



CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY  
FOR THE INCARCERATED  
FROM THE ORDER OF MALTA

# The Serving Brother

ADVENT 2013

A Message from His Excellency Thomas Cardinal Collins, Archbishop of Toronto

## Jesus: The Light Shining in Our Darkness

In the last few months, we have received plenty of news regarding the birth of royalty. Prince William and his wife Kate gave birth in July to their first-born son, George Alexander Louis.

This little child – officially Prince George of Cambridge – is the great-grandson of Queen Elizabeth II, and is now third in line to the throne. If things continue normally, at some time in the future he will be the King of England.

There was, of course, much anticipation and excitement surrounding his birth. There was the usual media frenzy, and there were thousands of people waiting outside Buckingham Palace, and millions of people around the world, anxiously awaiting both the birth, and then his naming.

He himself was surely surrounded by the best possible conditions – the top baby doctors and nurses, the best baby food around, the most comfortable crib. There was generally worldwide excitement when the birth was announced, and many of us will perhaps remember where we were when we heard the news.

All of this should make the Advent season particularly meaningful to us this year. After all, Advent is a time when

we also prepare ourselves to celebrate the birth of another baby. This baby's birth was also awaited by countless people and generations. This baby was also royalty, but a royalty unlike any other in this world.

The baby we await at this time of year is not just any prince, but he is the Prince of Peace and the King of all kings. He is Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world.

Yet how did this royal baby arrive in the world? His dear mother was not given any special care or treatment. In fact, there was no room for them at the inn. He was not born in comfort or luxury.

Rather, he was born in a stable, surrounded in the cold of the night by animals. He did not have a soft and warm bed but was forced to lie in a manger. We must remember that a manger was a trough – the container from which the animals would eat or drink; it was unclean and full of hard and sharp straw.

Finally, there was no worldwide excitement surrounding the birth of this baby – nobody apart from his parents and the animals would have been aware of the birth. To the eyes of the world,

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SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER  
ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM  
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**H.E. Archbishop William C. Skurla**  
The Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church  
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**H.E. Bishop Gregory John Mansour**  
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**H.E. Bishop Mikael Mouradian**  
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**H.E. Bishop Thomas Mar Eusebius**  
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Exarchate in USA (Est. 2010)

*Message from Father George*

## Celebrate an Outlaw Christmas

In this Advent edition of *The Serving Brother*, Cardinal Collins reminds us that as the days grow shorter and the year draws to an end, Jesus is our light in the darkness.

You'll read about how the whole Bible is the story of the promise (covenant) God made to send a savior to free us from all our prisons. On the first Christmas, God entered into humanity and became one of us.

During Advent, this beautiful season of waiting in hope, we can open our hearts to the wonder of God's love and mercy. We prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, the King of Kings. He chose not to be born in a luxurious palace but rather, in a stable, in the cold of the night to humble parents who couldn't afford to even rent a room.

It is clear from the Gospels that Jesus has a special love for the poor, for the outcast, for the sick and for prisoners. Jesus loves outlaws!

Often Advent and Christmas get completely lost in the glitzy lights and materialism that have nothing to do with the real meaning of Christmas. I have a suggestion for you. Instead of celebrating the fake Christmas we see on TV, this year, let's prepare ourselves to celebrate an "Outlaw Christmas"!

I have friends who are Catholic monks who live in the high desert in Colorado. Every Christmas they celebrate what they call "Outlaw Christmas." After the midnight Mass, they go out into the desert and have a party – outside in the fields, like the shepherds in the Gospel story of Jesus' birth. (See Luke 2:8-16)

If you think about it, even the shepherds in the Gospel story were outlaws! Being a shepherd in those days was not a high-status job. They were doing a job no one else wanted to do – having to stay out in the cold at night to watch over sheep. But it was these outlaws who first learned of Jesus' birth.

