



CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY
FOR THE INCARCERATED
FROM THE ORDER OF MALTA,
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

The Serving Brother

SPRING 2011
LENTEN EDITION

A Message to the Serving Brothers and Sisters from Bishop Gregory Mansour

While Jesus was saying these things to them, an official came forward, knelt down before him, and said, "My daughter has just died. But come, lay your hand on her, and she will live." Jesus rose and followed him, and so did his disciples.

A woman suffering hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the tassel on his cloak. She said to herself, "If only I can touch his cloak, I shall be cured."

Jesus turned around and saw her, and said, "Courage, daughter! Your faith has saved you." And from that hour the woman was cured.

— Matthew 9

A Lenten Reflection

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

There once was a man who never saw what he really looked like except through the eyes of other people. Some people said he was a good person, others said he was bad. From opinions such as these he formed his own self image, never really taking the time to truly discover for himself who he really was.

Then one quiet day as he closed his eyes he saw an image of himself that he did not recognize. There was beauty and brilliance, a certain glow and sincerity, much potential and possibility, yet at the same time there was also much pain, disappointment, many shattered dreams and unfulfilled hopes.

Just then an angel passed by with a message: "This, my friend, is really you, not what others think of you, not what you think of yourself, but the you that God sees, that God loves." The man was frightened, something inside him was shaken, yet it was as though he was made whole again, his life would never be the same.

This story reminds me of the woman in the Gospel of Matthew. She had been suffering from some chronic illness. She reached out to touch Jesus and saw there a glimpse of herself, as she was, perhaps for the first time. She saw her real worth, her true beauty, her vulnerability, suffering, disillusionment and pain.

From that moment she was changed, everything was suddenly different. A power changed her; it was the power of Christ's person, the very power of God. She touched God and in return God touched her.

Brothers and sisters like the woman of the Gospel we also are afflicted with a chronic suffering that only Jesus can heal. Our chronic sinfulness, our brokenness, fears and disappointments seem to follow us everywhere. Like her we need the courage to fight through the crowdedness and busyness of our lives lived within the four walls of our daily im-

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His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI
The Vatican

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A Spiritual Message from Father George

Lent: A Time to Better Serve the Lord

The reason Catholics practice some form of self-discipline during Lent is simple. We know that we can’t earn our way into heaven by our own efforts. God offers us salvation freely. Jesus died on the cross to save mankind because nothing we can do by our own efforts can save us. That’s why we needed a savior in the first place.

But that doesn’t mean we don’t have to work hard to become the men and women God intends us to be. Good habits (just like bad habits) require practice. We need to work at being better people not so we can prove to God we are worthy of heaven but to prove to ourselves and to other people that living a good and holy life is its own reward right here on earth. We have to work to give our lives purpose and meaning. Practicing self-discipline during Lent reminds us we have work to do with our lives, including our spiritual lives. Just as we are responsible for maintaining our physical health, so too we are responsible for our own spiritual health.

Each day you wake up you have a choice. You will use this gift of another day of life to serve God or you will waste it doing something else. Lent is a reminder to us that our days on Earth are numbered and that we need to live our lives TODAY as Christians, in service to God and one another. That is why traditionally we are told on Ash Wednesday, “Remember you are dust and unto dust you shall return.” None of us gets out of this world alive.

So with the time we have, we need to work hard to serve God faithfully in this life. Jesus’ adoptive earthly father Joseph is a perfect example of such service. Joseph does not speak a word in the text of the Bible. But his silent service, his protection of Mary and the infant Jesus and his trust in God shine through the story of Jesus’ first days on earth. We know little about Joseph except he was a working man, a carpenter, a faithful man who lived his Jewish faith, a man who cared for his wife and child, risking all he had to keep them safe.

We could not do better than imitate Joseph in our lives. It’s not our words that will be our legacy, but our actions. Like Joseph, we should be willing to work hard, to live our faith, to care as best we can for those entrusted to our care and to trust in God, no matter what. We need to make the effort, as my friend Jim Martin S.J. says, to bother to love.

