

Serenity

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My Immaculate Heart will triumph!



Our Mission

Continuing the work of Saint Jeanne Jugan, our MISSION is to offer the neediest elderly of every race and religion a home where they will be welcomed as Christ, cared for as family and accompanied with dignity until God calls them to himself.

Cover Photos

Front Cover: International pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima, blessed by Pope Francis, arrives at our home in Aberdeen, Hong Kong.

Outside Back Cover, inside front cover: Mother General Maria del Monte Auxiliadora and Mother Assistant Maria Clarette are welcomed at the provincial residence in Bangalore, India.

Inside Back Cover: Crucifix in the chapel of Jeanne Jugan Residence, Washington, D.C. This crucifix was used for the Papal Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, September 23, 2015 (photo: I.s.p.)

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Acknowledgments

Pages 1 & 9: *Water to the Thirsty*, painting by Scott Freeman, used with permission. To see Scott's biblical worldview storybooks for children, visit www.BigPicturePublishing.com.

Page 10: *The Prodigal Son*, painting by Rev. Stephen Reid, O.S.B. St. Anselm's Abbey, Washington, D.C.

Page 13: *Christ in Majesty* (left) and *the Good Shepherd*, mosaics in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C. (photos: I.s.p.)

Page 18: *The Great Banquet*, painting by Cicely Mary Parker, 1935.



Let us live well

and times will be good

To mark the centenary of Our Lady's apparitions at Fatima this year we begin this issue of *Serenity* with coverage of the visit of the international pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima to our home in Hong Kong and a look back at the visit of Pope Saint John Paul II to Fatima in 1982. We then follow with a reflection on Pope Francis' Lenten theme for 2017, *The Word is a gift. Other persons are a gift*, which is based on the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-31). Although Lent may have passed by the time this magazine reaches many of our readers, the lessons we can learn from this parable are valuable in every season.

These two stories might seem distinctly different — one a real-life event involving our Blessed Mother, and the other, a Biblical parable with references to the Old Covenant. And yet, there is a common thread running through the two “events.” At the heart of both the Fatima message and the parable of Lazarus is the call to repentance and personal responsibility.

When Pope Saint John Paul II visited Fatima he preached about this important message: “Repent, and believe in the gospel’ (Mk 1:15): these are the first words that the Messiah addressed to humanity,” he said. “The message of Fatima is, in its basic nucleus, a call to conversion and repentance, as in the Gospel. This call was uttered at the beginning of the twentieth century, and it was thus addressed particularly to this present

century. The Lady of the message seems to have read with special insight the ‘signs of the times,’ the signs of our time” (homily, May 13, 1982).

Sister Lucia, the oldest of the three Fatima seers, wrote a letter about the famous third secret to Pope John Paul II on the occasion of his 1982 visit. *“Let us not say that it is God who is punishing us in this way;”* she wrote. *“On the contrary it is people themselves who are preparing their own punishment. In his kindness God warns us and calls us to the right path, while respecting the freedom he has given us; hence people are responsible.”*

Just as Sister Lucia emphasized that God, in his kindness, calls us to do what is right, in the parable of Lazarus father Abraham refuses the rich man’s cries for mercy because he failed to heed the words of Moses and the prophets. “My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented.”

Many have observed that our contemporary culture is not all that different from the world Our Lady chose to visit in 1917. When Pope Benedict journeyed to Fatima in 2010 he described the historical context of the apparitions in terms that could easily apply to our own day, calling that era “a time when the human family was ready to sacrifice all that was most sacred on the altar of the petty and selfish interests of nations, races, ideologies, groups and individuals.”

The common lesson of the Fatima apparitions and the parable of Lazarus and the rich man is clear: Whether we have a charmed life or live in tough times, God, in his great respect for us, has given us freedom and personal responsibility to choose the good based on his Word and his plan for us. Because he is merciful, God guides us to the path of life and love, but we must decide whether or not to accept his grace.

Like the world in 1917, we may be living in hard times, but let us live well, according to God’s law of love, and times will be good (cf. St. Augustine)! 🌸

On January 15, 2017 our Little Sisters and Residents in Aberdeen, Hong Kong, received a surprise visit from the pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima blessed by Pope Francis. The statue arrived at 8:30 a.m. on a cold winter morning, and everyone bundled up to welcome her at the home's grotto. As they recited the rosary everyone then processed to the outdoor crucifix, where Rev. Bing Edgardo Arellano, who accompanies the statue, spoke about the value of suffering and the message of Fatima. The procession concluded in the home's chapel, where Mass was celebrated. Our Residents were proud to be the first group in Hong Kong to host the pilgrim statue.

