

NOVEMBER  
2025  
ISSUE

# *Unki*

SUNDAY GOSPEL REFLECTIONS  
& CATECHESSES



**DOMINICAN NOVITIATE OF THE ANNUNCIATION**  
Manaoag, Pangasinan

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**NOVEMBER 2025**

ISSUE

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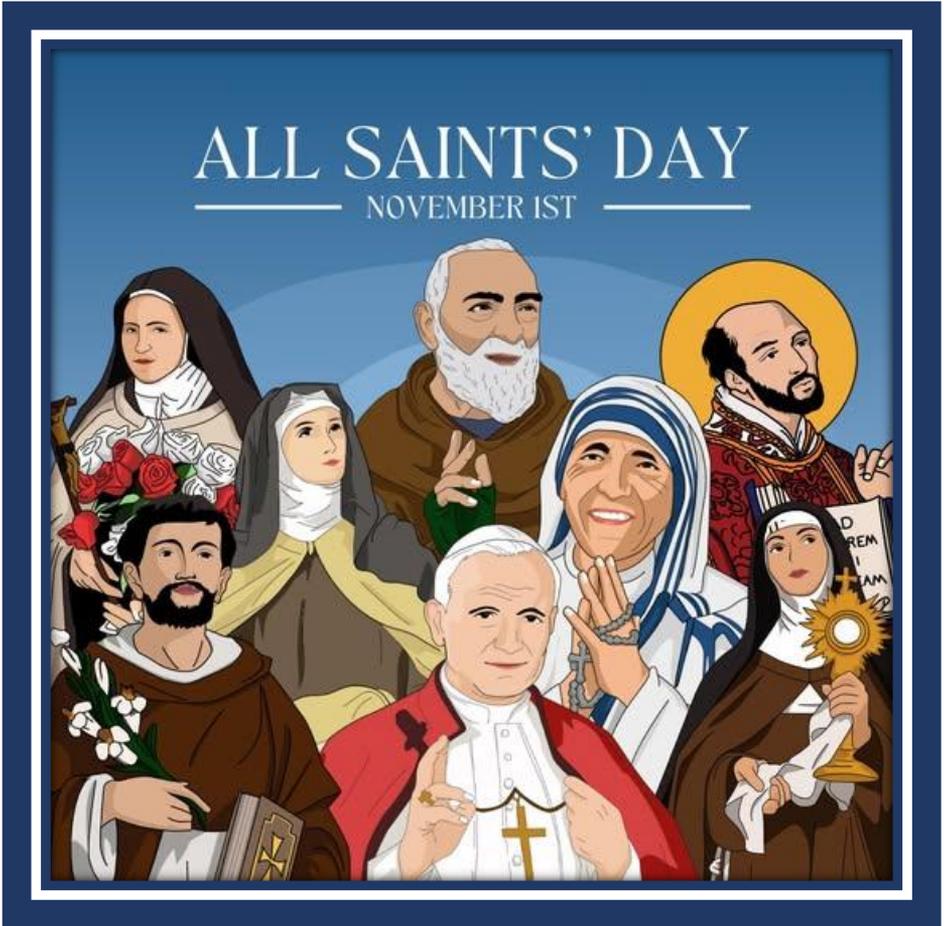
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**BINHI** is the official monthly publication of the novices of the Dominican Novitiate of the Annunciation at the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag. Featured in it are the reflections of the novices on Sunday Gospels of the current month, short catecheses regarding our faith and lives of saints.

# Gatechism of the Month



*"We are called to pursue a deep level of holiness,  
as our hearts and minds are called  
to be attuned to God."*

**Br. Rassched Chevy U. Avilla**

*Todos los Santos.* Today, on the Solemnity of All Saints, we venerate all men and women who have reached Heaven. While all the souls in Heaven are included in this, there are some who lived exceptionally virtuous lives on earth and were declared Saints by the Church. Saints



lived a heroic life, witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus that made them deserving of the glory of God. By surviving martyrdom or other types of religious persecution, through mystical union and intense prayer in contemplation, or through acts of service like teaching the faith or providing for the poor, saints adored and served God in various ways. Some saints performed miracles while they were still living. Others were influential preachers, living by example. Some lived in obscurity, others were pastors. Still others made great personal sacrifices for their beliefs, while in exile or despite the threat of being tortured. Throughout their lives, these saints exalted God in ways that He wanted. In heaven, they praise and exalt the God who created them; we honor them through our lives of witnessing.

