



# TOGETHER IN THE SPIRIT

Bi-monthly Catholic Magazine

August 2020—Issue 4

## TOGETHER IN THE SPIRIT

**WELCOME** to the fourth edition of our bi-monthly magazine. We hope you enjoyed the previous editions and we would love to hear your comments. Call or text any of the numbers below to share your news and views or to suggest items you would like to see in the magazine.

The pandemic is still with us but gradually restrictions are being eased and we are tentatively finding our new 'normal'. Our churches are gradually opening - Thank You God! Most churches are now posting information online and news of St Mary's Lowe House is available on <http://www.stmaryslovehouse.org/> website and **Holy Cross and St Mary's, Lowe House, St Helens** Facebook page post notices from St Mary's Lowe House and St. Thomas of Canterbury Churches.

You may contact the Healing Ministry Prayer Team on the numbers below:

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We would like to hear from anyone who would like to share their Covid19 experience or their fears or concerns for the future. The need to care for and support each other will, of course, continue, and we are just a phone call away. None of us, however, is altogether alone—Jesus is always with us! Keep in touch.

Contributions to the magazine this month from: Deacon Dave, Maria, Trish, Margaret, Bob and Ken.

**“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that they do not know Him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”**

**1 John 3:1-3**

## RECOMMENDED VIEWING AND LISTENING



Sister Emmanuel Maillard's story is one not to be missed. Sr. Emmanuel is a member of the Beatitudes community and has been living in Bosnia & Herzegovina since 1989. She is the founder of Les Enfants de Medjugorje and she has written several books and gives teaching on faith issues in a very loving and easy to understand way on YouTube. She is such a joyful and peaceful lady!

Before Sr. Emmanuel became a Religious Sister, she almost took her own life. Listen to Sister's story of how she got into the ouija board and astrology that then took her soul into a very dark place. By the grace of God, she was saved from her 5 o'clock plan to take her life.

Search for Sister Emmanuel's personal testimony on YouTube and you will no doubt come across her other videos too.



### **The Healing Ministry Prayer Team needs your help:**

*We  
Need  
Your  
Help!*

We hope you enjoy reading our magazine and find it both informative and entertaining. Our aim has always been to produce a magazine to spread the 'Good News' to a wide audience. However, the closure of the Churches means we have no way to distribute hard copies, so we decided to publish online. We need your help to enable the magazine to reach the widest audience possible—people of all faiths or none— so that, in spite of our circumstances, we can at least be 'together in Spirit'.

You can help us to increase our distribution by downloading and sharing, by emailing the magazine to your friends and colleagues or by posting a link to the magazine on Facebook and other social media. Please share, share, share! Thank you.

## *A SAINT OF OUR TIMES*



St Maria Goretti was born on October 16, 1890 in Corinaldo, in Italy, to Luigi Goretti and Assunta Carlini and was the third of seven children. By the time Maria was five, her family had become so poor that they were forced to give up their farm, move and work for other farmers. They moved in 1899 to Le Ferriere near modern Latina and Nettuno in Lazio, where they lived in a building they shared with another family, which included Giovanni Serenelli and his son, Alessandro. Maria's father died when she was just nine. While her mother and siblings worked in the fields, Maria would cook, sew, watch (baby) Teresa, and keep the house clean.

On July 5, 1902, eleven-year-old Maria was sitting on the outside steps of her home, sewing and watching Teresa. [Maria's mother] Assunta and the other children were at the threshing floor. Alessandro, who had persistently sought sexual favours from Maria, returned to the house and threatened to stab her with an awl if she did not do what he said; he was intending to rape her. She would not submit, however, protesting that what he wanted to do was a mortal sin and warning him that he would go to Hell. She fought desperately. He first choked her, then he stabbed her eleven times. She tried to reach the door, but he stopped her by stabbing her three more times before running away.

Teresa awoke with the noise and started crying, and when Assunta and Giovanni came to check on her, they found Maria on the floor bleeding and took her to the nearest hospital in Nettuno. Surgeons at Orsenigo were surprised that she was still alive. She underwent surgery without anaesthesia, but her injuries were beyond the doctors' help. Halfway through the surgery, she woke up. The following day, 24 hours after the attack, she died of her injuries.