OUR LADY COMES TO HONG KONG





Newly blessed pilgrim statues in Rome with the organizers of the pilgrimages around the world. Fr. Bing is third from the left.

Pope John Paul II's consecration of the whole world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Fatima, May 13, 1982

1. "We have recourse to your protection, holy Mother of God."

As I utter the words of this antiphon with which the Church of Christ has prayed for centuries, I find myself today in this place chosen by you, O Mother, and by you particularly loved.

I am here, united with all the Pastors of the Church in that particular bond whereby we constitute a body and a college, just as Christ desired the Apostles to be in union with Peter.

In the bond of this union, I utter the words of the present Act, in which I wish to include, once more, the hopes and anxieties of the Church in the modern world.

Forty years ago and again ten years later, your servant Pope Pius XII, having before his eyes the painful experience of the

human family, entrusted and consecrated to your Immaculate Heart the whole world, especially the peoples for which you had particular love and solicitude.

This world of individuals and nations I too have before my eyes today, as I renew the entrusting and consecration carried out by my Predecessor in the See of Peter: the world of the second millennium that is drawing to a close, the modern world, our world today!

The Church, mindful of the Lord's words: "Go... and make disciples of all nations... and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:19-20), renewed, at the Second Vatican Council, her awareness of her mission in this world.

And therefore, O Mother of individuals and peoples, you who "know all their sufferings and their hopes," you who have a mother's awareness of all the struggles between good and evil, between light and darkness, which afflict the modern world, accept the cry which we, as though moved by the Holy Spirit, address directly to your Heart. Embrace, with the love of the Mother and Handmaid, this human world of ours, which we entrust and consecrate to you, for we are full of disquiet for the earthly and eternal destiny of individuals and peoples.

Our Lady is carried by seminarians, a Dominican novice and our volunteers.





The procession winds its way toward the chapel.

In a special way we entrust and consecrate to you those individuals and nations which particularly need to be entrusted and consecrated.

We have recourse to your protection, holy Mother of God: reject not the prayers we send up to you in our necessities.

Reject them not!

Accept our humble trust and our act of entrusting!

2. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).

It was precisely by reason of this love that the Son of God consecrated himself for all mankind: “And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth” (Jn 17:19).

By reason of that consecration the disciples of all ages are called to spend themselves for the salvation of the world, and to supplement Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is the Church (cf. 2 Cor 12:15; Col 1:24).

Before you, Mother of Christ, before your Immaculate Heart, I today, together with the whole Church, unite myself with our Redeemer in this his consecration for the world and for people, which only in his divine Heart has the power to obtain pardon and to secure reparation.

The power of this consecration lasts for all time and embraces all individuals, peoples and nations. It overcomes every evil that the spirit of darkness is able to awaken, and has in fact awakened in our times, in the heart of man and in his history.

The Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, unites herself, through the service of Peter's successor, to this consecration by our Redeemer.

Oh, how deeply we feel the need for consecration on the part of humanity and of the world — our modern world — in union with Christ himself! The redeeming work of Christ, in fact, must be shared in by the world by means of the Church.

Oh, how pained we are by all the things in the Church and in each one of us that are opposed to holiness and consecration! How pained we are that the invitation to repentance, to conversion, to prayer, has not met with the acceptance that it should have received!

How pained we are that many share so coldly in Christ's work of Redemption! That "what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" is so insufficiently completed in our flesh.

And so, blessed be all those souls that obey the call of eternal Love! Blessed be all those who, day after day, with undiminished generosity accept your invitation, O Mother, to do what your Jesus tells them (cf. Jn 2:5) and give the Church and the world a serene testimony of lives inspired by the Gospel.

Above all blessed be you, the Handmaid of the Lord, who in the fullest way obey the divine call!

Hail to you, who are wholly united to the redeeming consecration of your Son!

Mother of the Church! Enlighten the People of God along the paths of faith, of hope and love! Help us to live with the

whole truth of the consecration of Christ for the entire human family of the modern world.

3. In entrusting to you, O Mother, the world, all individuals and peoples, we also entrust to you the consecration itself, for the world's sake, placing it in your motherly Heart.

