies before us 365 days – the whole new year that we are going ahead to possess. Who can tell us what we shall find? What new experiences and challenges await us? What new needs shall arise? But we should derive solace that the Supreme Power above us –GOD – indeed takes care of all our needs. Our names are written in His palm and His wings protect us against all calamities. All our supply is to come from the Lord. Here are springs that shall never dry; here are fountains and streams that shall never be cut off.

The land that we dwell on is a land of hills and valleys. If life is all about one dead level, it would be dull, uninteresting and unproductive. The hills and the valleys are all part of this land. The hills collect the rains for a hundred fruitful valleys. The hills are symbolic of the challenges that we face in life. The valleys are symbolic of our triumphs. The hills bring down the showers to the valleys – the showers of blessings of the Lord. If the entire earth were a valley of wilderness, how many would have perished in the wilderness and buried under the golden sands! Without the hills, how many would have perished in the frost, blighted with winds!

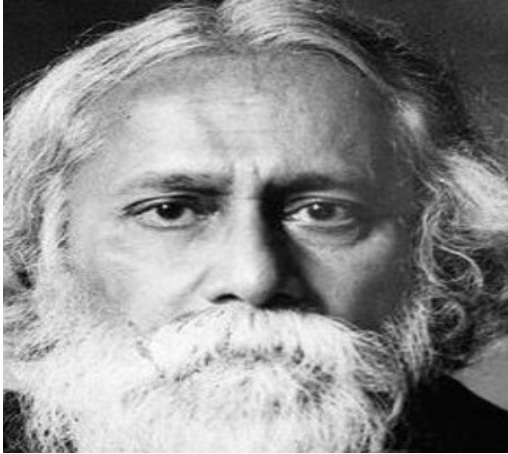
God's hills are the gracious protection of his people against their foes. Our lives are not fruitful without trials and triumphs. Hard trials and tribulations in life make the final triumphs sweet and meaningful just as the darkness justifies and makes the radiance meaningful. The Indian "Upanishads" tells us in Sanskrit:

*"asatho maa sathgamayah:
thamaso maa jyothirgamayah:
mrithyor maa amritham gamayah"*

That means:

*"lead us from unreal to real
from darkness to radiance
and from death to eternal life"*

It is 'unreal' that gives some meaning to 'real'. Without 'darkness', 'brightness' has no meaning. Similarly without 'death', 'eternal life' is unreachable.



Death is not extinguishing the light;
it is only putting out the lamp
because the dawn has come.

— Rabindranath Tagore —

Therefore, let us, at the beginning of every new year, have faith in the provisions of the Lord so that we accept that we are indeed going to face several challenges and have the hope that triumphs will give meaning to the trials that we are going to face.

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"
I Corinthians 15:51-55



HUMAN BODY: DO WE TREAT IT AS THE TEMPLE OF GOD AS INSTRUCTED BY THE HOLY BIBLE?

You are a Temple of God



Knowing-Jesus.com



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Our body is the temple of God. The Holy Spirit dwells within us. There are ample evidences in the Holy Bible to substantiate these facts.

Our Lord revealed through Apostle Paul *via* his first epistle that our body is indeed God's temple. 'You, yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit indwells in your midst. Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God. You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.' **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**. 'You are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you. If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.' **1 Corinthians**

3:16-17. 'Christ is in you, the hope of glory.' **Colossians 1:27**.

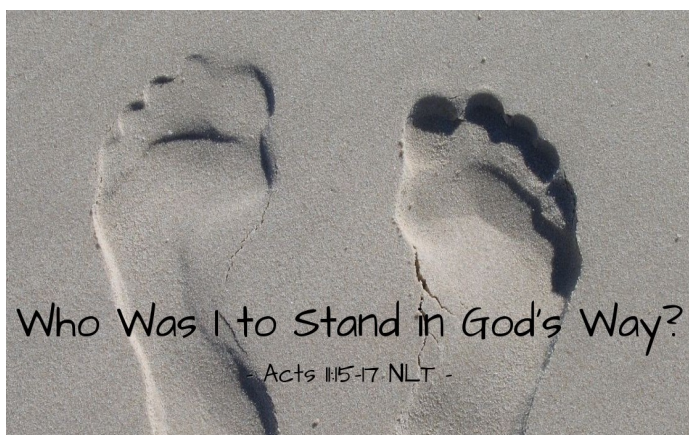
'Our Lord Jesus Christ himself promised us that once we receive the Holy Spirit, He will remain with us for ever. I will pray to the Father, and He shall give you another comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.' **John 14:16**. 'I will never leave you; I will never abandon you.' **Hebrews 13:5**.

'God's Spirit lives in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.' **Romans 8:9**. The Lord's commitment to reside in us and never leave us or forsake us is out of His love to us, His children. However, one cannot receive the Holy Spirit, unless one first receives, acknowledges, and witnesses Jesus Christ as the only Lord and saviour. 'He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God. The world cannot receive Him, because it cannot see Him or know Him. But you know Him, because He remains with you and is in you.' **John 14:17**.



The idea that Jesus Christ is within us is a New Testament revelation. The New Testament is clear that Christ, by the Holy Spirit, takes up a permanent residence in all believers. Only through the baptism of the Holy Spirit does Jesus actually come and live in the hearts of the believers. Unbelievers cannot receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. 'In union with him you too are being built together with all the others into a place where God lives through his Spirit.' **Ephesians 2:22.**

Apostle Peter stated that the coming of the Holy Spirit in a person is the proof of the promised salvation of a person, not only to the Jews but to the gentiles too. 'And when I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came down on them just as on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' It is clear that God gave those Gentiles the same gift that He gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; who was I, then, to try to stop God!' **Acts 11:15-17.**



'Your bodies are members of Christ.' **1 Corinthians 6:15.** 'Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into His friends and gave us the task of making others His