In a dying deposition, in the presence of the Chief of Police, she told her mother of Alessandro's sexual harassment, and two previous attempts made to rape her. Alessandro stated that he did not complete the assault and Maria died a virgin.

Alessandro Serenelli was captured shortly after the attack: the police taking him to prison overtook the ambulance carrying Maria to the hospital. His proposed life sentence was commuted to 30 years. He remained unrepentant and uncommunicative from the world for three years, until a local bishop visited him in jail.

After his release, Alessandro visited Assunta and begged her forgiveness. She forgave him, and they attended Mass together receiving Holy Communion side by side. He attended Maria's canonization in 1950.

Alessandro later became a lay brother of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, living and working in a monastery until he died in 1970 at age 87. Maria was beatified on April 27, 1947. In attendance at the ceremony were both Assunta and Pope Pius XII. Three years later, on June 24, 1950, Pius XII canonized Maria as a saint. Assunta was again present at the ceremony, along with her four remaining sons and daughters. Alessandro was also present.



## **The HEALING MINISTRY PRAYER**

**TEAM** have continued meeting together to pray, albeit virtually, each Thursday evening since our churches were closed due to COVID-19. We have found it both a time of great blessing and a time of trial. One of the many blessings has been, that we have had a lot of time on our hands. We have been able to livestream Holy Mass every day, devote more time to

prayer and spend more time reading and learning about our Catholic Faith. This in turn has helped us to grow spiritually and we feel a real closeness to God.

We have also experienced times of trial. The closer our relationship with God has become, the harder Satan has tried to tempt us to turn away from what is good. If we look at what is happening around our world today we see discontentment, discord, aggression.

People of faith are being persecuted, statues desecrated and churches burned. This is evil. Our Lady, in Medjugorje, warns us that Satan is fighting to win the world. She tells us that he will not win the battle and that her Immaculate Heart will triumph. However, she repeatedly asks us to pray, pray, pray so that peace will come soon. We are asked to pray, work and witness with love. If we do, then God will bless our efforts and unbelievers will feel the grace of conversion. We have the opportunity to save and bless many souls through prayer.

Jesus gave St. Faustina this short prayer to pray for the conversion of souls:

***“O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the heart of Jesus as a fount of Mercy for us, I trust in you”.***

Let us start praying this prayer for the conversion of souls.



# REFUGEES

They have no need of our help  
So do not tell me  
These haggard faces could belong to you or me  
Should life have dealt a different hand  
We need to see them for who they really are  
Chancers and scroungers  
Layabouts and loungers  
With bombs up their sleeves  
Cut-throats and thieves  
They are not  
Welcome here  
We should make them  
Go back to where they came from  
They cannot  
Share our food  
Share our homes  
Share our countries  
Instead let us  
Build a wall to keep them out  
Its not ok to say  
These are people just like us  
A place should only belong to those who are born there  
Do not be stupid to think that  
The world can be looked at another way



## NOW READ FROM BOTTOM TO TOP

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**Who is a refugee?** A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country due to a conflict or a credible fear of persecution based on reasons of race, religion, political opinion, membership of a social group in that country and is seeking refuge in another state. **Latest figures show there are 70.8 million displaced people in the world of whom 25.9 million are refugees.**

## WHAT IS THE MAGISTERIUM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?



The magisterium is the official teaching office of the Church, including the Pope and the Bishops in union with him. In simple terms, the **magisterium is the official teaching office – in the sense of role or authority, not a bureaucratic center - of the church**, which consists the Pope and the Bishops in union with him. They are given the task of **interpreting scripture and making judgements**

**on 'tradition' within the church**, making official statements as to the authenticity of such traditions.

Here is how the Catechism of the Catholic Church defines the magisterium: “The task of giving an **authentic interpretation of the Word of God** whether in its written form or in the form of **Tradition**, has been entrusted to the **living teaching office of the Church** alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ” This means that the task of interpretations has been entrusted to **the Bishops in communion with the successor of Peter**, the Bishop of Rome, (CCC 85).

