2022

Cataldo Pilgrimage Devotional Guide

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Overview

Please be aware that your role as Chapter Leader is critical to the success of the Pilgrimage. Your leadership will set the tone and morale for the pilgrims in your chapter. They and the Religious assigned to your chapter will be depending on you!

More than anything else, be aware at all times of your surroundings, the traffic, the weather, etc. and be concerned about the safety and physical health of the pilgrims in your chapter. Don't forget about the Priest or Religious.

Your role as Chapter Leader is to enable the Priest to perform his tasks easily, and when the Priest is not present, to fill in as best as you can.

Discipline - If there are discipline issues in your chapter (usually teen-age boys), you have the authority to reprimand them as needed to keep the order. Unless critical to the safety or peace of the chapter, do not try to 'fix' problems during the walks – wait until the next break to solve issues.

Friday Morning – Please read the pilgrimage prayer at the beginning, followed by the first spiritual text 'In the Image of the Sacred Heart'

Before starting – each leg of the journey, look at the schedule to see how long you'll be walking. Then decide, at least in principle, what you will plan for the time when walking.

Rosary – Joyful and Sorrowful in the morning, use the meditations in each day – the meditations should be brief – no more than 1 minute – it's pretty customary that we sing the Hail Mary and Glory Be's - Ask for 5 minutes of silence after the Rosary. Glorious mysteries sometime in the afternoon.

Spiritual Texts – There are several spiritual texts available to be read each day – whichever ones you choose – have them read slowly and

clearly – have someone else read at times – follow with 5 minutes of silence

Free time – In general, let the first 5 minutes after starting from breaks and lunch be free time to let the pilgrims get re-focused and organized. Then, after the Rosary and Spiritual Texts (and the silence) – another 10 to 15 minutes

Songs – Don't plan specific times for songs. Instead, intersperse singing throughout the day. Don't try singing when going up hills or when the pilgrims are really tired. Do use singing to regroup the pilgrims if it seems like they are becoming dissipated. If you don't feel comfortable starting the songs, feel free to choose one or more pilgrims to start a song. Don't feel like you have to sing all the songs in the pilgrimage booklet, or that you can't sing the same song more than once.

Breaks – pay attention to the time – regroup your pilgrims beginning 3 minutes before you have to leave – then announce 1 minute before and leave promptly.

Friday

Spiritual Texts

The occasion for the opening of the Holy Door is the fiftieth anniversary of the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council on December 8, 1965. The choice of this date to begin the Jubilee Year is the cause of the difficulty. But this circumstance does not affect the essence of the jubilee; its act, ordered to its object, remains the plenary indulgence and the sanctification of the faithful people. For this occasion or circumstance to affect the jubilee and distort it, it would be necessary for it to become the specific object or end thereof. Now the conditions for obtaining the indulgence, as spelled out, are traditional (prayer, confession and communion, visit to a jubilee church). In the letter containing instructions that he addressed to Cardinal Fisichella on September 1, 2015, the Pope expresses his intention that "the celebration of the Holy Year [may] be for all believers a true moment of encounter with the mercy of God. It is indeed my wish that the Jubilee be a living experience of the closeness of the Father, whose tenderness is almost tangible, so that the faith of every believer may be strengthened and thus testimony to it be ever more effective." In the Bull of Indiction Misericordiae Vultus, the purpose of this Holy Year is identical: to celebrate the mercy of the Father whose face is Jesus Christ (no. 1); to be merciful with others as the Father is with us (no. 13); to make it "possible for many of God's [estranged] sons and daughters to take up once again the journey to the Father's house" (no. 18); to promote personal prayer (no. 14), confession

(nos. 17-18) and corporal and spiritual works of mercy (no. 15), etc.

St. Margaret Mary did not receive the mission of revealing this devotion, which sprang up well before her time. Her mission was nonetheless of great nobility and importance: she was the instrument chosen by God to set forth the fullness of the devotion in its spirit and its practices, and impress upon it a universal movement and reach. “My Divine Heart,” our Lord once told her, “is so impassioned with love for men, and for you in particular, that, no longer able to contain within Itself the flames of Its ardent charity, it must spread them through you and make Itself manifest to mankind to enrich them with these precious treasures that I reveal to you, which contain the sanctifying and saving graces necessary to bring them back from the edge of perdition. I have chosen you as an abyss of unworthiness and ignorance for the accomplishment of this great plan, so that all will be done by Me.” (Apparition of December 27, 1673). Before St. Margaret Mary, this devotion was practiced not only by a few privileged souls, such as St. Gertrude and St. Catherine of Siena, but also, thanks to St. John Eudes, by a large part of the Christian people. What, then, was lacking? First of all, the spirit of the devotion was perfected. Until this time those devoted to the Sacred Heart had chiefly rendered praise and thanksgiving to Him. There was no emphasis on reparation. It was, however, our Lord’s desire that we realize how unknown is His love and make reparation.

Recognition of the infinite tenderness of the Divine Love is important, but it is of equal import to make reparation for the sins of the world. Of course fervent souls had already thought of this. But in a time where the Faith was weakening and the Divine Love was increasingly disregarded and insulted, it became important to emphasize reparation. It was Margaret Mary's mission to draw the attention of loving souls toward this aspect of the devotion and to inspire souls to reparation, inviting them to turn to the forgotten and scorned Love: "Behold this Heart which has loved men so much that It has spared nothing, exhausting and consuming Itself to show them Its love: and in return I receive from most of them only ingratitude, by their irreverence and their sacrileges and by the coldness and scorn that they have for Me in this sacrament of love. But what is even more painful to Me is that it is hearts that are consecrated to Me that act this way." (Apparition of June 16, 1675.) This incomprehensible scorn of the love of God calls for reparation. Jesus asked His servant for reparation, and through her He asks all generous souls: "You, at least, give Me the pleasure of making up for their ingratitude, as much as you are able…"

The motive of mercy is always the consideration of another's misery as one's own. This is easy to understand if we remember that mercy is fundamentally sadness, and that we could not "be sore at heart" at the sight of someone's misery if we were not touched by it. And misery touches us because we share it, that is to say, when we make it our own. So the whole question is to

know why we make someone else's misery our own. There exists a certain natural, humanitarian, or philanthropic mercy, by which all men naturally love those like them and therefore share their misery which is that of the human nature in general as such. This mercy is ultimately based on a real and objective bond (which depends neither on our knowledge, nor on our affection, be it sensible or voluntary) that stimulates a practically spontaneous tendency of human nature. We say of those who go against it that they are "unnatural." This tendency urges every normal man to lend his help to anyone in danger, to anyone undergoing an evil, and to refuse this help sometimes even constitutes a misdemeanor, penalized by positive human law, which in this case clarifies the natural law. But while natural and humanitarian mercy radically inviscerate, are instinctive, in every man, this mercy does not take into account the knowledge of the profound roots of evil. Evil undergone, that is, misery, does not at once appear as the consequence of an evil committed, that is, sin. And precisely because of this ignorance of the relation between the two, this natural tendency of man's always runs the risk of being mistaken. Supernatural mercy goes much farther; it supposes charity. Here our motive for relieving misery is the friendship that attaches us to God, according to grace. For the love of God, it wishes to relieve all those whom misery can touch, both spiritual and corporal misery. And in this misery that touches one's neighbor, it sees the consequence of sin; in the evil undergone it sees the result of the evil committed. It therefore also sees to what extent it is just to relieve the

punishment incurred: to the extent that the sin justifying the infliction of this punishment ceases to be willed by him who committed it, to the extent that the sinner hates his sin, and to the extent that the sinner had extenuating circumstances. Or at least to the extent that the exercise of mercy, whose intention is to diminish or even suppress the evil of a punishment, does not contradict the requirements of justice, whose intention is to neutralize the evil of a sin. And that is the heart of the matter.

