

Reflections

International

Catholic Family Newsletter

June 2023

Volume 94

Bringing Light Into a World of Darkness

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Bible Verse for the Day: "Do not fear the words of sinners, for their glory ends in corruption and worms. Today exalted, tomorrow not to be found, they have returned to dust, their schemes have perished. Children! be courageous and strong in keeping the law." (1 Maccabees 2: 62:64)

Thoughts for the Day:

The two fruits: Eve ate a fruit (an apple) and caused all to have sin. The Hail Mary prayer, says, "blessed be the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Mary gave birth to our salvation. Interesting to note how one fruit caused sin and the "blessed fruit-Jesus" took away our sins.

Nothing from Nothing: It is absurd for the Evolutionist [*those that deny a Creator*] to complain that it is unthinkable for an admittedly unthinkable God to make everything out of nothing and then pretend that it is more thinkable that nothing should turn itself into everything. **G K. Chesterton**

What to Prayer for Today: Help your family find the grace they need to live a better life through the salvific work of Jesus Christ.

Blessing to All:
By: Richard Pickard

Beginning in 1973, in Akita in Japan, the Virgin Mary appeared in a convent to Sister Agnes Sasagawa. In conjunction with the visions of the Virgin Mary Sister Sasagawa was given messages that were to be shared with the world. To this day, the messages from the Virgin Mary's apparitions, approved by the Catholic Church as authentic, are viewed by many as containing some of the most ominous prophecies of a future chastisement. What she had to say echoed her messages in Fatima & Medjugorje- like a patient mother who repeats her instructions over and over again, because they have not been listened to or have been followed badly.

"[The] Church will be full of those who accept compromises," she said and because of that, "if men do not repent and better themselves", God will "inflict a terrible punishment on all humanity", such as one will never have seen before. There will be "**fire falling from the skies**", she said, "good and bad will perish and those who survive will wish they were dead."



Our Blessed Mothers message echoes the Book of Revelation.

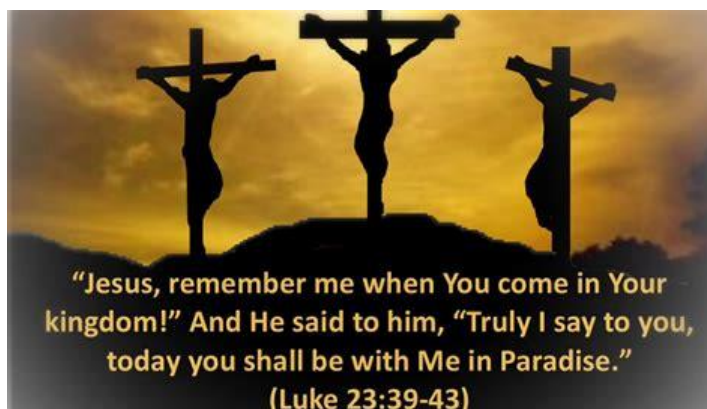
Revelation 8:6-7 And the seven Angels who hold the seven trumpets prepared themselves, in order to sound the trumpet.

And the first Angel sounded the trumpet. And there came **hail and fire, mixed with blood**; and it was cast **down upon the earth**. And a third part of the earth was burned, and a third part of the trees was entirely burned up, and all the green plants were burned.

PLEASE PRAY FOR YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS. DON'T WASTE THIS TIME.

Help Our Blessed Mother save souls...with your prayers and fasting.

A Lesson on Faith By the Thief on the Cross



How does the thief on the cross fit into your theology? No baptism, no communion, no confirmation, no speaking in tongues, no mission trips, no volunteerism at church, no financial gifts, and no church clothes. He couldn't even bend his knees to pray. He didn't say the sinner's prayer and among other things, he was a thief. Jesus didn't take away his pain, heal his body, or smite his scoffers. Yet, it was a thief who walked into paradise the same hour as Jesus simply by BELIEVING.