Venerating the saints also invites all of us to aspire to the holiness. The lives of the saints are models for us to follow. They are sure pathways to holiness. To learn from their example, we should study and reflect on the lives of the saints, including the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saints Francis of Assisi, Dominic de Guzman, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Ávila, Thérèse

of Lisieux, Augustine of Hippo, and Thomas Aquinas. There are also more contemporary saints like as Pope John Paul II, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and the most recent patron of the internet St. Carlo Acutis, and more whom we can emulate.



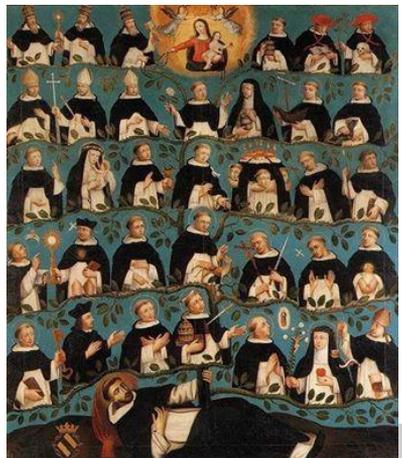
In the early Church, the community of believers venerated the martyr and deacon Saint Stephen, the first martyr. Saints Peter and Paul, along with numerous others, were killed in the first organized persecution of Christians

in Rome in 64 by Emperor Nero. Thereafter, other Roman emperors organized different persecutions across the empire, the harshest of which occurred between 303 and 311 under Emperor Diocletian. Churches and holy books were demolished during that persecution. Christians lost their lives, property, and legal rights and those who survived were tortured and imprisoned. Up to 3,500 martyrs are thought to have died during the Diocletian persecutions.

Public devotion to the martyrs flourished in the fourth century with the legalization of Christianity in 313 by Emperor Constantine I, who himself, converted to Christianity and started erecting churches and monuments to the martyrs. Their tombs were turned into churches, holy spaces for prayer and pilgrimage. Pope Boniface IV converted the Pantheon, a pagan temple in Rome, into a cathedral honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary and all martyrs on May 13, 609. The Blessed Virgin Mary and the martyrs were also honored at the yearly dedication festival. On November 1, 731, Pope Gregory III dedicated an oratory to "all saints" in Saint Peter's Basilica, which included confessors, martyrs, Apostles, and all other saintly men and women worldwide.

Pope Gregory IV expanded the commemoration of November 1 to include the entire Church in 844. Pope Sixtus IV declared November 1 to be a holy day of obligation for the entire Church in 1484. He also added an octave and vigil day. All Hallows' Eve, also known as Halloween, was the vigil celebration for All Hallows' Day. Unfortunately, Halloween has become a secular, even pagan, event in many places, losing its Christian and saintly focus.

The Saints and Blesseds are our great intercessors in heaven. As we commemorate all of them today, let us also remember that we are invited to join them. Our lives shall be an eternal holocaust to God to the extent that we become holy while we are here on earth. **We are called to pursue a deep level of holiness, as our hearts and minds are called to be attuned to God.** Our very life can be our prayer itself. We seek to live out the virtues and to be holy as we ought. And, finally, let us always cooperate with God's grace to live to be the saint that God desires us to be.



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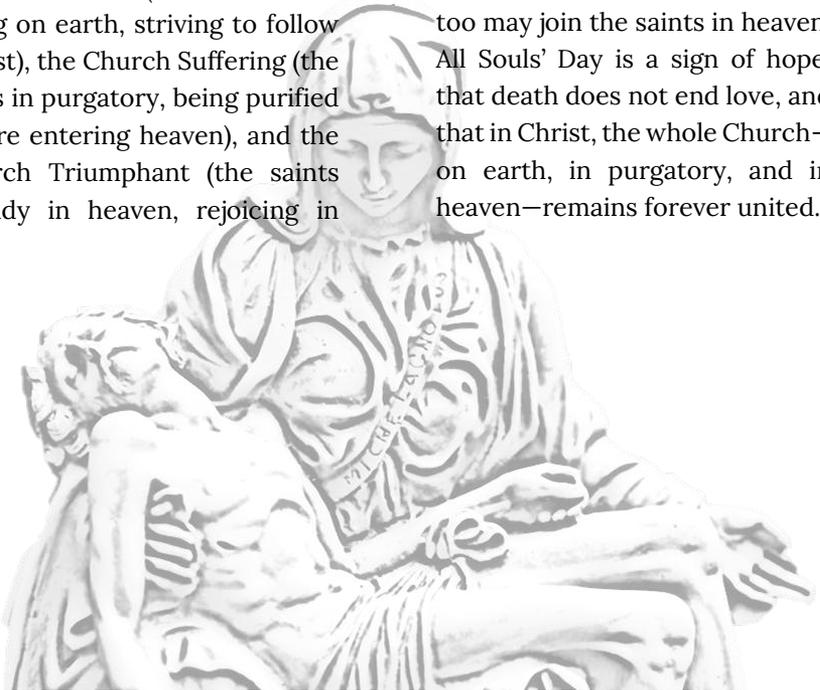
## UNDAS: ALL SOULS DAY