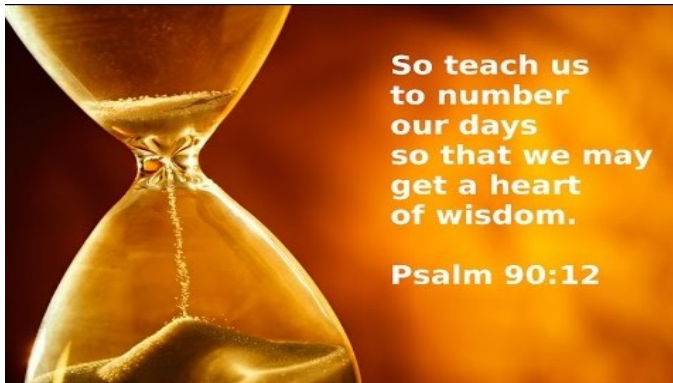
friends too. Our message is that God was making all human beings His friends through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins, and He has given us the message which tells how He makes them His friends.' **2 Corinthians 5:17-19.**

Treating one's body which is God's house and the temple of the Holy Spirit by eating naturally healthy foods is the responsibility of each one of us. It is good to feed our body which is God's temple with nutritious foods items. It is not surprising that God gave us many good food choices in the world created by the Lord for us and are listed in the Holy Bible. If one wants to add food items to have a healthy diet to keep one's body healthy, here are some foods items as stated in the Holy Bible. Some of the most common food items mentioned for our good health in the Holy Bible are lamb, flax seeds, honey, olives and olive oil, milk, pomegranate, vegetables, grapes, fermented grapes, dried grapes, wine, figs, bread, legumes, dairy products, fish, other meats, pistachio, wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, almond nuts, spelt etc. and the list goes on and on as stated in **Ezekiel 4:9.**

Health is often taken for granted until we lose it. The Bible reveals a lot about health, the limits of it, and our need for the mighty healer, Our Lord, Jesus Christ. 'I am the Lord, your healer.' **Exodus 15:26.**



Many will spend money to keep fit, buy the right food, and adopt a lifestyle to stay healthy as long as one could. When we become unwell, it can affect what we do, how we think, how we feel, and in some cases, it can be life-changing. 'Worship the Lord your God and His blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you.' **Exodus 23:25.**



When illness creeps into our lives or we experience the sudden ill health of a loved one, we might start to think about the bigger questions of life. In some cases, it can drive us to think about the number of our days and our own mortality. 'Teach us how short our life is, so that we may become wise.' **Psalm 90:12.** 'Have compassion on me, Lord, for I am weak. Heal me, Lord, for my bones are in agony.' **Psalm 6:2.** 'He sent out His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.' **Psalm 107:20.**

There is a contrast between our physical bodies in this world and our spiritual bodies when we are raised again to new life. 'Our bodies will be planted in the ground when we die, but will be raised to live forever.' **1 Corinthians 15:42.** 'They will be buried in brokenness and weakness, but will be raised in glory and strength.' **1 Corinthians 15:43.** While we are in our physical bodies, we will experience the effects of the fall of Adam in both mind and body. We will need prayer, medical intervention, and support from others when we experience ill health. 'Yet, we can hold onto hope as we look forward to the resurrection, when we will be like the heavenly man, Jesus,' **1 Corinthians 15:49.**

Our Bodies Belong to God. We should honour the Lord by taking care of our health because our bodies were purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, therefore we are not our own as stated in **1 Corinthians 6:19-20.**

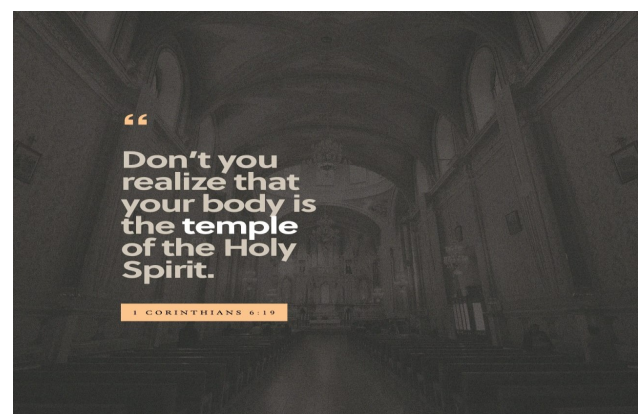
He not only created us, but He died for us too. With these amazing truths, knowing that we were created by God, that Jesus died for us and that we will spend eternity with Him, this should be the confidence we

need to live boldly for Him and to steward everything He has given to us, including our bodies. 'As believers, our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit and God dwells in us. We can live a life that brings the Lord glory through everything we do.' **1 Corinthians 10:31.**

We should look after our bodies and this might include training it through discipline, healthy eating, and fitness. There is a type of training that surpasses physical bodily training. Training in godliness has eternal significance and is of value in every way according to **1 Timothy 4:8.** 'We are preparing for an eternity with our Lord and Saviour and whilst we are on earth, we are being refined and transformed by the renewing of our minds. Knowledge of the truth leads to godliness.' **Titus 1:1.**

But God in His great wisdom created the sources we needed and the wisdom to use them the best we can to honour Him and keep our bodies healthy, as temples of the Holy Spirit.

Regardless of the physical appearance of one's body, we should have the courage to respect and honour, learn to love, appreciate, and accept one's body, the temple of our God. 'You, yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit indwells in your midst. Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God. You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.' **1 Corinthians 6:19-20.**

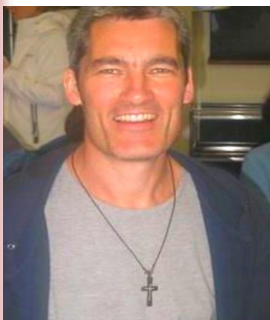


Not only is our body sacred as highlighted above. We all are familiar with the statement to treat one's body as the temple of God. However, how many of us do that? We should also adopt this line of thinking for our mind, spirit, and soul too. How healthy do we keep our body, mind, spirit, and soul?

