



CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY
FOR THE INCARCERATED
FROM THE ORDER OF MALTA

The Serving Brother

ADVENT 2017

The Inspiring Life of St. Peter Claver, a crusader against slavery in the Americas

St. Peter Claver was a Jesuit Priest who lived over 400 years ago, but his life can be an inspiration to all – especially those who are living through the experience of incarceration.

Peter Claver lived at the time when the Slave Trade between Africa and the New World was at its peak, and devoted his life to helping Africans victimized by the horrors of slavery.

This terrible crime against humanity began in the 1400's and didn't officially end until the late 1800's. Over those 400 years of misery, over 12 million African men, women and children were kidnapped – torn from their families, their homes, their cultures, their languages, and their religions. Even their names were stolen from them. They were brought to a strange new land where they were forced to work under horrible conditions with no pay and no human dignity. And these were the ones who survived. Millions more Africans died before they ever reached the new world.

The form of slavery used by the Europeans – called “chattel” slavery – was particularly cruel and inhumane because under this system, slaves were seen as

merely property, just animals without human rights. We know from watching the news today that slavery – and the racism that allowed it – continues to divide people. Some even compare our mass incarceration over the last 40 years in the US as a form of modern day enslavement. So in a way, Peter Claver's example is still relevant for us today.

Peter was born in Spain in 1581 into a Christian farm family that loved God. His parents taught him from early childhood to let nothing come between him and the love of God. At the age of 21, he entered the Jesuit Order and while in the novitiate (the first stage of training for priesthood), he dedicated himself to serve God “like a slave,” offering God his whole soul, body and mind to that purpose.

Peter was influenced by the example of a holy Jesuit brother named Alphonsus Rodriguez. Brother Alphonsus was a simple man who spent most of his life as a servant doorkeeper of a Jesuit college in Majorca, Spain. He taught Peter to “seek God in all things, direct all your

Continued on page 4 – **CLAVER**



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER
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The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
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H.E. Archbishop William C. Skurla
The Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church
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The Maronite Catholic Church
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Eparchy of Newton (Est. 1976)

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Eparchy of St Thomas the Apostle (1985)

H.E. Bishop John Michael Botean
The Romanian Greek Catholic Church
Eparchy of St. George (Est. 1987)

H.E. Bishop Abdallah Elias Zaidan, MLM
The Maronite Catholic Church
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon (Est. 1994)

H.E. Bishop Yousif Habash
The Syriac Catholic Church
Our Lady of Deliverance Diocese (1995)

H.E. Bishop Jacob Angadiath
The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church
Diocese of Chicago (Est. 2001)

H.E. Bishop Emmanuel H. Shaleta
The Chaldean Catholic Church
Eparchy of St. Peter the Apostle (Est. 2002)

H.E. Bishop Mikaël Mouradian
The Armenian Catholic Church
Eparchy of Our Lady of Nareg (Est. 2005)

H.E. Bishop Philipos Mar Stephanos
The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church
Eparchy of St. Mary, Queen of Peace (2010)

Letter from Father George

Lessons from the saints that you can use in your life, today

Peter Claver has always been one of my favorite saints. As a Jesuit novice, I was inspired by the way Peter dedicated his life in service to those who society rejected or considered unimportant. I am sure it was his example and prayers that led me into prison ministry.

Peter lived a long time ago, but his example speaks to us today in an important way. He reached out in compassion to those who had been taken hostage, stolen away from their loved ones and their homes in Africa and after enduring terrible cruelty, were brought to America to be sold into slavery. As a Christian, Peter knew that Jesus calls us to be with the poor, the sick, the homeless and the prisoner. He knew that Jesus expects us to welcome strangers and foreigners. But don't take my word on this, read Matthew 25, verses 31-46!

We live in a time where the evils of racism, cruelty and violence are still very real and very present in our society.

But Peter Claver's life and witness to Christ teaches us that love and compassion are stronger than any prison. Only love can free us from slavery – slavery to greed, selfishness, hatred, addiction and fear. This is why as Catholic Christians we have to respond to the call of Christ to reach out to those who are suffering the most around us.