Let's think of this season as an "outlaw" season – after all, we are preparing to celebrate the birthday of history's greatest convict – a man who was not afraid to break the religious rules if they got in the way of love and compassion. How can you celebrate the real meaning of Christmas this year? Be creative, have a party, share some food, celebrate being alive! An outlaw Christmas doesn't need a Christmas tree, it just needs us to stop and give thanks wherever we find ourselves.

# Mass readings

WEEK	MON	TUES	WEDS	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
<b>Dec 2-8</b>	Is 4:2-6 Mt 8:5-11	Is 11:1-10 Lk 10:21-24 <i>St Francis Xavier</i>	Is 25:6-10a Mt 15:29-37 <i>St John Damascene</i>	Is 26:1-6 Mt 7:21, 24-27	Is 29:17-24 Mt 9:27-31 <i>St Nicholas</i>	Is 30:19-21, 23-26 Mt 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8 <i>St Ambrose</i>	Is 11:1-10 Rom 15:4-9 Mt 3:1-12
<b>Dec 9-15</b>	Gn 3:9-15, 20 Eph 1:3-6, 11-12 Lk 1:26-38 [1]	Is 40:1-11 Mt 18:12-14	Is 40:25-31 Mt 11:28-30 <i>St Damasus I</i>	Zec 2:14-17 Lk 1:26-38 <i>Our Lady of Guadalupe</i>	Is 48:17-19 Mt 11:16-19 <i>St Lucy</i>	Sir 48:1-4, 9-11 Mt 17:9a, 10-13 <i>St John of the Cross</i>	Is 35:1-6a, 10 Jas 5:7-10 Mt 11:2-11
<b>Dec 16-22</b>	Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a Mt 21:23-27	Gn 49:2, 8-10 Mt 1:1-17	Jer 23:5-8 Mt 1:18-25	Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a Lk 1:5-25	Is 7:10-14 Lk 1:26-38	Sg 2:8-14 Lk 1:39-45 <i>St Peter Canisius</i>	Is 7:10-14 Rom 1:1-7 Mt 1:18-24
<b>Dec 23-29</b>	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24 Lk 1:57-66 <i>St John of Kanty</i>	2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 Lk 1:67-79	Is 52:7-10 Heb 1:1-6 Jn 1:1-18 [2]	Acts 6:8-10; 7:54- 59 Mt 10:17-22 <i>St Stephen</i>	1 Jn 1:1-4 Jn 20:1a, 2-8 <i>St John, Apostle</i>	1 Jn 1:5-2:2 Mt 2:13-18 <i>Holy Innocents, Martyrs</i>	Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 Col 3:12-21 (or -21) Mt 2:13-23 [3]
<b>Dec 30-Jan 5</b>	1 Jn 2:12-17 Lk 2:36-40	1 Jn 2:18-21/ Jn 1:1-18 <i>St Sylvester I, Pope</i>	Nm 6:22-27 Gal 4:4-7 Lk 2:16-21 [4]	1 Jn 2:22-28 Jn 1:19-28 [5]	1 Jn 2:29-3:6 Jn 1:29-34 [6]	1 Jn 3:7-10 Jn 1:35-42 <i>St Elizabeth Ann Seton</i>	Is 60:1-6 Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6 Mt 2:1-12 [7]
