

STRICTLY NOT FOR SALE

August 2021
ISSUE

Pinhi

SUNDAY GOSPEL REFLECTIONS
& CATECHESSES



DOMINICAN NOVITIATE OF THE ANNUNCIATION
Manaoag, Pangasinan

What's on

August 2021

ISSUE

CATECHESIS OF THE MONTH	
The Dominican Spirituality	1
REFLECTION	
Ang Pagkaing Hindi Nasisira	4
CATECHESIS	
Bl. Jane of Aza	6
Our Holy Father Saint Dominic	7
REFLECTION	
The Greatest Bread of All; The Bread of Life.....	8
CATECHESIS	
St. Maximilian Kolbe	10
REFLECTION	
My Spirit Rejoices in God my Savior.....	11
CATECHESIS	
St. Hyacinth of Poland	13
REFLECTION	
Tapat sa Pag-Ibig.....	14
CATECHESIS	
St. Rose of Lima	16
Our Holy Father St. Augustine	16
REFLECTION	
Inside Out.....	18

BINHI is the official monthly publication of the novices of the Dominican Novitiate of the Annunciation at the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag. Featured in it are the reflections of the novices on the Sunday Gospels of the current month, short catechesis regarding our faith, and the lives of selected saints, especially that of the Dominican Order. **BINHI** aims to aid the faithful nurturing the seed of the Word of God by providing practical and relevant points to reflect on.

Catechism of the Month

The Dominican Spirituality

CATECHISM OF THE MONTH by Br. John Michael M. Veneracion

Veritas

I love Dominican Spirituality. Through living our particular spirituality, anyone is able to live an authentic human life capable of genuine intimacy with God and others while never compromising virtues and righteousness. And I believe we are able to live this way because of something very important; so important, in fact that we even made it one of our mottos: “Veritas” – Truth.



Truth, to us, is given the pinnacle of importance – along with charity – because truth, to us, is not just an impersonal, distant, and cold concept, nor is it just a lofty standard or an ideal. Truth, to us, is a person. A person named Jesus Christ, for Our Lord said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” It is, therefore, never acceptable for us to compromise truth, even in the name of love. Because even as the Gospels attest that God is Love, the same Gospels also attest that the same God is Truth. We – indeed, anyone who claims to worship the God of the Bible – cannot claim to live for one and not the other. We can never choose one over the other, for we cannot reject God in the name of God. In fact, I would even argue that one can only ever experience love – full, unadulterated love – if that love is founded on truth – full, unadulterated truth. Anything less is a lie or an illusion in one way or another that, in fact, actually prevents one from experiencing love.

Gospel Truth, Gospel Joy

Given the amount of importance we put into adherence to the Truth in our way of life, it is inevitable, then, for the Order to be known within the Church for its doctrinal exactness and high levels of sophisticated philosophy. Given what I’ve said so far, it is, therefore, a rather reasonable possibility to see the members of the Order as stiff prudes that know of “smile” and “humor” as entirely foreign concepts. This would be a gross misrepresentation. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact,

anyone who has had the opportunity of being with a group of Dominicans would be the first to attest that this group of Preachers are some of noisiest possible groups in the Church.



In the Dominican tradition, the truth that we expose ourselves to though our life of prayer and study only leads us to a deeper relationship with Him from whom all truths come from. And this deepening of our relationship with Our Lord inevitably leads us to a joy that can only be experienced through living in the Gospel, and having the Gospel live in us; for anyone who knows and really understands that we are a redeemed people, a rescued people, a people destined for eternal happiness and bliss through Our Lord Jesus Christ, cannot possibly remain in a state of dejection and depression. The hope and love we understand through our studies inevitably infect our way of thought and our way of life. This knowledge of the hope and the amount of love that God lavishes on us invigorates us and keeps us moving. It gives us reason to do anything we do. In fact, this Gospel Joy was so influential to us that when our Holy Father Dominic was establishing the rules of the Order, he specifically said that as much as our rules were meant to be faithfully followed by the brethren because they help us spiritually, it should still nevertheless be understood that none of the rules of our Order were binding under sin. Why? Because we are “free men under grace” and not “slaves of the Law” (it is an amusing story that our Holy Father even threatened that if anyone were to treat the rules as binding under sin, he will personally go to each convent and scratch out the rules with his own knife).

As Pope St. John Paul II beautifully put it, “we are an Easter people, and Alleluia is our song.” And a Dominican, being able to imbibe this concept of being an “Easter people” through prolonged exposure to the truth, just cannot help but radiate all that joy and excitement and energy to other people. And when that joy – that Gospel Joy – is a primary motivation for our work, then observers can’t help but notice. And that is also where the source of our Preaching comes from. This Gospel Joy, I would dare say, is the “secret ingredient” that gives our preaching its unique flavor. A flavor that has attracted different kinds of people from different walks of life through the centuries.

Drunkards with the New Wine of God's Love

It would, however, be another unjust misrepresentation if one were to assume that the brethren would be haughty and proud because of their academic achievements and prowess. This, I would again dare say, is quite a large improbability. Any proper Dominican, through the truth he/she exposes himself to, would know that whatever we can do, we can do only because God has showered us with gifts. As our Holy Father Dominic is often told to remark, "everything is grace." And this totality of grace in our lives is not limited only to our gifts, but also to our pains. That means that to a Dominican, every aspect of our life is not something he/she earned through their efforts and merits but is instead a gift something to be thankful for. If this doesn't drive someone to humility, I don't know what will.