GOSPEL REFLECTION on the  
Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed  
by Br. Yoga Dwi Kaswara

Every year on November 2, the Catholic Church celebrates All Souls' Day, a time set aside to remember and pray for our departed brothers and sisters. It is a day of faith and love, reminding us that death does not end our connection with those who have gone before us. **Through prayer, we entrust them to God's mercy and strengthen our hope in eternal life.** The Catholic Catechism teaches that the Church exists in three states: the Church Militant (the faithful still living on earth, striving to follow Christ), the Church Suffering (the souls in purgatory, being purified before entering heaven), and the Church Triumphant (the saints already in heaven, rejoicing in

God's presence) [CCC 954]. These three are not separate, but united in Christ. We are like one great family, where the prayers of the living can help the souls in purgatory, and the saints in heaven intercede for us.

All Souls' Day is not only a time to mourn, but a time to love. By offering prayers, Masses, and sacrifices for the departed, we help them on their journey to eternal life. At the same time, we are reminded of our own calling to holiness, so that one day we too may join the saints in heaven. All Souls' Day is a sign of hope: that death does not end love, and that in Christ, the whole Church—on earth, in purgatory, and in heaven—remains forever united.



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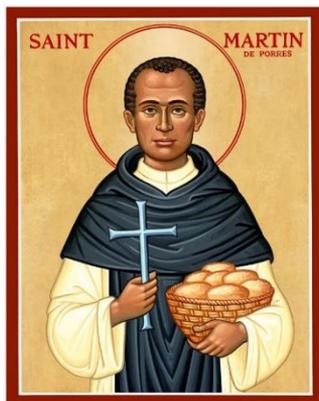
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## THE BLACK FRIAR

CATECHISM on the Feast of St. Martin de Porres

by Br. Jim Mark G. Orlan

How many times have you experienced rejection in your life? Was it pleasurable or embarrassing? Certainly, it is something that we do not want to remember. Rejection, though part and parcel of our human experience, allows us to experience sadness, pain, anger, and anxiety. Such experience may arise from family brokenness, physical distress, unhealthy relationships with friends and loved ones, or even disappointments due to the inability to achieve something.



St. Martin de Porres, was born in Lima, Peru on December 9, 1579, an illegitimate son of a woman slave from Panama and a Spanish nobleman who abandoned him, his sister, and his mother. At a young age, after attending primary school, he was sent to a barber-surgeon to learn haircutting and medical practical arts. Due to his color and being born of a mixed race, he experienced ridicule and rejection from his friends and neighborhood. In Peruvian law, anyone with African or Indian blood were not allowed to become full members of religious orders or congregations. However, due to his persistence and desire to join a religious community, he asked the Dominicans of the Holy Rosary Priory in Lima to accept him as



a volunteer who would perform menial tasks inside the convent. In return, he would be allowed to wear the religious habit of the order and live together with the community. Martin was admitted to the Convent of the Holy Rosary in Lima at the age of 15 and was assigned as a servant boy and in charge of the distribution of money to the deserving poor.

During his time in the convent, Martin used his old skills of barbering and healing. He also worked in the kitchen, did laundry, and cleaned the monastery. After eight years with the friars of the Holy Rosary, he was granted the privilege to profess

his vows as a member of the Third Order of Saint Dominic. The prior, Juan de Lorenzana, decided to disregard the law of the land which restricted him from joining based on his race. However, not all of the members in the Holy Rosary were as open-minded as Lorenzana. Martin was called horrible names and mocked for being an illegitimate descendant of a slave.

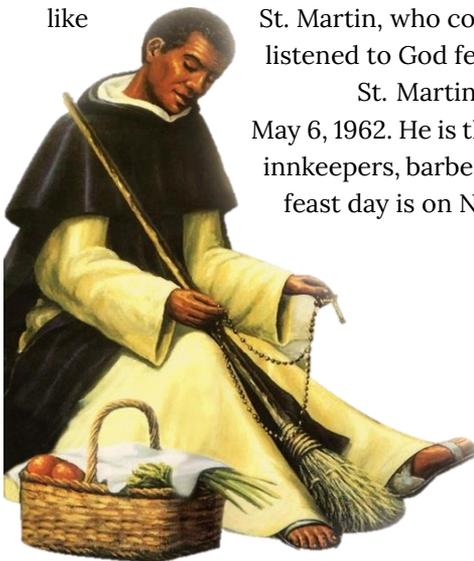
Martin grew up as a Dominican lay brother. In 1603, at the age of 24, he was donned with the religious habit of a lay brother. Martin was assigned to the infirmary, where he would remain in charge until his death. He became well known for his virtues, carefully and patiently caring for the sick and elderly, even in the most trying situations of his life.