**The task, given to the apostles and St. Peter by Jesus Christ, can be seen in the New Testament**, specifically in the Acts of the Apostles where there arose a dispute concerning the admittance of gentiles. St Peter had a vision where he was urged by God to accept the “unclean.” Afterwards he proclaimed, “can anyone withhold the water for baptising these people, who have received the Holy Spirit even as we have? He ordered them to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:47-48).

The baptism of the gentiles is one example of how Peter and the Apostles encountered a new situation where they had to **discern the right course of action**. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, they were able to make a proclamation that interpreted God’s Word in an authentic way. Catholics believe that the Pope and the bishops with him **can be trusted because of Jesus’ promise to send the Holy Spirit** upon them, guiding

them in the process of proclaiming certain ‘dogmas’ and in judging the authenticity of certain traditions.

The entire concept of the magisterium hinges on this belief, going back to Jesus’ promise, **“I will ask the Father and He will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of Truth”** (John 14:17-17). **ALETEIA an online Catholic news and information website**

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## **Fr. Slavko Barbaric (1946-2000). Priest of Medjugorje.**



(June 25, 2020) The following is the prayer that Fr. Slavko composed as a response to his teaching on prayer in the book, "Be Similar to My Heart". Let's pray it! We need Jesus to help us to pray. We are so little and in need!!

“Lord Jesus, I adore You and thank You for your presence. I pray with joy that You are with me. Thank you for Your name Emmanuel - God with us, God for us. Today I have in my heart the desire to pray as You asked me and as Mary is teaching me. Like the apostles I ask

You now, Lord Jesus, teach me to pray. Give me the grace of prayer so that it may be always leading to the Father and the Holy Spirit. May my prayer be joy, being with You. In this silence, Lord Jesus, teach me to pray.

Lord Jesus, I adore you. Teach me to meet You and the Father and the Holy Spirit in every prayer. Hear my voice so that I may be able to give up to the Father and to you, in your name, all my problems, all my wounds, all my desires, all my intentions so that my heart may be free for meeting you. Forgive me, O Jesus, when I was looking for something other than You. For this reason I pray that my desire and decision will be to be with You, the Father and the Holy Spirit. Forgive me when my prayers were like battles, fighting with God, our Father, in Heaven. O Jesus, make my heart free and teach me to pray.

Lord Jesus, say a word, and heal my spirit of prayer. Heal my prayer to become a prayer of joy in meeting You. Make me free from everything that is hindering me to meet You. Give me, my family, my prayer group, my communities and Church the Spirit of Prayer. May my prayers praise You and bless You. May my prayer become for me the love You have for me. Amen.”

(Fr. Slavko Barbaric, "Be Similar to My Heart". P. 40.)



Spiritual Communion is nothing else but a fervent desire to receive Our Lord and be united to Him. We may receive Him and enjoy His presence in a spiritual manner without communicating, to the great advantage and welfare of the soul. Christ, when on earth, healed many persons by laying His sacred hands upon them – and He also restored many at a distance, for example, the centurion’s daughter. While He imparts great graces to those who receive Him worthily in the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar, He is none the less generous to those who only receive Him in desire. He refers to this manner of receiving in the words; “I am the bread of life, he that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst.” (*John 6:35*). Christ can bestow His grace upon the soul without the medium of the Sacraments.

Bishop Fornerus (1160 – 1218) tells us how Spiritual Communion is to be made: “All those who assist at Holy Mass, and prepare themselves carefully, are fed with the Body of Christ in a spiritual manner at the communion of the priest, for the potency of the Holy Mass is so great that all who unite their intention to the intention of the celebrant and desire to participate in the Holy Sacrifice will, together with the priest, consume the Sacred Victim and enjoy the fruits of this spiritual sustenance.” “Just as when a grand banquet is given no member of the household is left to suffer hunger, so it is at the Holy Mass, the Great Supper at which there is no one present who does not receive something unless he willfully closes his mouth when Christ holds out to him the spiritual food.”