On a certain occasion during her life in Carmel, St. Therese of Lisieux was asked: "Tell us what we must do to be as little children. What do you mean by keeping little?" She replied: "When we keep little we recognize our own nothingness, and expect everything from God just as a little child expects everything from its father. Nothing worries us." In those words she reveals to us the foundation of her confidence. By looking at her heavenly Father's love for her, she learns a secret which is hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed only to little ones, namely that whereas, in heaven, the love of God goes out to those who are most like himself—the saints, our Lady, the only-begotten Son, on earth, His love goes out to those who are farthest off—the weak, the outcast, the sinful. In other words, the love revealed to St. Therese in the Person of our Lord was a merciful love, and it is as the "Merciful Love" that she always speaks of it. From her earliest days she had a special knowledge of the Divine Mercy, and one may say that this was the great light of her life and the grace proper to her mission. No one, it

would seem, was ever more attracted than she was to this infinite mercy; no one penetrated further into its unfathomable secrets; no one better understood the immensity of the help that human weakness can draw from it. "The mercy of God was the illuminating sun of her soul, that which, to her eyes, threw light upon all the mystery of God in His relations with man." That this was so she tells us herself. "All souls cannot be alike. They must differ so that each divine perfection may receive special honour. To me He has manifested His infinite mercy, and in this resplendent mirror I contemplate his other attributes. There each appears radiant with love."

Meditations

FIRST POINT.

What is this fire that Jesus Christ came to cast upon the earth? It is Divine Love. The Word was made Flesh, dwelt amongst us, passed through the various states of his mortal life: worked, taught, suffered, only in order to teach us, by precept and example, to love God: only to obtain for us, to merit for us, to communicate to us himself, the grace to love God. This grace is the greatest of all his benefits: it presupposes or includes all the others. The True God was hardly known or loved before Jesus Christ came: and it is only by him that God will be known and loved to the end of time. He is the Sun of Love, the true Light which enlightens and gives the warmth of supernatural life to every man coming into the world.

What share have I taken, up to the present time, in this benefit of Jesus Christ? If my soul is not burning with this sacred fire, is it due to him, or is it not entirely my own fault? How much I have

This fire which Jesus Christ came to bring on earth, and which he wills to be enkindled, will not burn in my heart, or at least will not burn with increasing brightness, if I do not myself desire that it should be lighted there, if I do not maintain it, feed it, and fan it into greater heat by my own co-operation. I received the first spark, the germ of it, in my Baptism. By an act of his pure goodness God kindled it within me; it was impossible for me to merit this grace, but he has charged me constantly to fan it and feed it. Have I done so since I came to the age of reason and knew the value of Divine Charity and sanctifying grace? How many times have I extinguished this Fire by mortal sin? That I have extinguished it I know; but I do not know with absolute certainty whether it has been kindled again by the Sacrament of Penance;

Thou shalt love. With what kind of love? With the love of preference to all other objects whatever, and to thine own self: thy love for God shall surpass, if it can, all other affection, in that same degree that the Object of it surpasses all else; thou shalt be ready, if occasion requires, to sacrifice all to him, even thine own life, rather than to offend him; thou shalt fear to displease him beyond and before all else; and thou shalt consider the smallest sin as an evil infinitely greater than all other evils of any other kind; thou shalt put the advantage of pleasing him before any other advantage of what value soever; and shalt be more jealous of his friendship than of that of the

"*God is love,*" says St John, and the sole Source of all love. He it is who, by the Holy Spirit, has put the eternal love of the Father and of the Son into our hearts. What other love could God pour into our hearts than that charity wherewith he loves himself? From all eternity there has been no other love, nor is there any other, nor can there be till the end of time. This love is pure, infinitely pure in its origin; it is poured into every Christian soul at Baptism and infuses into it the selfsame pure love; and it would be always pure in its acts, if self-love with its disorder did not rush in to soil it by miserable self-seeking. Neither gratitude nor hope can affect its purity. The motive powers of these two virtues accord perfectly with that of charity, and in no way interfere with it unless self-love insinuates itself into its motives and infects them in a greater or lesser degree with its poison. It is quite possible for me to love God for his benefits, for the rewards which he has promised and which I confidently expect from him; and at the same time to love him much more for his own sake. What does it matter, after all, that, when I love God by the particular motive of gratitude or of hope, I do not then love him by the formal motive of charity? Does charity any the less live in my heart? The

Rosary Meditations

Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation

Picture the scene of the Annunciation. God proposes the mystery of the Incarnation which He will accomplish in the Virgin Mary—but not until she has given her consent. The accomplishment of the mystery is held in suspense awaiting the free acceptance of Mary. At this moment Mary represents all of us in her own person; it is as if God is waiting for the response of the humanity to which He longs to unite Himself. What a solemn moment this is! For upon this moment depends the decision of the most vital mystery of Christianity.

The Visitation

See how the Holy Spirit greets the Virgin Mary through the mouth of Elizabeth: "Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb! And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoke to thee by the Lord."

Blessed indeed, for by this faith in the word of God the Virgin Mary became the Mother of Christ. What finite creature has ever received honor such as this from the Infinite Being? Mary gives all the glory to the Lord for the marvelous things which are accomplished in her.

The Nativity

The Virgin Mary sees in the Infant that she has given to the world, a child in appearance like all other children, the very Son of God. Mary's soul was filled with an immense faith which welled up in her and surpassed the faith of all the just men of the Old Testament; this is why she recognized her God in her own Son. This faith manifests itself externally by an act of adoration. From her very first glance at Jesus, the Virgin prostrated herself interiorly in a spirit of adoration so profound that we can never fathom its depth.

The Presentation

On the day of the Presentation God received infinitely more glory than He had previously received in the temple from all the sacrifices and all the holocausts of the Old Testament. On this day it is His own Son Jesus Who is offered to Him, and Who offers to the Father the infinite homage of adoration, thanksgiving, expiation and supplication. This is indeed a gift worthy of God.