This saintly slave and friar is an embodiment of the virtues of patience, fortitude, and humility. Despite his experiences of rejection, he remained strong in his desire to serve the people and the church through his simple ways and assignments inside the convent. His life was an emblem of God's graciousness and mercy. He made sure that his entire life would be a way of witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus, on serving the least of the brethren. As a friar, his life reflected how to live common life, despite his mixed racial origin.

***If there is one thing we can learn from the life of St. Martin, it is not to focus on the rejection. Rather, to raise our eyes to what is the most essential – the fulfillment of God's will and love here on earth.*** Let us offer to God in solitude and silence all that disturbs us emotionally: pain, anger, and guilt. For sure, God will make something new and better for us. He is here and will always be here in the darkest and deepest corners of our hearts, like

St. Martin, who contemplated everything in his heart and listened to God fervently.

St. Martin was canonized by Pope John XXIII on May 6, 1962. He is the patron saint of people of mixed race, innkeepers, barbers, public health workers, and more. His feast day is on November 3.



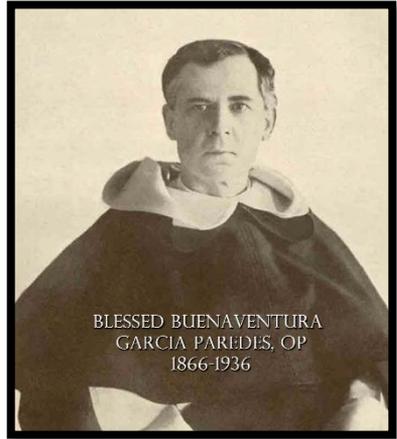
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## Weak in Body, Strong in Spirit

CATECHISM on the Memorial of Blessed Buenaventura Garcia Paredes OP and companion martyrs in Spain  
by Br. Francis Hyle M. De Leon

*“Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”* (2 Cor. 12:10) These were the words St. Paul addressed in his second letter to the Corinthians. It is in our weakness that we are strong because, God’s grace is sufficient for our mission. This is what we can learn from the life of the holy men, we celebrate today, Blessed Buenaventura Garcia Paredes OP and his companions, martyred during the Spanish Civil war.



Blessed Buenaventura was born in Spain, and as he was growing like all the other children in town, he was always sick. Because of this, he had to transfer schools. But this didn’t stop him from achieving academic excellence, obtaining, in fact, a doctorate in both Philosophy and Letters, and Jurisprudence. As a friar he was sent to the Philippines to teach at the University of Santo Tomas. In the year 1926, he was elected Master General of the Order of Preachers. He didn’t want to accept this office and decided to throw himself to the ground, asking to be spared. But seeing the insistence of the members of the Chapter, he accepted the office in the spirit of obedience.

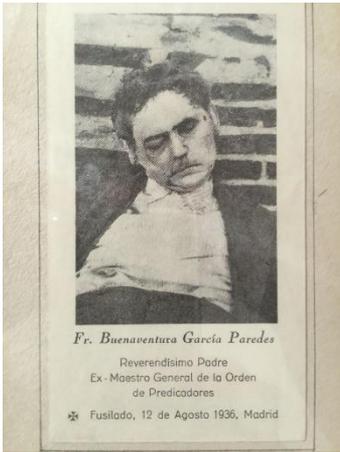
His term as a Master General was filled with achievements, which however, did not spare him from issues. A serious problem once surfaced in the Order, which affected his weak health. It is said that some friars were connected to a movement condemned by the Pope. He was asked to investigate this but the delay in the investigation did not please the Holy See. Weakened by his poor health to carry on the heavy burden of his office, he resigned. He returned to Spain, and lived there in peace not until the Spanish Civil War began.

The Civil War ensued in 1936, when the Popular Front of the Communists in Spain won the election. This led to the persecution of the opposing side, which included the Christians, especially priests. Blessed Buenaventura went into hiding, and planned to go back to the Philippines

for refuge, but he was not able to because his documents were denied on account of him of “being a religious.” He never stopped celebrating mass even in secret, and never lost faith in God. In August of the same year, he was found staying in a pension, and was arrested and killed at a small road in a suburb in Madrid. His body was found dead, with a rosary and breviary. His last words before he was killed was, “I know why and for what you are taking me. I have not committed any crime except that of being a priest and a religious. What a pity, O God! The divine providence has willed this.”