Oh, Immaculate Heart! Help us to conquer the menace of evil, which so easily takes root in the hearts of the people of today, and whose immeasurable effects already weigh down upon our modern world and seem to block the paths towards the future!

- From famine and war, deliver us.
- From nuclear war, from incalculable self-destruction, from every kind of war, deliver us.
- From sins against the life of man from its very beginning, deliver us.
- From hatred and from the demeaning of the dignity of the children of God, deliver us.
- From every kind of injustice in the life of society, both national and international, deliver us.
- From readiness to trample on the commandments of God, deliver us.
- From attempts to stifle in human hearts the very truth of God, deliver us.
- From sins against the Holy Spirit, deliver us.

Accept, O Mother of Christ, this cry laden with the sufferings of all individual human beings, laden with the sufferings of whole societies.

Let there be revealed, once more in the history of the world your infinite power of merciful Love. May it put a stop to evil. May it transform consciences. May your Immaculate Heart reveal for all the light of Hope. 🌸



Every Person

is worthy of our giving

Taking his inspiration from the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Lk 16: 19-31), Pope Francis gave us an interesting and inspiring theme in this year's Lenten message: *The Word is a gift. Other persons are a gift.*

The parable tells the story of a rich man who lives sumptuously and selfishly, while a poor man named Lazarus languishes at his doorstep. When the two men die Lazarus is carried away to the bosom of Abraham, while the rich man is banished to the netherworld. When the latter pleads with Abraham for relief, he is told that by ignoring the words of Moses and the prophets he has squandered his opportunity to save himself and his brothers.

Pope Francis explained that this story gives us a key for understanding what we need to do in order to attain true happiness and eternal life. The parable of Lazarus challenges us to a sincere conversion with regard to the Word of God and our treatment of our brothers and sisters. Pope Francis drove home these two themes with a prayer: "May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ

present in our brothers and sisters in need.”

Lazarus, a poor man with a name

Our parable features three characters — a rich man, a poor man named Lazarus and father Abraham, the figure of God the Father. It is interesting that the rich man has no name, while the poor man does. The name Lazarus means “God helps,” yet at the beginning of the parable he seems virtually helpless as he lies on the ground with dogs licking his wounds. But God does come to Lazarus’ aid, and when he dies he finds comfort in the bosom of Abraham.



Lazarus was a person with a name — loved by God, a priceless gift, a treasure. The poor at our door are a summons to conversion. The parable of Lazarus invites us, our Holy Father said, to open the door of our hearts to others. This is just what our foundress, Saint Jeanne Jugan did when she opened her home and her heart to an elderly, paralyzed and blind woman in need. She treated each person as an individual with a unique story and legitimate needs and aspirations.

The anonymous rich man

Pope Francis has a lot to say about this nameless man, and not much of it is positive! The rich man has it all, but he is actually sicker than Lazarus. He is afflicted with worldliness, which has numbed his soul and left him blind to the needs of others. In the rich man, the Holy Father said, we “catch a dramatic glimpse

of the corruption of sin, which progresses in three successive stages: love of money, vanity and pride.”

Let’s take a look at what our Holy Father said about these vices. “Instead of being an instrument at our service for doing good and showing solidarity towards others, money can chain us ... to a selfish logic that leaves no room for love and hinders peace ... The parable then shows that the rich man’s greed makes him vain. His personality finds expression in appearances ... but his appearance masks an interior emptiness.”

The lowest rung of the rich man’s moral collapse is pride. “The rich man dresses like a king and acts like a god, forgetting that he is merely mortal. For those corrupted by the love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness” to the needs of others.

Our Holy Father pointed out that the rich man was not condemned because he was rich, but because he failed to show Lazarus compassion. He chose not to see the poor man! Even if money is not our thing, there are many ways we can become so preoccupied with ourselves and our own concerns that we are blind to the needs of others. We can be covetous of our image, our reputation, our popularity, our ranking or power in the workplace, our talents and abilities, and even our free time. Whenever we get caught up in comparing ourselves to others or labeling them, it becomes impossible to welcome them as a gift.

Father Abraham

Reflecting on the figure of father Abraham invites us to consider our own image of God. Is he an imposing or frightening figure, like the fiery “Christ in Majesty” mosaic at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington? Or is he gentle and loving, like the Good Shepherd or the Divine Mercy image? Do we give much thought to the idea that the way we envision God may be influenced by our own actions?