The Finding in the Temple

"How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" This is the answer that Jesus gave to His Mother when, after three days' search she had the joy of finding Him in the Temple. These are the first words coming from the lips of the Word Incarnate to be recorded in the Gospel. In these words Jesus sums up His whole person, His whole life, His whole mission. They reveal His Divine Sonship; they testify to His supernatural mission. Christ's whole life will only be a clarifying and magnificent exposition of the meaning of these words.

Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony in the Garden

My Jesus, You told Your Apostles many times that You looked forward to the final hour of Redemption, and yet as you foresaw the sufferings to come you shuddered with fear and anguish of soul. You asked the Father to let this chalice pass and you received a refusal. My future looms before me at times, dear Jesus, and I tremble with fear and trepidation. I have implored the Father many times to grant me a favor or release me from a cross and His answer has often been "No." Why should I question His Wisdom in my regard when He refused His Own Son because the good of mankind was at stake? Help me to do the Father's Will with Your generosity and to accept a negative reply with Your love.

The Scourging at the Pillar

The pain of this suffering often escapes me, dear Jesus, I forget that this incident was not only painful but humiliating. Each stroke of the whip made you wince with pain and the gaze of the onlookers made You feel like "a worm and no man." Were You thinking of us today as we travel the road of immorality, dope, alcohol and unfaithfulness? Did Your divine eyes see the immodesty, perversion, and fornication through the centuries? Did the

thought of how easily men strip themselves of grace for gross pleasure give You the courage to receive one more blow of the lash, one more wound and one more sneer? Did the tears of unrequited love stream down Your cheeks as You saw so many laughingly going to perdition?

The Crowning with Thorns

My Jesus, I often think my portion of the cross is more than I can bear. It seems to me that I am the recipient of superfluous suffering. My thoughts are empty of reasoning and my heart is cold. If I remembered that You were crowned with thorns after You were scourged, I would be silent in the Presence of Divine Wisdom. My pride, stubbornness and lack of faith tagged each thorn as it pierced Your Sacred Head. My desire for the glory of this world to the exclusion of spiritual realities tightened the branches around Your Head.

The Carrying of the Cross

Help me, my Jesus, to carry my cross with joy, ever keeping my eyes on the Father's Will. Grant that I may not waste time deciding which cross comes from You and which comes from my neighbor. Let me accept all from You, realizing that some crosses correct me, some release me, some prevent me from a life of sin, others are redemptive, and still others lead to repentance. May our cross be one cross, dear Jesus, that together we may glorify the Father and save souls.

The Crucifixion

Help me, Jesus, to see Your loving gaze as it looked up to the Father with abandonment, at the thief with mercy, and at Your Mother with love.

Grant that I may forgive my enemies and abandon myself to the Father's Will. Let me commend my life and my eternity to His care. Let zeal for the salvation of souls make my soul thirst for sacrifice and let the thought of paradise enlighten my path. Give me the grace to persevere to the end, and when the journey is over and I have fought the good fight, let the Angels sing the last verse of my earthly song: "It is finished."

Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection

On the day of His Resurrection Jesus Christ left in the tomb the shroud, which is the symbol of our infirmities, our weaknesses, our imperfections. Christ comes from the tomb triumphant—completely free of earthly limitation; He is animated with a life that is intense and perfect, and which vibrates in every fiber of His being. In Him everything that is mortal has been absorbed by His glorified life. Here is the first element of the sanctity represented in the risen Christ: the elimination of everything that is corruptible, everything that is earthly and created; freedom from all defects, all infirmities, all capacity for suffering.

The Ascension

But Jesus goes only to precede us; He does not separate Himself from us, nor does He separate us from Himself. If He enters into His glorious kingdom, it is to prepare a place for us there. He promises to return one day to take us with Him so that, as He says, where He is we also may be. True, we are already there in the glory and happiness of Christ, by our title as His heirs; but we shall one day be there in reality. Has not Christ asked this of His Father? "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me."

The Descent of the Holy Ghost

On the day of Pentecost the Divine Spirit communicated such an abundance of life to the whole Church that to symbolize it "there came a sound from heaven, as of a violent wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they (the Apostles) were sitting." But it is also for us that the Holy Spirit has come, for the group in the Cenacle represented the whole Church. The Holy Spirit came to remain with the Church forever. This is the promise of Jesus Himself. He dwells in the Church permanently and unfailingly, performing in it without ceasing, His action of life-giving and sanctification. He establishes the Church infallibly in the truth. It is He Who makes the Church blossom forth with a marvelous supernatural fruitfulness, for He brings to life and full fruition in Virgins, Martyrs, Confessors, those heroic virtues which are one of the marks of true sanctity.

The Assumption

If Christ Jesus wishes us to love all the members of His Mystical Body, should we not love above all others her who gave Him the very nature by which He became our Head, the same nature which He uses to communicate His grace to us? We cannot doubt but that the love which we show to his Mother is extremely pleasing to Christ. "Yes, we shall sing your praises, for you alone have delighted the heart of your God. May you be blessed, for you have believed the word of God, and in you the eternal promises have been fulfilled."

The Coronation

What is the purpose of all the mysteries of Christ? To be the pattern of our supernatural life, the means of our sanctification, the source of all our holiness. To create an eternal and glorious society of brethren who will be like unto Him. For this reason Christ, the new Adam, has associated with Himself Mary, as the new Eve. But she is, much more than Eve, "the Mother of all the living," the Mother of those who live in the grace of her Son.

Saturday

Spiritual Texts

In his Letter to Friends and Benefactors dated May 24, 2015, the Superior General of the Society of Saint Pius X clearly indicated the course to follow: “When the floodgates of grace are opened wide, we must receive abundantly! A Holy Year is a great grace for all the members of the Church. We live, after all, by true mercy, as all the pages of the Gospel and of the traditional liturgy teach us. In keeping with the ‘preliminary discernment’ on which Archbishop Lefebvre based the conduct of the Society of Saint Pius X, in these times of confusion, we reject a diluted mercy and live fully by whole mercy.... “Let us take this appeal to mercy seriously, as the inhabitants of Nineveh did! Let us go in search of the lost sheep, let us pray for the conversion of souls, let us perform as much as we can all the works of mercy, both material and especially the spiritual works, for there is a serious shortage of the latter.... “As for us, dear brothers and sisters in the Faith, we must take advantage of this Holy Year to ask the God of mercy for an ever deeper conversion to holiness and implore the graces and pardons of His infinite mercy. We will prepare for the centennial of the apparitions of Our Lady in Fatima by practicing devotion to her Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart and propagating it with all our strength, as she demanded. We will keep

begging that her requests, particularly the consecration of Russia, will be carried out properly at last. There is no opposition between these thoughts turned toward Mary and the Year of Mercy—on the contrary! Let us not separate what God wants to see joined: the Two Hearts of Jesus and Mary, as Our Lord explained to Sister Lucy of Fatima. Every district of the Society will inform you of the particular works to be performed in order to benefit from all the graces that Divine Mercy will grant us during this Holy Year. And in this way we will offer as well as possible our collaboration with the merciful will of God to save all people of good will." Because of the centennial of the apparitions in Fatima and the major international pilgrimage to Portugal that we will organize in 2017, God willing, the General House has planned no major pilgrimage to Rome during this jubilee of mercy. But nothing prevents seminaries, districts, and priories from organizing them, as it is possible to gain the jubilee indulgence in all the dioceses of the world.