Blessed Buenaventura was not the only victim of the persecution in Spain. There were more than 400 men and women, both religious and lay who suffered and were martyred during this persecution, and gain their crown of glory by means of fighting for their faith. They did not heed the call of the devil to renounce their faith. Today, November 6, we celebrate the courage these martyrs have manifested for our faith, and for the glory of God.

***The life of Blessed Buenaventura teaches us that amidst our weaknesses, and sickness, we are strong because God will be our strength.*** True to the message of St. Paul, God’s grace is sufficient for us and with this grace we are strong. We boast of our weaknesses for through these, we glorify God, and God makes us strong. All we have to do was to be steadfast in faith, and not be shaken and be carried away by the wickedness of the world.



## ***Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome***

REFLECTION on the FEAST of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome (Jn 2:13-22)  
by Br. Lawrence J. Pacatang

Every 9th of November in the liturgical calendar, we celebrate the feast and anniversary of the dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome—one of the four major basilicas of the Roman Catholic Church. Emperor Constantine erected it over the former site of the Lateran Palace around 318-324 AD, which the noble Laterani family had owned, hence its name. Being the oldest of the four major basilicas, the first ever Papal Palace (housing popes for nearly a millennium from the 4th century until the 13th century), the cathedral of the bishop of Rome (which is the Pope), and

having been the site of 5 ecumenical councils (the Lateran Councils); it possesses the title “mother and head of all churches of Rome and the world” (omnium ecclesiarum Urbis et Orbis mater et caput).

Today, despite its antiquity—having been around for a little bit more than 17 centuries already, the Lateran Basilica still remains to be one of the Catholic Church’s greatest unifying emblems. Nevertheless, we should not forget that we Christians, are the very living stones of the Church, which is the body of Jesus Christ, bound up and held together by the mortar of our baptism. Thus, just as Jesus commanded in the Gospel today to keep the physical churches holy because they are consecrated to be the dwelling places of God, so also should we keep ourselves holy, for when we got baptized, we have been consecrated to that very same purpose as well—to be a part of Christ’s Body, the Church. So, we never stop trying, never stop aspiring, never stop persevering: to be holy, like Christ!



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## SAN ALBERTUS MAGNUS

CATECHISM on the FEAST of St. Albert the Great, OP

By Br. Cherwi Jonatan

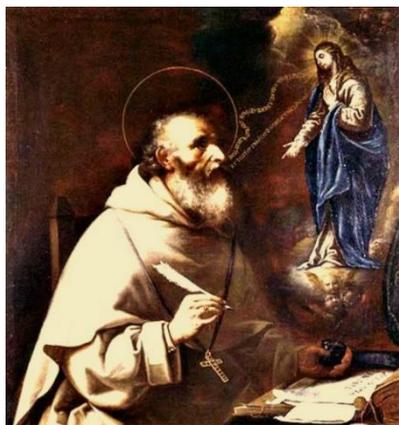
ST. ALBERT THE GREAT, also known as Albertus Magnus, was born around 1200 in Lauingen, Bavaria, into a noble German family. He received a classical education and later studied at the University of Padua, where he encountered the works of Aristotle—an influence that would shape his intellectual legacy. In 1223, Albert joined the Dominican Order, dedicating his life to scholarship, teaching, and spiritual service. His reputation as a brilliant thinker grew rapidly, leading to teaching appointments in Cologne, Hildesheim,



Freiburg, Regensburg, Strasbourg, and eventually the University of Paris, the most prestigious academic institution of the time.

Albert's most enduring contribution lies in his synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy with Christian theology. At a time when Aristotle's works were being rediscovered and often viewed with suspicion by the Church, Albert championed their study. He believed that reason and empirical observation were not threats to faith but tools to deepen understanding of divine truth. He wrote commentaries on nearly all of Aristotle's known works, interpreting them through a Christian lens and laying the foundation for Scholasticism—a method of learning that dominated medieval universities and influenced generations of theologians, including his most famous student, St. Thomas Aquinas.

His theological writings are vast and varied, including commentaries on the Bible and treatises on ethics, metaphysics, and the nature of God. Albert emphasized the compatibility of revelation and reason, arguing that theology could benefit from philosophical inquiry. He believed that knowledge of the natural world could lead to a greater understanding of God, a conviction that underpinned his scientific investigations and distinguished him from many of his contemporaries.