<b>Jan 6-12</b>	Jn 3:22-4:6 Mt 4:12-17, 23-25 <i>St André Bessette</i>	1 Jn 4:7-10 Mk 6:34-44 [8]	1 Jn 4:11-18 Mk 6:45-52	1 Jn 4:19-5:4 Lk 4:14-22a	1 Jn 5:5-13 Lk 5:12-16	1 Jn 5:14-21 Jn 3:22-30	Is 42:1-4, 6-7 Acts 10:34-38 Mt 3:13-17 [9]
<b>Jan 13-19</b>	1 Sm 1:1-8 Mk 1:14-20 <i>Saint Hilary</i>	1 Sm 1:9-20 Mk 1:21-28	1 Sm 3:1-10, 19-20 Mk 1:29-39	1 Sm 4:1-11 Mk 1:40-45	1 Sm 8:4-7, 10-22a Mk 2:1-12 <i>St Anthony</i>	1 Sm 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1a Mk 2:13-17	Is 49:3, 5-6 1 Cor 1:1-3 Jn 1:29-34
<b>Jan 20-26</b>	1 Sm 15:16-23 Mk 2:18-22 [10]	1 Sm 16:1-13 Mk 2:23-28 <i>Saint Agnes</i>	1 Sm 17:32-33, 37, 40-51 Mk 3:1-6 [11]	1 Sm 18:6-9; 19:1-7 Mk 3:7-12 [12]	1 Sm 24:3-21 Mk 3:13-19 <i>St Francis de Sales</i>	Acts 9:1-22 Mk 16:15-18 [13]	Is 8:23-9:3 1 Cor 1:10-13, 17 Mt 4:12-23
<b>Jan 27-Feb 2</b>	2 Sm 5:1-7, 10 Mk 3:22-30 <i>St Angela Merici</i>	2 Sm 6:12b-15, 17-19 Mk 3:31-35	2 Sm 7:4-17 Mk 4:1-20	2 Sm 7:18-19, 24-29 Mk 4:21-25	2Sm 11:1-4a, 5-10a, 13-17 Mk 4:26-34 <i>St John Bosco</i>	2Sm 12:1-7a, 10-17 Mk 4:35-41	Mal 3:1-4 Heb 2:14-18 Lk 2:22-40-32 [15]
<b>Feb 3-9</b>	2Sm 15:13-14, 30; 16:5-13 Mk 5:1-20 [16]	2 Sm 18:9-10, 14b, 24-25a, 30-19:3 Mk 5:21-43	2 Sm 24:2, 9-17 Mk 6:1-6 <i>St Agatha</i>	1 Kgs 2:1-4, 10-12 Mk 6:7-13 [17]	Sir 47:2-11 Mk 6:14-29	1 Kgs 3:4-13 Mk 6:30-34 [18]	Is 58:7-10 1 Cor 2:1-5 Mt 5:13-16
<b>Feb 10-16</b>	1 Kgs 8:1-7, 9-13 Mk 6:53-56 <i>St Scholastica</i>	1 Kgs 8:22-23, 27-30 Mk 7:1-13 <i>Our Lady of Lourdes</i>	1 Kgs 10:1-10 Mk 7:14-23	1 Kgs 11:4-13 Mk 7:24-30	1 Kgs 11:29-32; 12:19 Mk 7:31-37 [19]	1 Kgs 12:26-32; 13:33-34 Mk 8:1-10	Sir 15:15-20 1 Cor 2:6-10 Mt 5:17-37
<b>Feb 17-23</b>	Jas 1:1-11 Mk 8:11-13 [20]	Jas 1:12-18 Mk 8:14-21	Jas 1:19-27 Mk 8:22-26	Jas 2:1-9 Mk 8:27-33	Jas 2:14-24, 26 Mk 8:34-9:1 <i>St Peter Damian</i>	1 Pt 5:1-4 Mt 16:13-19 [21]	Lv 19:1-2, 17-18 1 Cor 3:16-23 Mt 5:38-48
<b>Feb 24-Mar 2</b>	Jas 3:13-18 Mk 9:14-29	Jas 4:1-10 Mk 9:30-37	Jas 4:13-17 Mk 9:38-40	Jas 5:1-6 Mk 9:41-50	Jas 5:9-12 Mk 10:1-12	Jas 5:13-20 Mk 10:13-16	Is 49:14-15 1 Cor 4:1-5 Mt 6:24-34