But wait. Did I just say that even our pains are something that we can attribute to God as grace? And did I just say that we should be grateful for even those? I did! Because we are so sure that even the things that hurt us in this life, when it comes from God, can only be given to us because God knows that those pains can help us be happier with Him later. In other words, we can be sure that there is nothing that can happen in this world that can separate us from the love of God. Everything in this life can be attributed to the love of God. And I don't know about you, but to me, that kind of message is the stuff hope and joy is made of. And this message of joy and love, honed through deep understanding, is like a sweet new wine that when drunk, we can never have enough of. Not only that, but it is so potent that when we drink of it, we are made as if blind-drunk and we can no longer see anything other than Him who is the source of this New Wine. And that is also why those who dare drink this wine of God's love, like any drunkard who loses sight of his self and is so beside himself with joy, also cannot help but want to share his wine with others so they could join him in his reverie. This is why the image of wine and wine drinking has always been prominent even in the documents of the brethren of the first generation.

But let's not think that only we, the creation, are those acting drunk with love. As Paul Murray, OP remarks in his book "The New Wine of Dominican Spirituality", St. Catherine of Siena, one of my favorite saints,



was once so astonished by the love of God that she perceived that she exclaimed the following excerpt that I probably won't be forgetting anytime soon, and it deserves to be quoted at length:

You, high eternal Trinity, acted as if you were drunk with love, infatuated with your creature... You, sweetness itself, stooped to join yourself with bitterness. You, splendor, joined yourself with darkness; you, wisdom, with foolishness; you, life, with death; you, the infinite, with us who are finite. What drove you to this?

In the Dominican tradition, being drunk with the New Wine of God's love is not just a real possibility, but something very vital for our way of life. When we find this New Wine in the Truth we study, there are only two rational things to do: to drink – and drink deeply – and to ask others to share that drink with us.

AUGUST



Ang Pagkaing Hindi Nasisira

REFLECTION on 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Jn 6:24-35)
by Br. Humphrey Francois N. Astibe

Naranasan mo na ba yung gutom na gutom ka na pero hindi ka makakain dahil walang pagkain o di kaya'y hindi pa ito handa o bawal pang kumain? Alam mo yung pakiramdam na labis na ang iyong kagutuman pero ang dami mo pang kailangan tapusin? Ang hirap magutom noh? Bukod sa masakit na ang tsyan mo, mawawala ka pa sa focus at hindi ka pa makakilos nang malaya. Pero hindi lang ang katawan ang nagugutom. Kailangan ding mabusog nang ating kaluluwa!

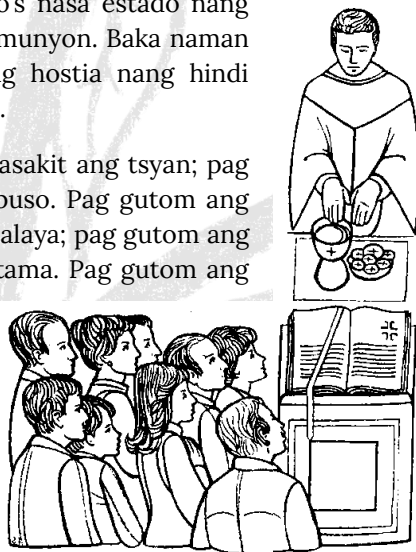
Sa ating ebanghelyo ngayong linggo, mababasa natin na sinusundan nang mga tao si Hesus dahil sa ginawa nyang milagro nang maparami nya ang tinapay. Sila ay nakakain at nabusog. Dahil dito, nais nilang sundan si Hesus. Ngunit alam to ni Hesus kaya sinabi nya sa kanila, *“Tunay na tunay na sinasabi ko sainyo, na hinahanap nyo ako, hindi dahil sa nakita ninyo ang mga kababalaghan, kundi dahil sa kumain kayo ng tinapay at kayo's nabusog. Pagsikapan nyong tamuhin hindi ang pagkaing nasisira, kundi ang tumatagal hanggang sa buhay na walang hanggan...”* Hindi lamang dapat ang gutom nang katawan ang pinipunan natin! Nagugutom din ang ating kaluluwa! At ang tanging makakabusog nito ay ang tinapay nang buhay – si Hesus! Maari natin syang matanggap sa dalawang paraan. Una, sa pamamagitan nang

pakikinig o pagbabasa ang Bibliya. Si Hesus ay ang Salita nang Diyos na nagkatawang tao. Sa tuwing nakikinig o nagbabasa tayo nang Bibliya ay tinatanggap natin sya. At ang pangalawang paraan naman ay sa pamamagitan nang pangungumunyon. Sa Eucharistia, tinatanggap natin ang katawan at dugo ni Kristo – ang tinapay nang buhay, ang pagkaing tumatagal hanggang sa buhay na walang hanggan.