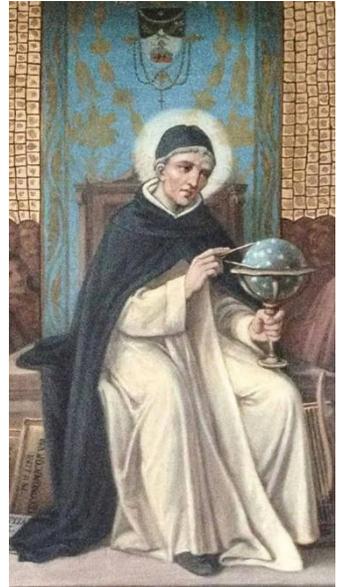
Albert's curiosity extended far beyond theology and philosophy. He was one of the first medieval scholars to systematically study the natural sciences. His works on botany, zoology, astronomy, mineralogy, and alchemy reflect a deep commitment to empirical observation. In his treatise *De Mineralibus*, Albert described various minerals and their properties, and he is credited with isolating the element arsenic. His botanical studies included detailed descriptions of plants, their medicinal uses, and their ecological contexts. In zoology, he cataloged animal species and behaviors with remarkable accuracy for his time. His scientific method—based on observation, classification, and analysis—anticipated the principles of modern science. He rejected superstition and emphasized the importance of evidence, making him a pioneer in the empirical tradition.

In 1260, Albert was appointed Bishop of Regensburg by Pope Alexander IV. Though he accepted the position out of obedience, he resigned after three years to return to teaching and writing. During his tenure, he worked to reform the clergy and improve the administration of the diocese. He also played a role in Church diplomacy and attended several important councils, defending the teachings of Thomas Aquinas and helping shape the intellectual climate of the Church in the 13th century.

Albert died in Cologne in 1280, and his tomb remains a site of pilgrimage. He was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1931 and declared a Doctor of the Church, a title reserved for saints whose writings have significantly contributed to Catholic doctrine. His feast day is celebrated on November 15, and he is recognized as the patron saint of scientists, philosophers, and students of the natural sciences. His legacy continues in the fields of theology, philosophy, and science, where he is remembered as a visionary who saw no conflict between faith and reason. Albert's life exemplifies the pursuit of truth through both divine revelation and empirical investigation. His integration of Aristotelian philosophy into Christian theology transformed medieval thought and laid the groundwork for Scholasticism. His scientific inquiries demonstrated that faith need not fear reason, and that the natural world reflects divine order. In an age often divided between science and spirituality, Albert's legacy offers a powerful reminder that the

two can coexist and enrich one another. His work continues to inspire scholars, theologians, and scientists, affirming the timeless value of intellectual curiosity guided by faith.

St. Albert the Great teaches us that faith and reason are not enemies but companions on the journey to truth. He believed that by studying the natural world, we could come to know the Creator more deeply. For him, science and theology were two paths leading to the same divine reality. **His life reminds us that learning, thinking, and questioning are not threats to faith but acts of worship when they seek the truth with humility.** In every discovery, he saw the fingerprints of God, and in every mystery of creation, he found a reason to praise the Creator. Albert's example also reminds us to unite intellect with love and humility. True wisdom, he taught, is not for pride or power, but for service and understanding. By using our knowledge for the good of others, we reflect the light of God's wisdom in the world. His life invites us to see no division between prayer and study, between the Church and the laboratory. Like St. Albert, to seek truth in all things—trusting that every genuine insight, whether born of faith or science, leads us closer to the One who is Truth itself.



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## DO NOT BE AFRAID, *Just Have Faith*

REFLECTION on the 33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (Lk 21:5-19)  
by Br. Francis Hyle M. De Leon

Some religions would say, “Kami lang ang maliligtas!” or “Malapit na ang katapusan ng mundo, sumanib na kayo sa amin.” These are just common noises we hear from other Christian sects when we pass by the market, in front of our favorite fast-food chain, and even in front of the church. They always talk about the end of times. Some would even use many Bible verses to strengthen their point. Is the end really near? When do we need to start changing ourselves? Do we really need to transfer to a religion?

The Gospel today is somewhat difficult to hear for it talks about destruction, persecutions, tribulation, separation, and even betrayal. It seems to be the end. Well, it really talks about the coming end of times. Everything here on Earth will cease to exist, all these magnificent infrastructures, churches, landmarks, and monuments. It is like the reversal of the Creation story, where everything is destroyed but one. We are saved from the destruction for we are God's beloved.



The end of times will test us. It will test our faith in God, how we cling to Him and his commands. We will be persecuted because of our faith in Him. Some will die in foreign lands, lose their family members, experience suffering, and even betrayed by their own friends, families, and loved ones. However, amidst all these horrendous things, God promised that not a hair on our head will be destroyed. He will never leave us. We only need to have faith in Him, keep this faith until the end, and we will achieve that eternal life He prepared for us.

This 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time prepares us for the coming kingship of Jesus Christ. He will come victorious and all his beloved will be brought to his heavenly abode to live in peace. What matters in the end is love. It is our love for God that saved us. The Lord will come to rule the earth with justice. Even if it were to be destroyed by war against the evil one, He will renew it to be our heavenly and eternal abode. He will make everything new for his beloved.

