



CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY  
FOR THE INCARCERATED  
FROM THE ORDER OF MALTA

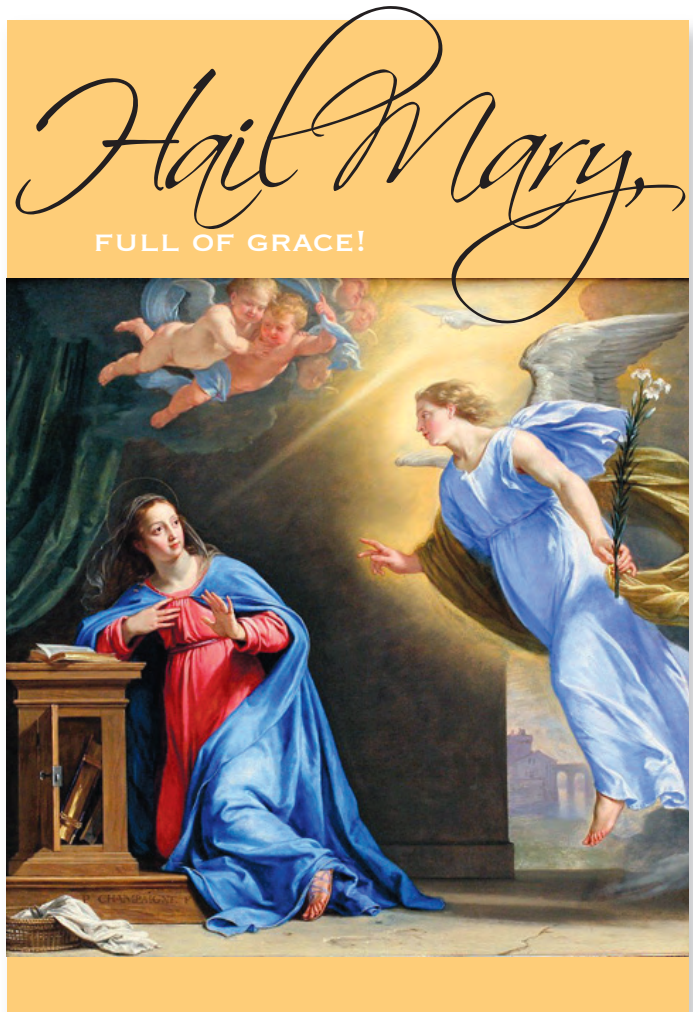
# The Serving Brother

SPRING 2015  
LENTEN EDITION

## A Message to the Serving Sisters and Brothers from the Order of Malta

The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated by the Church on March 25th, is related in Luke 1:26-38. The Evangelist tells us that in the sixth month after the conception of St. John the Baptist by Elizabeth, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to the Virgin Mary, at Nazareth, a small town in the mountains of Galilee. Mary was of the house of David, and was promised to be married to Joseph, of the same royal family. She had, however, not yet entered the household of her spouse, but was still living in her mother's house. And the angel Gabriel having taken the figure and the form of man, came into the house and said to her: "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."

Mary having heard this greeting did not speak. She was troubled as she did



not know the angel, nor the cause of his coming, nor the meaning of his greeting. The angel continued. "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your

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A Spiritual Message from Father George

## Keeping the focus on Jesus

In his message on Holy Week, Pope Francis invites us all to go outside of ourselves- to view the world with the love and tenderness of God. Often we stay trapped inside ourselves because we have been hurt by people, by life, or by the world and it doesn't seem safe to trust anymore. I'd say trust is really the hardest thing if you've been let down a lot in life. So how do we begin to trust again? How do we begin to feel healing when for years we have given up on ourselves?

I think the key thing is to keep our focus on Jesus and take our focus off ourselves for a while. It's like learning to ride a bike – if we stare at our own feet or the wheels of the bike, we end up falling. It's only when we learn to take the attention off ourselves and look up that we manage to get the feel for riding the bike and then it just comes naturally. Holy Week is an invitation to take the focus off of ourselves.

I recommend you start reading Mark's Gospel, Chapter 11 and on to read about the events that lead up to Jesus's arrest, trial and execution, as well as his resurrection from the dead. Mark's gospel is short and to the point. This year, Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, March 29th. Imagine yourself in the Gospel stories, as if you were there watching the events unfold. Read about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, his betrayal by his friend Judas, his arrest, torture, trial and execution. Then read what follows: his victory over all these evil things in the Resurrection.