Gaano katagal na nang huli tayong nangumunyon? Kelan tayo huling nakinig at nagbasa nang Bibliya? Baka naman gutom na gutom na ang ating kaluluwa. Pagsikapan nating tamuhin hindi ang pagkaing nasisira, kundi ang tumatagal hanggang sa buhay na walang hanggan. Kung sa tingin natin mahirap pag gutom ang katawan, aba mas mahirap pag gutom ang kaluluwa. Kung sa tingin natin nakamamatay pag gutom ang katawan, aba, mas nakamamatay pag gutom ang kaluluwa! Mangumunyon tayo. Makinig at magbasa tayo nang Bibliya.

Pero hindi puedeng basta basta lang tayo mangumunyon. Tulad nang pagkain para sa katawan, may tamang oras at tamang paghahanda ding kinakailangan bago natin tanggapin ang mahal na eucharistia. Mangumpisal tayo! Sa ating pangalawang pagbasa, sinasabihan tayo ni San Pablo na kailangan nating iiwan ang ating lumang pagkatao na kaugnay nang ating nakaraang pamumuhay na nabubulok dahil sa magdarayang mga pita. Kelangan nating iiwan ang ating makasalanang sarili bago tayo tumanggap nang hostia. Kelangan nating humungi nang tawad sa Diyos sa pamamagitan nang pangungumpisal. Kelangan, tayo's nasa estado nang grasya bago tayo tumanggap nang kumunyon. Baka naman tanggap nang tangap lang tayo nang hostia nang hindi nangungumpisal, aba, delikado rin yan.

Pag gutom ang katawan, sumasakit ang tsyan; pag gutom ang kaluluwa, sumasakit ang puso. Pag gutom ang katawan, hindi tayo makakilos nang malaya; pag gutom ang kaluluwa, hindi tayo makakilos nang tama. Pag gutom ang katawan, ito'y nakamamatay pero pag gutom ang kaluluwa, walang hanggang pagdurusa ang ating sasapitin sa kabilang buhay! Pagsikapan nating tamuhin hindi ang pagkaing nasisira, kundi ang tumatagal hanggang sa buhay na walang hanggan.



AUGUST

02

Bl. Jane of Aza

CATECHISM by Br. John Michael M. Veneracion

Mother to Our Holy Father Dominic, one of the greatest saints in the history of the Church, Bl. Jane can rightly be expected to be nothing less than saintly herself.

Bl. Jane was married to Felix de Guzman of Castille, a noble of medieval Spain and, aside from St. Dominic, was also mother to Fr. Anthony, another priest who died in such abundant charity, and Bl. Mannes, another Blessed of the Order of Preachers. Being herself born to the very prominent d'Aza family, Bl. Jane was gifted with material stability and comfort since her childhood. This state of life, however, far from pulling her concerns from the plight of the poor around her, actually moved her to compassion and care for them. In fact, by the time of her death, her reputation was already so wide-spread that her *cultus* as a Blessed preceded the Holy See's actual decree.

Legend relates that before (or while) conceiving St. Dominic, she had a vision through a dream of a dog leaping from her womb bearing a flaming torch which the dog used to set fire to the whole room and this fire scattered throughout the whole world and set it aflame. As it turned out, her son really did set the world afire with his preaching and the preaching of the Order he established. On Bl. Jane's part, though, it was her duty to take care of this kindling fire until it grew strong and big enough. Thus, it was to her that we give the credit for an early education and a perfect example of saintly life which as we know infected St. Dominic as well as his two siblings. It can also be attributed to her example of a saintly feminine figure that St. Dominic inevitably fell in love with Our Mother Mary who embodied all those qualities to a much more perfect degree. Thus, her influence to the Order of Preachers is an undeniable fact.



AUGUST

08

Our Holy Father St. Dominic de Guzman

CATECHISM by Br. Humphrey Francois N. Astibe

Dominic de

Guzman was born at Caleruega, Spain, around 1172-1173. After completing his studies at Palencia, he joined the Canon Regular in the Cathedral of Osma and was ordained priest. Diego d'Azevedo, upon seeing Dominic's holiness and intelligence asked him to join him on a diplomatic mission where he experienced firsthand the Albigensian heresy which was at that time widespread in southern France. From that time on he was determined to dedicate his life to the ministry of preaching and to live a life of simplicity. Together with Diego, he started preaching the truth to the heretics and converted them. Eventually, he founded a convent for a group of women converts from Catharism in Prouille in 1206.



In 1215, he founded a community of trained preachers in Toulouse who would spread the truth of the gospel by their preaching and teaching and would live in the apostolic way of life, eventually adopting the rule of St. Augustine in 1216. Dominic started living as a mendicant and dedicated himself to teaching the truths of the faith and converting heretics. Dominic organized his fellow preachers into a new religious order which was formally confirmed by Pope Honorius III on December 22, 1216. In 1217, the same pope granted the Order privileges under the designation as "preaching friars" meriting them the official title as the Order of Friars Preachers. His love in prayer and study, his zeal for the salvation of souls, and his belief in apostolic poverty became the foundation of the newly found Order. On August 15, 1217, he dispersed his small band throughout Europe and from such beginnings the Order grew. It was said of St. Dominic that "he either spoke with God or about God." Many wonders and miracles were attributed to him during and after his life. Tradition has it that it was to him that the Blessed Virgin Mary entrusted the propagation of the Holy Rosary. He died at Bologna on August 6, 1221 and was canonized on July 3, 1234

AUGUST

08

The Greatest Bread of All: The Bread of Life

REFLECTION on 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Jn. 6:41-51)

by Br. June Edward D. Mercede

Have you ever found yourself living with nothing except only for a piece of bread?