***The Gospel today reminds us to be steadfast, and continue to persevere in faith.*** We may experience being rejected by others, to the point that even our families are against our beliefs, this must not stop us to cling to God, and put ourselves to Him. In the end, we will not have anything to hope and believe for we are already united with God. It is not yet late to change our lives, to align it to the will of God, for God is the only one who knows when the end of times will occur. However, we must not delay this change, let us not be complacent. We don't need to change religions, for God is beyond religion. We only need to have faith in Him and continue to do good work. Let us continue to do good, amend our lives, and help each other attain Heaven.



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## The Crucified King

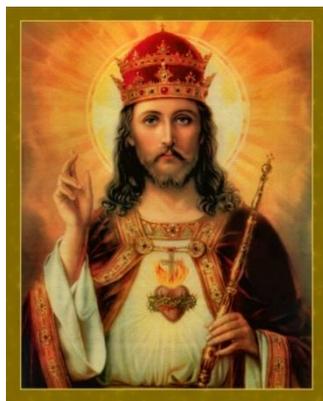
REFLECTION on the SOLEMNITY of Christ the King (Lk 23:35–43)  
Br. Michael S. Pepania, Jr.

As the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, we are reminded that Jesus is not just a teacher, healer, or prophet—He is the King of all creation. But unlike the kings we often imagine, Jesus shows us a very different kind of kingship. In our gospel today, we see Jesus not in glory, but in suffering. He is hanging on a cross, surrounded by people who mock Him and question His power. They say, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” But Jesus does not respond with anger or miracles.

Instead, He remains silent, accepting the pain and humiliation, reigning through humility, compassion, and sacrificial love. **His kingship is not defined by control or conquest, but by His willingness to suffer for others, to forgive even in His final moments, and to uplift the forgotten and the broken.**

The Gospel passage from Luke, often read during this solemn feast, presents a striking image of Jesus on the cross. He is mocked by soldiers and religious leaders, dismissed by the crowd, and even ridiculed by one of the criminals crucified beside Him. Yet amid the humiliation and pain, Jesus remains silent, choosing mercy over retaliation. It is in this moment that the other criminal, often called the “good thief,” recognizes the truth: Jesus is not a failed messiah, but a King whose kingdom is not of this world. With a humble heart, he says, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom”—expressing faith, humility, and hope. Jesus responds with a promise that echoes through time: “Today you will be with me in Paradise.”

This story teaches us several important lessons. First, it reminds us that true leadership is not about being the strongest or most popular. Jesus leads by example, showing humility, patience, and love even in the face of suffering. Second, it shows us that no one is too far gone for God’s mercy. The good thief had made mistakes, but in his final moments, he turned to Jesus and was welcomed into Heaven. This gives hope to all of us, especially when we feel unworthy or lost. Third, it encourages us to look beyond appearances. The good thief saw a King in a man who was beaten and dying. In our own lives, we are called to see Jesus in the poor, the sick, and those who are suffering. Lastly, it reminds us that the cross is not a symbol of defeat—it is a sign of victory. Through His death, Jesus opened the gates of Heaven and showed us the depth of His love.



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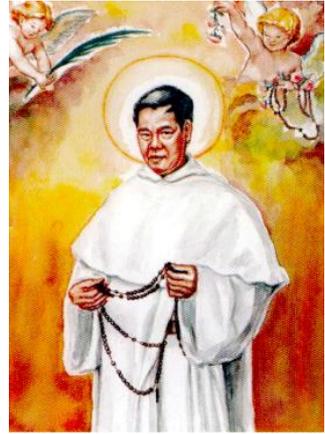
## ST. VINCENT Liem Dela Paz

CATECHISM on the MEMORIAL of St. Vincent Liem Dela Paz  
by Br. Kodikara Arachchige Tehan Sampath Sri Dalas Perera

ST. VINCENT LIEM DELA PAZ was born in 1732 in Trà Lũ, a village in Nam Định Province, Vietnam. His parents were Christians, and when he became very ill as a baby, he was baptized by a missionary priest. He was given the name Vincent and later moved to a missionary center to learn more about the Catholic faith.

In 1738, a special opportunity was offered to students from Vietnam to study in the Philippines. Vincent was one of five young men selected to go there. He studied at Colegio de San Juan de Letran and later at the University of Santo Tomas. After completing his education, Vincent joined the Dominican Order and became a priest in 1758. He returned to Vietnam in 1759 to serve as a priest and professor at Trung Linh Seminary.