Angelus Press: Can the sacraments be given within the prison walls?
Mike Banschbach: SSPX priests routinely administer the sacrament of Penance before Mass as well as the Eucharist. We often hear the lament: "I really need the Sacraments".

Occasionally, prisoners are also baptized, and the following account was given by an offender about to be baptized by an SSPX priest: “As the date for my baptism draws nearer, it would seem that the demonic opposition intensifies. Some heretics here have begun to indirectly persecute me. What I mean by this is that, although they usually do not directly attack me for my faith, nevertheless, they gather together and slander it, knowing that I am around. And they tend to do so mockingly....I won’t pretend this does not bother me, because it does! But I won’t let it discourage me!”

What does devotion to the Sacred Heart require of us? Devotion to the Sacred Heart does not involve any new commandments: it is founded on the basic act of all Christian and supernatural life: the act of love. This cult consists in an attitude of the soul, a disposition of all our faculties to return to our Lord love for love. All the writings of St. Margaret Mary show that the fundamental act of our devotion towards the Divine Heart is an act of love. One day, our Lord removed her heart and set in its place a burning flame, telling her, “Here, My beloved, is a precious token of My love; enclosed in your side is this little spark of My love’s most burning flames, to be a heart to you and consume you until your last moment.” (ibid., pp. 69-70.) From then on, the saint’s life was consumed with love for

the Master's Heart. She wrote to Mother de Saumaise, "He will reign despite His enemies and will become the Master and possessor of our hearts, for the principal purpose of this devotion is to convert souls to His love." The voice of the Church confirmed these words. In his encyclical of June 28, 1888, Leo XIII wrote, "Jesus has no more burning desire than to see the fire of love which devours His own Heart ignited in souls! Let us then go to Him who in exchange for His charity asks only the return of His love."

What is new about the devotion to the Sacred Heart is first of all the consideration of the love of Jesus for us specifically, a love symbolized by His Heart of flesh. The act of love asked of us is directed towards a particular object: our Lord's love for us. However, that is not all. It is not only divine love considered in itself, in the infinite richness of its gifts, it is this same love disregarded and outraged. Our Lord Himself complained of this to St. Margaret Mary, speaking of the Eucharist: "As for recognition, I receive from most only ingratitude through their irreverence and their sacrileges, and through the coldness and the contempt they show Me in the sacrament of love." The love of the divine Master, disregarded and outraged: such is the particular object of the devotion to His Sacred Heart. From this follows the chief element in its practice, the spirit of reparation. The idea of reparation in devotion to the Sacred Heart does

indeed seem to be the chief element, established by our Lord Himself to St. Margaret Mary. Not, indeed, that this idea was new to Christianity, for it is on the contrary an integral part of the Redemption. Before St. Margaret Mary, however, it was not related to devotion to the Sacred Heart. Therein lies the originality of St. Margaret Mary's work. The Sacred Heart and reparation are inseparable in her thought and her writings: "The Sacred Heart," she writes, "asks for someone to do reparation, who will very humbly ask God's pardon for all the injuries done Him in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar." An act of love addressed to the Sacred Heart of our Lord, in the spirit of reparation for His disregarded love, such is the complete formula of devotion to the Sacred Heart.

The fruits of this devotion have been listed by the virgin of Paray, St. Margaret Mary herself, when she included in her writings the promises made by the Divine Savior to all those who would practice this vital devotion. (These promises are given according to the texts verified with the greatest care at Paray-le-Monial; the diocesan authority guarantees their authenticity.)

1. For those who work for the salvation of souls: "My divine Savior gave me to understand that those who work for the salvation of souls will have the skill of touching the most

hardened hearts and will work with marvelous success, if they themselves are filled with a tender devotion to His Divine Heart.

2. For communities: “He promised me…that He will spread the sweet unction of His ardent charity” on all the communities that honor Him and place themselves under His special protection; that He will hold back all the blows of divine justice to return them to grace when they fall.

3. For lay persons: “For lay persons, they will find through this amiable devotion all the help necessary to their state in life: that is peace in their families, relief in their labors, the blessings of heaven on all their enterprises, consolation in their afflictions; and it is in the Sacred Heart that they will find their refuge all their lives and above all at the hour of death.”

4. For homes where an image of the Sacred Heart is exposed and honored: “Assuring me that He takes singular pleasure in being honored under the form of this Heart of flesh, He wished this image to be exposed in public, in order, He added, to touch the hard hearts of men; promising me that He would bestow abundantly on the hearts of all those who honored him all the gifts of which He disposes; and that anywhere this image was exposed and especially honored, it would draw down all kinds of blessings.”

5. Promises of graces for all those who devote themselves to Him: “I feel as if I were lost in this divine Heart, if I mistake not [this manner of speech, habitual with the saint, does not indicate a doubt in her mind, but rather comes from her humility], as in a bottomless depth, where He shows me treasures of love and graces for the persons who will consecrate themselves and will make sacrifices to give Him and procure for Him all the honor, love and glory that is in their power.”
6. Promise of salvation for all those who devote and consecrate themselves to Him: “Then He confirmed to me that the pleasure He takes in being loved, known and honored by His creatures is so great that, if I am not mistaken, He promised me that all those who should devote and consecrate themselves to Him should never perish.”
7. Promise of a good death for those who receive Communion on nine consecutive first Fridays of the month: “One Friday, during Holy Communion, He said these words to His unworthy slave, if she is not mistaken: ‘I promise you, in the excessive mercy of My Heart, that His all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Communion on nine consecutive first Fridays of the month, the grace of final repentance; they will not die unprepared or without receiving the sacraments; My divine Heart will be their refuge in their final moments.’”

8. Promise of the reign of the Sacred Heart: “Fear nothing; I will reign despite my enemies and all those who would oppose it.” “This Sacred Heart will reign in spite of Satan and all those he has raised up against Me.”
She heard Him repeat these words: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass.”

Meditations

To serve God by love is the sweetest way. It attracts our hearts, for the heart is made to love. It draws the will, very gently but very efficaciously, to do what God asks of it. Love puts the heart perfectly at ease, which no other sentiment is able to do. Fear constrains; hope is not without a shadow of disquiet; but love knows neither the torments of fear nor the alarms to which hope, left to itself, is subject. Love inspires joy, which St Paul calls the second fruit of the Holy Spirit, putting charity—or love—first.[1]

The second quality of the love of God is strength, its very great force. Now, what kind of strength? A force that is irresistible; nothing can resist it; a strength that tramples under foot the world with its attractions and threats; the devil with his temptations; a strength that triumphs over the softnesses of the flesh and the corruption of nature; quells the most violent passions and overcomes the most inveterate habits; humbles self-will and brings it into subjection; weakens and destroys self-love; a strength that wrestles (like Jacob) even with God himself in the trials through which he makes the soul pass. See the strength of love in the martyrs! See it in the solitaries; in the religious of both sexes who have embraced and endured the most austere of lives! See it in so many illustrious penitents whose mortifications of every kind surpass imagination, and, as it seems, are above the powers of our weak human nature!