And Peter Claver's example reminds us of one more thing – we don't have to wait for the rest of the church to do this. We can respond to God's love and mercy in our own lives by reaching out in love and mercy to those in need around us. We cannot make prisons nice places, but we can at least make them more livable by treating each other with respect.

In all of this we have Jesus Christ as our guide. Our faith is not about religious rules; it's about our relationship with Christ. We grow in our relationship with Jesus through prayer and this edition of the Serving Brother offers us two ways we can try to deepen our prayer.

Mass readings

WEEK	MON	TUES	WEDS	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
Nov 27 - Dec 3	Dn 1:1-6, 8-20 Lk 21:1-4	Dn 2:31-45 Lk 21:5-11	Dn 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28 Lk 21:12-19	Rom 10:9-18 Mt 4:18-22 <i>St Andrew, Apostle</i>	Dn 7:2-14 Lk 21:29-33	Dn 7:15-27 Lk 21:34-36	Is 63:16b-17,19b; 64:2-7 Cor 1:3-9 Mk 13:33-37
Dec 4 - 10	Is 2:1-5 Mt 8:5-11 <i>St John Damascene</i>	Is 11:1-10 Lk 10:21-24	Is 25:6-10a Mt 15:29-37 <i>St Nicholas</i>	Is 26:1-6 Mt 7:21, 24-27 <i>St Ambrose</i>	Gn 3:9-15, 20 Eph 1:3-6,11-12 Lk 1:26-38 [1]	Is 30:19-21, 23-26 Mt 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8 <i>St Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin</i>	Is 40:1-5, 9-112 Pt 3:8-14 Mk 1:1-8
Dec 11 - 17	Is 35:1-10 Lk 5:17-26 <i>St Damasus I</i>	Zec 2:14-17 12:1-6a, 10ab Lk 1:39-47 <i>Our Lady of Guadalupe</i>	Is 40:25-31 Mt 11:28-30 <i>St Lucy</i>	Is 41:13-20 Mt 11:11-15 <i>St John of the Cross</i>	Is 48:17-19 Mt 11:16-19	Sir 48:1-4, 9-11 Mt 17:9a, 10-13	Is 61:1-2a, 10-11 1 Thes 5:16-24 Jn 1:6-8, 19-28
Dec 18 - 24	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>	1 Sm 1:24-28 Lk 1:46-56	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24 Lk 1:57-66 <i>St John of Kanty</i>	2Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12,14a,16 Rom 16:25-27 Lk 1:26-38
Dec 25 - 31	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>The Holy Innocents</i>	1 Jn 2:3-11 Lk 2:22-35 <i>St Thomas Becket</i>	1 Jn 2:12-17 Lk 2:36-40	Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 Col 3:12-21 Lk 2:22-40 [3]
