

#### DOMINICAN NOVITIATE OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Manaoag, Pangasinan

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# What's on

#### **SEPTEMBER 2025**

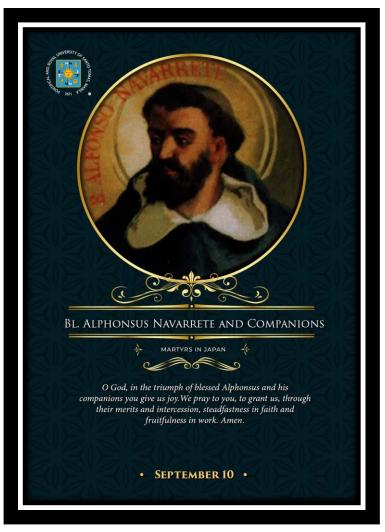
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The Word Made Easy for All.....

**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 and short catechesis regarding our faith and lives of saints.

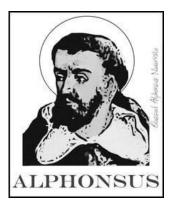
## Eatechism of the Month



"Alphonsus displayed remarkable bravery. He continued to preach, assist the poor, and secretly baptize new Christians, all the while caring deeply for children and the sick. Despite the constant threat of arrest or even death, he remained committed to helping those in need."

Br. Kodikara Arachchige Tehan Sampath Sri Dalas Perera





#### BLESSED ALPHONSUS NAVARRETE

was a dedicated Catholic priest and missionary. Born in 1571 in Spain to a wealthy and noble family, he made a bold choice to become a Dominican friar, leaving behind his riches to follow the path of Jesus. His heart was set on spreading God's message, which led him to embark on a missionary journey. He first made his way to the Philippines and then to Japan, where he aimed to share the Catholic faith with the people.

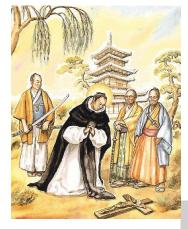
During that time, being a Christian in Japan was incredibly dangerous. The government strictly prohibited the practice of Christianity. Yet, Alphonsus displayed remarkable bravery. He continued to preach, assist the poor, and secretly baptize new Christians, all the while caring deeply for children and the sick. Despite the constant threat of arrest or even death, he remained committed to helping those in need.

In 1617, Alphonsus, along with two fellow Christians—Blessed Ferdinand Ayala, a priest, and Blessed Leo Tanaka, a Japanese layman—was arrested. They were pressured to renounce their faith in Jesus, but they stood firm. Their unwavering belief ultimately led to their execution by beheading on June 1, 1617. To prevent people from honoring them, their bodies were cast into the sea, but their legacy endured.

Alphonsus and his companions are celebrated as heroes of the Catholic faith. They are part of a larger group known as the 205 Martyrs of Japan, who sacrificed their lives for their beliefs. In 1867, the Pope

recognized them as "Blessed," honoring their holy lives and sacrifices. Many of these martyrs were Dominicans, just like Alphonsus.

Today, Catholics commemorate Blessed Alphonsus on his feast day, 10 September. He inspires us to remain steadfast in our faith and to show love to others, even in challenging times. His life serves as a powerful reminder that true courage comes from trusting in God, and that even in the face of danger, we can still spread love and hope throughout the world.



# SEPTEMBER

#### Life is Full of Choices: And They're Not Always Easy

REFLECTION on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (Luke 14:25-33) by Br. Khen Airon A. Yonzon

Let's be real—bawat araw, punong-puno ng desisyon ang buhay natin. Minsan simple lang: "Anong kakainin ko?" or "Matutulog pa ba ako, babangon na ba ako at papasok na?" But there are also big ones—like choosing who to trust, what path to take, or even when to walk away from something. And have you noticed? The most meaningful choices

usually come with sacrifice. Like when you study instead of going out, or when you forgive someone who hurt you. Hindi laging masaya. Hindi laging madali. Pero worth it. Life teaches us early on: if you want something great, you have to let go of something good. That's just how it works. Kaya when Jesus talks about "counting the cost" of following Him, relatable

'yun eh. Because whether you're religious or not, you've probably felt the weight of making a hard, life-changing choice.