**This last point is really important: so many Christians get stuck on Good Friday, but the point of His story – the meaning of Easter – is that God has overcome the power of oppression and death.**

As you read, ask yourself where in these stories do you find yourself in your life today. The heart of our Christian faith is the revelation that God chose to become one of us – Jesus shares our human nature – he knew what it was like to be hurt by the people he loved. He knows what we go through. He even went through the experience of being arrested, beaten, put on trial and executed.

There is nothing we suffer that He cannot understand. There is no hurt in our hearts that He cannot feel – and that He cannot heal. Keeping our eyes on Jesus helps us look up, beyond our selves to see our lives as God sees us. Keeping our eyes on Him frees us from the chains of past hurts and memories that

## Mass readings

WEEK	MON	TUES	WEDS	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
<b>Mar 2-8</b>	Dn 9:4b-10 Lk 6:36-38	Is 1:10, 16-20 Mt 23:1-12 <b>St Katharine Drexel</b>	Jer 18:18-20 Mt 20:17-28 <b>St Casimir</b>	Jer 17:5-10 Lk 16:19-31	Gn 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a Mt 21:33-43, 45-46	Mi 7:14-15, 18-20 Lk 15:1-3, 11-32 <b>Sts Perpetua and Felicity, Martyrs</b>	Ex 20:1-17 1 Cor 1:22-25 Jn 2:13-25
<b>Mar 9-15</b>	2 Kgs 5:1-15b Lk 4:24-30 <b>St Frances of Rome</b>	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	2 Chr 36:14-16, 19-23 Eph 2:4-10 Jn 3:14-21
<b>Mar 16-22</b>	Is 65:17-21 Jn 4:43-54	Ez 47:1-9, 12 Jn 5:1-16 <b>St Patrick</b>	Is 49:8-15 Jn 5:17-30 <b>St Cyril of Jerusalem</b>	2Sm 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16 Rom 4:13, 16-18, 22 Lk 2:41-51a [1]	Wis 2:1a, 12-22 Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30	Jer 11:18-20 Jn 7:40-53	Jer 31:31-34 Heb 5:7-9 Jn 12:20-33
<b>Mar 23-29</b>	Dn 13:41c-62 Jn 8:1-11 <b>St Turibius of Mogrovejo</b>	Nm 21:4-9 Jn 8:21-30	Is 7:10-14; 8:10 Heb 10:4-10 Lk 1:26-38 [2]	Gn 17:3-9 Jn 8:51-59	Jer 20:10-13 Jn 10:31-42	Ez 37:21-28 Jn 11:45-56	Mk 11:1-10 Is 50:4-7 Phil 2:6-11 Mk 14:1-15:47 [3]
<b>Mar 30-Apr 5</b>	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 [4]	Is 52:13-53:12 Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9 Jn 18:1-19:42 [5]	Mass readings listed below* <b>Holy Saturday</b>	Acts 10:34a, 37-43 Col 3:1-4 Jn 20:1-9 <b>Easter Sunday</b>
<b>Apr 6-12</b>	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 4:32-35 1 Jn 5:1-6 Jn 20:19-31 [6]
<b>Apr 13-19</b>	Acts 4:23-31 Jn 3:1-8 <b>St Martin I</b>	Acts 4:32-37 Jn 3:7b-15	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 3:13-15, 17-19 1 Jn 2:1-5a Lk 24:35-48
<b>Apr 20-26</b>	Acts 6:8-15 Jn 6:22-29	Acts 7:51-8:1a Jn 6:30-35 <b>St Anselm</b>	Acts 8:1b-8 Jn 6:35-40	Acts 8:26-40 Jn 6:44-51 <b>St Adalbert &amp; St George, Martyrs</b>	Acts 9:1-20 Jn 6:52-59 <b>St Fidelis, Martyr</b>	1 Pt 5:5b-14 Mk 16:15-20 <b>St Mark, Evangelist</b>	Acts 4:8-12 1 Jn 3:1-2 Jn 10:11-18
<b>Apr 27-May 3</b>	Acts 11:1-18 Jn 10:1-10	Acts 11:19-26 Jn 10:22-30 <b>St Peter Chanel [7]</b>	Acts 12:24-13:5a Jn 12:44-50 <b>St Catherine of Siena</b>	Acts 13:13-25 Jn 13:16-20 <b>St Pius V</b>	Acts 13:26-33 Gn 1:26-23 Mt 13:54-58 [8]	Acts 13:44-52 Jn 14:7-14 <b>St Athanasius</b>	Acts 9:26-31 1 Jn 3:18-24 Jn 15:1-8
<b>May 4-10</b>	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 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48 1 Jn 4:7-10 Jn 15:9-17
<b>May 11-17</b>	Acts 16:11-15 Jn 15:26-16:4a	Acts 16:22-34 Jn 16:5-11 <b>Sts Nereus, Achilleus &amp; Pancras</b>	Acts 17:15, 22-18:1 Jn 16:12-15 <b>Our Lady of Fatima</b>	Acts 1:1-11 Eph 1:17-23 Mk 16:15-20 [9]	Acts 18:9-18 Jn 16:20-23 <b>St Isidore</b>	Acts 18:23-28 Jn 16:23b-28	Acts 1:15-17, 20a, 20c-26 1 Jn 4:11-16 Jn 17:11b-19
<b>May 18-24</b>	Acts 19:1-8 Jn 16:29-33 <b>St John I</b>	Acts 20:17-27 Jn 17:1-11a	Acts 20:28-38 Jn 17:11b-19 <b>St Bernadine of Siena</b>	Acts 22:30; 23:6-11 Jn 17:20-26 <b>St Christopher Magallanes</b>	Acts 25:13b-21 Jn 21:15-19 <b>St Rita of Cascia</b>	Acts 28:16-20, 30-31 Jn 21:20-25	Acts 2:1-11 Gal 5:16-25 Jn 20:19-23 [10]
<b>May 25-31</b>	Sir 17:20-24 Mk 10:17-27 <b>Sts Bede, Gregory VII, &amp; Mary Mag. de' Pazzi</b>	Sir 35:1-12 Mk 10:28-31	Sir 36:1, 4-5a, 10-17 Mk 10:32-45 <b>St Augustine of Canterbury</b>	Sir 42:15-25 Mk 10:46-52	Sir 44:1, 9-13 Mk 11:11-26	Sir 51:12cd-20 Mk 11:27-33	Dt 4:32-34, 39-40 Rom 8:14-17 Mt 28:16-20 [11]