Jan 1 - 7	Nm 6:22-27 Gal 4:4-7 Lk 2:16-21 <i>Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God</i>	1 Jn 2:22-28 Jn 1:19-28 <i>Sts Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen</i>	1 Jn 2:29-3:6 Jn 1:29-34 <i>The Most Holy Name of Jesus</i>	1 Jn 3:7-10 Jn 1:35-42 <i>St Elizabeth Ann Seton</i>	1 Jn 3:11-21 Jn 1:43-51 <i>St John Neumann</i>	1 Jn 5:5-13 Mk 1:7-11 <i>St André Bessette</i>	Is 60:1-6 Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6 Mt 2:1-12 [4]
Jan 8 - 14	Is 55:1-11 Mk 1:7-11 <i>The Baptism of the Lord</i>	1 Sm 1:9-20 Mk 1:21-28	1 Sm 3:1-10, 19-20 Mk 1:29-39 <i>St Anthony</i>	1 Sm 4:1-11 Mk 1:40-45	1 Sm 8:4-7,10-22a Mk 2:1-12	1 Sm 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1a Mk 2:13-17 [5]	1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19 1 Cor 6:13c-15a,17-20 Jn 1:35-42
Jan 15 - 21	1 Sm 15:16-23 Mk 2:18-22	1Sm16:1-13 Mk 2:23-28	1Sm 17:32-33, 37, 40-51 Mk 3:1-6 <i>St Anthony</i>	1Sm 18:6-9; 19:1-7 Mk 3:7-12	1Sm 24:3-21 Mk 3:13-19	1Sm 12:1-7a; 10-17 Mk 3:20-21 <i>Sts Fabian and Sebastian</i>	Jon 3:1-5 1 Cor 7:29-31 Mk 1:14-20
Jan 22 - 28	2 Sm 5:1-7, 10 Mk 3:22-30 [6]	2 Sm 6:12b-15, 17-19 Mk 3:31-35 <i>Sts Vincent and Marianne Cope</i>	2 Sm 7:4-17 Mk 4:1-20 <i>St Francis de Sales</i>	Acts 22:3-16 Mk 16:15-18 <i>The Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle</i>	2 Tm 1:1-8 Mk 4:26-34 <i>Sts Timothy and Titus</i>	2Sm 12:1-7a,10-17 Mk 4:35-41 <i>St Angela Merici</i>	Dt 18:15-20 1 Cor 7:32-35 Mk 1:21-28
Jan 29 - Feb 4	2 Sm 15:13-14, 16:5-13 Mk 5:1-20	2 Sm 18:9-10, 24- 25a, 30, 19:3 Mk 5:21-43	2 Sm 24:2, 9-17 Mk 6:1-6 <i>St John Bosco</i>	1 Kgs 2:1-4, 10-12 Mk 6:7-13	Mal 3:1-4 Heb 2:14-18 Lk 2:22-40 [7]	1 Kgs 3:4-13 Mk 6:30-34 <i>Sts Blaise and Ansgar</i>	Jb 7:1-4, 6-7 1Cor 9:16-19, 22-23 Mk 1:29-39
Feb 5 - 11	1 Kgs 8:1-7, 9-13 Mk 6:53-56 <i>St Agatha</i>	1Kgs 8:22-23,27-30 Mk 7:1-13 <i>St Paul Miki and Companions</i>	1 Kgs 10:1-10 Mk 7:14-23	1 Kgs 11:4-13 Mk 7:24-30 <i>Sts Jerome Emiliani and Josephine Bakhita</i>	1 Kgs 11:29-32; 12:19 Mk 7:31-37	1 Kgs 12:26-32; 13:33-34 Mk 8:1-10 [8]	Lv 13:1-2, 44-46 1 Cor 10:31-11:1 Mk 1:40-45
Feb 12 - 18	Jas 1:1-11 Mk 8:11-13	Jas 1:12-18 Mk 8:14-21	Jl 2:12-18 2 Cor 5:20-6:2 Mt 6:1-6, 16-18 [9]	Dt 30:15-20 Lk 9:22-25	Is 58:1-9a Mt 9:14-15	Is 58:9b-14 Lk 5:27-32 [10]	Gn 9:8-15 1 Pt 3:18-22 Mk 1:12-15 [11]
Feb 19 - 25	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 <i>St Peter Damian</i>	1 Pt 5:1-4 Mt 16:13-19 <i>The Chair of Saint Peter the Apostle</i>	Ez 18:21-28 Mt 5:20-26 <i>St Polycarp</i>	Dt 26:16-19 Mt 5:43-48	Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18 Rom 8:31b-34 Mk 9:2-10