Let's use this way of thinking in this difficult times of Covid-19 to strengthen and enhance our body, mind, spirit, and soul.



COVID-19 : A WAKE UP CALL



Dominic McDermott

a Catholic is 57, lives in High Wycombe, UK and has been married to Alison for 27 years and has two daughters and a grand-daughter. He's a member of two communities, one, a small Celtic community (The Source) that he leads. The last fifteen years he was involved in a

full-time prison ministry. He is co-leader of the national team and a "key-intercessor" for TJCI (Towards Jerusalem Council Two) an international ministry working to unite the gentile and Jewish parts of the Body of Christ. He is part of the Executive of the European Network of Communities with responsibility for prophecy and intercession and is also part of their ACTs team (helping with community development training). He lives a prophetic lifestyle and loves to teach on "Hearing from God". He is also an interpreter of dreams, with an M.Sc. in A.I. who makes swords and loves to sing!

I know there is a lot of anxiety and fear around the virus pandemic and it is certainly changing how we live our lives but as those with Almighty God as a personal friend this fear is lessened by our faith in the One who has defeated death! We know that physical death

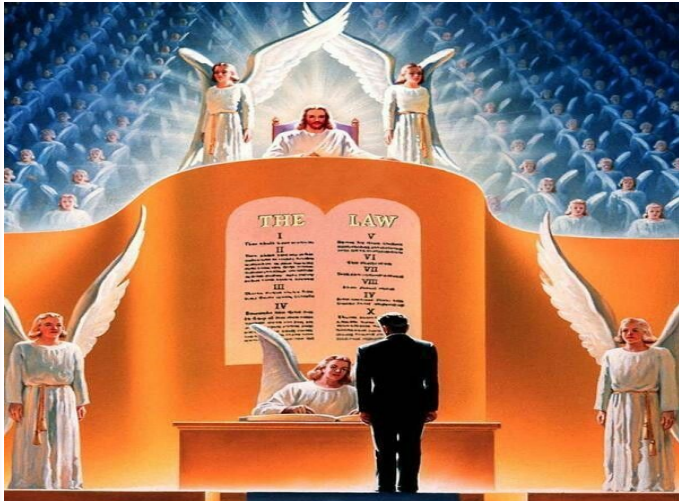
is just the passport to eternal Glory! This is a season where we are invited by Jesus to stay extra close to Him as this is a sure vaccination against fear.

In the book of Haggai (2.6-7) God spoke about shaking everything that could be shaken and that certainly seems to be happening now! When the earth is asleep spiritually and morally God shakes us to wake us up and get our attention. Imagine someone you love has fallen asleep on a road and a lorry is coming while the lorry was a long way off you might call to them gently to wake them up without shocking them but if that didn't work and the lorry was coming closer you would shake them roughly, this would be an act of love!

For those who believe in Him the Father wants to shake us out of our apathy and our tolerance of sin in our own lives, to say to us that 'time is short transform your own lives and work with Me to reach your brothers and sisters'. For those who don't believe the Father wants to shake our pride and our confidence in our ability to control the world, our reliance on our material and especially our financial security.

But isn't it Satan's work to try and kill thousands of peo-

ple you may ask. Certainly the enemy has his part in all this and we can pray against that part but God uses even the nastiest thing the enemy does, even with the full help of evil men, to bring us good, Rom 8:28 says **"All things work for the good of those who love God"**. This is a truth we need to hold onto and to repeat daily as the shield of faith! (Ephesians 6) The English prophet Graham Cooke was fond of saying *"God allows in His wisdom what He could prevent by His power"*. That would apply here as God could stop this virus in its tracks today, but hasn't, (at least not yet). Why? When



working with an addict sometimes you have to allow the person to hit rock-bottom thus allowing them to experience the consequence of their choices in order to encourage them to choose differently in the future. It is tough-love but it is an act of mercy, an act of love not abandonment even though it may cause some very real pain. This is the sense of the word "judgement" in the following. I was asking what I could share with you, after 3 or 4 days of strict fasting, daily mass and finally a holy hour in front of a relic of the true cross (that I believe He said is genuine!). I give you the background because of the seriousness of the prophetic word.

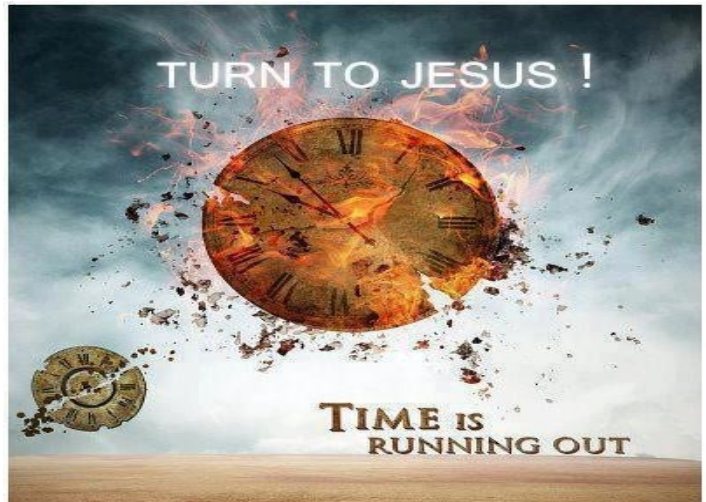
"This is a judgement brought upon the Earth by your (mankind's) rebellion against Me & against natural law. (eg the killing of our children in abortion - blood soaks into the earth & cries for a response. The gender & sexuality confusion spread by many governments & international organisations which are destroying the lives of His children, young & old, the destruction of the planet etc).

Repentance & humility will bring mercy & healing as the scripture says (2 Chronicles 7:13-14). ***The danger to the world is now so great that this judgement is necessary but it is still an act of mercy. Beloved ones who***

are called by My Name lead the way back to Me with humility & penitence as many others will follow your corporate lead. This is the time for crying out for mercy & mercy will be given! My heart aches for your poor world - turn to Me & be saved, while you can..."