Note: **Solemnities** in red, **Feast days** in gold and **Memorials** in green in celebration of the saint/event shown. [1] **The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patronal Feastday of the United States of America**, [2] **The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)**, [3] **The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**, [4] **The Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God**, [5] **St Basil the Great & St Gregory Nazianzen**, [6] **The Most Holy Name of Jesus**, [7] **The Epiphany of the Lord**, [8] **St Raymond of Penyafort**, [9] **The Baptism of the Lord**, [10] **St Fabian & St Sebastian**, [11] **Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children**, [12] **St Marianne Cope & St Vincent**, [13] **The Conversion of St Paul the Apostle**, [14] **St Thomas Aquinas**, [15] **The Presentation of the Lord**, [16] **St Blaise & Saint Ansgar**, [17] **St Paul Mihi & Companions, Martyrs**, [18] **St Jerome Emiliani & St Josephine Bakhita**, [19] **St Cyril & St Methodius**, [20] **The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order**, [21] **The Chair of St Peter the Apostle**

Jesus comes to us in our brokenness. He comes to us when we are held helpless by the powers of this world. He comes to the worst prison of all – our hearts that we have walled off to stop feeling any more pain.

This Advent, let's allow Jesus' light into the places we need healing. This Advent, let's prepare to welcome this outlaw King into our hearts.

I wish you a very merry Outlaw Christmas!

# The Master Key that unlocks the Bible

The answer to the question “What’s the Bible all about?” can be summed up in a single word: “Covenant.” A covenant is a sacred contract. It explains all that God says and does in Scripture. In a covenant you give your very self to another person.

At the Last Supper, Jesus revealed Himself to be the “New Covenant,” in words we recall during every celebration of Mass: “This cup is the cup of My blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant.” (See Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20)

The bishops and Church leaders in the first generations after the Apostles understood biblical history as the story of a series of covenants made by God with His chosen people leading to the New Covenant of Jesus. We remember this story of biblical salvation history at every Mass in the Eucharistic Prayers:

*Father,*

*You formed man in your own likeness and set him over the whole world;*

*Even when he disobeyed you and lost your friendship you did not abandon him to the power of death;*

*Again and again you offered a covenant to man, and*

*In the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior.*

(Eucharistic Prayer IV)

That’s the most perfect summary you’ll find of what the Bible’s all about. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that all of us are “called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer Him a response of faith and love.” (paragraph 357)

That personal covenant is offered to us in the sacraments of the Church. God’s grace transforms us from something physical and natural into something spiritual and supernatural. Humans are being changed from merely a species sharing common traits and characteris-

tics into a divine brotherhood and sisterhood, a family of God.

## **The Covenant with Adam** (Genesis 1:26-2:3)

By this covenant, God’s family assumes the form of the bond between husband and wife. God promised blessings to Adam and Eve that their union would be fruitful, and their offspring would fill the earth and rule over it.

The sign by which the covenant is remembered and celebrated is the Sabbath, the seventh day of rest. God made one condition to Adam and Eve that they must keep under the covenant and that was that they were not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And God attached a curse: that if they disobeyed, they would surely die.

## **The Covenant with Noah** (Genesis 9:8-17)

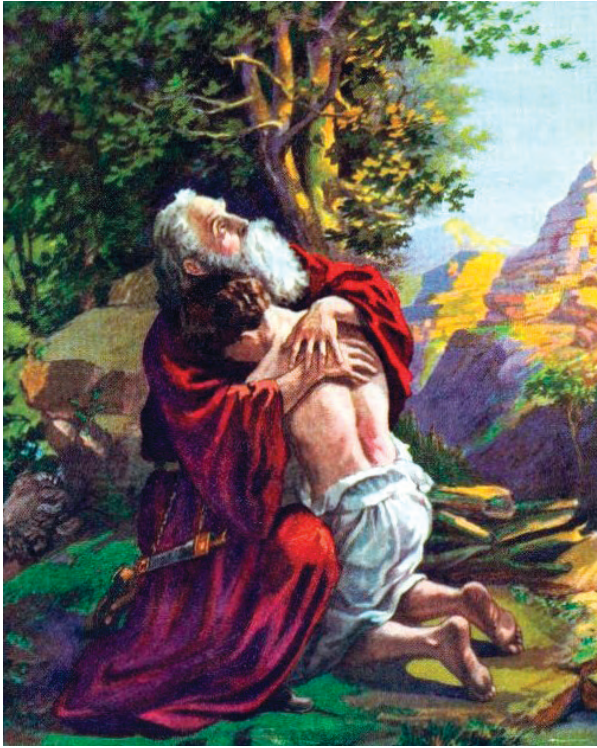
The word “covenant” is used in the case of Noah, when God promises never again to destroy the world by flood. The covenant was made with all humanity, through Noah, in his role as the father of his family. The covenant includes blessings to Noah and his family (that they would be fruitful and fill the earth) and conditions that must be obeyed (not to drink the blood of any animals, not to shed human blood). The sign of the covenant is the rainbow in the sky.