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** [2] **The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)** [3] **The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph** [4] **The Epiphany of the Lord** [5] **St Hilary** [6] **Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children** [7] **The Presentation of the Lord** [8] **St Scholastica** [9] **Ash Wednesday** [10] **The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order** [11] **First Sunday of Lent**

One way is the practice of the examination of conscience each day. This is a method of religious practice developed by the founder of the Jesuits, and over the centuries since has been found a very useful way to grow in gratitude and awareness of God's presence in our lives.

The other way is the ancient Christian practice of sacred reading or "Lectio Divina," where we read and pray with the living word of God in the scriptures. Prayerful reading and meditation with the Bible is a part of our Catholic heritage! ❄️

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 750 on death row.

CLAVER – from front page

actions to the greater glory of God, and to work tirelessly to save souls.” Peter felt called to go to South America, to one of the major port cities where African slaves were brought to be put on the market for sale. Peter dedicated his life to serve the millions of abandoned souls who were victims of the slave trade. He spent the next 40 years of his life in the city of Cartagena, on the northern coast of Colombia.

Peter did what he could to lighten the misery of the traumatized slaves. He sought to be Christ’s messenger of love in the midst of their suffering, at a time when few Europeans showed any concern or care for the suffering of the African Slaves.

Cartagena was hot and humid. There were many outbreaks of contagious diseases. The slaves arrived in the filthy ships exhausted, naked, often sick, having been chained together for weeks as they crossed the ocean. They were terrified. Most of them had no idea what was happening to them. Claver wrote that many of them thought they had been brought to this new land in order to be eaten. Claver and his fellow priests were the only white men they had met who showed them compassion or care.

Peter and his helpers met and cared for the arriving slaves with food and medicine which they collected by begging. Peter’s work was a work of mercy inspired by his Catholic faith that saw all human beings as children of God and deserving respect and dignity. His work did not abolish the slave trade – that would not happen for another 400 years. But he was a prophetic voice calling for change and an end to the business and practice of slavery. He worked to change laws to improve the physical conditions of the slaves and to allow Christian marriage for slaves. He also fought for laws that stopped the practice of separating families.

Peter’s work often enraged the slave owners and the wealthy citizens of the



St Peter Claver ministering to slaves. Artist unknown

city who had become rich from the trade in human lives, but over time his example began to inspire conversion of hearts for many people.

Claver also was perhaps one of the first prison chaplains in the new world. He ministered to prisoners several times a week and one witness of the time wrote, “There was no one condemned by the courts in his day whom he did not assist.” He even worked hard to ensure that the poor and enslaved who died were given a proper burial.

Just as Jesus became a prisoner at the end of his life, so too did Peter Claver. Old and tired, unable to walk anymore after a plague hit the city in 1650, Peter spent the last four years of his life neglected in a cell until his death in 1654. As one of the Jesuits of the time later wrote, “The man who made his life a constant slavery in the service of slaves suffered alone in a cell.” Peter Claver had joined the suffering of those who he had served all his life.

Pope Leo XIII once said, “No life, except the life of Christ, has so moved me as that of Peter Claver!” ✖

Listening for God's voice in our everyday lives

God's voice can be heard by us not just in Church, but in our everyday experiences. If God wants to talk with us, it will happen during the course of our 24 hour day. But how do we listen to God?

Generations of Christians have given us some helpful tools. One of these is what we call the examination of conscience, or simply the "Examen." The founder of the Jesuit order (AKA The Society of Jesus), St. Ignatius of Loyola, included the Examen as one of the prayer exercises in his manual "The Spiritual Exercises," written in the 1500s.

The Examen is what most Catholics were taught to do to prepare ourselves for confession: examine our lives in terms of the 10 Commandments – to see how our daily behavior stacks up with the laws of God.

Now, let's face it, searching our minds for memories of how we sinned isn't something we enjoy doing. And the good news is that the Examen is more than just doing that. It is also a way of prayer that opens us up not to just our sins, but also to all the grace and goodness in our lives already.

The Examen can become a daily prayer practice. It is best practiced at mid-day or at night before you go to bed. It's easy and you can do it by following 5 simple steps:

1) Begin by praying for the Light of God. This is the kind of spiritual light that lets us see clearly how God is leading us. It's not just about remembering things, it's about making sense of our lives and understanding ourselves in relation to God.

2) Remember the events of your day with gratitude. Notice how this is different from just making a list of all your sins! Most of us have no trouble remembering our weaknesses, our lack of love or generosity, but it's also important to remember all the Gifts God gives us each and every day. The foundation

of our whole relationship with God is gratitude. So walk through your day from the time you woke up until now, even reviewing the day hour by hour to notice all the ways that God was present in your life. Maybe it was a class, or a program, a conversation, a good laugh. Anything that reminds us of what is good in life. We spend so much time in bitterness and negativity, we need to learn how to savor what is good and sweet in our lives too.