This was given with a real sense of His pain in what it was costing us and I understood that many times this judgement has been postponed in the past.

I was challenged by someone who's discernment I trust about the truth of this word so I went back to Him and asked again for confirmation and as far as I am able to dis-



cern was given clear confirmation.

God wants us to prepare for a spiritual harvest like we have never seen before. We spend so much time trying to bring a few people to Him that we are not ready if they come in a flood, in their thousands. I believe that we must become ready as this is what is going to happen. We are entering a time where every believer needs to be able to facilitate a small group of new believers. Whether we are meeting online or face to face! This will mean learning the simple elements of small group meeting as a basic tool we can all use. To be able to share the gospel simply and help new believers take the first steps into a deeper walk, encouraging them to read the bible and helping people to hear from God for themselves. The world has changed but Psalm 91 guarantees us that, whatever comes, we have our Defender and Protector all we need to do is to stay under the shadow of the Almighty (verse 1) and note, to be under His shadow you have to choose to be close!

May God bless you and keep you and make His Face shine upon you and give you peace.

Dominic McDermott ("The Source": a fresh spring from an ancient Celtic source)

BEING A PRIEST TODAY



Rev. Fr. Raphael Saji George

Rome, Italy

Father is an ordained priest in the diocese of Assisi and working as a parish priest in the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul and St. Cristopher. At present he is doing his licentiate in the Spiritual Theology in the Gregorian University, at Rome. This article was written as a part of my study and was originally written in Italian.

The role of the priest in today's society has become subject of debate. In his introduction to the Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Pope John Paul II states that without priests the Church would not be able to live its fundamental obedience which is the very heart of its existence and its mission in the world that's "go and make disciples of all nations" (Mt. 28,19) and "do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22,19).

When we talk about being a priest today and his pastoral challenges, we normally think about facing what the world puts before us as a provocation. This is only partially true. Instead, the first challenges we are called to understand and respond to codirectly from within the Church and from being priests. A correct understanding of the nature of the priestly ministry is therefore essential due to conviction, and the commitment of this vocation. Such understanding, the synod implies, could only be achieved through a healthy ecclesiology and a profound awareness of how the ministerial priesthood is essentially at the service of the worshippers. De Lubac said that "the priest is the man of the institution, an ecclesiastical man, who has a strong sense of the Church; it is not an easy way, but a path that requires a lot of discipline and the ability to lose one's life."¹

The pastoral crisis is also reflected in two areas in particular - flee from the priesthood and the reduction of vocations. In the last thirty years more priests have abandoned their vocation than in any other similar period in the history of the Church.² This sad phenomenon as indicated by the urrent Holy Father as a sign counter. The whole ministry of a Priest must be characterized by putting in the foreground not in himself and his opinion, but in Jesus Christ. Priests are "servants" and their work can be effective to the extent that it refers to Christ and we are perceived as docile instruments in his hands to collaborate with him in salvation.

1. The Priestly Identity

With these reflections in the introduction as a context, the terrain is now ready to consider some observations of priestly identity. Priestly identity and the crisis of priests is a very debated issue since the Second Vatican Council. It

¹ Cf. H. DE LUBAC, *Paradossi e nuovi paradossi*, Jaca Book, Milano 1989, 103.

² Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 31 luglio 1996. Vedere anche la revisione delle statistiche della Chiesa cattolica per il periodo 1979-97 in *SEMINARIUM*, XXXIX, n. 4, *La dimensione quantitativa della Chiesa Cattolica alle soglie dell'Anno Giubilare*, 1999, 652.

has also been mentioned in many occasions by John Paul II. In his pastoral visit to different countries he has always made it a point to talk about to priests and seminarians, to confirm them in their vocation and to show them how to find their true identity in Christ, the Eternal High Priest. He has repeatedly said that their life will be authentic to the extent that they reflect Christ, to the extent that they become *alter Christus, altri Cristi*.³

1.1 The fundamentals of the identity



Again in *Presbyterorum Ordinis* the specific link between Christ and the presbyter is highlighted: "presbyters are marked with a special character and are thus configured to Christ the priest, so that they can act in the person of Christ the head" (n.2). The old formula reads as follows: *sacerdos alter Christus*; the Council Fathers do not reject this Christological perspective, but insert it into the vision of a missionary ecclesiology. The presbyterial ministry was viewed from the Council as a service performed in favor of the devotees, so that their spiritual sacrifice may be made perfect, because it is united to the sacrifice of Christ, the only mediator.⁴ For the Council, therefore, there is a special relationship between the presbyter and Christ the head and pastor, a relationship that enables him to exercise ministry in the Church not by his own ability but by the virtue of action of the Lord. This relationship is not for a higher dignity of the priest, but for the ministry to the community.

For missionary priests, their ministry cannot be reduced to the sole dimension of worship, but must also include preaching and pastoral guidance. The Council does not reject the perspective of worship and consecration, but has made it more dynamic and ecclesial. The "ternary" model prevails over the "binary" one: the latter marked the cultural and legal dimensions, excluding the missionary value that the Council, instead, re-launched. The ternary model establishes that the content of the priest's mission consists of the triple ministry: authoritative proclamation of the Word, presidency of the Liturgy, pastoral guidance of the people of God. The conciliar documents⁵, in tracing the presbyteral identity, underline the community dimension of the presbyterate: we insist on fraternity among presbyters by virtue of the bond of consecration - a mission that unites them all; and then the notion of presbytery with particular reference to the communion among the presbyters of the same Church and of these with their bishop (the presbytery is considered the bishop's senate, as St. Ignatius intended it).