This year, instead of giving up something to eat for Lent, try to fast in another way: Jesus said it isn’t what goes in us that defiles us, it is what comes out of our hearts and mouths. (Mark 7:20) To defile something is to ruin it by making it dirty. We might all try to fast from defiling speech, verbal violence, gossip and judgment. What good is it to give up

Mass readings for the spring

| WEEK | MON | TUES | WEDS | THUR | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|--------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|---|---|---|
| Feb 28-Mar 6 | Sir 17:20-24 Mk 10:17-27 | Sir 35:1-12 Mk 10:28-31 | Sir 36:1-17 Mk 10:32-45 | Sir 42:15-25 Mk 10:46-52 | Sir 44:1, 9-13 Mk 11:11-26 | Sir 51:12c-20 Mk 11:27-33 | Dt 11:18, 26-28, 32 Rom 3:21-25, 28 Mt 7:21-27 |
| March 7-13 | Tb 1:3; 2:1a-8 Mk 12:1-12 | Tb 2:9-14 Mk 12:13-17 | Jl 2:12-18 2 Cor 5:20-6:2 Mt 6:1-6, 16-18 | Dt 30:15-20 Lk 9:22-25 | Is 58:1-9a Mt 9:14-15 | Is 58:9b-14 Lk 5:27-32 | Gn 2:7-9; 3:1-7 Rom 5:12-19 Mt 4:1-11 |
| March 14-20 | Lv 19:1-2, 11-18 Mt 25:31-46 | Is 55:10-11 Mt 6:7-15 | Jon 3:1-10 Lk 11:29-32 | Est C:12-25 Mt 7:7-12 | Ez 18:21-28 Mt 5:20-26 | 2 Sm 7:4-16 Rom 4:13-22 Mt 1:16-24a | Gn 12:1-4a 2 Tm 1:8b-10 Mt 17:1-9 |
| March 21-27 | Dn 9:4b-10 Lk 6:36-38 | Is 1:10, 16-20 Mt 23:1-12 | Jer 18:18-20 Mt 20:17-28 | Jer 17:5-10 Lk 16:19-31 | Is 7:10-14; 8:10 Heb 10:4-10 Lk 1:26-38 | Mi 7:14-20 Lk 15:1-3, 11-32 | Ex 17:3-7 Rom 5:1-2, 5-8 Jn 4:5-42 |
| Mar 28-Apr 3 | 2 Kgs 5:1-15b Lk 4:24-30 | Dn 3:25, 34-43 Mt 18:21-35 | Dt 4:1, 5-9 Mt 5:17-19 | Jer 7:23-28 Lk 11:14-23 | Hos 14:2-10 Mk 12:28-34 | Hos 6:1-6 Lk 18:9-14 | 1 Sm 16:1b, 6-13a Eph 5:8-14 Jn 9:1-41 |