3) Notice the feelings that come up when we review our day. All of our feelings, positive and negative, painful or pleasing, are clear signals of where the spirit was present (or not) during the day. So pay attention to these feelings as they surface: hope, regret, shame, uncertainty, compassion, disgust, gratitude, pride, anger, rage, doubt, confidence – whatever was there in your day.

4) Choose one of these feelings, and pray on it – positive or negative, whichever most catches your attention. Let your prayer respond to the feeling: praise, repentance, gratitude, sorrow. Sometimes all we can do is cry out for help, and that is perfectly OK.

5) Look toward tomorrow. Thinking about tomorrow brings up what feelings? Anticipation, dread, happiness or boredom? Whatever it is, bring those feelings into your conscious prayer with God. Offer tomorrow to God and ask Him to use the gift of tomorrow to help you grow and heal. You can end this Examen process with the Lord's Prayer or any other prayer you like.

This is just one way to listen to and to notice God's action and presence in our life – and it works! It's easy and it is based on our own lives, not on obscure doctrines or rituals. It helps us to deepen our relationship to God through Jesus Christ. ❄️

Based on an article by Dennis Hamm, SJ, printed by America Press, Inc in 1994; used with permission.



The Adoration of the Shepherds, Poussin, French, 1633

Enrich your Bible study, practicing the *Lectio Divina*

A rich form of Bible prayer from the early church is making a comeback today. This is the practice of *Lectio Divina* – prayerful study of the Word of God.

This practice was described in the Acts of the Apostles (8: 26-39) in which a court official of Queen Candace of Ethiopia was reading and trying to understand the Servant Song of Isaiah (Is 53:7-8). Stumped, he asked the Apostle Philip to explain it to him. Philip’s teaching was so powerful that the man was converted to Christ and asked to be baptized.

Christians continued this practice of prayerful study of the Bible. The holy desert Fathers and Mothers spent much of their days in prayer, fasting and study of the Bible. When the first monasteries were formed, the practice became a part of everyday life for monks and sisters. It is said that the dedication to prayer of the Christian monks in the deserts of Arabia inspired Mohammad, and to this day Muslims pray five times a day as those early Christian monks did.

Many Christians today, both Catholic and Protestant practice *Lectio Divina* without necessarily knowing that is what it is called. Reading, rereading, memorizing verses, reflecting on the meaning of these verses in our lives is a form of Bible-based spirituality that over time can transform a person into

the image of Christ.

Sister Sandra Schneider, IHM, a professor of Theology in Berkeley, California describes the 4 steps of *Lectio Divina*:

Begin with a slow, leisurely and careful reading and re-reading of the scriptural passage. Memorizing is a good way to “internalize” the Word, making it a part of us.

This leads us to meditating on the meaning of the passage in our lives. The point isn’t to try to “figure out” what the Bible is saying in general, though that can be helpful. Rather, we are engaging with the living Word of God in the here and now of our daily lives, allowing God to speak to us personally through the scriptures. Our meditation on the word can bring us more deeply into our relationship with Christ.

This meditation can lead us into a deeper prayer, and invites us to respond to God with praise, thanksgiving, adoration, repentance or intercession for others. The Psalms are particularly effective for this purpose.

Finally our prayerful response to God’s grace leads us to contemplation – what some have called “taking a long, loving look at the Real” or in other words, prayer that unites us with God in ways that go beyond words. We are in contemplation when we are content to just be in the Holy Presence of God without having to do or say anything. ✖

Dear Serving Sisters and Brothers,

As you may have seen in the news, the past year has been a colorful one in the 969 years since the Sovereign Military Order of Malta's beginnings. We ask for your understanding for our absence since the Fall 2016 edition. Since the year 1113, we have operated under the protection of the Holy Father. At his invitation we are now undergoing a period of reflection on how to enhance our spirituality and our impact upon the world. As a volunteer in our works, we invite you to join in this effort.