Jesus' words to Saint Faustina provide insight on this question. "Before I come as a just judge I first open wide the door of my mercy. He who refuses to pass through the door of my mercy must pass through the door of my justice" (*Diary*, 1146). Jesus doesn't say IF I come as a just judge, but BEFORE — it's just a matter of time. We can be sure that he will come as a just judge, but not before he has offered us the opportunity to pass through his Mercy door.

And on another occasion Jesus told Faustina, "In the Old Covenant I sent prophets wielding thunderbolts to my people. Today I am sending you with my mercy to the people of the whole world. I do not want to punish aching mankind, but I desire to heal it, pressing it to my Merciful Heart" (*Diary*, 1588).

These words echo Father Abraham's words to the rich man. When the latter begs him to send Lazarus to warn his brothers, Abraham replies, "They have Moses and the prophets" [i.e. the Old Covenant] "If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead."

It wasn't that father Abraham *wanted* to banish the rich man to hell, but by failing to show Lazarus mercy, the rich man forfeited the possibility of receiving mercy. By his own life choices he banished himself to the netherworld!

The parable, Pope Francis said, gives us a clear warning: "God's mercy toward us is linked to our mercy toward our neighbor; when this is lacking ... not finding room in our closed heart, he cannot enter. If I do not thrust open the door of my heart to the poor that door remains closed. Even to God. This is terrible."

Saint Jeanne Jugan expressed this truth in a similar manner: "Treat the poor compassionately and Jesus will treat you kindly on your last day." When she welcomed an elderly woman into her home Jeanne Jugan definitively thrust open the door of her heart to the poor, and so on her last day she could face God with humble confidence. These were her last words: "Eternal Father, open your gates today to the most miserable of your



Jesus: just judge or gentle shepherd? Both!

children, but one who greatly longs to see you. O Mary, my dear Mother, come to me. You know that I love you and I long to see You.”

Unworthy though she believed she was, Saint Jeanne Jugan took Jesus at his word: “Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy.”

God’s Word

Pope Francis’ commentary on our parable invites us to reflect on our destiny in view of God’s mercy and justice. “In the afterlife,” Pope Francis wrote, “a kind of fairness is restored and life’s evils are balanced by good.” In his Lenten message the Pope pointed out that at the root of the rich man’s sin is his failure to heed God’s word. “When we close our heart to the gift of God’s word, we end up closing our heart to the gift of our brothers and sisters.” A passage from the prophet Isaiah clearly illustrates this teaching:

You fast only to quarrel and fight and to strike with a wicked fist!

Do not fast as you do today to make your voice heard on high!

*Is this what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?
Is this not, rather, the fast that I choose:
releasing those bound unjustly, ...
Setting free the oppressed, breaking off every yoke?
Is it not sharing your bread with the hungry,
bringing the afflicted and the homeless into your house;
Clothing the naked when you see them,
and not turning your back on your own?
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your wound shall quickly be healed; ...
Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer,
you shall cry for help,
and he will say: "Here I am!"*

It is clear that the way we treat others will influence the way we will be treated on our last day. This is Jesus' message in the parable of the Last Judgment: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40).

But what if we feel we have more in common with the rich man than with Lazarus? It's never too late to change! In the psalms and the prophets we read over and over that God delights in mercy, that he is slow to anger and rich in compassion. The prophet Micah goes so far as to say that God casts all our sins into the depths of the sea (Mi 7:19)! Do we realize how much God wants to forgive us, how much he wants us to turn to him? Can we even imagine how eager he is to embrace us? God is always watching for our return, just as the Father in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32).

The prophet Ezekiel reassures us with these words: "Do I find pleasure in the death of the wicked? Do I not rejoice when they turn from their evil way and live? I find no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies.... Turn back and live" (Ez 18:23)!

These Biblical passages show us that we should never de-

spair of God's mercy. In *Evangelii Gaudium* Pope Francis encouraged the faithful to make this prayer their own: "Now is the time to say to Jesus: "Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 3).



The example of the saints

In addition to Sacred Scripture we can learn much about Pope Francis' theme, *The Word is a gift and other persons are a gift*, through the example of the saints. Three holy figures, two of them American, are now knocking on our door asking to share their experiences with us. They are Saint John of God, Dorothy Day and Rose Hawthorne.

The first, Saint John of God, lived in sixteenth century Spain. After leading a nomadic existence for many years, he experienced a sudden and profound conversion after listening to the preaching of St. John of Avila. So radical was the invasion of grace in his soul that he acted like a lunatic and was committed to a psychiatric hospital, where he saw patients chained and brutally treated.