Wait... Did Jesus Really Say That? In this Gospel, Jesus turns to the crowd and says something that probably made people stop walking: "Anyone who comes to Me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children... even their own life—cannot be My disciple." Grabe, Lord. Parang sobra naman 'yon! But here's the thing—hindi literal na "hate" ang ibig sabihin Niya. He's using strong language to make a strong point: "If you want to follow Me, I have to come first—above everything and everyone." Not because He's selfish, but because He knows that only when He's first will



the rest of your life fall into place. He even gives examples: a builder making sure he can finish the tower, and a king checking if he has enough troops. In short: pag-isipan mo muna bago ka magsimula. Following Jesus isn't for show. It's not just a status. It's a daily commitment. Kaya tanong: Handa ka ba talagang sumunod kahit may kailangang isuko?

Jesus Doesn't Want Half-Hearted Followers. Let's be honest—madaling maging "part-time" Christian. We pray when we need something, go to Mass when it's convenient, or post Bible quotes online. But what happens when following Jesus gets uncomfortable? When we have to say no to peer pressure? Or when we feel alone because we chose what's right? That's where this Gospel hits hard. Jesus is asking us: Are you really in this, or just when it's easy? Because following Him isn't just about believing in

Him—it's about living like Him. And that means sacrifice, love, forgiveness, humility. Oo, mahirap. Pero hindi ka nag-iisa. Jesus carries the cross with you. He knows how heavy it is—He carried His own. But He also knows how beautiful the reward is when you carry it with love.



It's not about losing—it's about gaining something greater. Here's the twist: akala natin sumusuko tayo sa maraming bagay kapag sinusunod natin si Jesus, but in reality, we're actually gaining something so much better. You might lose temporary comfort—but gain lasting peace. You might lose a toxic friendship—but gain a real, faithful one. You might give up control—but find purpose. Jesus is not trying to take away your joy—He's inviting you to a deeper, more meaningful kind of joy. One that doesn't depend on likes, applause, or popularity. One that stays even when life gets messy. Sabi nga ng iba, "Ang tunay na mahal, ipinaglalaban." If we truly love God, then we'll fight to put Him first—above feelings, fears, or even our own plans. Because what He has in store is so much greater than anything we could plan for ourselves.

So... Are You In, or Are You Out? So now we're here. Jesus has laid it all out. No sugar-coating. No false promises. Just the truth: "Count the cost. Carry your cross. Follow Me." Parang ang bigat, pero ang totoo, Siya rin ang tutulong sa atin. He knows your struggles. He sees your efforts. He



understands your hesitations. But still—He calls you. Because He believes in you. Ikaw, ready ka na bang sumagot? Are you ready to follow Him, even if it means letting go of things that don't lead you closer to Him? Remember: He's not looking for perfect people. He's looking for real hearts. Hearts that say, "Lord, I don't have it all figured out... pero susubukan kong sumunod." And that simple, yes? That's where the real journey begins.

#### SEPTEMBER

#### MARY: Our Advocate of Hope

CATECHISM on the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady by Br. Jim Mark G. Orlan

The catholic faithful, especially in the Philippines, have a deep devotion to the Blessed Mother. We can trace the diversity of practices reflected in our cultures and traditions back through our history. These expressions are highlighted in religio-sociological contexts. devotions are showcased in dance, song, and playing of musical instruments Several regions celebrate their feasts through in the form of festivals.

> colorful and artful festivals. This way of giving honor not only enriches the theological aspects of our

devotions but also enhances our historical knowledge of how things came into being. Other expressions of our devotion to the Blessed Mother are through visual arts. We can see in our churches and historical institutions, such as museums archives, how the early Filipinos preserved their religious heritage through paintings and sculptures. Our known artifacts would tell the richness of the people's love for the

Blessed Mother. Hence, we are called "Pueblo

Amante de Maria," or "People in love with Mary."

Today, September 8, 2025, we are celebrating the Nativity of Our Lady in the entire church. This feast is believed to have been first celebrated in the fifth or sixth century in the East and was tied to the dedication of a Byzantine church near the Pools of Bethesda in the Old City of Jerusalem, where the house of Sts. Joachim and Anne are believed to have been erected just a small distance away from the temple. In the twelfth century, the current Basilica of Saint Anne was built on the same site. Beneath the basilica lie what are believed to be the caves in which the mother of God was born and lived.