A story was told of a pious peasant who was most exemplary in his devout attendance to Holy Mass. He used to follow attentively all that the priest did at the altar and in his own simple fashion meditated on the Passion of Our Lord. When the time came for the priest to consume the Sacred Host, he felt an overpowering desire to receive Communion too. However, it was not customary at that time for the laity to receive the Eucharist more than twice a year, and the good peasant

said to himself: “Alas, unhappy man that I am; I am not allowed to receive my God; I am deprived of the precious fruits of this Divine Sacrament! Thou alone knowest, O sweet Jesus, how I long to receive thee and be made one with Thee. But since the happiness of receiving Thee sacramentally is denied me, I beseech thee, of thine infinite condescension, to feed me spiritually with this celestial bread.”

Thus, he breathed forth the desire of his heart, and at the Communion of the priest he closed his eyes and opened his mouth as if he were about to communicate. One day when he did this and imagined himself to be kneeling at the holy table, he felt a particle of the Host upon his tongue. He swallowed it reverently, his heart filled with ineffable consolation. From that time on he longed more and more for Holy Communion and whenever he was at Holy Mass, at the communion of the priest, a particle detached itself from the sacred Host and entered his lips.

Thus, we see God reward by a miracle the earnest desire for Holy Communion and teach us at the same time how pleasing to Him is Spiritual Communion and how profitable to our souls. The Church also teaches us how good and how salutary is this desire for Holy Communion when she says:” Those who, when eating in desire that heavenly bread which is set before them are, by a lively faith which works by charity, made sensible of the fruit and usefulness thereof.” (*Council of Trent, Sess. xiii., Ch. 8*)

*Summarised from “The Incredible Catholic Mass” by FR. Martin Von Cochem.*



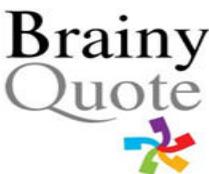
## THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The Blessed Virgin Mary is never invoked in vain. An appeal to her is always rewarded and is far more efficacious than an appeal to any other Saint. This was revealed to a Dominican Saint by the Mother of God herself and he has left it in writing for our benefit:

1. “What Mary asks of God she invariably obtains.”
2. “God withholds His mercy from no one for whom Mary prays.”
3. “The world would long since have been destroyed had not Mary upheld it by her intercession.”
4. “The love of Mary for sinners is greater than that of any one human being for another.”
5. “Such is the love of Mary for sinners that, did God permit, she would be willing to make atonement for each one by daily bearing all the sufferings of the world.”
6. “The least service shown to Mary, were it merely the recital of the Angelic Salutation ‘Hail Mary’ is worth more than an act a thousandfold greater performed in honour of one of the other Saints.”
7. “A single *Ave Maria* (Hail Mary) is of more value than any temporal gift of body or soul, of life or death.”
8. “As the firmament of Heaven surpasses all the stars in magnitude, so does the loving kindness of Mary surpass that of all other Saints.”
9. “As the sun exceeds in its beneficent action all the other orbs, so does the assistance which Mary renders us exceed that of all other Saints.”
10. “The veneration shown to Mary rejoices all the Blessed.”
11. “The veneration paid to the Saints may be compared to silver; that which is paid to Mary may be compared to gold’ that which is paid to Christ, to precious gems; while that which is paid to the Holy Trinity is like the stars in splendor.”
12. “Never does a day pass without some souls being rescued from Purgatory by Mary.”

These twelve privileges or graces are the crown of 12 stars which St. John saw encircling Our Lady’s head. He who ponders them well cannot fail to feel himself irresistibly drawn to the service and veneration of Mary.

*The Incredible Catholic Mass. Fr Martin Von Cochem’.*



Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more so that we may fear less. Marie Curie.

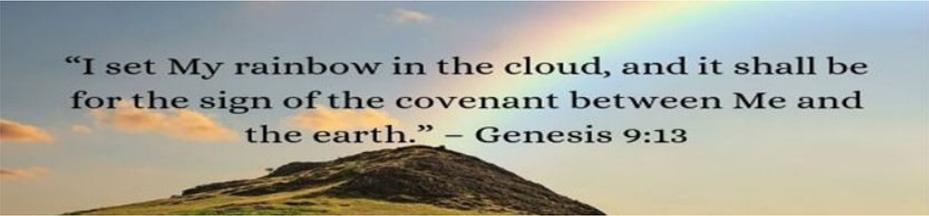
## *Fr Mark Goring: 4 sneaky ways to praise the Lord (or, how to be good without really trying!)*



Many of you may be familiar with Father Mark Goring's videos but this one particularly caught our attention; the suggestions are so easy to follow and if put in regular practice, they may greatly enhance our reverence for Our Lord.