Whoever has the sincere will to love God with his whole heart, ought to begin by giving himself entirely up to God, that he may do in him and with him all that he pleases. This gift of self to God means an absolute renunciation of personal rights with regard to self into the Hands of God. It means that he has a firm intention not to belong to or dispose of himself; but to deliver himself up to divine Grace, to follow all its leadings; to submit to divine providence and conform to all its dispositions; to commit himself utterly to the divine Will, that It may work all Its good pleasure in him.

This gift is a great act of love. Of ourselves we are incapable of making it, and it requires a special grace from God to enable us to do so. This grace he never refuses to anyone who asks and truly desires to obtain it. But most people, even those who are truly religious, have not this desire really and efficaciously. They wish to give themselves to God and

Love of Self being the enemy of the love of God, it is evidently the enemy of that right and well-ordered love which we ought to have for ourselves. Reason and faith equally concur in making it a duty for us to love our True Good, our sole and supreme Good; and both one and the other teach us that that Good is God. And faith further teaches me that if during this life I live in the way that is commanded, I shall see him, love him, and possess him eternally, which will make me supremely happy. But self-love, fixing my love on my self, which is not and cannot possibly be my chief Good, turns me away from loving him who really is the supreme Good, and exposes me to the danger of being for ever deprived of the enjoyment of him; and it is certain that I shall never enter into that complete possession and felicity as long as any germ of self-love subsists in me. Thus my greatest interest in this world lies in being delivered from it completely, since on this all my happiness depends.

Rosary Meditations

Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation

Humility has a bad name. Many dismiss it as a perpetual hanging of the head, the coward's one claim to virtue. But humility is not that. The materialist who confesses he is only a soulless animal, is not humbler than Mary of Nazareth, who knew she was a child of God. His thoughts are lowly, but he is proud; Mary's thoughts are lofty, and she is humble. That is because her thoughts are true. She knew that her goodness, her greatness, came altogether from the Great God, and she acted accordingly. Humility means acting upon the truth about God and ourselves. It is the proud man who hangs his head; otherwise, he would see God above him. Humble Mary became God's mother – the world's greatest person – something for me to meditate upon!

The Visitation

Pride would be proper if, by an impossibility, there were no God. But our world is spun forth from His hand, and everything in it is His – beauty, goodness, harmonious ordering of events. Our own good deeds are God's as well. Hence, pride is not only improper; it is impractical. A water faucet is useless if the reservoir is closed; so, too, a man is

helpless when he tries to act independently of God. That is why, when Elizabeth cried out "Blessed art thou among women," Mary added the balancing truth: "He who is mighty has done great things for me." Mary was practical, realistic, because she sincerely referred all her goodness to God. Her humility was, literally, "done to earth". And I… ?

The Nativity

The new born Christ Child in the arms of His mother is the world's tenderest thing; but a very awesome thing as well. God became man; divinity in dust! It is apt to frighten; humility is like that. But it was not humility at all; it was condescension. Condescension is a stooping down; humility is a straightening up. In the Incarnation, God, while remaining God, became something inestimably less – man. Humility has exactly the opposite effect: By stifling pride, it makes man truly man, a free creature keenly conscious that he can do nothing good without God, thus freeing him for something inestimably more – a share in the very life of God. I am called to live God's own life, by Grace on earth, then in Glory. Humility is the only threshold to such greatness.

The Presentation

The proud man stands upon a pedestal, but so does the humble. The proud man is poised on the pedestal of inordinate self-esteem; the humble is born upon Christ. A proud man will never climb down the pillar of self; egoism hugs the heights; he must be toppled off. That is the chief value of temptations and the remorse following sin: To strike away pride's underpinning, and bluntly, make the soul sprawl. One pillar only must remain – Christ. The humbled soul need not climb it; Christ will lift him up. Christ was set for the fall; He is set for the rise as well. To admit my weakness, my insufficiency, is to lose it – if I turn for strength to Jesus Christ.

The Finding in the Temple

The Incarnation was sheer Divine Condescension. But once "He bowed the heavens and came down," once He was made to our image and likeness, Jesus Christ was preeminently humbled. As God, He knew perfectly "what was in man"; as man, he confessed what He knew of His humanity: "Of myself, I can do nothing." Nothing rhetorical or exaggerated about it: Simply, a man can do nothing good of himself, alone. That is in the nature of things. And it demands man's recognition through his free obedience to God's laws. And Jesus, who came not to destroy the law,

but to fulfill it, went down to Nazareth to obey. Am I humble? My obedience to God's law is my humility.

Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony in the Garden

It is for the love of His Father above all else that Jesus willed to undergo His Passion. Behold Jesus Christ in His agony. For three long hours weariness, grief, fear and anguish sweep in upon His soul like a torrent; the pressure of this interior agony is so immense that blood bursts forth from His sacred veins. What an abyss of suffering is reached in this agony! And what does Jesus say to His Father? "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me." Can it be that Jesus no longer accepts the Will of His Father? Oh! Certainly He does. But this prayer is the cry of the sensitive emotions of poor human nature, crushed by ignominy and suffering. Now is Jesus truly a "Man of Sorrows." Our Savior feels the terrible weight of His agony bearing down upon His shoulders. He wants us to realize this; that is why He utters such a prayer. But listen to what He immediately adds: "Nevertheless, Father, not My will but Thine be done." Here is the triumph of love. Because He loves His Father, He places the Will of His Father above everything else and accepts every possible suffering in order to redeem us.

The Scourging at the Pillar

Christ substituted Himself voluntarily for us as a sacrificial victim without blemish in order to pay our debt, and, by the expiation and the satisfaction which He made for us, to restore the Divine life to us. This was the mission which Christ came to fulfill, the course which He had to run. "God has placed upon Him"—a man like unto ourselves, of the race of Adam, but entirely just and innocent and without sin—"the iniquity of us all." Since Christ has become, so to speak, a sharer in our nature and taken upon Himself the debt of our sin, He has merited for us a share in His justice and holiness. In the forceful words of St. Paul, God, "by sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as a sin-offering, has condemned sin in the flesh." And with an impact still more stunning, the Apostle writes: "For our sakes He (God) made Him (Christ) to be sin who knew nothing of sin." How startling this expression is: "made Him to be sin"! The Apostle does not say "sinner," but—what is still more striking—"sin"! Let us never forget that "we have been redeemed at great price by the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

The Crowning with Thorns

Christ Jesus becomes an object of derision and insults. Behold Him, the all-powerful God, struck by sharp blows; His adorable face, the joy of the saints, is covered with spittle; a crown of thorns is forced down upon His head; a purple robe is placed upon His shoulders as a mock of derision; a reed is thrust into His hand; they genuflect insolently before Him in mockery. What an abyss of ignominy! What humiliation and disgrace for One before Whom the angels tremble! The cowardly Roman governor imagines that the hatred of the Jews will be satisfied by the sight of Christ in this pitiful state. He shows Him to the crowd: "Ecce Homo—Behold the Man!" Let us contemplate our Divine Master at this moment, plunged into the abyss of suffering and ignominy, and let us realize that the Father also presents Him to us and says to us: "Behold My Son, the splendor of My glory—but bruised for the sins of My people."