\*Readings for Holy Saturday: Gn 1:1-2; 22:1-18 / Ex 14:15-15:1 / Is 54:5-14; 55:1-1 / Bar 3:9-15, 32 – 4:4 / Ez 36:16-17a, 18-28 / Rom 6:3-11 / Mk 16:1-7

Note: **Solemnities** in red, **Feast days** in gold and **Memorials** in green in celebration of the saint/event shown. [1] **St Joseph** [2] **The Annunciation of the Lord** [3] **Palm Sunday** [4] **Holy Thursday** [5] **Good Friday** [6] **Divine Mercy Sunday** [7] **St Louis Grignion de Montfort** [8] **St Joseph the Worker** [9] **The Ascension of the Lord** [10] **Pentecost Sunday** [11] **The Most Holy Trinity**

keep us imprisoned in darkness. Jesus walks with all of us in the events of Holy Week. He's there in our times of happiness and triumph as well as in those low points where we experience betrayal, loss, and grief.

At the end of it all, he shows us that the end of each of our stories is not betrayal, loss and grief. Jesus shows us that our destiny in Him is to experience the resurrection of life, of forgiveness,

healing and joy. That no matter how dark our present situation, God has a better plan for us. All we have to do is keep our focus on Jesus, look up and let Him lead us. ✠

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 4,200 men, including more than 650 on death row.





## Following Jesus means learning to go outside ourselves

Today I want to focus on Holy Week, during which we accompany Jesus in his Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

But what does it mean for us to live Holy Week? What does it mean to follow Jesus on his journey to Calvary, toward the Cross and his Resurrection?

On his earthly mission, Jesus walked the streets of the Holy Land. He called twelve simple persons to stay with him, sharing his path and continuing his mission. He spoke to everyone, without distinction: to the great and the humble, the powerful and the weak. He brought God's mercy and forgiveness. He healed, consoled, understood. He gave hope. He brought to all the presence of God who cares for every man and woman as a good father and a good mother cares for each of their children.