Blessed Gerard

The women and men of the Order have a long tradition on how we respond to the many setbacks that have visited us in our long history. We re-commit ourselves to serving the sick, the poor and the forgotten, wherever we find them, with even more energy. In this, we count upon the rich mercy offered by Our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the ongoing intercession of our patrons, The Blessed Mother and St. John the Baptist.

This Christmas Season our gift to readers is the inspiring life story of St. Peter Claver. Our hope is that his example will encourage you to work with your Catholic Chaplain and volunteers to create a local community second to none in strongly living the Christian life. Our Founder, Blessed Gerard, will smile with pride in heaven as you build a group of committed disciples worthy of the high standards that he expects of all of his spiritual sons and daughters!

With Christmas Joy,

Steve Caron, KM
Publisher

Give your brain a workout!

Sudoku Puzzle

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

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. ANSWERONBACK PAGE

Cryptograms

Can you uncode the sayings below, by figuring out how the letters have been swapped? Hints: In the first puzzle, T represents the letter H. In the second, P represents T.

TNJZ ANKQZVMZ WQKT NGG KTQVPI.

LRK XQFIK OX NGG, WQKT UORFIZGX.

– INQVK XFNVMQI SZ INGZI

PDX CXJ PI XHXQJPDGMGK MB YWPMXG

VX. JIF KXP PDX VDMVCXG UJ DWPVDMGK

PDX XKK, GIP UJ BZWBDM GK MP.

– WQGIRN D. KRWBIA

Matthew and Luke: The First Christmas Presents

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke give us all the stories we have about the birth of Jesus that were handed down from the earliest Christian traditions. It is believed that Luke himself interviewed the surviving witnesses of the birth of Jesus, including the one person who would have remembered it the best – his mother Mary.

Luke describes in detail how the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her she would be the mother of Jesus (*The Annunciation*). Only Mary could have remembered this meeting and exactly what the angel told her (Lk 2:19). Luke’s gospel also describes four other events that only Mary herself could have remembered because she was there for each of them. *The Visitation* is when she visited her cousin Elizabeth, who was pregnant with her baby who would grow up to be John the Baptist (Lk 1:39-45). Luke also describes the details of *Jesus’ Birth* in a stable in Bethlehem (Lk 2:10-20). He also gives us the only Gospel stories we have of the *Presentation of the baby Jesus at the Temple* (Lk 2:21-39) and of *Jesus as a Child in the Temple* (Lk 2:40-52).

By the way, these five stories of the early life of Jesus make up the “Joyful Mysteries” we pray in the Rosary – a reminder that the rosary prayers are both scriptural in origin and focused on the life of Christ. It also shows why Mary is

such an important figure in the Gospels. She was there as the first witness to these wonderful events. Without her memories, we would have had no Christmas stories to speak of.

Matthew’s Gospel (Mt 2:1-16) describes how King Herod sought to kill the newborn baby Jesus and how mysterious wise men (Magi) from the East came to Bethlehem with precious gifts. But Luke’s gospel focuses on the humble people around Jesus, like the shepherds to whom the Angels appeared – and *they* were the first to see the baby Jesus after he was born (Lk 2:8-20), not the wealthy or powerful.

In fact, Luke always showed a special concern for the poor and the oppressed. It is Luke’s Gospel that gives us the beautiful story of the condemned man on the cross next to Jesus who repents at the end of his life and is saved (St. Dismas). It is Luke who quotes Mary’s prayer where she praises God who brings down mighty kings from their thrones and lifts up the lowly and the poor (Lk 1:46-55).

As we prepare to celebrate Jesus’ birth, let’s go back on our own and read carefully in both Matthew and Luke about Jesus’ birth as we reflect upon what Christmas is really all about – God’s love for us and His call for each of us to be open to receive it. ✨

Puzzle solutions

Answers to cryptquotes:
 Have patience with all things. But first of all, with yourself. – Saint Francis de Sales
 The key to everything is patience. You get the chicken by hatching the egg, not by smashing it. – Arnold H. Glasow

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

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