The Carrying of the Cross

Let us meditate upon Jesus Christ on the way to Calvary laden with His cross. He falls under the weight of this burden. To expiate sin, He wills to experience in His own flesh the oppression of sin. Fearing that Jesus will not reach the place of crucifixion alive, the Roman soldiers force Simon of Cyrene to help Christ to carry His cross, and Jesus accepts this assistance.

In this Simon represents all of us. As members of the Mystical Body of Christ, we should all help Jesus to carry His Cross. This is the one sure sign that we belong to Christ—if we carry our cross with Him. But while Jesus carried His cross, He merited for us the strength to bear our trials with generosity. He has placed in His cross a sweetness which makes ours bearable, for when we carry our cross it is really His that we receive. For Christ unites with His own the sufferings, sorrows, pains and burdens which we accept with love from His hand, and by this union He gives them an inestimable value, and they become a source of great merit for us. It is above all His love for His Father which impels Christ to accept the sufferings of His Passion, but it is also the love which He bears us.

The Crucifixion

At the Last Supper, when the hour had come to complete His oblation of self, what did Christ say to His Apostles who were gathered around Him? "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And this is the love, surpassing all loves, which Jesus shows us; for, as St. Paul says, "It is for us all that He is delivered up." What greater proof of love could He have given us? None. Hence the Apostle declares without ceasing that "because He loved us, Christ delivered Himself up for us," and "because of the love He bears for me, He gave Himself up for me." "Delivered," "given"—to what extent? Even to the death on the cross! What enhances this love immeasurably is the sovereign liberty with which Christ delivered Himself up: "He offered Himself because He willed it." These words tell us how spontaneously Jesus accepted His Passion. This freedom with which Jesus delivered Himself up to death for us is one of the aspects of His sacrifice which touch our human hearts most profoundly.

Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection

Christ's Resurrection and the risen Christ himself is the principle and source of our future resurrection: "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.... For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." The risen Christ lives in the hearts of his faithful while they await that fulfillment. In Christ, Christians "have tasted...the powers of the age to come" and their lives are swept up by Christ into the heart of divine life, so that they may "live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."

The Ascension

When his visible presence was taken from them, Jesus did not leave his disciples orphans. He promised to remain with them until the end of time; he sent them his Spirit. As a result communion with Jesus has become, in a way, more intense: "By communicating his Spirit, Christ mystically constitutes as his body those brothers of his who are called together from every nation."

The Descent of the Holy Spirit

The mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit is brought to completion in the Church, which is the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. This joint mission henceforth brings Christ's faithful to share in his communion with the Father in the Holy Spirit. The Spirit prepares men and goes out to them with his grace, in order to draw them to Christ. The Spirit manifests the risen Lord to them; recalls his word to them and opens their minds to the understanding of his Death and Resurrection. He makes present the mystery of Christ, supremely in the Eucharist, in order to reconcile them, to bring them into communion with God, that they may "bear much fruit."

The Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven

"This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly from the consent which she loyally gave at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation.... Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix."

The Coronation of Our Lady

The "splendor of an entirely unique holiness" by which Mary is "enriched from the first instant of her conception" comes wholly from Christ: she is "redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son." The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person "in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" and chose her "in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love."

Sunday

Spiritual Texts

Caritas vincit omnia. Little is said of the Apostle's departure from the security of the Cenacle, immediately going out unto the crowds of pilgrims under the first influence of the Holy Ghost. The outpouring of excessiveness, the Fire of Love, they acted under the impulse of charity. Caritas urget nos—charity presses us. We are not ready, we are too weak, too ignorant…we shall be over-exposed against all prudence. By nature, charity takes the lead. It is always a few steps ahead, so that we will follow. Our Lord commanded his Apostles to trust this spirit of charity, at a time when they thought his bodily departure was premature. Through the spirit of charity they would be taught and instructed in everything. Such is the pattern of charity: life commitments seem too soon, the vows of religion or of matrimony. Charity demands change in our degree of trust, from timorous wishing to living it in concrete reality. The charity of the Holy Ghost forced the Apostles from the shelter of the upper room outward into a hostile world. Therein they would henceforth mingle with the enemy, living amidst heresy and error and the entrenched hatred of those who rejected the Messias. Yet, in this seeming contradiction of circumstances there would be hundreds of thousands of conversions. Thus was the

beginning of the Church militant. This is the first condition of the Church and every move forward through heresy and persecution in historical time has required a repetition of it. Ultimately martyrdom would be the end of their earthly lives, but only the beginning of an eternal mission.

A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another (Jn. 13:34). Why is this a new commandment? Because the spirit of the new law is to act with love, and not with fear, because, although the precept of fraternal charity exists in the Old Testament, it had never been explained as well as in the new, and on this point you can read St. Luke, chapter 10, verses 29 to 37, in which Jesus Christ explains and decides that all men are our neighbor and there is no longer any stranger for us. Thirdly, this commandment is new because Jesus Christ adds to it this important circumstance, that we must love one another as He has loved us. He has preceded us with His love, when we were not thinking of Him: He came to us first; He is not repelled by our infidelities, by our ingratitude: He loves us in order to make us holy, to make us happy, disinterestedly; for He does not need us, nor does He need our services: with a love that flows naturally and is never deterred. So go and do likewise. Why do I see bizarre hatreds among you, temper against

temper, person against person, enmities, jealousies, sharpness, anger and hidden loathing? Is that how Jesus Christ loved us? And why do I see on the other hand flatteries, false or excessive deference? Is that how Jesus Christ loved us? And why do I see among you exclusive friendships, leagues and plots against each other? Is that how Jesus Christ loved us? And why make persons progress or regress depending on your inclination for them? Is that how Jesus Christ loved us? He did show more of an inclination, if we may dare to speak thus, for St. John: It was the disciple that Jesus loved. But what was this inclination, according to the tradition of the holy doctors, but a special love for the virginal chastity that He found and preserved in St. John! And as for the other qualities of this beloved disciple, what was the love He had for him but a love of the goodness, gentleness, simplicity, candor, cordiality and tenderness and contemplation by which he was particularly suited to his Master? So love in this way. And did this special love with which He honored St. John make Him any more indulgent when he was wrong? And did it stop Him from saying to him along with his brother St. James: You know not what you ask (Mt. 20:22), and another time: You know not of what spirit you are (Lk. 9:55)? So do the same. And did His tenderness make Him prefer John to the others? Is it not Peter whom He placed at the head of the

apostolic college and of the entire Church? In the end, He entrusted His holy mother to St. John. Who was better suited to her and to him by all the qualities we have mentioned and in particular his virginity? He was His family, His servant, and He preferred St. John who, on top of everything we have mentioned, was His close relative. So love in this way: have the consideration that blood demands, but base the heart of your affections upon virtue. And how far did Jesus take His love? To the point of giving His life for those He loved. Do not doubt that there are occasions when you must do the same for your brother. Love as I have loved, that is My new precept: the model of your love is Mine.