At that time, the Vietnamese government was very hostile towards Christians. They saw Christianity as a threat and started arresting and killing many Christians, including priests like Vincent. In 1773, Vincent and some of his fellow priests were arrested. They were beaten and taken on a long journey to face trial. **Despite the suffering, they continued to preach and stay strong in their faith.** The king sentenced them to death for refusing to deny Christ, and Vincent was beheaded on November 7, 1773.



After his death, Vincent's body was taken by fellow Christians and buried in Trung Linh. His story, along with the stories of other martyrs from Vietnam, was later shared with the Church. In 1909, Pope Pius X beatified Vincent and other martyrs. Later, in 1988, Pope John Paul II canonized Vincent Liem Dela Paz and 116 other Vietnamese martyrs, recognizing their courage and faith. Their feast day is celebrated on November 24 each year.

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## Advent Na!

REFLECTION on the First Sunday of Advent  
by Br. Khen Airon A. Yonzon

Mga kaigsoonan ko diha ni Kristo  
(My dear brothers and sisters in Christ),

Have you seen boys and girls selling lanterns in the streets? Parang nakasilip na yata si Jose Mari Chan sa pintuan ng bahay nyo. May nakita ka na bang parol na kumikislap sa kalsada o gate ng mga bahay? Maybe someone in your neighborhood has already lit up their Christmas decor. May nagsindi na ba ng ilaw sa bahay ninyo? Itinayo nyo naba ang Christmas tree? O baka naman, sinimulan n'yo na ang magplano ng noche buena?

Today is the First Sunday of Advent, and this marks the beginning of our Christmas season. Pero teka, Advent is not just about shopping, decorations, or waiting for gifts. It's really about preparing our hearts. Advent is a time to pause and reflect—handa na ba talaga tayo sa pagdating ni Hesus? Just like we prepare our homes for Christmas, we are also being invited to prepare our hearts for Jesus.

And the Church reminds us: Jesus is not only coming as a baby in a manger; He is coming again—sa muling pagbabalik Niya. The Gospel today brings us that wake-up call, not to scare us, but to invite us to live, always ready. “Be awake, be alert!”—yan ang panawagan sa atin ngayong linggo. How can I be ready? What kind of preparation is God asking from me this Advent?

In today's Gospel, Jesus talks about how His coming will be like the time of Noah. People were busy doing their usual routine—eating, drinking, getting married—until the flood came and caught them by surprise. Ganun din daw ang pagdating ng Anak ng Tao. It will come unexpectedly, like a thief (magnanakaw) in the night. Kaya ang tanong: are we ready, or are we distracted?

Jesus isn't telling us to panic or live in fear. He's telling us to live with purpose, to be watchful. “Magbantay kayo,” sabi ni Hesus. Watchfulness means not wasting time on things that don't matter. It means choosing kindness, forgiveness, and love, kahit mahirap minsan. It means praying even when we're tired, and doing what is right kahit walang nakakakita. It means devoting ourselves to Him daily, no matter how long it takes, and never giving up, no matter the obstacles. Persistent prayer, rooted in love, can transform us.



This Advent, Jesus is inviting us to stay spiritually awake. Because when we are awake, we won't miss His presence—every single day. He comes in the smile of a friend, in the silence of prayer, in the chance to help someone. So let's not sleepwalk through life. “Be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Let's take this message seriously—but also with joy. Because Advent is not just waiting; it's joyful expectation.

So what's the big message here? Maybe it's this: Don't just prepare your house—prepare your heart. The lights and trees are great, pero mas mahalaga yung liwanag ng puso natin. Are we lighting the way for others through our actions? Are we making room for Jesus by letting go of anger, envy, or pride? Are we ready to persist in love, to be patient with those around us, and to devote ourselves to God's will, even when it's hard?

Sometimes we get too busy, even during Christmas. We focus on gifts, parties, TikTok trends, or anything that we aspire to get in life. But the best gift we can give Jesus this season is a heart that's awake and ready. It could be as simple as saying “sorry”; loving someone you hold dear even if they are far away; helping someone in need, or taking time to pray each day for yourself and those whom you cherish. Maliit man na bagay, malaking handog sa Diyos.

This Gospel reminds us: life is short, time is precious. So why not live meaningfully today? Let's not wait until we “feel ready.” Let's choose to be ready now. The joy of Advent is not just in waiting, but in preparing with love. Because Jesus doesn't just come once a year—He comes every moment we welcome Him.

So this week, as we light the first candle of the Advent wreath, let it be a reminder: Lord, keep my heart awake, alert, and always ready, filled with love, patience, and unwavering devotion.

Maayong unang domingo sa Adbiyento (Happy first Sunday of Advent)!



# 13<sup>th</sup> 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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*Come, Join Us!*

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