John was profoundly impacted by this experience, embracing these sad souls as brothers and sisters, and seeing in them



the suffering Christ in his passion and death. He went on to establish hospitals and founded a religious community, the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God.

John of God encouraged his followers to meditate on the passion and wounds of Jesus Christ, and to show hospitality to the poor out of love for him. “If we look forward to receiving God’s mercy, we can never fail to do good so long as we have the strength. “For if we share with the poor, out of love for God, whatever he has given to us, we shall receive according to his promise a hundredfold in eternal happiness.” He clearly grasped the connection between being merciful and receiving mercy.

Dorothy Day was an American journalist and social activist. After living a bohemian lifestyle for several years, during which she aborted one child and became a single mother to another, she converted to Catholicism and grew to love Scripture and the sacramental life of the Church.

Day had a profound love for the poor and devoted her life to them. She went on to co-found the Catholic Worker Movement, a pacifist movement that combines direct aid for the poor and homeless with nonviolent direct action on their behalf. She died in Manhattan on November 29, 1980. Her cause for canonization was initiated in 1983.

This quintessentially American hero deplored what she saw as our society's habitual disregard for the poor. She often said that America had a tendency to treat people like Kleenex — use them and throw them away. Day's Kleenex image is very close to Pope Francis' expression "throw-away culture." If God felt that human beings were disposable, he surely would not have sent his Son to suffer and die for our salvation!

Rose Hawthorne was the daughter of renown author Nathaniel Hawthorne. After a childhood spent in Europe she married the son of another prominent New England family and had a son, who died of diphtheria as a young child. The couple sought solace in the Christian faith and were received into the Catholic Church in 1891.

After her conversion Hawthorne became more and more committed to the works of the Church. She eventually separated



from her husband and enrolled in nursing school, where she was deeply moved by the plight of the destitute cancer victims she encountered. After nursing school Hawthorne established a home for cancer patients among the tenements on Manhattan's Lower East Side. "A fire was then

lighted in my heart, where it still burns," she reflected. "I set my whole being to endeavor to bring consolation to the cancerous poor." These cancer victims no doubt bore a striking likeness to Lazarus, destitute and covered in sores.

On December 8, 1900 Rose Hawthorne founded a new religious community devoted to the care of cancer patients, the Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne, Congregation of St. Rose of



Lima. Henceforth known as Mother Alphonsa, she placed herself “at the foot of the cross alongside our Blessed Mother” and served victims of incurable cancer for another thirty years. She often said, “We cannot cure our patients, but we can assure the dignity and value of their final days, and keep them comfortable and free of pain.” Rose Hawthorne died in 1926; her cause for canonization was sent to the Vatican in 2013.

Saint John of God, Dorothy Day and Rose Hawthorne would no doubt concur with Saint Jeanne Jugan in counseling us to treat the poor with compassion. Christ waited for each of these trailblazers in the person of the poor, and for them the poor were a gift that led them to realize their God-given purpose in life.

With these holy souls let us put into practice these challenging words of Pope Francis: “Every person is worthy of our giving. Not for their physical appearance, their abilities, ... but rather because they are God’s handiwork ... God created that person in his image, and he or she reflects something of God’s glory. Every human being is the object of God’s infinite tenderness, and he himself is present in their lives. Jesus offered his precious blood on the cross for that person. Appearances notwithstanding, every person is immensely holy and deserves our love” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 274). 🌱



MOTHER GENERAL DISCOVERS THE BEAUTIES OF INDIA

India is a land overflowing with vibrant colors, intense flavors and profound spiritual traditions. Hundreds of languages are spoken in this nation of 1.3 billion people; and four major world religions were founded on the subcontinent — Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. India is thus known as the land of spirituality and philosophy. As if that were not enough to make it unique, India also stands out as a modern example of unity in diversity.

The first Little Sisters destined for India arrived in Calcutta after a long ocean journey on November 30, 1882. On January 19, 2017 our current superior general, Mother Maria del Monte Auxiliadora, began her first visit to India with a 3:00 a.m. arrival at the provincial residence in Bangalore, the third largest city in India. Despite their unusual arrival time, Mother General and her companion, Mother Assistant Maria Clarette, were greeted

HOMES OF THE LITTLE
SISTERS OF THE POOR
IN INDIA

JABALPUR

KOLKATA

MUMBAI

SECUNDERABAD

GUNTUR

BANGALORE

MANGALORE

CHENNAI (MADRAS)

MYSORE

COONOR

ERODE

TUTICORIN

Their official welcome by the Residents and staff would have to wait until the next morning, when they were saluted by a school band, an honor guard of employees carrying brightly colored umbrellas, a song sung in Spanish, a dance performed by thirty school children and the release of 100 balloons intended to evoke the centenary of the Fatima apparitions. Residents and friends of the home then performed the “arathi,” a gesture of veneration and love carried out by making circular movements with a platter bearing a flame, sandalwood and flowers.