| April 4-10 | Is 65:17-21 Jn 4:43-54 | Ez 47:1-9, 12 Jn 5:1-16 | Is 49:8-15 Jn 5:17-30 | Ex 32:7-14 Jn 5:31-47 | Wis 2:1a, 12-22 Jn 7:1-2, 10-30 | Jer 11:18-20 Jn 7:40-53 | Ez 37:12-14 Rom 8:8-11 Jn 11:1-45 |
| April 11-17 | Dn 13:41c-62 Jn 8:1-11 | Nm 21:4-9 Jn 8:21-30 | Dn 3:14-20, 91-95 Jn 8:31-42 | Gn 17:3-9 Jn 8:51-59 | Jer 20:10-13 Jn 10:31-42 | Ez 37:21-28 Jn 11:45-56 | Mt 21:1-11 (37) Is 50:4-7 Phil 2:6-11 Mt 26:14-27:66 |
| April 18-24 | Is 42:1-7 Jn 12:1-11 | Is 49:1-6 Jn 13:21-33, 36-38 | Is 50:4-9a Mt 26:14-25 | Ex 12:1-8, 11-14 1 Cor 11:23-26 Jn 13:1-15 | Is 52:13-53:12 Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9 Jn 18:1-19:42 | Ez 36:16-28 Rom 6:3-11 Mt 28:1-10 | Acts 10:34a-43 Col 3:1-4 Jn 20:1-9 |
| Apr 25-May 1 | Acts 2:14, 22-33 Mt 28:8-15 | Acts 2:36-41 Jn 20:11-18 | Acts 3:1-10 Lk 24:13-35 | Acts 3:11-26 Lk 24:35-48 | Acts 4:1-12 Jn 21:1-14 | Acts 4:13-21 Mk 16:9-15 | Acts 2:42-47 1 Pt 1:3-9 Jn 20:19-31 |
| May 2-8 | Acts 4:23-31 Jn 3:1-8 | 1 Cor 15:1-8 Jn 14:6-14 | Acts 5:17-26 Jn 3:16-21 | Acts 5:27-33 Jn 3:31-36 | Acts 5:34-42 Jn 6:1-15 | Acts 6:1-7 Jn 6:16-21 | Acts 2:14, 22-33 1 Pt 1:17-21 Lk 24:13-35 |
| May 9-15 | Acts 6:8-15 Jn 6:22-29 | Acts 7:51-8:1a Jn 6:30-35 | Acts 8:1b-8 Jn 6:35-40 | Acts 8:26-40 Jn 6:44-51 | Acts 9:1-20 Jn 6:52-59 | Acts 1:15-26 Jn 15:9-17 | Acts 2:14a, 36-41 1 Pt 2:20b-25 Jn 10:1-10 |
| May 16-22 | Acts 11:1-18 Jn 10:11-18 | Acts 11:19-26 Jn 10:22-30 | Acts 12:24-13:5a Jn 12:44-50 | Acts 13:13-25 Jn 13:16-20 | Acts 13:26-33 Jn 14:1-6 | Acts 13:44-52 Jn 14:7-14 | Acts 6:1-7 1 Pt 2:4-9 Jn 14:1-12 |
| May 23-29 | Acts 14:5-18 Jn 14:21-26 | Acts 14:19-28 Jn 14:27-31a | Acts 15:1-6 Jn 15:1-8 | Acts 15:7-21 Jn 15:9-11 | Acts 15:22-31 Jn 15:12-17 | Acts 16:1-10 Jn 15:18-21 | Acts 8:5-8, 14-17 1 Pt 3:15-18 Jn 14:15-21 |