1.2 Presbyters between continuity and renewal

The changes that are intriguing the figure of the priest are functional, but in reality, they are touching the deep identity, namely, it touches not only the external discussion like the duties of the priest, but more intrinsically and much more profoundly the very identity of the priest. Therefore different types of priesthood emerge. Here we must underline those indicated in the text by Vittorino Andreoli⁶ that outlines eleven among the most regular ones: the priest of the temple, of the street, of the countryside, of the pain, of the cemetery, of the paper, intellectual, of the television, exorcist, of the prison and that of school. The typologies end up characterizing the priest and sometimes to cover him with a value that derives precisely from what he does as a social function. I recall some of them that seemed more suited to our conversation.

1.2.1 The priest of the temple



The priest of the temple is the one that essentially offers a traditional aspect of an ideal priest: he is called to recover the work of Christ in the world, he makes the temple his home and in the language of the liturgy pronounces carefully his identity at best. "He is a man who must succeed in showing that beyond the human, within the human there is a divine dimension".⁷ And he does it through prayer: the priest of the temple means to manifest the pleasure of prayer and to do it together with the devotees. In some ways the priest of the temple is the figure that this society needs! It is wonderful to need the priest and always find him in the temple, without fearing that it is closed, that there is nobody, that he is out. This society needs one who speaks in the name of God, even if it does not know it or affirms not to look for it.⁸

1.2.2 The priest of the street



The street priest is undoubtedly an illustration full of charm: the street, in fact, refers to people without a permanent home, and they are the last. This is the priest who is particularly attentive to the situations of precariousness, poverty and misery of the many and is willing to go to places of discomfort to share and bring the Gospel. The author Andreoli warns of two possible risks: the first and the most frequent is that of not reaching the desired social results, producing feelings of guilt and a sense of failure. Even if something is always better than nothing. The

³ Cf. ANDREA TORNIELLI, *l'Osservatore Romano*, 23 ottobre 1993.

| ⁴ Cf. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, 7 December 1965 n.3 | ⁵ *Ibid.*, n.7.8

⁶ Cf. V. ANDREOLI, *Preti, Viaggio fra gli uomini del sacro*, Piemme, Milano 2009, 217-277. ⁷ Cf. ANDREOLI, 218-221. | ⁸ *Ibid.*

other risk comes from heroism, from feeling like a hero priest tending to special things, to extraordinary attitudes and jobs. "Let us not forget the fact that the hero is always a showman, and becomes the protagonist of the suffering of others on which he frequently fulfills a dream of personal power".⁹

1.2.3 The intellectual priests



The intellectual priests, says Andreoli, are a gigantic and unbearable group; they are the ones who not only know everything, but also many other things. And then they are aware that their brains produce truth; they know the Gospel and quote it in the original language; they don't pray because they don't need to say anything except about themselves; they are not in contact with people, with the flock. "I do not wish a Church of ignorants, if anything, a Church with priests full of wisdom. We must pray that the Lord make the intellectual priests a little wise".¹⁰ Patron Wong, the archbishop of Mexico added: "But if a priest is not trained to be a good shepherd, all his intellectual knowledge will not be of much use".¹¹ In reality, in the face of very significant general transformations, the figure of the priest, however, appears to have a fair capacity. In our

society, although expressed as secularized and mostly insensitive to religious appeals, the priest continues to maintain a high ground. He represents for many a figure of all respect, the personal and institutional reference to build experiences of faith and human solidarity, lived as true, real and rich in content.

2. The challenges of a priest in the changing world

2.1 The challenge of the liquid society



The first challenge of a priest in this multiethnic and multi-cultural world is to find himself in a "liquid" society. We feel that something has broken, things have quickly changed and no longer work as before, we live in a very plural, distinct, constantly moving horizon: everything changes, everything runs, everything is constantly remodeled and we struggle to maintain a stability.¹²

We all run and run fast without knowing why we run. To resume a beautiful expression of Michael Ende "We have gone on so quickly in all these years that we now have to pause a moment to allow our souls to reach us".¹³ Thus, on all the issues, from the daily ones to the most existential

ones, there is discussion, debate, change, the theory of points of view is preferred over objective visions.

This panorama calls a different Christian existence, capable of updating pastoral languages and practices which, at times, have remained prisoners of a culture of the past, of a figurative and collective world that no longer exists. The need to evangelize, the need to communicate with the world in which the Church finds itself living, leads this same Church to enter into dialogue with the culture and cultures of peoples. Paul VI in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, ascertaining the gap that has been created between the Gospel and culture, makes a warning and writes: "The break between the Gospel and culture is undoubtedly the drama of our age, as it was also of other ages" (EN 20). In front of the urgency of such requests, the Church cannot set itself aside; therefore: "It is necessary to make all efforts in view of a generous evangelization of culture, more precisely of cultures" (EN 20). In this context Ternynck says;

Today's priest must know the art of inspiring a faith that knows how to produce human intelligence, that knows how to challenge it on a human and rational level, which is open to dialogue and doubt and not, instead, a faith that presents itself as a series of things to believe blindly; we must enter into dialogue to bring our contribution to current cultural contents and work for "the good life" that the very humanity of Jesus shows us.¹⁴

But we have to do this by learning to enter the debate and this requires our review of government styles. Showing, that is, starting from the priestly ministry, the face of a Church that is not hostile, non-exclusive, more fascinated by diversity than consistency. Overcoming a merely authoritarian style, priests are required not to impose the Gospel but instead to relate, support the debate, launch challenges and provocations, critically question and, above all, exercise

⁹Ibid. |¹⁰ Ibid., 224. |¹¹Cf. <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/europeancommunion/2017/11/vatican-vision-priest-pastor-intellectual/> [Accesso il 04/01/2018]. |¹² C. TERNYNCK, *L'uomo di sabbia. Individualismo e perdita di sé, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2012*, 9-11. |¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ C. TERNYNCK, 10. C. TERNYNCK, *L'uomo di sabbia. Individualismo e perdita di sé, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2012*, 9-11. C. TERNYNCK, 9-11.

the discernment of people's real situations, in the art of accompaniment capable of listening, communication, attention and compassion.