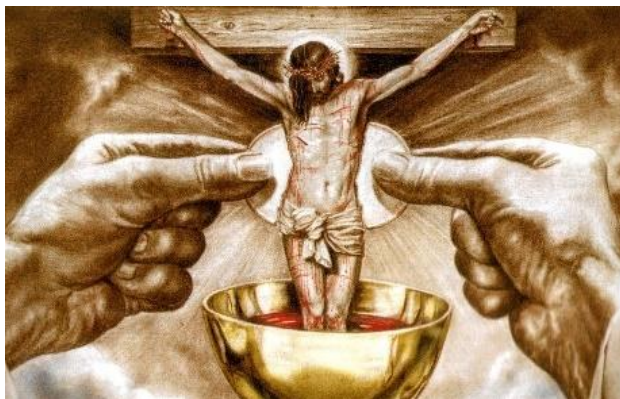
Undeniably, it is difficult to imagine, right?



Why do you think so? Simply, it is because we are already accustomed to have everything, we need in our lives provided with our own capabilities. We have enough food, good clothing, comfortable house to live in, stable work and many other needs for life were already present. Basically, everything we need in order to survive as well as our personal wants were already in our hands. And so, we thought that having less is already insufficient for us to live. We choose to acquire more in order to satisfy our desire for needs. In fact, we have a usual consumer statement that goes, “Mas mabuti nang sobra kaysa kulang pa”. Practically speaking, it is not bad to think in that same way as long as the sense of contentment is still present. But we are challenged by the Lord to not only limit ourselves with it, we should go beyond of what we initially thought. Our gospel today is a clear invitation for us from Jesus Christ himself.

The Jews could not find themselves with what Jesus told them. They couldn't believe Him saying, “*I am the living bread which has come from heaven; whoever eats of this bread will live forever.*” With that, they casted their doubts upon his early background as well as his capabilities to sustain them forever if he is truly the bread of life. In other words, they couldn't accept his teaching about everlasting sustenance through himself- the bread of life. They cannot think of themselves relying only to Jesus forever as the food that gives life. It is because their ancestors who only ate manna in the desert, still suffer hunger and eventually died. Hence, they learn to

think that eating only the bread will not be enough for them to live. However, Jesus assured them of this new promise that they will not die because of hunger. The bread that they will eat is a different bread from what their ancestors had eaten. It is the greatest bread among all and that is Jesus Christ himself. The bread that gives life to the world and for us his people.



My dear friends, Jesus in our gospel today invited us to believe and trust in Him as the one who can sustain us every day of our lives. We might have nothing such as expensive properties, highly compensated jobs, luxurious way of life etc., but if we have Jesus in our hearts everything is already enough. As Saint Teresa of Avila says, “Solo Dios Basta!” which means “God is enough”. He is sufficient for us and so with us to him. We must believe that he does not only intends us to be fed physically through our stomach; but also, with our hearts and minds that enable us to know him more deeply. Our lives will be completely meaningless without God nourishing us day by day. However, we cannot deny the fact that we are sailing on a tumultuous journey here in this earthly world. We often find ourselves broken and crushed by circumstances that come along our way. Left to our own resources we can find no light in the sea of life that we are journeying. Nonetheless, to keep going we need an assurance that we are not alone in our lives and that we have someone who is already enough to sustain us; that is none other than Jesus Christ himself. He unfailingly provides us everything we need in our pilgrim journey to God. And so, He is the Living Bread, the unique source of life for us and for the world.

Brothers and Sisters, let us look at our lives and ask ourselves are we still in hunger for Christ who is the Bread of Life? Leading ourselves to him requires not just only going to Church weekly and receiving the Holy Communion frequently. We are also invited by the Lord to manifest our satisfaction of his presence through conceiving it in our own actions such as loving our neighbors and being good to them. If we make ourselves

present to Christ in the Church, we must also present ourselves to those who bear his image outside the Church especially the poor and the needy. If Jesus makes himself available to us, why not ourselves? Like St. Dominic, our founder, whose Solemnity is also celebrated today. His constant and unflinching dedication to preach to those who are led astray from the Church is a greatest sign of making himself available both to Christ and other people. He had offered his life to an itinerant way of preaching to set the world on fire and for the salvation of souls. In addition, the Order of Preachers whom he founded is a symbol that a simple desire to serve God through preaching, had shone its light to the world today because of the God's grace. He found in himself that he had enough, and everything followed in his path was already God's Providence. Lastly, the Holy Eucharist is the concrete sign of the Love of God for us; and it is the same sacrament that we received him as the Bread of Life who gives life for us and to the world. May we become truly filled with his presence by believing that he is ever always present in the host that we received. Let us remember that we are not just filled physically but also our minds and hearts are filled with his grace.