some small thing if at the same time we don’t bother to be kind to other people or to watch what we say? This Lent, let’s pay attention to our thoughts and speech, and work hard to not gossip or use foul language. Perhaps we need to talk less and act more lovingly.

Another positive thing we can do this Lent is attend Mass whenever we have the opportunity and invite our friends, especially those who are Catholic but have been away from Church to come with us to Mass. We have such an opportunity through the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion

to open our hearts to God’s forgiveness and healing. Let’s use this time – in the beautiful words of Bishop Mansour – to approach God with reverence, yet with confidence, unafraid to draw near to Christ Himself.

Father George T. Williams SJ, Editor of The Serving Brother, is Chaplain of San Quentin State Prison. Opened in July 1852, San Quentin is the oldest prison in California, and houses over 6,000 men, including more than 700 on death row.

Most Rev. Gregory John Mansour, author of our front cover mesage, is Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, a diocese of the Syriac Maronite Church. Part of the Eastern Catholic Church, it traces back to the community founded by Maron, an early 5th-century monk venerated as a saint.

prisonments. This brave woman of the Gospel reached out to touch God and to be touched by Him. We too need that healing that comes from touching God, being forgiven our sins, and forgiving those who have sinned against us.

During this Lent, our touching God will take place perhaps by way of the Sacrament of Confession; or through the reception of Holy Eucharist; or by simply forgiving someone, asking forgiveness of someone, or letting God forgive us. In whatever way we approach God, let us approach with reverence, yet with confidence, unafraid to draw near to Christ Himself. As we reach for Him we shall also see the true image of ourselves with all our beauty, hopes and disappointments. God's grace can meet us there, in fact, anywhere, anytime and in a way that exceeds our every expectation.

I wish you a blessed Lent and a Happy Easter. ✠

Message of the Divine Mercy from Dr. Bryan Thatcher

The Feast of Mercy: A Fresh Start with Our Lord

Saint Faustina, the apostle of mercy, recorded in her spiritual diary several passages in which Our Lord requests that a "Feast of Mercy" be officially established in the Church.

"I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners.

"On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy.

"The soul that will go to Confession, and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment.

"On that day all the divine floodgates through which grace flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet" (Diary, 699)

There are many promises associated with the Feast. The grace received from Our Lord is like that we receive in baptism:

"I want to grant a complete pardon to the souls that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion on the Feast of My mercy" (Diary, 1109)

"Whoever approaches the Fountain of Life on this day will be granted complete forgiveness of sins and punishment" (Diary, 300)

"This Feast emerged from the very depths of My mercy, and it is confirmed in the vast depths of My tender mercies" (Diary, 420)

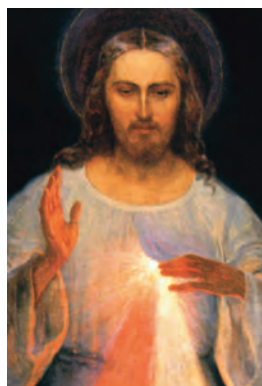
Jesus desires us to trust in His mercy more, especially in difficult situations.

Our Lord requested that the image be venerated on that day as well. Jesus told St. Faustina:

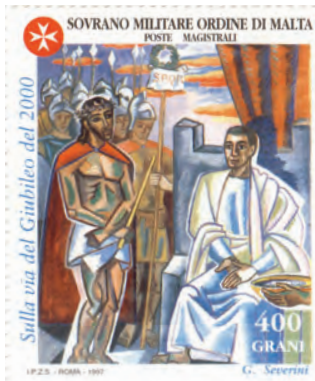
"I want this image, which you will paint with a brush, to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter; that Sunday is to be the Feast of Mercy" (Diary, 49)

Bringing great joy to all the people, Pope John Paul II fulfilled Jesus' request on April 30, 2000. He declared that the Sunday after Easter would be celebrated throughout the world as "Divine Mercy Sunday." The greatness of this Feast lies also in the fact that everyone, even those who are converted that very day, may obtain the great grace of the feast.

The preparation for the Feast of Mercy is to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, preferably within a week or two of the Feast. ✠



The Stations of the Cross as depicted on a series of postage stamps issued by the Order of Malta



STATION 1

Jesus is condemned to death

"When I am handcuffed, let me remember that your hands were also tied. "Lord, when I come before judges, let me feel that you are near to me. Don't let me despair; let me trust that You will be with me as I give my life to the Father. Amen"



STATION 2

Jesus accepts His cross

"Jesus, in my cell, let my heart change as I think of the cross that crushes you. "I promise you I will not cause others pain, or be a cross for them to carry. "I will take up my cross, and bear it without anger, bitterness or hatred. Amen"



STATION 3

Jesus falls the first time

"Jesus, I have stumbled and fallen many times. Forgive me for my selfishness and look with mercy upon me, for I have sinned. "Help me Lord never to gang up on anyone who has fallen, but teach me to be as forgiving as you are. Amen"



STATION 4

Jesus meets his mother, the Virgin Mary

"Jesus, I know the pain and tears that my family feels when they see me here. I think back to my actions that hurt my family, or times I ignored them, and my heart breaks with guilt. "Lord, help me to take care of my loved ones. Amen"