He had nothing more to offer other ***than his belief that Jesus was who He said He was***. No spin from brilliant theologians. No ego or arrogance. No shiny lights, skinny jeans, or crafty words. No fog machine, donuts, or coffee in the lobby. Just a naked dying man on a cross unable to even fold his hands to pray. ***"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that whoever BELIEVES in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."*** (John 3:16) ***That is the good news of the Gospel!***

THE GREATEST SIN

By: Fr. Slavko Barbaric

Often, I have struggled with the question, "What is the greatest sin?" I have asked others this question. I have searched through Holy Scripture. On different occasions, I have discovered different answers. Finally, I think I have found the correct answer. You see, deeds of darkness are only the end result, the cause is much more difficult and subtle to diagnose. We can never remove the consequences if we do not first remove the cause. Now, what I want to tell you is this: All sins are really nothing more than the result of a lack of love. And all the problems in which we find ourselves are caused by a lack of love. Where love is missing, the doors are open wide to evil and to sin. All wars, all family and personal conflicts, all deficiencies, all injustices, murders, abortions - all of them are the consequence of a lack of love for life and for the Giver of Life, the Creator of all. Therefore - the absence of love is the greatest sin.



Not even hatred is as dangerous as the absence of love. Even if hatred temporarily overcomes love - if love is present - it will eventually cleanse and heal. But when love is absent, there is no hope that things will be eventually healed. Then, the doors to every possible evil open wider and wider.

If we look for a comparison, we could say that it is much more serious to be without light and not even want to find the light, than to be temporarily in darkness. God breathed into man's heart not only the gift of love, but also the deep desire to be loved and to be accepted by others. None of us is indifferent to whether others like or dislike us.



In baptism, we were given the divine seeds of faith, hope, and love as gifts. Through baptism, God prepares the soil so that these seeds can grow and develop. When these seeds mature, when we cultivate their growth and development, we become the image and likeness of the Father. If we are

not committed to doing this, then love, faith and hope are left only as seeds and the talent remains wrapped up and hidden - not necessarily destroyed, but unused.

When we fail to cultivate love, we commit the first fundamental sin, which is the starting point for all other sins, all troubles and all destruction! If we are not working every day to cultivate our love, then spiritual death is already present and, with it, will come all other evils.

Nothing is more essential for a human being than to be committed to growing in love. With this commitment, he will do everything possible to develop love towards himself, towards God, towards his neighbor and towards all creatures. This love will make him strong, and he will eventually stop living according to the standards of the world.

On the other hand, as long as love is dependent on being loved in return, it is immature love. As long as we calculate whether or not to return love in the same measure, we have received it, or if we say, "If I am not loved, then I am not going to love," then our love is conditional. Then our love is no different from the love of pagans who know how to love those who love them and lend to those from whom they hope to receive in return.

However, when we are committed to love and determined to do everything to make our love steadfast, then we become capable of the most beautiful acts in the world and we learn the only right and effective way to defeat death and destruction - which means we learn how to defeat sin.

With this kind of love, it is not hard to imagine all wars coming to an end, the hungry having food, the sick being treated with dignity, the rejected having someone to accept them, the persecuted being honored with freedom, the sad becoming joyful, and the wounded becoming cured and healthy. Only love can accomplish this. If we are not convinced of this now, and do not even dare to dream such a dream, it is only a sign that we have not understood what love can accomplish. It is the same love that has been poured out into our hearts, as Saint Paul teaches in Romans 5:5. Without love, all interior and exterior pains will overcome man and destroy him. And the greatest threat to love is sin, because - regardless of the kind of sin - its presence always chokes love in the heart.

I give you a new commandment: * love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. John 13:23

Eucharistic Miracle in Trivandrum, India. Jesus is Truly Present



This Eucharistic miracle was verified recently, on May 5, 2001, in Trivandrum, India. In the Host there appeared the likeness of a man similar to that of Christ crowned with thorns. His Beatitude Cyril Mar Baselice, Archbishop of the diocese of Trivandrum, wrote regarding this prodigy: “[...] For us believers what we have seen is something that we have always believed [...]. If our Lord is speaking to us by giving us this sign, it certainly needs a response from us”. The monstrance containing the miraculous Host is to this day kept in the church.

The Rev. Fr. Johnson Karnoor, pastor of the church where the Eucharistic miracle took place, recounts in his deposition: “On April 28, 2001, in the parish church of St. Mary of Chirattakonam, we began the Novena to St. Jude Thaddeus as we did every year. At 8:49am, I exposed the Most Holy Sacrament in the monstrance for public adoration.

After a few moments I saw what appeared to be three dots in the Holy Eucharist. I then stopped praying and began to look at the monstrance, also inviting the faithful to admire the three dots. I then asked the faithful to remain in prayer and reposed the monstrance in the tabernacle.

On April 30th, I celebrated the Holy Mass and on the following day I left for Trivandrum. On Saturday morning, the 5th of May 2001, I opened the church for the usual liturgical celebrations. I vested for Mass and went to open the tabernacle to see what had happened to the Eucharist in the monstrance. I immediately noted in the Host, a figure, to the likeness of a human face.