AUGUST

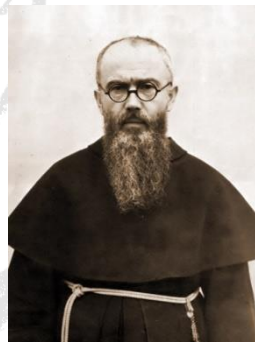
14

St. Maximilian Kolbe

CATECHISM by Br. June Edward D. Mercedes

St. Maximilian Kolbe was born at Pabianice, Poland in 1894. He was given the name Raymond as his baptismal name.

He joined the Order of Friars Minor Conventual at Lvov, Poland and took the name Maximilian as his religious name. Prior to his ordination as a priest, he founded the Immaculata Movement devoted to our Lady the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was ordained to the priesthood on April 28, 1918.



As a newly ordained priest, he went to Japan where he built a comparable monastery and then to India to pursue the movement he had founded. In 1936, he returned home because of sickness and frailer health. In 1939, after the Nazi invasion, he was imprisoned and released for a time. After 3 years, he was arrested again and was sent to concentration camp at

Auschwitz, Poland. On August 4, 1941, in reprisal for one prisoner's escape, ten men were chosen to die. Father Maximilian willingly offered himself in place of a young husband and father. Ten days later, on the 14th day of August 1941, St. Maximilian was given a death through lethal injection of carbolic acid.

Maximilian Mary Kolbe was canonized by Pope John Paul II on October 10, 1982 as a martyr of charity.

AUGUST

15

My Spirit Rejoices in God my Savior

Reflection on the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Lk. 1:39-56) by Br. John Michael M. Veneracion

“How can this be that the Ark of the Lord should come to me?” These are the words that King David said regarding the Ark of the Covenant around 1,000 years before the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And these words are echoed almost verbatim by St. Elizabeth pertaining Our Mother Mary during her Visitation proclaimed in this Sunday's Gospel: “And why is this granted me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?”

Brothers and sisters, we celebrate this Sunday the Solemnity of the Assumption of Our Blessed Mother Mary. Through this celebration, we affirm and attest that Our Mother was taken up body and soul to Heaven after her life here on Earth. Why is this fact important to us – not just to Catholics, but to anyone who believes in the salvation brought by Our Lord? Because in Our Mother's bodily assumption, we see the salvific power of Christ performed in its full glory.



You see, brothers and sisters, there is not one person in all history who was ever as close to Our Lord as His blessed mother. It was her that showed Him, who is love Himself, how it feels to be loved with such pure, such tender sweetness that it can be said it was from her that He learned how it felt to be loved. And being Love Himself, He couldn't help but reciprocate that love hundreds or thousands of times, or maybe even more. If then, he couldn't apply the salvific merit of His cross and resurrection to His sweet mother, the one person He loved the most, then what salvation can we, normal people ever hope to receive? Indeed, it is exactly the people who deny the privilege Our Lord bestowed on His mother through the Assumption who lower the value and put doubt in the salvation of Our Lord through the cross. For it is through remembering and glorying in what Our Lord has done for His mother that we can also hope for a measure of the same merits.

But the value of our celebration doesn't stop with talk of the end of our lives on Earth. In this Sunday's Gospel, we see how Our Mother, bearing Our Lord in her, was able to bring so much joy to her cousin Elizabeth who she visits. She brought joy to someone by bringing the Christ she had in her to that someone. And this is the same challenge the Gospel gives us. Because, brothers and sisters, Our Mother Mary wasn't the only one who ever bore Christ in their selves. We, as Christians have that same privilege; and this we have by hearing His Words proclaimed in the liturgy and by receiving Him in the Eucharist. Therefore, to a certain degree, we also receive the same state – and the same mission as Our Mother Mary: the mission to bring Christ to someone else's life and in doing so, bring the same kind of joy that St. Elizabeth and John the Baptist felt at the arrival of Our Mother.

My dear brothers and sisters, let us celebrate this Solemnity with joy and exaltation to our God. And in doing so, let us do our best to bring the joy of Christ to others so that at the end of our life, we may merit to see and be with the Ark of the Lord's Covenant in the First Reading, the woman crowned with twelve stars with the moon beneath her feet – Our Mother Mary. And being granted that privilege, may we joyfully sing with her, “my soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”

Let us love, let us love deeply. That someday we may we glory in the Lord Our God with all his saints and His Blessed Mother in Heaven. May Our Beautiful Mother wrap us in her loving mantle and keep us. Veritas.

AUGUST

17

St. Hyacinth of Poland

CATECHISM by Br. John Michael M. Veneracoin

St. Hyacinth was a Friar Preacher of the first generation, a direct disciple of St. Dominic, and can be said to be the first outstanding missionary apostle of the Order of Preachers after our founder himself that shed much glory to the fledgling Order.



St. Hyacinth was born of the noble Polish family of Odrowatz and, along with Blessed Ceslaus, was raised with careful attention to their education and religious life. When their priest uncle, Fr. Ivo, was to be appointed bishop of Krakow, he took his two newly ordained priest nephews with him to Rome for his consecration. It was there that they were able to meet St. Dominic and were witnesses to an incident where he raised a dead boy to life. This incited the new bishop, Ivo, to beg St. Dominic to send Friars Preachers to Poland. St. Dominic's eyes, however, fell on the two young priests.