STATION 5

Simon helps Jesus carry the cross

"Lord, the others around me also carry burdens of shame, guilt, anger, frustration and sadness. "Show me how to help them carry their crosses. Make me strong enough to reach out to others with Your help. Amen"



STATION 6

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

"Jesus, I would like to be so filled with sadness at Your suffering that I would try to do something about it. "Help me to see Your face in anyone who is suffering or in pain. Amen"



STATION 7

Jesus falls a second time

"Here, locked away Lord, I want to give my life over to You. But you know I still fall, and sometimes hard. The better way You call me to sometimes feels far away. "Lord, don't give up on me! Help me to seek forgiveness, and start again. Amen"



STATION 8

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

"Jesus, show me how to comfort my loved ones. "Let me be patient and understanding of them, to respond peacefully, and not to argue or make selfish demands upon them. "Bring them peace during my incarceration. Amen"



STATION 9

Jesus falls the third time

"Jesus, teach me to surrender my life to You. Let me place in Your hands the anger and frustration I feel, all my temptations, hopes and fears, the darkness and sadness I feel. "Everything in my life I surrender to You, Lord. Amen"



STATION 10

Jesus is stripped of His garments

"Jesus, You know how degrading it is to be strip-searched. There will always be people who disrespect me, who make me want to respond with violence. "Jesus, let me find strength in you, that I may act as You did facing death. Amen"



STATION 11

Jesus is nailed to the cross

"Jesus, I know I will never suffer as much as You did, and You did it because you loved me. "Jesus, help me to be faithful to You. Amen"



STATION 12

Jesus dies on the cross

"Jesus, as I think about Your death, I ask forgiveness for anything I have done to hurt anyone. "I place at the foot of Your cross anyone who is a victim of what I have done, and ask You to bless them and keep them close to You. "I ask that You change me, so that I will never victimize anyone again. Amen"



STATION 13

Jesus is taken down from the cross

"Jesus, they take Your body down from the cross and place it in Your mother's arms. "Lord, wake within me compassion for all women who suffer for their children. "Let me know their grief and sorrow; let me sense it in the sadness of Your mother at your death. Amen"



STATION 14

Jesus is buried

"Jesus, where I am now often seems a tomb, a dead end to my life – the death of my hopes and dreams. "How can I get through this time Lord? Even if I get through it, my future often looks empty, or like an endless series of problems. "Jesus, fill my heart with faith, peace and hope. Lord Jesus, my savior, teach me to love. Amen"

Have your prayers heard at the shrine of Lourdes

The Blessed Virgin first appeared to 14-year-old St. Bernadette on February 11, 1858 in Lourdes, France, followed by seventeen more appearances over the next five months. Ever since, the healing waters of the site have drawn millions to Lourdes for physical and spiritual healing. The Church has officially authenticated 66 miraculous healings at Lourdes.

Join in the healing spirit of the Order of Malta’s Annual International Pilgrimage to Lourdes. (Pilgrims are any people on a journey of faith and healing; a pilgrimage is their journey toward freedom.) Even if you cannot leave the prison physically, you can still make this pilgrimage in spirit, with your prayers offered up by hundreds of the faithful in your name at Lourdes.

All you need to do is pray about what healing you or a loved one needs, and then mail your prayer requests to us by April 15th. Your letter will be presented to God at the very spot where the Virgin Mary appeared to St. Bernadette. Mail prayer requests to:

The 2011 Pilgrim-In-Spirit Program
c/o The Knights and Dames of Malta
43 Essex Street
Andover, MA 01810

Last year scores of letters from our Serving Sisters and Brothers joined with prayer petitions from others around the globe. Don’t let yourself miss out on participating in this year’s pilgrimage! Even better (and especially if you miss the mailing date), you can join in a deep communion with your fellow pilgrims by saying the rosary each day of the journey, from April 27th-May 3rd.

Give your brain a workout!