God didn't wait for us to come to him. It was He who came to us. Jesus lived the everyday reality of the most common persons. He cried when he saw Martha and Mary suffering for the death of their brother Lazarus. He also experienced the betrayal of a friend. In Christ, God has given us the assurance that He is with us, in our midst. Jesus has no home because his home is the people, us ourselves. His mission is to open the doors to God for all, to be the presence of God's love.

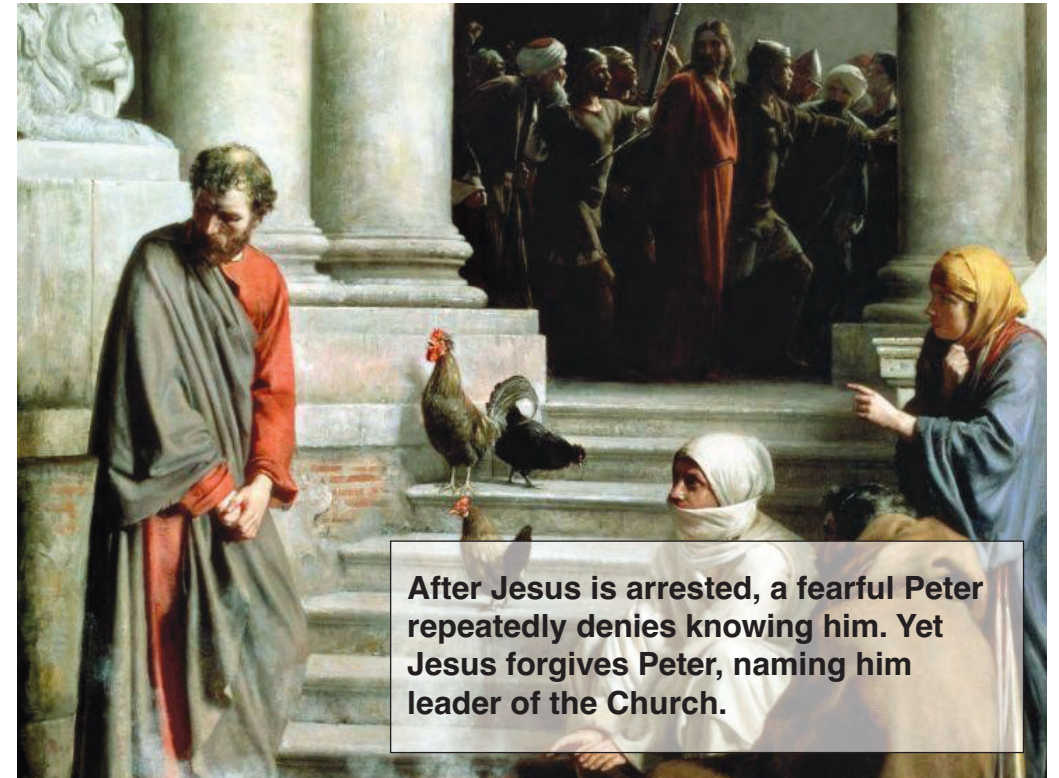
During Holy Week we are living the highest point of this plan of love that runs throughout the history of the relationship between God and humanity. Jesus enters into Jerusalem to take the final step in which his entire existence is

summed up. He gives himself completely, keeping nothing for himself, not even his life. At the Last Supper, with his friends, He shares the bread and distributes the chalice "for us." The Son of God offers himself to us. He puts his Body and his Blood in our hands to be always with us. And in the Garden of the Mount of Olives, as at the trial before Pilate, he makes no resistance, but gives himself.

Jesus doesn't live this love that leads to sacrifice passively or as his fatal destiny. He certainly didn't hide his deep human turmoil when faced with violent death, but he entrusted himself to the Father with full confidence to show his love for us. Each one of us can say "Jesus loved me and gave himself up for me."

What does this mean for us? It means that this path is also mine, also yours, also our path. Living Holy Week, following Jesus not only with moved hearts, means learning to come out of ourselves. In order to meet others. In order to go toward the edges of our existence. To take the first steps towards our brothers and sisters, especially those who are farthest from us. Those who are forgotten. Those who need understanding, consolation and assistance.