St. Hyacinth's apostolic life can be described as nothing other than a miracle – one that Our Lady undisputedly helped him with. He was able to travel nearly twenty-five thousand miles on his apostolic travels, garnering a rich harvest of souls with his preaching and miracles in the countries of the North, a region that was largely hostile and barbaric during his time.

The most famous miracle account attributed to him was during a Tartar invasion to the convent. As he was hurrying to pack the Blessed Sacrament for safekeeping, he heard a voice from a statue of Our Lady begging him not to leave her behind to be desecrated. Being promised that she would lighten the load of the large, solid statue, St. Hyacinth was thereby able to carry the Blessed Sacrament in one hand and the statue in the other and was able cross the river dry-shod.

St. Hyacinth, remaining as one of the most famous saints in the Order, established the standard of preaching for all generations to come after him.

AUGUST

22

Tapat sa Pag-Ibig

REFLECTION on 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time (Jn. 6:60-69)

by Br. Humphrey François N. Astibe

Hanggang kailan ka magiging tapat sa taong iniibig mo? Ang pag-ibig ay hindi laging tungkol sa galak at kapayapaan. Ang pag-ibig ay sinusubok at pinagtitibay nang panahon. Hindi natin masasabing tunay tayong nagmamahal hangga't hindi pa tayo handang masaktan para sa pag-ibig.

Minsan may mga hindi pagkakaintindihan o may mga bagay na mahirap unawain at may mga pangyayari'ng mahirap tanggapin, handa pa rin ba tayong magin tapat sa taong minamahal natin? Sa Panginoon, hanggang kailan tayo magiging tapat sa pag-ibig sa kanya?



Sa ating ebanghelio ngayong linggo ating napakinggan na marami sa mga tagsunod ni Kristo ang tumalikod at hindi na sumama sa kanya. Ito ang may pinaka mataas na bilang nang mga taong tumalikod sa kanya sa buong bagong tipan. Bakit? Dahil hindi nila maunawaan o matanggap ang mga Salita ni Jesus at ang mga turo nya. Umalis sila at hindi na sumunod. Sa buhay natin, maramingbinibigay ang Dios na hindi natin maunawaan o matanggap. Bakit ako naghihirap? Bakit ako hindi magka jowa? Bakit ako may sakit o karamdaman? Bakit namatay ang taong mahal ko? Bakit hindi matapos-tapos itong pandemya? Ang hirap maunawaan. Ngunit dahil ba dito, tatalikuran na natin ang Dios? May mga turo ang simbahan at si Kristo na maaaring hindi natin matanggap o maunawaan; Bakit bawal ang abortion, divorce, same sex marriage, contraception, at pre-marital sex? Dahil ba dito iiwan na natin ang Simbahan at ang Panginoon?

Sa unang pagbasa, nagsalita ang Dios sa pamamagitan ni Josue, “Kung ayaw nyong maglikngkod sa Panginoon, piliin nyo kung sino ang nais nyong paglingkuran.” Binibigyan tayo nang Panginoon nang kalayaang pumili kung kanino tayo magiging tapat. Hindi nya tayo pinipilit na suklian ang pag-ibig at katapatan nya sa atin. Gaano ba katapat ang Dios sa’tin? Iyan

ay sinasagot nang pangalwang pagbasa. Ang pag-ibig at katapatan nang Dios sa Simbahan ay parang mag-asawang lubos at tunay na nagmamahalan. Wagas ang pag-ibig ni Kristo sa atin, ang kanyang minamahal na Simbahan at nais nyang piliin din nating maging tapat at mapagmahal sa kanya.

Nawa'y tularan natin si San Pedro. Nang tinanong ni Jesus ang mga apostol, “Kayo, ibig din baga ninyong umalis?” Si San Pedro, kahit hindi pa nya lubusang nauunawaan ang mga turo ni Kristo ay buong tapang na sumagot, “Panginoon, kanino kami patutungo? Taglay mo ang mga salitang nagbibigay ng buhay na walang hanggan. Kami ay sumanpalataya at aming nabatid na ikaw ang Banal na Dios.” At alam naman natin na kalauna’y, dahil sa kanilang katapatan, naintindihan rin nila ang mga wika ni Jesus. Ganun rin saatin, ang mga bagay na hindi natin naiintindihan sa ngayon ay mauunawaan rin natin sa tamang panahon yun ay kung mananatili tayong tapat sa Dios.

Hanggang kailan tayo magiging tapat sa taong iniibig natin? Kaya ba natin maging tapat sa hirap o ginhawa, sa kayamanan man o kahirapan, sa kalusugan man o pagdurusa, hanggan sa kamatayan? Eh sa Panginoon, hanggang kailan tayo magiging tapat sa kanya? Aba, kung titingnan lang natin kung gaano tayo kamahal nang Dios, wala tayong ibang pipiliin kundi mahalin sya hanggang makapiling natin sya. Manatili tayong tapat sa pag-ibig sa kanya hanggang sa kamatayan.