2.2 The challenge of an indifferent world

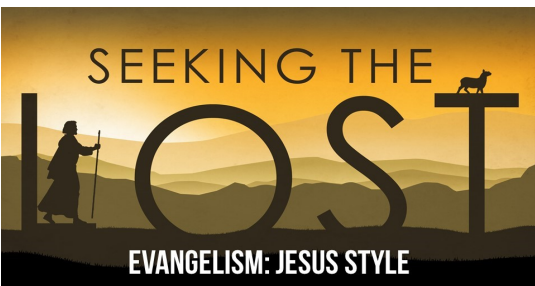


The second challenge of the modern clergy is to find itself in front of a world indifferent to religion and sacred worship. The modern way has also undermined strong, dogmatic and philosophical atheism. Today man has fostered a new form of absence of God that Jean Vernet has called the "post-atheism" in which he has slowly passed from refusal to absence, from battle to amnesia, from the struggle to passivity. Let us remember the *Gaudium et Spes* "The Christian who neglects his temporal commitments, neglects his duties towards his neighbor, indeed towards God himself, endangers his eternal salvation" (GS

43). Really clean and hard words. The council binds the outcome of our salvation to our capacity to take care of ourselves, not to appear indifferent to the pain of our neighbor. The good Samaritan recounted by Luke in his Gospel comes to mind and the destiny of the priest and the Levite who pass indifferently across the street.

Many times people are indifferent to religion and priests because they feel that religion is far from their reality and does not speak their language. In our Christianity we often do not hear of desire, of feelings and of senses, of imagination and joy of a simple believer. Probably, to defend the purity and the totality of the preached truth we have abandoned the human character of the Gospel and the potential load of joy that the gospel brings with it. Now at the ringing of the bells, the worshippers do not run to church. The priest, therefore, can feel like a fish out of water!

2.3 The challenge of evangelization in the changing world



A key role of the priest is to announce the word of God, to be an evangelizer. In the present cultural context, where people are constantly bombarded with the competition of audio and visual images, it is difficult for the priest to make his own voice heard above all these fascinating waves. He will be the bearer of a happy message for himself and for others only when he follows the example of Saint Paul who preached the good news of salvation in and out of season by convincing people that the attractions of this world do not last long. (Cf. 1 Cor 7, 31)

2.4 The challenge against the concept "The parish priest is always wrong"

Today's priests must be ready to face the challenges of the modern world. Once the parishioners were more religious and less critical of their parish priest. But today it is not so; people are ready to criticize priests in all circumstances. Here I would like to report the interesting reflection of Don Alberto Tomasini, who observes how a priest is exposed to society and his own parishioners. He wrote in a social blog an article entitled "The parish priest is always wrong" and he says:



The parish priest is always wrong. If the priest has a jovial face "he is naive". If he is thoughtful "he is an eternal dissatisfied". If he's handsome, "Why didn't he get married?" If he's ugly: "Nobody wanted him!" If he goes to the tavern "he is a drunkard". If he is at home "he is a sneering ascetic". If he's in plainclothes "he is a man of the world". If he wears the cassock "he is a conservative". If he talks to the rich "he is a capitalist". If he is with the poor "he is a communist". If he is fat, "he lacks nothing". If he is thin "he is a cheapskate". If he cites the Council "he is a modern priest". If he speaks of catechism "is from the Council of Trento"! If he preaches for more than 10 minutes "he is a wordy". If he does a short sermon

"He doesn't know what to say". If at the sermon he raises the voice "Shouts and gets angry with everyone". If he speaks normal, "You don't understand anything". If he owns a car he is "worldly". If he does not "he's not in line with the times". If he visits the parishioners, "he hangs around and sticks his nose in other people's business". If he stays in the rectory "He loves detachment and never goes to visit his parishioners". If he asks for offers "he is greedy for money". If he does not organize parties "The parish is dead". If he keeps the penitents for a long time in the confessional "He gives scandal or is endless". If in the confessional he is quick "he does not listen to penitents". If he begins the Mass on time "his clock is ahead". If he starts a little later, "he wastes everyone's time". If he renovates the Church "It is a waste of money". If he doesn't do it "he lets it go to ruin". If he talks to a woman, you immediately think of building

a romance novel. If he loves people "it is because he does not know them..." If he is young "he is without experience". If he is old "it is time for him to retire".¹⁵

Being a priest today requires great mental and spiritual preparation. The priest, if he seeks personal satisfaction, he could be disappointed in his priestly life. His gratification must conform with the crucified and risen Christ! Despite everything when a priest dies there is no one to replace him. As the Scripture says: The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few (Mt 9:37).

2.5 The challenge of celibacy



Pope Francis in a personal interview said "Personally, the idea of getting married has never occurred to me." As a Pope he repeated it several times, explaining that celibacy "is not a dogma" but "is a gift", a gift still precious.¹⁶ In the document *Pastores dabo vobis* the Pope tried to give a dynamic and evolutionary orientation to the question of celibacy for priests. The document emphasizes "the idea that celibacy as such does not exist, there are unmarried people" because of a law valid in the Western Church, which the Pope or an Ecumenical Council could change at any time. Many point out that a true renunciation can only have a beautiful and good object in itself, by definition. Their measure is not a matter of asceticism or deprivation, but the choice of another happiness. "The priest, in fact, is chosen by Christ not as a "thing", but as a "person": he is not an inert and passive instrument but an "alive instrument".¹⁷

Engaging forever in a state, whether that of marriage or that of consecrated celibacy, is a challenge against fear. No one is obliged to become a priest, just as no one can presume to be a priest, claiming the right. The priesthood is a call, to which one can correspond or not correspond, in the maximum freedom and responsibility. "Celibacy, like marriage, refers to the question of grace, that is, the strength that God gives freely to go on, day after day, whose typical image is that of the manna given in the desert. Like manna, the grace cannot be stored like the reserves in the hump of camels."¹⁸ You receive it day after day. It goes hand in hand with faith and hope and builds love. The whole reflection on the future of the Church therefore rests on the question of the acceptance of the grace. The divine grace that allows you to keep going on in marriage or in celibacy! Nobody deserves anything whether the unmarried or the married, but a condition of receiving, an opening of the heart that reveals an authentic spiritual struggle, to be resumed every morning..