This feast is closely connected to our celebration of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on December 8 every year. It falls nine months before the celebration of the birth of the Virgin. The Catholic Church honors three important figures whose birthdays we celebrate: Jesus on December 25th (Christmas Day), John the Baptist on June 24th, and the Blessed Mother on September 8th. The profundity of this celebration is to highlight not the Blessed Mother's merit as the mother of God but the Despite the tremendous privilege the Blessed

Mother obtained from God, as the Theotokos (God's bearer), she remained hidden and obedient. Not much is written about her in the scriptures, but her life is certainly lived fully with the Lord Jesus on earth until his death. In the Gospel of Luke, we can imagine the narrative in which the Blessed Mother served her cousin Elizabeth during her pregnancy of St. John the Baptist. Aside from this. traditions also hold that she served the Apostles, temporally and spiritually, in their ministries of proclaiming the good news of our salvation to the world. We cannot deny that until this time, she has been continually

interceding for all of us, assisting us in our needs. Today's feast of the Blessed Virgin honors her not only as the mother of God but the gift of her personhood, constantly responding to the cries of her children. Truly, the Blessed Mother is our advocate of hope.

**SEPTEMBER** 

#### Before It's Death, Now Life

**REFLECTION** on the **FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY** CROSS (Jn 3:13-17)

by Br. Francis Hyle M. De Leon

In the movie, "The Lion King", I remember the scene where the child, Simba, being raised to the sky for everyone to see. This child was the heir to the throne of the kingdom. He became a sign of hope for the whole Unbeknownst to himself, Simba would shoulder a great kingdom. responsibility in the future and live a normal life until the time of his kingship arrived.

In today's Gospel, we hear the very famous biblical passage regarding our faith as Christians. "For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life." God the Father loves us so much that he is willing to sacrifice his only Son, whom he dearly loves. Jesus died on the cross for us. He is raised into the sky for everyone to see. He is lifted up as a sign of terror for the Jews during those days. Now, he has become a sign of salvation for us. He was lifted up into the sky for everyone to see – a person who loves. We see a person who sacrificed himself for the salvation of mankind out of his endless love for humanity.

The Son of God didn't come to the world to lord over humanity but to live among them and save them from death by being lifted up for everyone to see. Just like the bronze serpent during the time of Moses, Jesus, mounted on a cross, was also lifted up for everyone to see. Those who

will surely have eternal life, which Jesus had already won for us through His death on the cross. The death we are bound to experience was defeated by Jesus himself, so us not experience a greater suffering. We only need to believe in Him, and we will enjoy the promises of Eternal Life.



Today we also celebrate the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, or the Triumph of the Cross. The cross which was formerly a sign of humiliation and punishment, has become our sign of faith, hope, love, and salvation. The cross that was formerly a sign of death became a sign of life. This is how important the cross is to our faith and our lives as Christians.

We make the sign of the cross every time we pray, when we pass by a church, and when we are blessed with holy water. It is sad to see people ashamed of making the sign of the cross in public. Some would make a small sign; some, as fast as a blink of an eye; some don't even finish; it's as if it is still a sign of humiliation. But that cross saved us from sin, from a death that we deserve. We should be proud of that cross. Without it, we are still in danger of death, not merely in our bodies but more so in our soul.



Just like Simba, Jesus was lifted up as a sign of hope. He is lifted up, mounted on a cross, bearing all our guilt and becoming the sacrificial lamb, gaining us our salvation and victory over death. As we continue to journey here on Earth, we must remember that Jesus died for us and defeated death once and for all. His cross is the cross of salvation, which saved us, and we must not be ashamed of this cross, but celebrate it with due respect. Jesus's victory is our victory. Only through him can we achieve eternal life.

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#### Saint John Macias, OP: The Hidden Friar

CATECHISM on the Memorial of St. John Macias, OP by Br. Cherwi Jonatan

**SAINT JOHN MACIAS**, a humble lay brother of the Dominican Order, is venerated for his profound charity, contemplative spirit, and unwavering service to the poor. Born in 1585 in Ribera del Fresno, Spain, he was orphaned at a young age and worked as a shepherd, developing a deep interior life rooted in solitude and prayer. Drawn by a quiet but persistent

call to religious life, he eventually sailed to the New World and entered the Dominican convent of Saint Mary Magdalene in Lima, Peru. There, he served as the porter for over twenty years—a role that placed him at the threshold of the monastery, welcoming guests, distributing alms, and attending to the needs of the poor. Though he held no clerical office, his sanctity radiated through simple acts of mercy and deep devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Rosary. Canonized in 1975 by Pope Paul VI, his feast is celebrated on September 18.





Saint John Macias exemplifies the Dominican charism in its most hidden and tender form. His life was marked by a profound union with God through contemplative prayer, often spending hours before the Blessed Sacrament while maintaining a tireless commitment to the corporal works of mercy. He fed hundreds of the poor relving solely divine on providence, was known for and miraculous interventions and spiritual counsel. His humility was so deep that he never sought recognition, and yet his holiness became a beacon for all who encountered him. He lived the Gospel not through preaching, but through presence—his silent witness becoming a

living sermon of compassion, simplicity, and joy. In him, the Dominican vocation found expression not in the pulpit, but in the doorway, where Christ Himself is met in the poor and the stranger.