But now comes the last word, more pressing than all the others: By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another (Jn. 13:35). This is the character of the Christian, the disciple of Jesus Christ. He who renounces charity renounces the Faith, abjures Christianity, and leaves the school of Jesus Christ, that is to say, His Church. So tremble, hardened hearts; tremble, the insensitive; tremble, all you whose hatred is implacable, and whose enmities are irreconcilable: you are no longer disciples of Jesus Christ; you are no longer Christians; you have renounced your baptism. See the Church being born:

one heart and one soul; all things were common unto them. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch (Acts 4:32, Acts 5:12), without dissension, envy or self-interest: And all the people admired them; and they said: Those are the disciples of Jesus; that was their special character. Envy, selfinterest and hatred reign among all other men: the innocent flock of Jesus knew not these evils. My Savior, where are Your disciples now? Where is charity? Where is brotherly love? How rare it is! That is why You said that the time will come when scandals and iniquity will abound, and the charity of many will grow cold (Mt. 24:12); and that when You return You will scarcely find faith upon the earth (Lk. 18:8), faith animated by charity. Let us weep, brethren, let us weep for charity grown cold in the multitude, among most of those who call themselves Christians; but also grown cold in our own hearts. Let us rekindle it: let us come to Jesus, let us listen tenderly to His last words, tenderly to what He said so tenderly. Fraternal charity becomes commendable to us for these reasons: because of the tenderness with which Jesus Christ recommends it to us, because of the time He chose to recommend it to us, because of the model He gives us of fraternal charity in His person, and because of the character of Christian that He attaches to this divine virtue. Let us be disciples of Jesus Christ; let us be Christians; that is to say, let us love our

brothers; and how? As Jesus Christ has loved us. At these words He stopped, and left us to taste this new commandment of the law of grace.

Angelus Press: Are there any success stories?
Mike Banschbach: We have often told offenders they will convert more to the Faith on the inside than on the outside. We routinely have, and welcome, non-Catholics attending the Mass and the classes; one non-Catholic offender agreed to come to class but made it clear he was not converting to Catholicism; a year later he was baptized and began serving Fr. Katzaroff's Mass each month! While we could quote numerous letters, the following excerpts provide a glimpse of the importance of getting truly Catholic material to these men: "The Bible I received is the most precious gift I have received in my entire life, outside of God's grace, redemption and salvation! I nearly had tears in my eyes when I opened that envelope and discovered the Divine Office and Bible." "When I talk about writing you and receiving materials from you I am immediately told that the SSPX is not in communion with the Church. To be quite honest I feel it is the other way around. If I was a Catholic, I would want to be a member of the SSPX because so far from what I have seen they are the ones holding the Church together." "For the first time in my life I'm learning what I'm

supposed to learn. Every time I come across a brother in here and they have received a package from you, they are always full of smiles and they yell ‘Hey, I heard from St. Michael’s!’ Every time I hear that I know the Catholic community here is about to get even stronger in our knowledge of true Catholicism.” “I cannot believe how much you blessed me. When I received your beautiful gifts (books), I almost cried. I was so overwhelmed by all of your generosity, I was beside myself.”

Meditations

Crosses are the great means employed by God himself to destroy self-love in us, and to increase and purify our love of him; whilst on our side we work at these two objects by diligently making use of the means he leaves at our disposition. It is by crosses that the work is finished; without them it must remain imperfect. And the reason of this is clear.

Self cannot put itself to death; the death-stroke must come from another, and *self* must remain purely passive in receiving it. So long as I act, I am living, and I can well mortify myself, but by my own efforts I can never *kill* self spiritually. I can detach myself from all those things to which I cling; but to divide myself from myself and really tear out self, this is not in my own power. The work must be undertaken by God, so that it shall be he who acts upon me, and that the fire of his love shall consume the victim.

Giving oneself to God means the consecrating to him of all our thoughts, affections and actions in such a way that the mind is occupied with him alone, or such objects as he may wish us to attend to at each moment; that the heart loves him supremely, and creatures in view of him according to the order which he has himself established; that all that we do, all we suffer, we refer to him; and that his glory, his good pleasure, may be our last end and principal intention.

To give myself to God means to renounce guiding myself, and to follow in all things the leadings of grace; it is to have no self-will over anything at all, but to will only that which God wills; it is to give up to him my liberty, in order that he may dispose of and direct me just as he wills and according to his good pleasure.

"*Thou shalt love God with thy whole heart.*"

Can God be loved otherwise than with our whole heart? Is it too much for a finite heart to love Infinite Beauty? If I should love him with less than my whole heart, would he be satisfied? Should I be satisfied myself? Alas! in loving him with all the strength of this heart, I love him far less than he deserves, and I shall always have to pray him to enlarge my heart, that I may love him more and more. I shall not love God with my whole heart if I have any reserves with him, or put any limits to the proofs of my love, determining not to pass these limits: if I obstinately refuse the sacrifice of certain things he asks of me; or if I make a plan of devotion and confine myself to it, although Grace may be inviting me to go much further. In order to assure myself whether I have

God is our Father; in all nature there is no title that gives a better right to be loved than does that of Father. But how is God our Father? In a way that can only belong to him. He is the Creator of my body and of my soul and is the author of their union. It is from him alone that I have received my faculties and natural qualities, such as I possess. He is my Father, and it is by him alone that I continue every instant to exist. He is my Father and continually supplies my needs, my comforts, and even my pleasures; for, even if I should take these against his Will, still no one else has provided them. He could in a moment withdraw all he has given me, if I should offend him by abusing his goodness. He could reduce me to nothing, and it is of his pure goodness that he does not annihilate me. What are other fathers compared with him? If by nature children have the sacred and indispensable duty of

loving their father, how much more am I obliged to love God!

But faith teaches me that God is my Father by a

Rosary Meditations

Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation

See how Mary gives her answer. Full of faith and confidence in the heavenly message and entirely submissive to the Divine Will, the Virgin Mary replies in a spirit of complete and absolute abandonment: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word." This "Fiat" is Mary's consent to the Divine Plan of Redemption. It is like an echo of the "Fiat" of the creation of the world. But this is a new world, a world infinitely superior, a world of grace, which God will cause to arise in consequence of Mary's consent.