AUGUST

23

St. Rose of Lima

CATECHISM by Br. Humphrey François N. Astibe

St. Rose was born in Lima, Peru in 1586. Her baptismal name was Isabella Flores, but due of her extraordinary beauty she was called “Rose.” From a young age she was resolved to consecrate herself to God and made a vow of virginity. Because of her beauty, even disfiguring her face with pepper and lime so that her many suitors will be less attracted to her. She was probably inspired by Jesus’ warning to remove anything which could possibly lead you to eventually commit a sin (Mt. 18: 8-9). Her vocation was a setback to her family who had other plans for her. So, when she wanted to enter the monastery, they did not allow her. Her determination persuaded them eventually allowing her to join the Third Order of St. Dominic. She spent many years living a solitary life devoting herself to prayer and later on emerging to do works of mercy to the poor. She practiced severe penances for the salvation of sinners and for the missionary efforts of the Church in the Indies. She had a special devotion to Christ in the Eucharist and to Mary, Mother of God. Her desire to teach others the secret of prayer made her a zealous promoter of the rosary. She died on August 24, 1617 at the age of 31. She was the first canonized saint in the New World and is considered as one of the secondary patron saints of the Philippines.



AUGUST

28

Holy Father St. Augustine

CATECHISM by Br. June Edward D. Mercede

St. Augustine was born on November 13, 354 at Tagaste, Africa. His father’s name was Patricius who is a pagan official of the town and his mother was the holy Saint Monica.

Augustine studied in the schools of Tagaste and Madaura, while his father planned to send him to Carthage to pursue a forensic career. In Carthage, he found himself amidst the attractions and seductions brought

by the big City. But, after some time, he was not able to hold it anymore and fell into various irregularities and vices. He had a sinful relationship with a woman with whom he stayed for fifteen years and bore a child. He would then later call his child as “the son of my sin”.

In the year 383, Augustine went to Italy and there in Milan, he heard for the first time about the saintly bishop, Ambrose. He went to listen to his sermons and was very delighted about how Bishop Ambrose preach. The seeds which Bishop Ambrose sowed sank deep into Augustine’s heart, yet it took another three years before he could be converted to the Catholic Faith

The grace of final conversion came when one day, a very honorable Christian came to the house where Augustine and his mother were staying. While in a conversation, the eyes of the visitor fell on a copy of the New Testament lying on the table. There they read some passages from the Epistles of St. Paul and in explanation, the visitor told them about the stories of his friends who had become hermits and monks, doing violence to themselves for the sake of following Christ. As he listened, Augustine suddenly saw the deformity and ugliness of his own life. He really pondered the words he heard from the visitor and kept them in his heart. Finally, in the autumn of the year 386, Augustine himself wrote a letter to Saint Ambrose, announcing his desire to receive baptism. His conversion filled his mother with great happiness and kept repeating: “At last Thanks be to God! Thanks be to God!”. Augustine who before had been afraid to lose the joys of his former life, now enjoyed unique delights of the Spirit.

After his conversion, he was ordained priest and lived a simple monastic life. He dedicated his life to work on his apologetic books which later on became a rich source for all other theologians after him particularly St. Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican Saint. After living a full life, Augustine died at the age of seventy-six bringing with him his repentance and willingness to embrace eternity. Lastly, St. Augustine handed over his rule to us-Dominicans of which our way of life is patterned.



AUGUST

29

Inside Out

REFLECTION on 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Mk 7:1-8.14-15.21-23) by Br. June Edward D. Mercede

Naranasan

niyo na ba na ma-late sa trabaho o sa eskwela, dahil lamang sa pagugol ng mahabang oras sa harap ng salamin? Wari'y kampante sa oras na di mahuhuli kaya suklay dito, suklay doon, pulbo dito, pulbo doon at marami pang paraan ng pag-aayos ng sarili na kadalasan tinatawag na nating "ritual" sa araw-araw. Naalala ko noong ako ay nag-aaral pa lang sa *highschool*, halos araw-araw akong nahuhuli sa pagpasok dahil sa paghihintay sa aking nakababatang kapatid na babae na wari ayaw nang umalis sa harap ng salamin. Suklay dito, pulbo dito at iba pang mga arte na ina-apply sa mukha at sa ibang parte ng katawan na parang kulang kung hindi nagawa bago umalis ng bahay. Aminin man natin o hindi, may iba sa atin na ganito ang ginagawa at meron ding iba na paminsan-minsan lamang. Mga kapatid, ang ating ebanghelyo sa araw na ito ay isang napakagandang ebanghelyo na naangkop sa araw-araw nating pagharap sa buhay lalong-lalo na sa turo patungkol sa kalinisan.