Considering all the good reasons favorable to the defense of celibacy in a perspective of faith by referring to Jesus who was unmarried, the ideal condition of those who want to put themselves at the service of the community and the prophetic call to "ultimate realities", it would be good to deepen the debate on this topic, to reach the possibility that those who are called to the priesthood can choose to be ordained by celibacy or married, but it is illusory to think that

¹⁵ Cf. <https://www.giornaledibrescia.it/lettere-al-direttore/il-prete-sbaglia-qualunque-cosa-faccia-1.393373>, [accesso il 08/01/2018 ore 23:54].

¹⁶ Cf. <http://www.lastampa.it/2017/03/09/vaticaninsider/ita/commenti/le-paroledelpapa-su-celibato-e-il-criterio-della-salus-animarumbCpLWNDwPkb5suyh1Hl4JP/pagina.html>, [accesso 09/01/2018].

¹⁷ *Pastores dabo vobis*, n.25.

¹⁸ Cf. JEAN MERCIER, *l'osservatore romano*, 3 dicembre 2014.

the simple abolition of celibacy is the answer to the current crisis of vocations and to the abandonment of the priestly ministry by many priests.

Pastores dabo vobis focusing on the very identity of the person of the priest emphasizes that the celibacy of the priest is not a marginal element to this identity, but a constitutive part. It is based on the understanding of the values proposed and freely accepted. "No one is the master of his priesthood or of his celibacy, but rather the humble servant of them."



CONCLUSION

We have tried to understand the priestly identity and some aspects of the priest's challenges in today's world. Presbyters by their nature will have to commit themselves to bring to men their contribution of presence, action and evangelical proclamation. Therefore the presbyter must avoid forming or considering himself a privileged "caste" or "class". Presbyters have been taken among men and constituted in favor of themselves in things that they refer to God, to give offerings and sacrifices in forgiveness of their sins and therefore living among them as brothers and fellowmen. Following the example of Christ and the apostles he will preach the good news, convinced that he must first accept and implement the radical demands of the people of God. Priest's *being* mandates assumes the same meaning as the mission of Christ. Jesus lives to be faithful to the mission that his father entrusted to him: "I do not seek my will", "I do not seek my glory".

A wish to all my brother priests, with the words of Cardinal Martini: «The Word will produce fruit in its time. We must have confidence, because the word sown goes on by itself. Throw it courageously, do not hold back by saying that the ground doesn't go and you have to wait for better conditions, don't think you are the masters of the word. You spread it and then go to sleep; don't think about it anymore, and it alone will bear fruit.»

We are all weak but we are also confident in his love and loyalty. The God who called us is faithful (Cf. 1Ts 5, 24). Many times we must recognize our weakness precisely because we can be strong in overcoming it with the help of the Lord. Saint Paul cries "a thorn was given me in the flesh" (Cf 2 cor 12, 7)! And the Lord replies: "My grace is sufficient for you ..." (Cf 2 cor 12, 9)



POEM



Jasmine James is a textile designer, illustrator, creative writer and visiting faculty of design. She graduated in English Literature from University of Kerala, India, and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Textile Design from National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) New Delhi, India. Jasmine is the author of 'Tamed Horses', a self-illustrated anthology of poetry and life thoughts. The book is a collection of 50 poems and 50 life thoughts she has written over the years and published by Notionpress, Chennai, in July 2018. Her poems have been published in daily newspapers & The Youth Express (The New Indian Express) since 1997. Her poems 'Echoes of Love' and 'Misery' were included in *The Silence Within*, a book published by International Library of Poetry, UK (Fall 2001) and in *Native Petals* - an anthology of Indian Poems (Jan 2005), a Poetree Garden Publication (An ecoliterary & welfare organization of The University of Kerala), respectively.

'Adam's Rib' and 'I'm Too Tired to Title this Poem' are two unpublished poems written by Jasmine for her upcoming second book of poetry.

ADAM'S RIB

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. (**Genesis 2:21, 22**)

*Dear remorseless stone,
how you've been canonized
after you were gone!
You defeated me with
psychopathic silence,
while I still pray for you
with narcissistic words.
I'm in love- with you,
with words,
with whatever I come across.
But with myself?
Do not even ask.*

*You have ten broken
commandments
under your bulging belt.
Twelve feathers in your cap,
Of Felt interlined with guilt
Thick skin. Oh, thick hide.
For me, you're merely dust
but the world takes your
sparkling side.
Hence in God, I confide.*

*I cried when I found out
the Almighty's little big secret that
the rib He removed from man
was undoubtedly Love.*

I'M TOO TIRED TO TITLE THIS POEM

*"Sad to know you have not moved
An inch from where I left you", he said.
He left carefully while I was
Still dreaming about him, in bed.*

*The trees were hurriedly pruned, in the dark,
While the cherubic flowers were just blooming.
And the fresh water from the nearby spring
Was still in the brass samovar, fuming.*

*There was none to toss in a pinch of tea leaves
Add spoonfuls of wild honey, to satisfy.
So it just sat there, sweating, burning
Unconsumed, finally left high and dry.*

*The large windows painted white
Watch me in awe, their eyes open wide;
While I lay in bed a little longer, watching
Barn swallows circle the blinding sky.*

*The sun's morning breath on the Canvas Blinds
Gave the pale blue papered walls a yellow hue;
Suddenly I think of chameleons, green mambas,
Woolly caterpillars and not surprisingly, you.*

*I do not know which of these two is bound
To change or will stay the same- the heart or the home.
But as I rise up, the William Morris razai *
Clings to my naked soul and refuses to let go.*

(* 'razai' in Hindustani is a cotton duvet or quilt)

Miraculous crucifix from 1522 plague moved to St. Peter's for pope's 'Urbi et Orbi' blessing

On the famous Via del Corso, known for being one of the busiest streets for shopping in Rome, is the church of Saint Marcellus, which holds a venerated and miraculous image of Christ crucified. That image has now been moved to St. Peter's and presented for the historical Urbi et Orbi blessing that Francis gave on March 27.