Left: Mother General's welcome at the provincial residence, Bangalore-St. Joseph included a balloon release. Each balloon carried a message from Our Lady of Fatima.

Below: Residents perform a traditional dance in Bangalore. In each of the homes in India Mother General was treated to colorful performances of native music and dance by Residents, staff and local young people.





Mother General's visit to the first of our two homes in Bangalore included the inauguration of the new multipurpose hall. A lively variety show then followed, giving young and old alike the opportunity to show off their dancing and musical talents.

During their visit to our second home in Bangalore, which bears the name of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Mother General and Mother Assistant helped to dedicate the Residents' newly renovated dining room. Their visit to this home coincided with India's national holiday. A flag raising and release of doves, as well as a visit from an actor portraying Mahatma Gandhi, marked this occasion.

Our travelers' next stop was Mysore, a city to the southwest of Bangalore and a popular tourist destination. In addition to



Opposite page: Mother General helps a staff member make breakfast at Bangalore-Perpetual Help. Later she poses with the home's employees.

Above: A Maharaja and his entourage await Mother's arrival in Mysore.

Right: A banner of Saint Jeanne Jugan, with local produce in her begging basket, on display in Mysore.



welcoming the elderly, our home in Mysore also houses the juniorate program for our young Indian Little Sisters in temporary vows. Mother General was welcomed there by the Maharaja, his wife and four soldiers.

She and Mother Assistant were seated on two "thrones" to enjoy the rest of the welcoming ceremony, after which they helped plant a sapling in honor of their visit.

From Mysore Mother General and her companion went to Erode, an agricultural and textile hub of India. Since she would



Left: A Resident performs a traditional welcome gesture, placing a sign on Mother General's forehead as she wears a garland of fresh flowers.

Center: Residents entertain their guests in Mysore.

Below: Mother General greets the Residents in Erode, offering them a gift.



not be able to visit every home in this large country, the Little Sisters from Coonoor joined in the festivities there. As in the other homes, in Erode our guests appreciated the solemn welcome rituals offered in their honor.

From Erode our travelers headed to Tuticorin, one of India's major seaports, which is known as the "Pearl City" due to the local pearl fishing industry. Mother General and her companion were greeted with garlands of fresh jasmine flowers as a band



Above: The Mass is concelebrated by seven priests in Tuticorin on February 7th.



Left: Mother Assistant Maria Clarette offers a Resident a gift in the dining room in Tuticorin.



Above: Residents and Little Sisters await the arrival of their guests in Chennai.
Below: The much-anticipated arrival!



played lively music. They were then shown the highest mark of respect given to guests with the offering of “purana Kumbam Arathi,” a silver pot containing mango leaves and coconut. White threads surrounding the pot signified that daily activities in the home revolve around God, the center of our lives.

On February 10th our travelers flew to Chennai, also known as Madras, capital of the state of Tamil Nadu. St. Thomas, patron saint of the city, was on hand to welcome them, congratulating



Residents, staff and Little Sisters line up as they wait to welcome Mother General and Mother Assistant on their last stop, Guntur.

himself for coming down from heaven for the occasion. Mother General then noted that St. Thomas was quite contemporary, since he was taking photos!

After celebrating the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes in Chennai, Mother General and Mother Assistant flew to Guntur, where they were welcomed by a shower of flower petals being tossed by young girls. Following a regional custom, each of the Residents offered their guests a rose as an expression of their love. Our Sisters from Secunderabad joined in the festivities in Guntur since Mother General would not be able to visit their city.

Mother General and Mother Maria Clarette returned to Bangalore on February 18th, where they met with the superiors of the province for several days. Before returning to France our travelers were awarded honorary diplomas by the community in Bangalore — Mother General for her proficiency in English and Mother Assistant for her skill in translating! We pray that the Lord will grant a rich harvest from all the seeds of joy and communion sown in Indian soil during Mother General's first trip to this vast and beautiful land! 🌱



Above: Welcome ceremonies in Guntur.