As a novice, I find in Saint John Macias a quiet but piercing invitation to embrace the hiddenness of formation. His life reminds me that sanctity does not begin with eloquence or achievement, but with surrendersurrender to the rhythm of prayer, to the humility of service, and to the slow, interior shaping of the soul. In the silence of the cloister, in the

repetition of daily tasks, and in the unseen sacrifices, I am learning to meet Christ not in grand gestures, but in the small fidelity of each moment. Saint John's example teaches the threshold—the place that welcome, of listening, of giving-is itself a sacred space. For lay faithful, his witness is equally profound: holiness is not reserved for religious life, but is accessible in every vocation, wherever love is poured out generously and prayer becomes the breath of daily living. His life is a gentle reminder that the path to heaven often begins at the door-where we meet Christ in others, and where we learn to open our hearts to grace.





#### Sts. Andrew Kim Taegon, Paul Chong Hasang and Companion Martyrs

CATECHISM on the Memorial of Sts. Andrew Kim Taegon, Paul Chong Hasang and Companion Martyrs | By Br. Rassched Chevy U. Avilla

#### SAINTS ANDREW KIM TAEGON AND PAUL CHONG HASANG.

together with their companions, are venerated as the Korean Martyrs—103 courageous witnesses who gave their lives for Christ during the fierce persecutions of the 19th century. Saint Andrew Kim, the first Korean-born Catholic priest, endured exile, secrecy, and danger to pursue his vocation, studying in Macau and being ordained in Shanghai before returning to



Korea to minister in perilous conditions. Saint Paul Chong Hasang, a lay catechist and leader, sustained the Korean Church decades during clergy, without organizing underground communities and petitioning Rome for missionary support. companions included men, women, and children from

every walk of life—nobility and peasants, catechists and converts—who embraced martyrdom with unwavering faith. Canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1984, they are commemorated on September 20 and honored as patrons of Korea and models of steadfast Christian witness.

The lives of Saints Andrew Kim and Paul Chong Hasang exemplify

the virtues of courage, perseverance, humility, and missionary zeal. Andrew Kim's priesthood was forged in hardship, marked by hidden formation and fearless ministry. He embraced his calling not for prestige but for sacrificial service, ultimately laying down his life for the Gospel. Paul Chong Hasang's leadership as a layman was equally heroic—he guided the faithful with wisdom, wrote eloquent appeals to the Vatican, and prepared the Church to receive ordained ministers. Both saints reveal that sanctity is not confined to one state of life; it is found wherever faith is lived with integrity and love. Their

companions, too, bore witness to the universality of holiness, showing that martyrdom is not the culmination of greatness, but the fruit of daily fidelity to Christ.

The lives of Andrew Kim Taegon and Paul Chong Hasang are not distant relics of history. They are living icons of formation, surrender, and mission. Andrew Kim's hidden years of study and exile reflect the solitude and discipline we embrace in religious life, while Paul Chong Hasang's lay leadership reminds us that even before ordination or profession, we are called to serve with courage and conviction. Their witness urges us to let

our formation be more than preparation—it must be transformation, a daily dying to self so that Christ may live more fully in us. For lay faithful, their example is equally compelling: holiness is not reserved for the cloister or the altar, but is cultivated in homes, workplaces, and communities. Whether one is a parent, student, farmer, or teacher, the Korean Martyrs remind us that fidelity to Christ in the ordinary can become extraordinary when offered with love. Their legacy calls all of us—religious and lay alike—to live with hearts ablaze, ready to give everything for the One who gave Himself for us.



# SEPTEMBER 21

#### God or Mammon?

REFLECTION on the 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (Lk16:1-13) by Br. Yoga Dwi Kaswara

Brothers and sisters in Christ, in the gospel today, Jesus teaches that faithfulness in small matters shows our readiness for greater responsibilities, and that no one can serve two masters—God and wealth. We are reminded to respect the property of others and to act with justice and generosity. Our possessions are not ours alone; they are gifts from God meant to be used for the good of all, especially the poor. When we treat



resources as tools for service rather than as idols, we grow in holiness and prepare our hearts for the true riches of heaven. This is why Jesus warns us not to let wealth become our master—it can easily blind us to eternal treasures.