Living Holy Week is always going deeper into God's logic, into the logic of the Cross. This is not first and foremost a logic of sorrow and death but one of love and the self giving that brings life. It is entering into the logic of the Gospel. Following, accompanying Christ, staying with him when he demands that we "go out." Out of our-



**After Jesus is arrested, a fearful Peter repeatedly denies knowing him. Yet Jesus forgives Peter, naming him leader of the Church.**

*Peter's Betrayal, by Carl Heinrich Bloch, Danish, c. 1870*

elves. Out of a tired and habitual way of living the faith. Out of the temptation of locking ourselves in our own schemes that wind up closing the horizon of God's creative action.

God went out of himself in order to come amongst us. To bring us the mercy that saves and gives hope. And we, if we want to follow and remain with him, cannot be satisfied with staying in the sheep pen with the ninety-nine sheep. We have to "go out," to search for the little lost sheep, the furthest one, with him.

Often, we settle for some prayers, a distracted and infrequent Sunday Mass, some act of charity, but we don't have this courage to "go out" and bring Christ.

We are a little like St. Peter. As soon as Jesus talks of his passion, death, and resurrection, of giving himself and love for all, the Apostle takes him aside and scolds him. What Jesus is saying shakes up his plans, seems unacceptable, the safe certainty he had constructed, his idea of the Messiah, in difficulty. And Jesus ... addressing some of the harsh-

est words of the Gospel to Peter, says: "Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

God thinks mercifully. God thinks like a father who awaits the return of his son and goes out to meet him, sees him coming when he is still afar ... a sign that he was awaiting him every day from the terrace of his house. God thinks like the Samaritan who doesn't pass by the unfortunate man, pitying him or looking away. But rather assists him without asking anything in return, without asking if he was a Jew or a Samaritan, rich or poor.

Holy Week is a time of grace that the Lord gives us to open the doors of our hearts, of our lives, to "go out" and meet others, to draw near them and bring them the light and joy of our faith. To always go out with the love and tenderness of God! ✠

The above is adapted from the Vatican Information Service's account of the first general audience given by Pope Francis at Vatican City on March 27, 2013, shortly after his election as successor to St. Peter as Bishop of Rome & universal pastor of the Catholic Church.

# Virtuous habits: The key to living a good life

Virtues are the key to living in God’s grace. St. Augustine defined virtue as “a good quality of the mind by which we live righteously.” We all confront temptation in our lives; the virtuous person routinely rises above temptation. Simply stated, virtues are good habits that make us act like good people. And just like the habits of jogging or lifting weights improve your health, the habit of acting virtuously gets easier over time, and improves your spiritual health.

St. Thomas Aquinas pointed out

four aspects of the soul that are the source of sin: our intellect, our will, our emotions, and our desires. Each of these four is corrected by a unique virtue:

- Sins of the intellect like rash thinking are prevented by the virtue of Prudence.
- Our will, or wanting of power is corrected by the virtue of Justice.
- The virtue of Fortitude or inner strength overcomes sins of emotion or passion.
- Temperance is the virtue that allows us to keep our desires in check.

## Message of the Divine Mercy from Dr. Bryan Thatcher

### St. Peter and the Human Condition

Many people think that the saints had an easy life, never made mistakes, and had no character flaws. We look at all our shortcomings, and believe we could never be a saint. But remember, every saint had a past, and every sinner has a future! None of us will ever reach perfection on this side of the grave.

Imagine if you were Peter and lived, walked, and ate with Jesus. You saw him heal the sick; the blind could see and the deaf could hear. He even saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead! And yet, when Jesus was ready to be scourged and crucified, what did Peter do? He denied



knowing Jesus for fear they might do the same to him! Not just once, but three times! “I never knew the man!” he shouted back at his accusers.

However, the key to the story is what he did after denying Jesus. He wept and repented and came back. Both Judas and Peter denied Jesus; Judas ran off in shame and hung himself, and Peter came back and eventually became the first Pope!

The A, B, Cs of mercy are that we Ask for mercy, Be merciful to others, and Completely trust in His mercy. But we must ask! We have to be humble enough to admit we have sinned. Our Lord’s mercy is His greatest attribute, and He never turns away a repentant sinner, for His mercy is like an ocean that has no bottom.