Right: Mother General joins in the Residents' kitchen band, also in Guntur!





ON THE ROAD in Mobile, Alabama, pt 1

A Nun's Life Ministry was founded by Sister Julie and Sister Maxine, I.H.M. The project combines technology, social media and vocations outreach in highly interactive and pastoral ways. The two Sisters take A Nun's Life on the road to introduce others to a variety of religious congregations and ministries in the Church. On March 8th they visited our home in Mobile, Alabama, for a Roadtrip podcast. Sr. Carolyn and Sr. Marie Cecilia participated in the program, while Sr. Ellen Anne worked in the online chatroom. Excerpts of their interview follow.

Nun's Life: *Can you both tell us about how you discovered your vocation?*

Sr Marie Cecilia: I come from a large family in the Philippines. I had never thought of being a nun until I went to Hong Kong and had a wake-up call. My friend, who was Catholic, joined another religion, and she invited me to join her. But I said, "I don't yet know the depths of our Catholic faith, but I'd like to find out more about it." That was the beginning for me and I started to go to daily Mass.

I was trying to get to Mass one day but it had been canceled. Someone told me I could attend Mass at the Little Sisters, so I went there. Afterwards I stayed in the chapel for quite a while, and then I met the superior. She invited me to stay to help one of the Residents, who was 102, to take her afternoon tea.

Seeing the Sisters' patience with the elderly, some of whom asked the same questions over and over — I thought I could never do that — but the Sisters were so loving! Then I realized that if they could do it, I could too, with God's grace. I thought of all that God had given me — my health, my strength — and I wanted to help that Resident the best I could.

Nun's Life: *Sr. Carolyn, how did you meet the Sisters?*

Sr. Carolyn: I was certain I was going to be married and have a lot of children; this is a good and holy desire for all women. One day I was out with my friend, driving along the Capital Beltway in a little red convertible, with our blond hair flying in the breeze. I was feeling very free, but then my friend asked if I would mind stopping at the home of the Little Sisters where she volunteered because she had to give a message.

We went in. The Little Sisters were lovingly serving the Residents, and they asked us to play our guitars for them. We were just beginners, but we sang and played for them, and there was so much joy on their faces. I didn't realize at the time that many of them had hearing impairments, but they seemed to think we played really well and it gave them a lot of joy!

Then a Little Sister took me in a room with a very sick Resident who was getting ready to go meet God. Sister knelt there with a lit candle, which signified that the Resident was preparing to meet Christ, like the Virgins with their lamps alight in the Gospel. I had a moment there where I thought, "There will be a lot of years between this moment and when I will be called home to God, and I want those years to be meaningful and beautiful, to be for HIM." So God swept me off my feet and I entered!

Nun's Life: *How did your foundress' example further encourage you to consider this way of life?*

Sr. Carolyn: It was her profound humility, simplicity and joy. She didn't seek notoriety; she just wanted to love and to serve. This is why she was canonized — her profound humility. Jeanne Jugan was taken from the leadership role by a spiritual director, but all she cared about was that the elderly receive joy and care. She continued to be joyful and humble as she lived among the novices for many years. During that time she saw 2,000 young women enter the Congregation — they lived and worked with her and learned from her counsels — and then went out all over the world to bring her spirit to the elderly.