I was deeply moved and asked the faithful to kneel and begin praying. I thought I alone could see the face so I asked the altar server what he noticed in the monstrance. He answered: 'I see the figure of a man.' I noticed that the rest of the faithful were looking intently at the monstrance.

"We began Adoration and as the minutes went by, the image became more and more clear. I did not have the courage to say anything and I began to

cry. During Adoration, we have the practice of reading a passage from Holy Scriptures.

The reading of the day was the one from Chapter 20 in the Gospel of John, which narrates the story of when Jesus appeared to St. Thomas and asked him to look at the wounds. I was only able to say a few words in my homily, and, having to leave for the nearby parish of Kokkodu to celebrate Mass, I immediately summoned a photographer to take pictures of the Holy Eucharist with the human face on it. After two hours all the photos were developed; with the passing of the time the face in every photo became more and more clear.”



Little Li: The Child Martyr of the Eucharist in China



She was a little Chinese Catholic girl, in a country where Catholics were and are only a demographic drop in the most populous country in the world, a country where Christians have been regarded for more than 100 years as dupes at best, agents at worst, of imperialistic Western powers. Their churches were marked for obliteration.

Li was reported to be 10 or 11. She lived during the communist takeover of China by Chairman Mao Zedong.

Little Li never made it to adolescence; she was killed for her faith right in her village parish church. She has become a legend. Like so many of the early martyrs of the Church, she was a real soul whose story was taken up by other real souls looking for reasons to believe. Her story has been told, retold, and embellished by many tellers in an age hungry for faith, in a

culture where terror and poverty have often reigned together, in a world riven by world wars, holocausts, and new weapons of mass destruction.

Many of the facts are uncertain except the most important one: Little Li was a martyr of the Eucharist. She gave her life in an act of Christian heroism and devotion to the Eucharist that has inspired multitudes.

What would you do if you were a Catholic and government troops invaded your parish church, imprisoning your parish priest? ***What would you do if the soldiers broke into the tabernacle, took the ciborium, and scattered the Hosts on the floor in an act of desecration designed to both terrorize you and demoralize you, to threaten everything and everyone you knew and loved?***

What would you do? Many people under such pressure buckled and joined the secularizing majority.

Here is what Li did: After nightfall, she slipped back into the church and observed a Holy Hour in front of the Hosts scattered on the church floor. After she finished the devotion, she carefully bent down and consumed just a single one of the Hosts with her tongue.

As a layperson in those pre-Vatican II days, little Li had been taught it was wrong to touch the Host with her hands. And she knew that in ordinary circumstances lay people were not supposed to consume more than one Host in a day. (She didn't know of the exception granted to prevent the desecration of the Eucharist.)

So, at great risk each time, Li patiently returned to the church night after night to observe her Holy Hour and consume another precious piece of the Body of Christ. There were 32 Hosts on the floor, so her nightly visits took just over a month. On the very last night, she was caught by a soldier who was guarding the church and killed.

The story of little Li became associated with Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, the Catholic media personality whose television show, "Life Is Worth Living," drew as many as thirty million weekly viewers during the 1950s. Sheen was a tireless promoter of the Holy Hour as a Catholic devotion.



In his autobiography, *Treasure in Clay*, completed shortly before his death in 1979 at age 84 but not published until 1982, Sheen wrote about the sufferings of Chinese Catholics in the wake of Mao's revolution that established a Communist regime in China that has lasted to this day. Sheen wrote this:

"Elsewhere in China, a priest had just begun Mass when Communists entered and arrested him and made him a prisoner in a house adjoining the little church. From a window in that house he could see the tabernacle. Shortly after his imprisonment, the Communists opened the tabernacle, threw the Hosts on the floor, and stole the Sacred Vessels. The priest then decided -- to make adoration to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament as much as he could day and night. **About three o'clock one morning, he saw a child who had been at the morning Mass open a window, climb in, come to the sanctuary floor, get down on both knees, press her**

tongue to the Host to give herself Holy Communion. The priest told me there were about thirty Hosts in the ciborium. Every single night she came at the same time until there was only one Host left. As she pressed her tongue to receive the Body of Christ, a shot rang out. A Communist soldier had seen her. It proved to be her Viaticum.” Little Li died a Martyr.