Do you think that God has given up on you? Do you think that you have committed the unforgivable sin? Do not lose hope and the reality of the love and mercy of God! The witness of Saint Peter should be a cause of hope for all of us!

Never forget that God’s mercy is greater than our greatest sin. Jesus told St. Faustina “My mercy is greater than your sins and those of the entire world” (Diary of Saint Faustina, 1485) and “The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to My mercy.” (Diary, 723) ✖

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I remember these four cardinal (principal) virtues by thinking “peanut butter, jelly, french toast,” or PJFT: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance.

Prudence is the habit of proper and sensible decision-making. Sins of the intellect occur when we are convinced to do something that we know is wrong. St. Augustine said: “Prudence is the knowledge of what to seek and what to avoid.”

Justice is giving each person what is his fair due. Sins against justice include things like murder, injury, theft, vengeance, and cheating – which all take away what belongs to another person – but also gossip and cursing. To be a just person entails being fair in all your dealings, and also being grateful to those who help you. St. Thomas says that justice also requires us to be friendly and generous with others.

A person with the virtue of fortitude is courageous, and not swept away by his emotions. He is what we call a “go-getter,” and he does not falsely fear rejection. Those with fortitude are rich in patience, which is the opposite of anger. And while we think of fortitude as courage, it also rejects thrill seeking and risky behavior, which are not truly courageous acts.

The virtue of temperance moderates the desire for food, drink, and sex. Sins against temperance are gluttony, drunkenness, and every form of lustful act: seduction, rape, adultery, unmarried sex, incest, perversions and even lustful thoughts. The temperate person does not overindulge. He is chaste in his thoughts, speech, and actions. St. Thomas also says that speaking and dressing modestly is part of temperance.

Adapted from the works of Dr. Taylor Marshall, published by the New Saint Thomas Institute of which he serves as Founder and President. Dr. Marshall is a Catholic professor, lecturer, and leading scholar in Saint Thomas Aquinas and Catholic education. More information may be found at [www.newsaintthomas.com](http://www.newsaintthomas.com).

## 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

Cryptogram: Can you uncode the saying below, by figuring out how the letters have been swapped? Hint: every G in the puzzle represents the letter E.

WGLGX UG PNXPDF JR JXA

BROGJCDWT WGK. XGOGOUGX,

POPJGIXB UIDHJ JCG PXZ; VXRNGBB-

DRWPHB UIDHJ JCG JDJPWDM.



**HAIL MARY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

The Virgin understood that there was question of the coming Redeemer. But, why should she be elected from amongst women for the splendid dignity of being the mother of the Messiah, having vowed her virginity to God? Not doubting the word of God, but filled with fear and astonishment, she said: “How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?”

*That Jesus was born to a virgin tells us that salvation comes not from any act of man, but solely from God*

To calm Mary’s fears, the angel assured her that her virginity would be spared, answering: “The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.”

He also told her of the conception of St. John, the miraculous pregnancy of her relative now old and sterile: “And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God.”

Mary may not yet have fully understood the meaning of the heavenly message and how the maternity might be reconciled with her vow of virginity, but clinging to the first words of the angel and trusting to the unlimited power of God Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

The Annunciation is the beginning

of Jesus in His human nature. Through His mother He is a member of the human race.

Pope Benedict XVI wrote: “The mystery of the annunciation to Mary is not just a mystery of silence. It is above and beyond all that a mystery of grace. We feel compelled to ask ourselves: Why did Christ really want to be born of a virgin?”

We find the answer when we open the Old Testament and see that the mystery of Mary is prepared for at every important stage in salvation history. It begins with Sarah, the mother of Isaac, who had been barren, but when she was well on in years and had lost the power of giving life, became, by the power of God, the mother of Isaac and so of the chosen people. The process continues with Anna, the mother of Samuel, who was likewise barren, but eventually gave birth; with the mother of Samson, or again with Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptizer.

“The meaning of all these events is the same: that salvation comes, not from human beings and their powers, but solely from God—from an act of his grace.” ❖

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**Puzzle solutions**

Answer to cryptoguide:  
Never be afraid to try something new. Remember, amateurs built the ark – professionals built the Titanic.

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