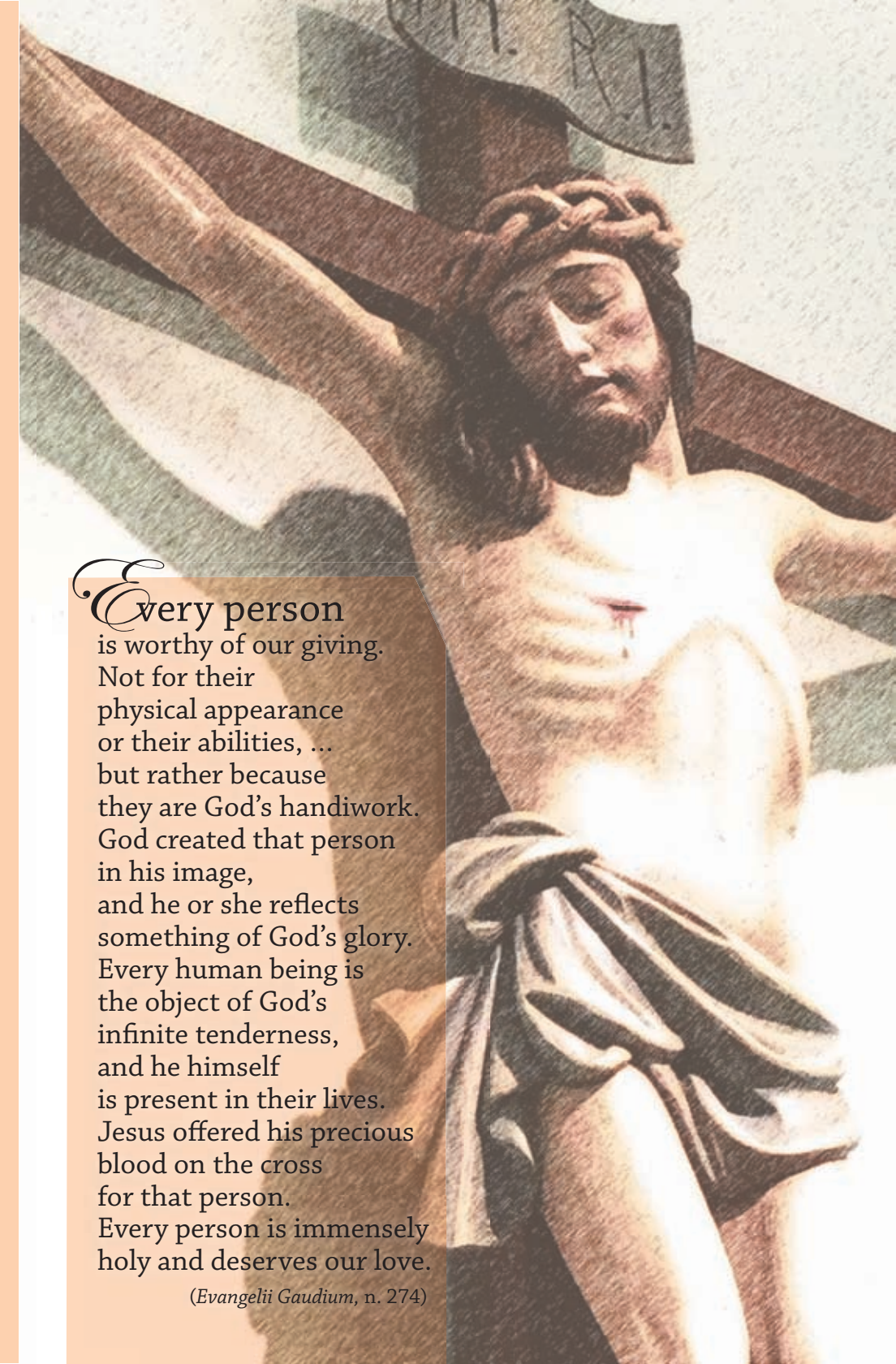
Sr. Marie Cecilia: And in her humility, Jeanne Jugan went out begging to fulfill the needs of the elderly. It takes humility to ask others to meet your needs, but with her faith and her humility she founded the Congregation. Seeing Christ in the elderly, she used to say, “Never forget that the poor are Our Lord.” She knew that she was doing everything for Jesus Christ and not herself.

Nun’s Life: *What is life here like as you live out this mission?*

Sr. Carolyn: It’s a profound continuation of that first joy. Jesus lives in the chapel, at the heart of our home, and his love for us reaches out and embraces us all day — when we’re with the Residents and when we’re kneeling in prayer, bringing them the love and joy that he would want their hearts to have during this final, beautiful stage of their lives. It’s a great privilege. People ask us where we get the strength to keep going day after day. It’s amazing how he gives the grace — that supernatural grace that comes with the vows and our consecration. We don’t run out of gas because we have Jesus.

Nun’s Life: *Tell us how the balance between contemplation and action is manifested in your daily life.*

Sr. Carolyn: A lot of people don’t realize it because they see us very active around the home, but we have a profound life of prayer.



Every person
is worthy of our giving.
Not for their
physical appearance
or their abilities, ...
but rather because
they are God's handiwork.
God created that person
in his image,
and he or she reflects
something of God's glory.
Every human being is
the object of God's
infinite tenderness,
and he himself
is present in their lives.
Jesus offered his precious
blood on the cross
for that person.
Every person is immensely
holy and deserves our love.

(Evangelii Gaudium, n. 274)



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