The Visitation

From the moment of the Incarnation the Virgin Mother sings in her heart a canticle full of love and gratitude. In the presence of her cousin Elizabeth she allows the most profound sentiments of her heart to break forth in song; she intones the "Magnificat" which, in the course of centuries, her children will repeat with her to praise God for having chosen her among all women: "My soul magnifies the Lord - and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, Because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid... Because He Who is mighty has done great things for me And holy is His name.

The Nativity

In the heart of Mary are joined in perfect harmony a creature's adoration of her God and a Mother's love for her only Son. How inconceivably great the joy in the soul of Jesus must have been as He experienced this boundless love of His Mother! Between these two souls took place ceaseless exchanges of love which brought them into ever closer unity. O wonderful exchange: to Mary Jesus gives the greatest gifts and graces, and to Jesus Mary gives her fullest cooperation: after the union of the Divine Persons in the Blessed Trinity and the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in the Incarnation, no more glorious or more profound union can be conceived than the union between Jesus and Mary.

The Presentation

And it is from the hands of the Virgin, full of grace, that this offering, so pleasing to God, is received. Mary's faith is perfect. Filled with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, she has a clear understanding of the value of the offering which she is making to God at this moment; by His inspirations the Holy Spirit brings her soul into harmony with the interior dispositions of the heart of her Divine Son. Just as Mary had given her consent in the name of all humanity when the angel announced to her the mystery of the Incarnation, so also on this day Mary offers Jesus to the Father in the name of the whole human race.

The Finding in the Temple

St. Luke tells us that Mary "did not understand the word that He spoke." But even if Mary did not grasp the full significance of these words, she did not doubt that Jesus was the Son of God. It’s why she submitted in silence to that Divine Will which had demanded such a sacrifice of her love. "Mary kept these words of Jesus carefully in her heart." She kept them in her heart, for there was the tabernacle in which she adored the mystery concealed in the words of her Son, waiting until the full light of understanding would be granted her.

Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony in the Garden

It is the mental anguish and uncertainty that tears my soul apart and I often question His love for me. Your example of resignation, acceptance and love makes me realize that the Father has my life in His hands and nothing happens to me that is not for my good. Give me the confidence to ask for what I think I need, the humility to wait for His Will, and the faith to accept a refusal. Let my suffering be Redemptive, let my will be one with God's and my life a sacrifice of love.

The Scourging at the Pillar

Surely, my Jesus, this scourging made reparation for more than the sins of the flesh. Were the welts that began to bleed suffered for those who tear off the garments of love and clothe themselves in the rags of dissension and disobedience? Was not one lash marked, "Rudeness" and another "Hate"? And when the scourging finally ended, did Your eyes see some Blood trickling down and stepped upon as if in derision?

We are sorry, dear Jesus. Cover us all with this Precious Blood and heal our many wounds. Let modesty and purity be our goal and harmony our motto.

The Crowning with Thorns

My lack of confidence in Your Mercy and the lukewarmness of my love braided this instrument of torture into a wreath of unspeakable pain.

Were the tiny thorns that pricked Your Head the worries I permit to choke Your Word from my mind? Were the resentments I cherish in my memory the reed that struck Your Head? And when the spittle randown Your Face, did my arrogance make You cry? Oh, Jesus, let me never forget Your love for me and the reparation You offered the Father for my sake. Let my soul magnify the Lord by humility of heart, purity of mind, and a gentle spirit.

The Carrying of the Cross

You loved me enough, dear Jesus, to take upon Your bleeding shoulders the wood of Your Cross. My love for You is wanting for I find physical pain difficult to bear, sorrow oppressive and tragedies cruel. You have asked that I take whatever the Father permits in my life and follow in Your footsteps, and yet I often think the Cross was meant only for You and not for me. I thought Redemption meant freedom from pain, but I know now, as I see this heavy beam on Your back, that Your Redeeming Cross gave value to my pain. Your footsteps in the coarse ground cushioned the path for my feet. Your Cross cut a ridge in the earth for

my cross to rest in.Your Presence cleared the air of hopelessness and showed me the way. Your acceptance took away the curse and bestowed a blessing.

The Crucifixion

You gave Your life for me when I was a sinner. You loved me, dear Jesus, before I saw the light of day or felt the gentle breeze upon my cheek.

You have suffered and died for me, hounded and pursued me, inspired and drawn me. Your love is totally unselfish, and though I rejoice that I am the recipient of such love, I cannot love unselfishly in return.

You forgave Your enemies and looked away as Your friends deserted You. Is it not strange, dear Jesus, that I still find forgiveness hard and mercy impossible? What is lacking in my life that makes forgiving my neighbor difficult? Is the fact that I cannot forgive myself a factor in my lack of mercy towards others?

Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection

But there is also another element of sanctity: union with God, self- oblation and consecration to God. Only in heaven shall we be able to understand how completely Jesus lived for His Father during these blessed days. The life of the risen Christ became an infinite source of glory for His Father. Not a single effect of His sufferings was left in Him, for now everything in Him shone with brilliance and beauty and possessed strength and life; every atom of His being sang an unceasing canticle of praise. His holy humanity offered itself in a new manner to the glory of the Father.

The Ascension

Our Lord said to His Apostles before He departed from them: "If you loved Me, you would indeed rejoice that I am going to the Father." To us also Christ repeats these words. If we love Him, we shall rejoice in His glorification; we shall rejoice with Him that, after completing His course on earth, He ascends to the right hand of His Father, there to be exalted above all the heavens in infinite glory. Let us then say to Christ Jesus: "Draw us into Your triumphal march, O glorious and all-powerful Conqueror! Make us live in heaven by faith and hope and love. Help us to detach ourselves from the fleeting things of earth in order that we may seek the true and lasting goods of heaven!"

The Descent of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Spirit appeared under the form of tongues of fire in order to fill the Apostles with truth and to prepare them to bear witness to Jesus. He also come to fill their hearts with love. He is the Person of Love in the life of God. He is also like a breath, an aspiration of infinite Love, from which we draw the breath of life.

The Assumption

We shall manifest our love by extolling the sublime privileges which Jesus has bestowed on His Mother, among which the Assumption is one of the most glorious. If we wish to please our Lord very much, we shall admire the wonderful gifts with which He has lovingly adorned the soul of His Mother. He wishes that we should sing the praises of the Virgin, who was chosen among all women to give the Savior to the world.

The Coronation

And since here below Mary was associated so intimately with all the mysteries of our salvation, at her Assumption into heaven Jesus crowned her not only with glory but also with power; He has placed His Mother on His right hand and has given her the power, in virtue of her unique title of Mother of God, to distribute the treasures of eternal life. Let us then, full of confidence, pray with the Church: "Show yourself a Mother: Mother of Jesus, by your complete faith in Him, our Mother, by your mercy towards us; ask Christ, Who was born of you, to give us life; and Who willed to be your Son, to receive our prayers through you."