Christ is our one Mediator, who perfectly shows us how to live in full obedience to the Father. In His earthly life, He was faithful with the mission entrusted to Him, even to the point of the cross. He prayed not only for His own needs, but for the salvation of all people. As His disciples, we too are called to pray for others, placing their needs before our own. This includes interceding for leaders and rulers, asking

God to guide them in justice and humility so that the poor and vulnerable are protected. Prayer shapes our hearts to love what God loves and to act as His faithful stewards.

In a world that often measures success by wealth and power, Jesus' words remind us to set our eyes on God alone. Serving Him means using our gifts—time, talents, and resources—for His kingdom, rather than clinging to them for selfish gain. Faithfulness in small acts of kindness, honesty, and generosity opens the door to deeper trust from God. True discipleship is not about having much, but about loving much, especially the least among us. When Christ is our only Master, we find the freedom and joy that no amount of money can buy. And in serving Him, we store up treasures that will never fade.



# 28

#### Do Good While You Still Can! Believe While It's Not Yet Too Late!

REFLECTION on the 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Luke 16:19-31) | Br. Lawrence J. Pacatang

The Gospel of Luke 16:19–31, narrates the story of Lazarus the poor man and the rich man. To make the long story short, it goes that when both of them were still alive, the rich man always feasted while Lazarus just longed to eat scraps falling from the rich man's table. The dogs even came and licked the sores of Lazarus but still the rich man never bothered to at least give a decent portion of the food from his table to Lazarus. Now Lazarus died, and was taken up to heaven by the angels. At the same time, the rich man died, and was buried. Suffering now in hell, he asked Abraham

to send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water, to at least cool his tongue in hell. But then Abraham conveyed; when you were still alive, you didn't even bother to look at Lazarus. So the rich man, disappointed, just begged Abraham to send Lazarus to his living brothers, to warn them with his fate. But Abraham replied; "If they will not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced, even if someone is raised up from the dead".

Brothers and sisters, three lessons could be learned from this Gospel. First, be generous and do good while you still can. Regret always comes at the end. Our lives



are just fleeting. If here on earth, we are given much, God expects us to give much as well. It also means that we are not blessed for ourselves alone. We are meant to be blessings to others; to be instruments of God's providence. So, while we are still alive, while still able, give.

Second, do not do unto others, what you don't want them to do unto you. Inversely, do to others what you want them to do unto you. If you want God to pity you, have pity on others. If you want to be helped, help others as well. If you want to receive, give.



Lastly, have faith while it's not vet too late. Heaven is real. Hell is real And in our lives, the present moment is given by God for us to decide and choose which to enter. Game Shows like "PERA O KAHON" in WOWOWIN, one is given time to discern. The time is not infinite. time is short. Once it ends, there's no turning back. So now, while we are still alive, we still have time, we have faith and we decide well

**SEPTEMBER** 

#### The Word Made Easy for All

CATECHISM on the MEMORIAL of Saint Jerome by Br. Michael S. Pepania, Jr.

SAINT JEROME was born around 347 AD. in Stridon, near the borders of present-day Croatia and Slovenia, during a time when the Roman Empire was undergoing great cultural and religious

shifts. Raised in a Christian family, he was sent to Rome for education, where he mastered Latin and Greek and immersed himself in classical literature. Though baptized early in life, Jerome initially pursued worldly ambitions, valuing intellectual prestige over spiritual depth. His turning point came through a personal crisis of faith, leading him to retreat into the Syrian desert, where he embraced a life of asceticism, solitude, and intense study of Scripture. This period of purification and prayer

marked the beginning of his lifelong mission: to

make the Word of God more accessible and understood by all.

Saint Jerome's most significant contribution to the Church was his translation of the Bible into Latin, known as the Vulgate, commissioned by Pope Damasus I in 382 AD. Unlike earlier translations, Saint Jerome worked directly from Hebrew and Greek texts, striving for both linguistic accuracy and theological clarity. His translation became the standard version of the Bible for the Western Church for over a thousand years and laid the The Church commemorates Saint Jerome each year on September 30, honoring his tireless devotion to Scripture and his role in shaping the intellectual and spiritual life of Christianity. His famous quote, "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ," remains a powerful reminder that the Bible is not merely a historical text but the living voice of God. In today's world—where distractions abound and biblical literacy is often neglected—Saint Jerome's life calls us back to the discipline of study, the beauty of truth, and the necessity of grounding our faith in God's Word. As the patron saint

of biblical scholars, translators, librarians, and students, he continues to inspire those who seek wisdom through learning. His legacy challenges all believers to approach Scripture not just with curiosity, but with reverence, humility, and a desire to be transformed.



### 13th Century Dominican Blessing

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



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