## **The Covenant with Abraham** (Genesis 12:1-3; 17:1-14; 22:16-18)

God swears to give Abraham a great land and to bless his descendants, who will become a great nation. God promises the blessings of land and great nationhood for his descendants, and through them all the nations of the earth would be blessed. The sign of the covenant was the mark of circumcision.

## **The Covenant with Moses** (Exodus 19:5-6; 3:4-10; 6:7)

By this covenant, made with Moses in his role as the judge and liberator of Israel, God swears to be Israel’s God



*Abraham embraces Isaac, by O. A. Stemler, 1927*

and Israel swears to worship no other but the Lord God alone. The blessings promised are that they will be God's precious and chosen people.

The conditions of the covenant are that they must keep God's Law and commandments. The covenant sign is the Passover, which each year remembers Israel's birth as a nation. By this covenant, God's family assumes the form of a "holy nation, a kingdom of priests."

### **The Covenant with David**

(2 Samuel 7:8-19)

God promises to make King David's son His son, to punish him if he does wrong but never take away his royal throne. "Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever," and through the blessings of this kingdom God promises to give wisdom to all the nations. The sign of the covenant will be the throne and Temple to be built by David's son, Solomon. By this covenant, God's family grows to take the form of a royal kingdom.

### **The New Covenant of Jesus**

(Matthew 26:28; 16:17-19)

The sixth and final covenant is made by the one mediator Jesus, who by His Cross and Resurrection reveals himself as the royal high priest and fulfills all the promises God made in all the previous covenants. The prophets, especially Isaiah and Jeremiah, had taught Israel to hope for a Messiah who would bring "a new covenant," through which God's law would be written on men's and women's hearts. (See Jeremiah 31:31- 34; Hebrews 8:8-12)

The conditions of the covenant are that men and women believe in Jesus, be baptized, eat and drink His flesh and blood in the Eucharist, and live by all that He taught. The Eucharist is the sign of the New Covenant. By this covenant, God establishes His family in its final form as a universal (in Greek, *katholikos* or 'catholic') church.

This is why it is important to read both the Old and the New Testaments in the Bible. Reading the Bible from front to back we see that with each new covenant, God reveals a little more about Himself and a little more about the relationship that He wants with His people, until finally in Jesus He shows us that He wants us to share in His very Being, to enter into the heart of the Blessed Trinity.

Our faith is not about Religion, it's about a Relationship – with Jesus Christ Himself. All of the details of the Bible make sense when you understand them as part of God's divine plan to make all men and women into His sons and daughters through the covenants, which are all summed up in the New Covenant, Jesus Christ. (See Romans 8: 15; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5) ❄️

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

this baby was ignored and neglected. Yes, this is how the King of Kings entered the world.

Could he have chosen to have a magnificent, luxurious, birth that was recognized by the whole world? Certainly. He could have entered the world surrounded by wealth and majesty. But instead, He chose to enter into poverty and lowliness. By entering the world in this way, God wanted to reveal to all of us that he is united with those who are suffering. To those who are neglected, to those who have no luxury or comfort, to those who find that the world has “no room” for them, the birth of Jesus is indeed Good News.

Jesus fulfills those words from the Prophet Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners...to comfort all who mourn.” (Isaiah 61:1-2)

These weeks of Advent are an important time to consider these words from the Prophet Isaiah as we ponder the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. For those who are separated from their loved ones, for those who feel cut off from society, it might seem that the joy of the Christmas season does not reach you. The light of Christ and all the festivities might seem as far removed from you as the majesty of Buckingham Palace.