According to people who knew Sheen or knew his work, this was an incident that Sheen had repeated in talks and interviews during his long priestly and media ministry. In particular, they say, Sheen had revealed in a 1979 television interview that little Li’s fervent devotion to the Eucharist had been the inspiration for his preaching. It was her story as well, according to accounts, that had led Sheen to promise that he, personally, would observe a Holy Hour of prayer and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament every day of his priestly life, a promise that he kept.

The association of the story of little Li with the Communist takeover of China under Mao Zedong makes sense. Those years, especially after the Korean War broke out in 1950, were marked by brutal persecution of Christians as agents of foreign powers. Bishops and priests were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and killed. Foreign missionaries were expelled, and Mao’s government launched a massive effort to break the independence of China’s Christian churches, including the Catholic Church, and bring them under direct government control.



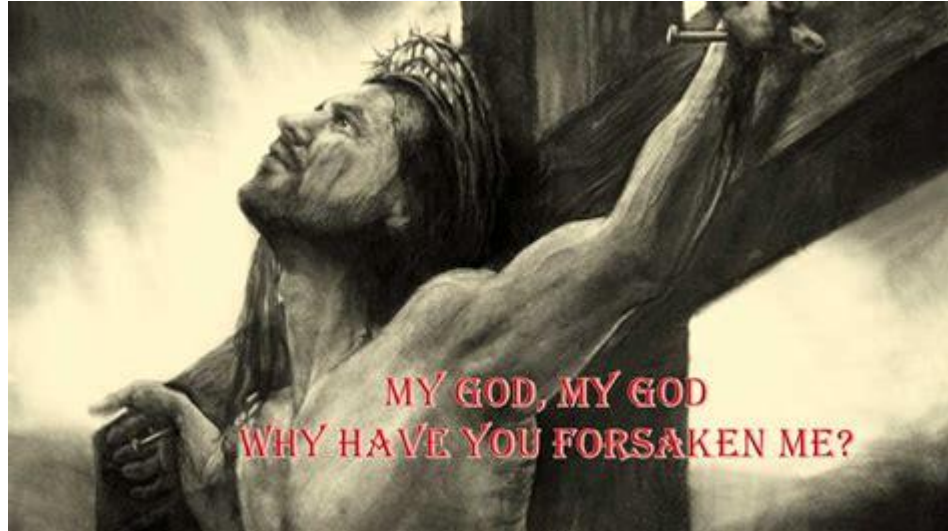
One of the resisters was Bishop Ignatius Kung, arrested in 1955 and imprisoned for more than 30 years. He was secretly named a Cardinal *‘in pectore’* by Pope St. John Paul

II, his elevation revealed only in 1991. The story of Li's heroism resonated in part because it exemplified that of Kung and many others.

We don't know Li's actual name or exactly when she lived and died, but we can know the persecution she and millions endured and the faith that allowed Little Li to die a martyr for the Eucharist are both most assuredly real.

My God, My God, why have you fareshaken me

As Jesus was near death he made the statement out loud..." **My God, My God, why have you fareshaken me.** The phrase is found in both Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34. "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?'"



Why did he say this? Here is the reason for those that do not know the answer.

Around the cross of Jesus were the religious Jewish leaders, who had voted in the Sanhedrin to have Jesus crucified. The two main groups were Pharisees and Sadducees. The Pharisees were very zealous for the Law of

Moses, but they also considered themselves the guardians of the oral traditions that scholars developed over generations. The Sadducees were of the wealthy ruling class in Jesus' day. Many of them comprised the priesthood that controlled the temple in Jerusalem and the Jewish legal council called the Sanhedrin. It is recorded in Matthew's Gospel 26:62.68

This statement was directed to the Jewish religious leaders who were watching Jesus on the cross.



Jesus knew they would be keenly aware of the Psalms, as they had studied and memorized them. Jesus was using the first sentence of **Psalm 22... My God, My God, why have you forsaken me.....** as a message to them that He

was indeed the Messiah".

They instantly knew what this meant...and all the verses gave proof that He was the Messiah, as it described in detail His crucifixion and all that was taking place right in front of them. What a shock they must have felt. He was quoting the very verse that identified Him as the Messiah and the way He was to die.

As Jesus looked at those watching the crucifixion, He raised His eyes and said as loud as He was able..."Father forgive them, for they know not, what they do."

"It is finished." And gave His last breath...

It is Better to Light One Little Candle Than to Curse the Darkness



Tell others about this monthly Newsletter. **Let the Light shine in the darkness to guide people to Jesus.**

**The International Catholic Family Newsletter
Is Published Monthly**

Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.



The Rosary is the 'weapon' for these times. - Padre Pio

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