Fr Mark quotes Psalm 113 v 3 which says "from the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised".

1. Father Mark begins with an example; introducing a friend at a party we would say 'this is Jane' and asked how much different it would be to say 'here is wonderful Jane'. It would make Jane feel honoured and happy. Then speaking of the Lord, why not praise Him as you speak of Him – rather than say 'the Lord said' say 'the **good** Lord said'; rather than say that you 'receive the Eucharist', why not say 'the **Holy** Eucharist'; when you say you 'read the Bible', say you 'read the **Holy** Bible'.
2. In conversation, sneakily praise the Lord by mentioning how good the Lord is. When friends enquire how you are, saying 'the Lord takes good care of me', or, if they ask how you are coping with a challenge, say 'I trust the Lord, He is going to work things out for me'. These are little ways of praising and testifying to how good God is.
3. Then there are gestures, when you come to Holy Mass genuflect with reverence before the good Lord. Join your hands in prayer. When a priest joins his hands in prayer, he is proclaiming Holy, Holy, Holy. "We are in the presence of the Holy Angels and Saints in the sacred liturgy, we are in the presence of Almighty God, so I hold my hands together in reverence".
4. Finally, we can give praise to the Lord in how we dress. When someone you love dies and your football buddies comes to the wake, they dress up, often in suits, to honour your loved one. When one goes to church it is not a good idea to be too casual. A person who really loves the Lord and wants to honour the Lord should dress well as an outward sign of reverence for Almighty God.



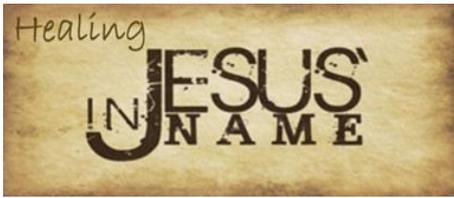
“I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.” – Genesis 9:13

## **Divine Mercy Reflection 187: A Rainbow after the Storm**

It’s fascinating how Creation itself proclaims the glory of God and teaches us about matters of faith. Take a rainbow. It is bright and beautiful, colourful and awe-inspiring. Everyone rejoices on seeing a rainbow. But there would be no such thing as a rainbow without rain, or storms. Such is life. We will have good days followed by bad and bad days followed by good. We should not be surprised by one or the other. On a good day filled with joy we should thank God and be aware that the “rainbow” is a gift. We should savour it so that we will remember it on the bad days. When a bad day comes, we should thank God. We should thank Him for the knowledge that this too shall pass if we wait patiently upon Him. Life is full of ups and downs but the Mercy of God is eternal and it will bring us through all things, enabling us to rejoice after the storm has passed (See *Diary* #992).

Reflect, today, upon the difference between a rainbow and a storm. Imagine a rainbow full of radiant colour stretching across the sky from one end to the other. It is beautiful and inspiring, the cause for a smile and delight. Now compare that to the storm that preceded it. In the midst of the storm, the coming rainbow would not have been thought about. Instead, the primary focus is to seek shelter. Reflect upon how this may be similar to your personal life. When you feel pain or are bombarded with challenges do you run and hide? You should also remind yourself that every struggle is the precursor to a rainbow. Keep the blessings of God’s Mercy alive in your mind so that they will daily carry you through the challenges of life.

***Lord, keep my eyes on You at all times. May I retain hope and joy in the midst of every storm of life. Please remind me when I feel oppressed and bombarded that this too shall pass and that You will bring my struggles and my life to a full and joyous conclusion. Jesus, I trust in You.***



## HEALING PRAYER MINISTRY AND EUCCHARISTIC HEALING

The Gospels tell us about Jesus' life and ministry. Matthew tells us: Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him. (Matthew 4:23-25 NIV).

This shows two aspects of Jesus' ministry: the ministry of the Word where Jesus went around teaching and preaching, proclaiming the Kingdom of God; and the ministry of healing where He healed the sick and the tormented. People were desperate for healing and they followed Jesus because He gave them hope that He would respond to their suffering. And, as scripture tells us, Jesus healed them all.