But do not let that be your Advent experience! Place yourselves in the hands of Our Lady and let her take you to Bethlehem to behold the real joy of Christmas. The real joy of Christmas is that Jesus is close to us in our darkness, because he experienced it himself. Jesus is close to us when we are lonely or abandoned, because that is how he was



*Adoration*, by Peter Paul Rubens, 1608

born. Jesus comforts us when we mourn, he heals our broken hearts, and yes, he even sets the captives and prisoners free. May Advent be a time for all of you to prepare your hearts to experience this – the Good News of our salvation, far greater than anything we will ever find in this world. ✠

His Eminence Thomas C. Cardinal Collins is the Archbishop of Toronto, Canada. He was born in Guelph, Ontario to the circulation manager of The Guelph Mercury newspaper and a legal secretary. He was inspired by one of his English teachers to join the priesthood.

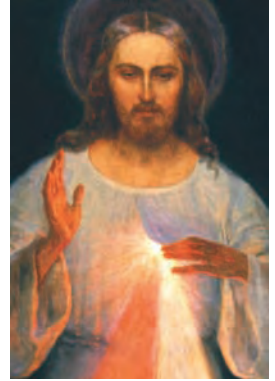
## Advent reflections

*“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners...to comfort all who mourn.” (Isaiah 61:1-2)*

Isn't that why the Lord came into the world? As the great physician, we know He came for the sick and for all those hurting; aren't we all captive and prisoners bound and weighted down by our brokenness?

In the Divine Mercy Image Jesus is surrounded by black; He is coming into a world of darkness permeated by all our sins. His knees are slightly bent as if He is walking towards us. His right Hand is raised in a blessing, and I can almost hear the words, “Come to Me; come to Me all of you who are broken-hearted and held captive by your brokenness. I want you to feel My love, and know that I am the God of Mercy.”

This Advent, let us allow Jesus to enter our hearts and be healed from the scars of life. His love is unconditional, and all need to know that He loves us just as



we are! How do we let Jesus into our hearts? It is as easy as A, B, C. We must Ask for His mercy, Be merciful to others, and Completely trust in His mercy. His mercy is like an ocean with no bottom; but we have to ask for it, as God will never force Himself upon us.

Remember the words of Our Lord to St. Faustina, “The greater the sinner the greater the right he has to My Mercy” (Diary, 723). ❌

Bryan Thatcher, MD is the Director of the Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy, 10016 Park Place Ave, Riverview, FL 33569 (877)380-072 [eadm@marian.org](mailto:eadm@marian.org)

## Give your brain a workout!

### Sudoku Puzzle

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

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

Tom's soccer team needed a cigarette lighter. Why?

What key is hardest to turn?

Which part of London is in France as well?

How can the word “cow” be spelled with 14 letters?

Name the country that, if you remove the last letter of its name, becomes a part of the human body.



*The Calling of St. Matthew*, by Caravaggio, c. 1600

## How does it feel to be elected Pope?

In a recent interview, Pope Francis revealed his feelings when chosen to lead the Church:

“I often visited the Church of St. Louis of France, and I went there to contemplate the painting of *The Calling of St. Matthew*, by Caravaggio.

“That finger of Jesus, pointing at Matthew. That’s me. I feel like him. Like Matthew.

“It is the gesture of Matthew that strikes me: he holds on to his money as

if to say, ‘No, not me! No, this money is mine.’

“Here, this is me, a sinner on whom the Lord has turned his gaze. And this is what I said when they asked me if I would accept my election as pontiff.”

Then the pope whispers in Latin: “I am a sinner, but I trust in the infinite mercy and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I accept in a spirit of penance.”

From *La Civiltà Cattolica*, August 2013

### Puzzle solutions

1) Because they lost all their matches

2) A donkey

3) The letter N

4) See oh double you

5) China

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