Why this crucifix?



**POPE'S SPECIAL URBI ET ORBI BLESSING ON
MARCH 27, 2020
FOR A WORLD SUFFERING FROM THE CORONAVIRUS
PANDEMIC.**

The church of Saint Marcellus was first built in the 4th century, sponsored by Pope Marcellus I, who was later persecuted by the Roman emperor Maxentius and condemned to do the heaviest work in the stables of the *catabulum* (the central state post office) until he died from exhaustion. His remains are kept in the church, which he had sponsored and which was named after his name saint.

On the night between May 22 and 23, 1519, the church was ravaged by a terrible fire that reduced it completely to ashes. At dawn, the desolated people came to see the tragic scene of still-smoking debris. There, they found the crucifix which had been hanging over the main altar, providentially intact, illuminated by the oil lamp which, though deformed by the flames, still burned at the image's feet.

They immediately shouted that it was a miracle, and the most devout members of the faithful began to gather every Friday to pray and light lamps at the foot of the wooden image. Thus was born the "Archconfraternity of the Holy Crucifix in Urbe," which exists even to this day.

However, this was not the only miracle that happened in connection to the crucifix. The next one dates to three years later, in 1522, when a terri-

ble plague struck the city of Rome so severely that it was feared the city would simply cease to exist.

In desperation, the friars of the Servants of Mary decided to carry the crucifix in a penitential procession from the church of St. Marcellus, eventually arriving to St. Peter's Basilica. The authorities, fearing the risk of contagion, tried to prevent the religious procession, but the people in their collective desperation ignored the prohibition. The image of Our Lord was carried through the streets of the city by popular acclamation.

This procession lasted several days—the time needed for it to be carried throughout the entire area of Rome. When the crucifix returned to its place, the plague stopped completely, and Rome was saved from being exterminated.

Since 1650, the miraculous crucifix has been carried to St. Peter's Basilica during each holy year.

During Lent of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000, the miraculous crucifix was put on exposition on the Altar of the Confession in St. Peter's. It was in front of this image that St. John Paul II celebrated the "Day of Pardon"

Pope Francis also prayed before the Holy Crucifix on March 15, 2020, asking for an end to the scourge of the coronavirus that has taken so many lives around the world.





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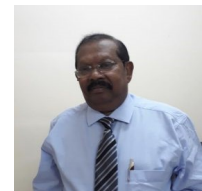
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20.01.2020



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May God bless you all!

Fr. Thomas Chozhithara MSFS

Director, MSFS Mission Development Office, Rome



Pentecost

FROM THE GREEK
PENTEKOSTOS
WHICH MEANS "FIFTY"



*Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts
of your faithful...*



On Pentecost Sunday, we commemorate the coming of the **Holy Spirit** on the early followers of Jesus.

Before the events of the first Pentecost, which came a few weeks after Jesus' death and resurrection, there were followers of Jesus, but no movement that could be meaningfully called "the church." From an historical point of view, Pentecost is the day on which the church was started; **the birthday of the church!**

WHAT HAPPENED?

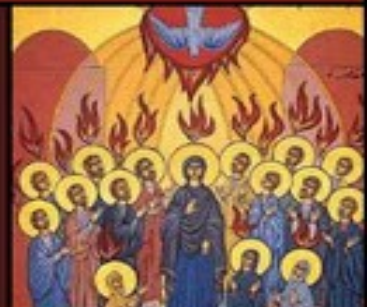
"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the **Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability..."

ACTS 2:1-4

Almighty ever-living God, who willed the Paschal Mystery to be encompassed as a sign in fifty days, grant that from out of the scattered nations the confusion of many tongues may be gathered by heavenly grace into one great confession of your name. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

"The Holy Spirit reminds us; he reminds us of all that Jesus said. He is the living memory of the Church, and when he reminds us, he helps us to understand the words of the Lord."

FROM THE HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS,
JUNE 8, 2014



Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Acts 20:28 (KJV)

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 14:26





Spiritual Communion is a Christian practice of desiring union with Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. It is used as a preparation for Holy Mass and by individuals who cannot receive Holy Communion.

This practice is well established in the Lutheran Churches, Anglican Communion, Methodist Churches, as well as in the Catholic Church, where it has been highly recommended by many saints, according to Pope John Paul II. He explained that practicing this constant desire for Jesus in the Eucharist is rooted in the ultimate perfection of Eucharistic communion, which is the ultimate goal of every human desire.

The practice of Spiritual Communion has been especially used by Christians in times of persecution, such as during the era of state atheism in the Eastern Bloc, as well as in times of plagues, such as during the current COVID-19 pandemic, when many Christians are unable to attend Mass, and therefore not able to receive the Eucharist on the Lord's Day.

St. Thomas Aquinas defined Spiritual Communion as "**an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Holy Sacrament and a loving embrace as though we had already received Him.**" The basis of this practice was explained by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*:

*In the Eucharist, "unlike any other sacrament, the mystery [of communion] is so perfect that it brings us to the heights of every good thing: Here is the ultimate goal of every human desire, because here we attain God and God joins himself to us in the most perfect union." Precisely for this reason it is good to cultivate in our hearts a constant desire for the sacrament of the Eucharist. This was the origin of the practice of "spiritual communion," which has happily been established in the Church for centuries and recommended by saints who were masters of the spiritual life. St. Teresa of Jesus wrote: "**When you do not receive communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed on you**" [The Way of Perfection, Ch. 35.].¹*

John 6:53-57

So Jesus said to them, "**Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.**"

Pope Francis

Prayer for protection from Coronavirus

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith.

You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.

We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will

and to do what Jesus tells us:

He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.



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