Sudoku Puzzle

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 5 | | | | | | 6 |
| | | 6 | 4 | 3 | | 5 | 8 | |
| | 8 | | 7 | | | | | |
| 6 | 1 | | | | 3 | 2 | | |
| 5 | | 7 | | | | 8 | | 9 |
| | | 3 | 5 | | | | 1 | 7 |
| | | | | | 8 | | 5 | |
| | 7 | 8 | | 6 | 5 | 1 | | |
| 1 | | | | | | 9 | | |

Sudoku Directions – Fill each square with the numbers 1-9. No number can appear twice within the same row, the same column, or within the same frame of nine squares.

ANSWERS ON BACK PAGE

Brain Teasers

Every hour, on the hour, a bus leaves town A and heads toward town B. Every hour, on the hour, another bus leaves town B and heads toward town A. The trip between the two towns takes exactly two hours.

How many buses going from town A to town B will the people on a bus going from town B to town A see during their trip?

You’re locked inside a car with just a hammer and a screwdriver. What’s the fastest way to get out?

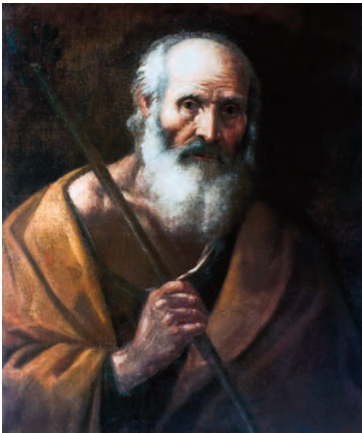
I always run but never walk.
I have a mouth but never talk.
I have a bed but never sleep.
I’m often wet but never weep.
What am I?

On the holiness of the humble

“St. Joseph is the model of those humble ones that Christianity raises up to great destinies; he is the proof that in order to be a good and genuine follower of Christ, there is no need of great things—it is enough to have the common, simple and human virtues, but they need to be true and authentic.”

JOHN PAUL II

From “*Redemptoris Custos: On the Person and Mission of St. Joseph*”
August 15, 1989



Joseph of Nazareth
Painting by Diego Velazquez (Spain, 1600's)

Remembering to Bother, by Father James Martin, SJ

This Lent I’d like to suggest not simply *giving something up* – which is what Catholics normally do – but doing something else: *bothering*. In the Gospels, when Jesus of Nazareth condemns people or points out their sin, it’s usually not people who are trying hard to avoid sinning; it’s the people who *aren’t bothering to love*. In the famous parable of the Good Samaritan, in the Gospel of Luke, two men pass by a guy lying by the side of the road, who could certainly use some help. They could help the fellow, but they don’t. Jesus rightly points out their sin. **But notice that Jesus doesn’t condemn those who are weak and trying hard; but those who are strong and aren’t even trying.** For Jesus, sin is often a failure to bother to love, what people often call a “sin of omission.”

But during the weeks before Easter, most Christians seem stuck on what they’ve been trying to avoid for years. Stuff they’ve always tried to stay away from. A familiar comment is: “I try to stop smoking every time Ash Wednesday comes around!” But if Jesus were around today he just might say, “Don’t worry about where you’re already trying hard and keep failing. Look at where you’re not even bothering.”

This Lent, instead of fasting or giving something up, why not *bother*? Instead of a negative Lent, how about a positive one? Instead of trying to kick your smoking habit, why not bother to talk to someone who is lonely? Or maybe you could bother to be kind to someone you normally don’t like. Jesus might appreciate your forgiveness of a fellow human being more than your giving up something like cigarettes or candy.

In the Gospels Jesus says, “It is mercy I desire, not sacrifice.”

Why not take Jesus at his word?

Fr. James Martin, SJ, is a Catholic priest and author of *My Life with the Saints*.

Puzzle solutions

- 1) Five. You see one arriving as you embark, and then another every half hour for the two hours.
- 2) First, try unlocking the door.
- 3) A river.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 8 |
| 3 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| 9 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 3 |
| 8 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 7 |
| 5 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 9 |
| 6 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 2 |
| 7 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 6 |