Jesus wanted His ministry to continue after His Resurrection and Ascension: 'Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.' (John 14:12 NIV)

At Pentecost God poured the power of His Spirit upon the disciples, and the Church community carries on the work of Jesus in the Holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus and with His authority. We know that Jesus' presence in the Church is authentic and living because of the work that the Church does in His name.

However, over time whilst compassion has enabled much charitable work in the Church, much regarding healing has been handed over to medical science. That is fine, but we also need a prayer ministry for healing. Some things medical science cannot heal, they are incurable, and sometimes there is little that can be done until an illness passes.

But another reason healing prayer ministry is needed is that God wants to be directly involved with the alleviation of suffering as shown by Jesus' presence on earth and His healing, showing that God directly intervened in people's lives to minister to them.

But healing is not restricted to the physical aspects; there is healing of the human spirit, the mind, and the soul. The Lord reaches the hidden places of the heart with His love through the ministry of healing. Through inner healing and healing of memories the Lord can heal many wounds caused by betrayal, violence or rejection, for example. The healing ministry is a very tangible way of showing that God loves and cares for us.

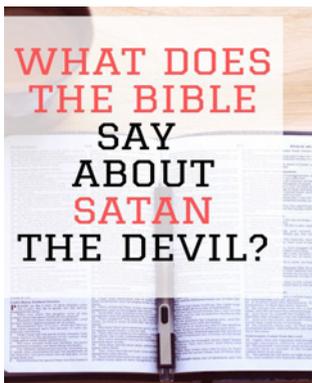
(Based on The Power Of Healing Prayer© Fr. Richard McAlear, O.M.I. Published by Our Sunday Visitor, Inc. 1-800-348-2440, [www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com).)

Healing prayer ministry has continued during lockdown as the healing prayer team have met 'in the Spirit' on Thursday nights to pray distantly over people as requests for prayer have come in. God doesn't stop healing even in lockdown! So if you do need prayer for yourself or others, please contact one of the team.

But the really good news is that Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament has started again! And there is nothing greater than the healing Jesus brings as we sit before Him in the Blessed Sacrament. Our Holy Hours will take place on the First Friday of the month at St. Mary's Lowe House starting Friday 7th August. The next one on 4th September at 3.00 p.m. This is the Hour of Mercy, and we will start with the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy. (If you aren't familiar with that, it's easy to pick up). We will then spend time in silent prayer and Adoration, with a brief Scripture reading and reflection; Please come along and join us – Jesus has been alone for a long time! We will, of course, be adhering to the guidelines for social distancing and staying safe.

**KEN'S CORNER:** I am suffering from kleptomania—but don't worry, when it gets really bad I take something for it! What's the difference between COVID19 and Romeo and Juliet? One's a corona virus, the other a Verona crisis! Juliet? One's a corona virus while the other is a Verona





**Discover what scripture reveals about Satan** in this collection of Bible verses. Whether you are wondering if Satan is real, or are a believing Christian considering how Satan may be deceiving you, it is important to go to the source of all truth about Satan – THE BIBLE - which is 100% true. God's Word describes to us in detail who Satan is, his nature, his acts, and his future! Read and ponder the Bible verses here below to gain a better understanding of the 'great deceiver'.

REMEMBER! Satan is happiest when people deny his existence!

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/bible-verses-about-satan/>

Please read the following passages from your Bible, in fact read the whole chapter they are in to understand better the context. I have also referenced sections of the Catechism of the Catholic Church which specifically relate to some of the readings below and highlight the teaching of the Church relating to these scriptures.

1 John 3:8 (CCC 392)

1 Corinthians 7:5 (CCC 2368)

2 Corinthians 11:3

Acts 5:3 (CCC 2468)

John 8:44 (CCC 391-394)

John 10:10

James 4:7

There are many more but I share a couple with you below:

**Matthew 16:23 (CCC 540, 554):** Jesus turned to Peter, 'get thee behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns'.