Tinanong ng mga Pariseo ang mga alagad ni Hesus kung bakit sila ay kumakain kahit hindi pa naghuhugas ng kamay ayon sa paraang iniuutos ng Judio. Sapagkat ayon sa kanilang batas, mahigpit na ipinagbabawal ang pagkain hangga't hindi pa naghuhugas ng kamay. Maging ang mga bagong biling pagkain galing sa palengke ay nararapat munang hugasan bago nila ito kainin. Sila din may sinusunod na paraan ng tamang paghuhugas ng kanilang inuman, pinggan, sisidlang tanso at iba pang mga bagay na kadalasan nilang ginagamit sa araw-araw lalo na sa pagkain. Iilan lamang ang mga ito sa mga batas ng mga Judio patungkol sa turo ng kalinisan. Mahigpit nila itong sinusunod sapagkat ang mga ito ay ipinamana pa sa kanila ng kanilang mga

ninuno at nararapat lamang nilang pakaingatan. Bagaman may magandang dulot ang maayos nilang paraan ng kalinisan, mahihinuha pa rin natin ang napaka-striktong pagpapatupad nila sa mga paraang ito sa mababaw lamang na kahulugan. Sila ay pawang nakapokus lamang sa mga ritwal na nakakapaglinis ng panlabas na anyo at hindi na sa panloob. Ito ang punto na nais iparating ni Hesus sa mga Pariseong nagtanong sa kanya. Sila ay naging alipin ng mga ritwal na tanging namumutawi lamang sa kanilang mga bibig at hindi sa kaibuturan ng kanilang puso. Sa di makakailang pagkakataon, tayo rin minsan ay nagiging katulad nila. Mayroon tayong mga popular devotion katulad ng prusisyon, novena, padasal at iba pa. pero tayo ba nakikilahok ng buong puso at isip sa mga ito? Ganoon din sa banal na misa, tayo ba ay pumupunta lamang sa Simbahan upang ipakita na tayo ay may malalim na pananampalataya sa Diyos at humingi ng papuri sa ibang tao? Ang mga Pariseo ay nagtuturo ng batas tungkol sa kalinisan ngunit ang laman ng kanilang kalooban ay puno pa rin ng dumi ng pagkukunwari at pagmamataas ng sarili. Ang batas ay makikita lamang natin sa kanilang gawa ngunit walang puwang ng pagsasabuhay nito sa kanilang puso.

Mga Kapatid, sa ating ebanghelyo ngayon, tayo ay iniimbitahan ng Diyos na tingnan ang ating sarili at tanungin, “Ako ba ay naglalaan din ng oras na linisin ang aking kalooban sa mga dumi nito? Ang pagiging malinis ay hindi lamang nakabase sa kung ano ang ating nakikita sa labas kundi pati na rin sa loob. Sa buhay natin, madalas natin pinagbibigyang-tuon ang ating panlabas na anyo, pero minsan nakakalimot na tayong tingnan din ang ating kalooban. Posibleng mas madumi pa ang ating puso at isip kaysa sa ating katawan. Maaring ang ating puso ay kinain na ng galit, pagmamataas, ganid at iba pang kasalanan na siyang nagpapadumi nito. Kaya sinabi ni Hesus sa ebanghelyo, *“Hindi ang pumapasok sa bibig ng tao ang nakapagpaparumi sa kanya sa mata ng Diyos kundi ang nagmumula sa kanya”*. Dagdag pa niya na tanging sa puso nangagaling ang masasamang isipan na nag-uudyok sa tao na makiapid, magnakaw, pumatay, paninirang-puri, ganid, pandaraya, kahalayan, pagkainggit, kapalaluan at kahangalan. Ang lahat ng mga ito ay siyang totoong nakakapagparumi sa atin. Kaya, mga kapatid, marapat lamang na tingnan natin ang ating puso at linisin ito sa pamamagitan ng Sakramento ng Kumpisal. Kung ang paghuhugas ang siyang naglilinis sa atin sa pisikal na aspeto, ang kumpisal naman ang siyang naghuhugas sa atin sa ispiritwal. Ibinabalik ng sakramentong ito ang grasya ng Diyos sa atin na siyang nawala dahil sa ating mga kasalanan. Kasalanan na siyang ating pinahintulotan ang dahilan kung bakit tayo nahiwalay sa Diyos. Bagkus, ang kumpisal ang nag-aakay sa atin pabalik sa kanyang piling. Sa ating

pagbabalik, buong puso na ulit nating mararamdaman ang pagmamahal niya. Sa karagdagan, isipin din natin na hindi pwedeng punuan ng kung anong inumin ang isang basong madumi sa loob at sa labas. Tayo ang basong iyon, hindi natin maaring tanggapin si Hesus sa Banal na komunyon kung tayo



ay nasa estado pa rin ng kasalanang mortal. Maari lamang natin siyang tanggapin kapag tayo ay nahugasan na mag-uli sa Sakramento ng Kumpisal. Nawa'y magkaroon tayo ng lakas at kababaang-loob na aminin sa Diyos ang ating kasalanan at humingi ng kanyang kapatawaran. Tayo ay lubos na pinagpala sapagkat ang kanyang awa sa atin ay umaapaw. Huwag natin itong sayangin habang tayo ay may panahon pa. Magsisi tayo sa ating kasalanan at ipakita natin na tayo ay handa na mahugasan muli sa Sakramento ng Kumpisal. Nawa'y ang grasya ng Diyos sumaatin sa araw-araw.



13th Century

Dominican Blessing

May God the Father bless us,
may God the Son heal us,
may God the Holy Spirit enlighten us
and give us eyes to see with,
ears to hear with,
hands to do God's work with,
feet to walk with,
and mouth to preach the word of salvation with,
and the angel of peace,
to watch over us and lead us
at last, by the Lord's gift, to the kingdom.

Amen.

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