**Romans 16:20 (CCC 410, 411):** The God of Peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

### **A prayer against Satan and his minions:**

O Divine Eternal Father, in union with Your Divine Son and the Holy Spirit, and through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg You to destroy the Power of Your greatest enemy — Satan, and the evil spirits. Cast them into the deepest recesses of hell and chain them there forever! Take possession of Your Kingdom which You have created and which is rightfully Yours. Heavenly Father, give us the reign of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. I repeat this prayer out of pure love for You with every beat of my heart and with every breath I take. Amen.

## Forgiveness & Reconciliation



Speaking to a friend of ours recently, Ben, we got talking about how God works in people's lives. He shared a story of what God had done in his life which I'd like to share it with you.

Ben was active in his local parish where things generally ran smoothly. But one day a silly argument erupted between Ben and another parishioner, Don. It should have been over with and forgotten quickly, but by Ben's own admission he had a tendency to sulk instead of letting things go. So much so that when he next saw Don, he ignored him. When he had finally calmed down and wanted to talk, Don ignored Ben! Soon after Ben and his family moved house and transferred to another parish and he forgot about it.

But then every now and again, it would pop back into his mind and he knew he should have resolved this before he left. Like a dripping tap, the thought wouldn't let go and eventually he reluctantly decided to ring Don. It went to answerphone. He could sort this without having to speak to Don! So, he apologised for his behaviour, forgave Don for his, and now they could both move on. He'd done his bit. Yet still his conscience occasionally troubled him. Something wasn't right.

He decided to ask the priest about it in Confession, assuming the priest would reassure him he'd done his bit and his conscience would be clear. Ben had a bit of surprise when the priest told him that no, he hadn't done enough to resolve this situation and, even worse for Ben, he said: and you know you haven't.

Ben pondered these words for a time and just couldn't see what else he could do. It was both of them after all. So for a while, he did nothing. He didn't think to ask the Lord what he should do. However, God knows our heart and during lockdown He provided

Ben was watching the retreat by Mgr. Armitage at Walsingham when he discussed unforgiveness and how we need to work to resolve any areas of unforgiveness in our lives. He suggested we think of anyone we had any unforgiveness issues with and just to say their name, nothing else, to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. This struck a chord and although Ben didn't think he held unforgiveness in his heart, he realised that, as God would not let this go, there really was something he still needed to do, so he sat in front of the Blessed Sacrament on Walsingham livestream and shared Don's name with Jesus.

One night he dreamt about Don – a funny dream where he met him with his dogs. Don looked the other way and Ben fussed the dogs. They didn't speak but Ben felt everything was ok now. Then he started to get messages from parishioners who for no apparent necessary reason would mention Don's name. It was like something was building up but he didn't know what.

Being active in his current parish, he would receive various invites and he accepted one such invitation. When the papers arrived for the gathering, he noticed Don's name on the attendance list! He knew immediately of course that this was the Lord giving him the opportunity to resolve this issue at last. And he was glad. However, he knew his own weakness and worried that he might just ignore Don again. So he asked Our Lady for her help, asked his Guardian Angel to be with him to ensure he didn't mess up and said before he left: 'Jesus, I can do this in your strength'. All was well, Don was as happy to be reconciled to Ben as Ben was to him.

So much to learn in this little story. Ben shared: I should have prayed long ago for God to show me how to resolve this; but God loved me so much, He wouldn't let me forget it until it was sorted; I was deceiving myself that I had done everything I could, but how important going to Confession was and that challenge issued by the priest! And then God, knowing that deep down I did want to resolve this, showed me how to do it through Mgr. Armitage at Walsingham! Just saying Don's name to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament healed everything –

**THAT IS THE HEALING POWER OF THE EUCHARIST!**

## **PSALM 46:19**

**‘Be still and acknowledge I am God,  
Supreme over nations, supreme over the world.’**

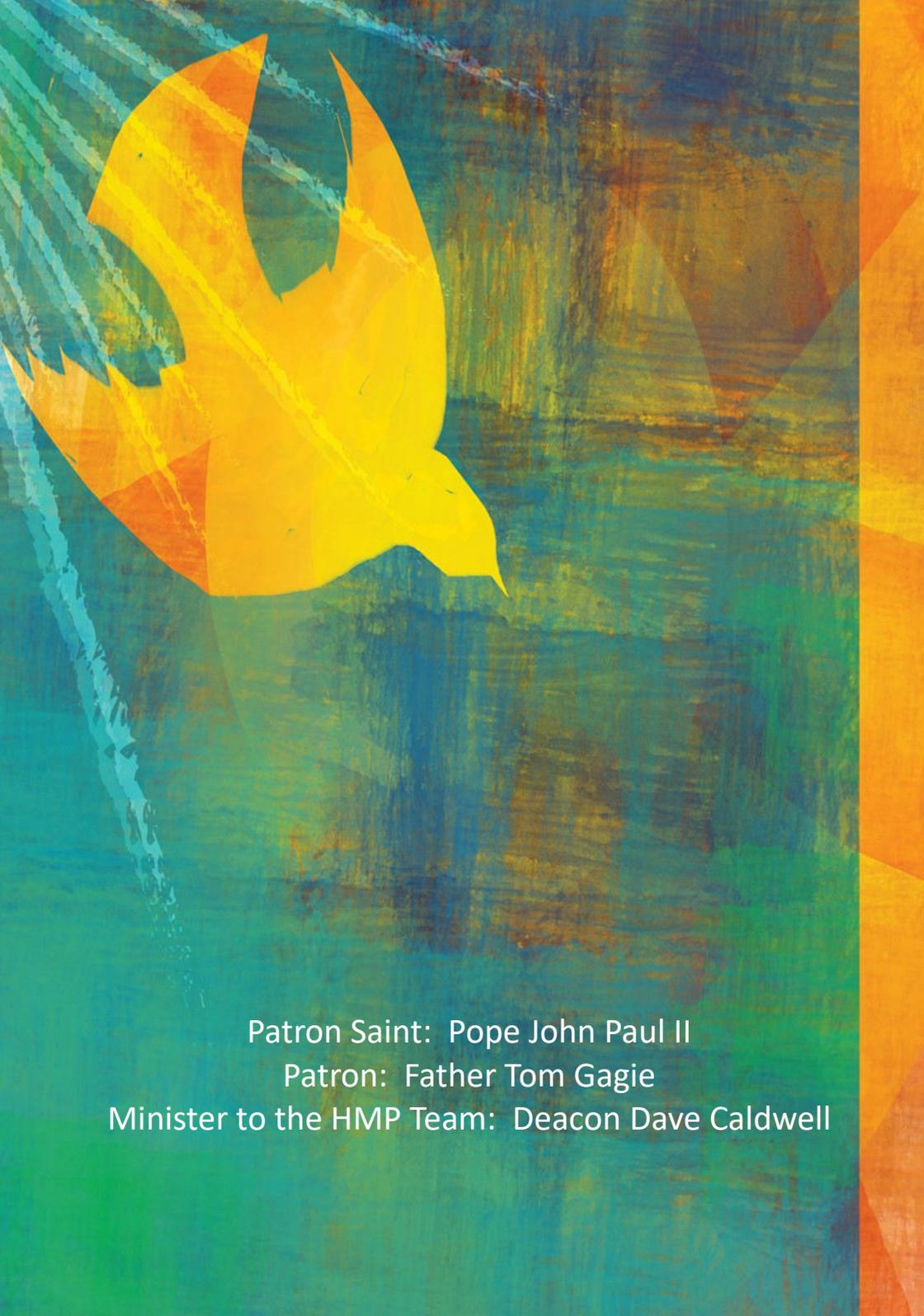


Loving Father, I pray that you will fill each of us with your Holy Spirit today and every day. Fill us with your love and surround us with your grace, leave no room for hurt or anxiety in our lives today Lord as we spend time with you, simply being still and knowing with our whole being that you are God, you are a good and loving Father and that we are totally and unconditionally loved.

Bless our families and our communities Lord with your peace that surpasses all understanding no matter what is going on around them.

Be with the decision makers, front line staff and scientists Lord as they continue to try to find the best way forward. Help them to work together for the good of all of your people, including those who don't yet know you.

You are the God of all, help us to glorify you and to keep you at the centre of our lives always. Amen.



Patron Saint: Pope John Paul II

Patron: Father Tom Gagie

Minister to the HMP Team: Deacon Dave Caldwell