A Weekly Publication of Our Lady of Penafrancia Basilica and National Shrine, Naga City, 4400 Philippines

March 25, 2012 | www.penafrancia.net | 5th Sunday of Lent

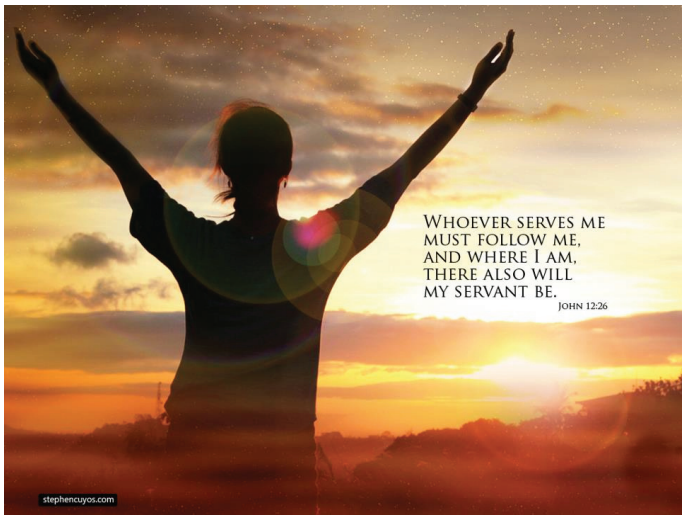
Are we Christians?

Fr. Wilmer Tria

The gospel this Sunday challenges us to follow the path of the cross. Jesus says: "Unless the grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat."

The narrative begins with a group of pilgrims who wanted to see Jesus. They chose Philip to intercede. Why Philip? First, he must be an approachable person. Second, he must be a person who would favour the pilgrims more than those who came to the feast for purely commercial reasons. To be sure that he succeeds, he tags Andrew along. Anyone who wants to become effective evangelizers must imitate Philip.

Perhaps, the Greeks were expecting to witness a circus. Jesus did not want to be treated like a performer. He drops a bomb to his guests. "Whoever loves his life loses it; and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life."



Jesus was not to entertain them through spectacular miracles. Like a grain of wheat, he was to be crushed to the ground instead.

After the Greeks, Jesus turns to us. "Hey, if you want to follow me, put your feet on the ground and walk with me. Choose the path that I take. It is the way of the cross. There are no detours. There are no short cuts." If we can give up meat on Fridays, can we give up our comfortable lives, and become generous with our time, talent and resources, for the love of others? We thank Alma Guiao, an OFW, who went out of her way, risked her life, to save the lives of 25 Filipinos in Syria.

Remember the movie '300'? When the Spartans came across the Arcadians, Daxos invited Leonidas to join forces against the invaders. He bragged that he had more soldiers than Leonidas. So Leonidas asked some of the Arcadians: Hey, you, what is your profession? One replied: a potter; Another, a sculptor; and another, a blacksmith. Then he turned to the 299 Spartans: Spartans! What is your profession?

The point of Leonidas was clear. His men were soldiers by profession. That was their identity. Unfortunately, to the Arcadians, it was not their identity but a mask to wear when situation called for it. The 300 Spartans who knew their identity had more worth than the 3,000 Arcadians who did not.

Are we Christians? Are we committed and loyal to our Lord, Jesus?

Daily Readings of the Week

Mar 25 Sun:	Jer 31:31-34/ Heb 5:7-9/ Jn 12:20-33
Mar 26 Mon:	Is 7:10-14; 8:10/ Heb 10:4-10/ Lk 1:26-38
Mar 27 Tues:	Nm 21:4-9/ Jn 8:21-30
Mar 28 Wed:	Dn 3:14-20, 91-92, 95/ Jn 8:31-42
Mar 29 Thurs:	Gn 17:3-9/ Jn 8:51-59
Mar 30 Fri:	Jer 20:10-13/ Jn 10:31-42
Mar 31 Sat:	Ez 37:21-28/ Jn 11:45-56

Sunday Gospel

John 3:14-21

"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you,
unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat;
but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it,
and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life.
Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be.
The Father will honor whoever serves me. "I am troubled now. Yet what should I say?
'Father, save me from this hour?' But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour.
Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven,
"I have glorified it and will glorify it again."

"Whoever loves his life loses it"

FEAST OF THE WEEK

Annunciation to Mary

March 25, 2012

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. —Luke 1:26-27

What was Mary's life like originally—before she learned that she was to become the mother of Israel's Messiah? While Luke's Gospel does not offer a lot of information about the mother of Jesus, it does tell us three important details that allow us to catch a glimpse of Mary's life before the angel Gabriel visited.

First, we learn that she lives in Nazareth. This was a small village in the region of Galilee. Jesus' coming from such an obscure village will cause him trouble later in his public ministry. Some will question how he really could be sent from God, since no prophet ever came out of this region (see John 7:52), while others will wonder whether anything good at all could come out of this little town (see John 1:46).

Second, Luke describes Mary as betrothed to Joseph. In first-century Judaism, betrothal was the first step of a two-stage marriage process. At her betrothal Mary would have consented before public witnesses to marry Joseph, and this would have established the couple as husband and wife. As a betrothed wife, however, Mary would have continued to live with her own family, apart from her husband, for up to a year. Only after this period of betrothal would the second stage of marriage take place—the consummation of the marriage and the wife's moving into the husband's home.

Consequently, as a betrothed woman, Mary still would have been living with her family in Nazareth. As such, it makes sense that Luke would describe her at this stage as "a virgin." Perhaps even more noteworthy, however, is the fact that women in first-century Palestine generally were betrothed in their early teen years. This tells us that Mary probably was a very young woman when God called her to serve as the mother of the Messiah.

Finally, the most striking point we know about Mary's life prior to the Annunciation is that she married a man from "the house of David" (1:27). This small detail indicates that Mary became part of the most famous family in all of Israel: King David's family.

In the time of Mary and Joseph, the Jews are suffering under Roman occupation. In such oppressive conditions, being a member of David's family no longer holds the privileges, authority and honor that it held in the glory days of the kings who reigned in Jerusalem. Instead, this Joseph "of the house of David" is a humble carpenter, leading a quiet, ordinary life in the small town of Nazareth.

Gaining Indulgence during Lenten Season

Continuation from last issue

Some Lenten Season activities by which the Christian Faithful can obtain Plenary Indulgences:

Plenary Indulgences Attached to Determined Actions

1. Attached to a pious visitation of one of the four major basilicas of Rome on the day of the festivity of the titular, or on any day holiday of obligation, or once a year on by the only on any other day chosen by the Christian faithful. During the visitation the Our Father and Creed are to be recited.
2. By visiting a cemetery, on any day from November 1-8, praying, even mentally only, for the departed. This indulgence is applicable only to the souls in purgatory.
3. By piously and devoutly receiving the papal benediction " Urbi et Orbi", even by watching the television or listening to the radio.
4. By attending on Good Friday the adoration of the Cross, and kissing it,
5. By participating in the solemn Eucharistic rite which is usually held at the end of congress
6. By making the Holy Retreat during at least three complete days.
7. By attending and piously participating in the public prayer of Reparation or Appeasement on the feastday of the Sacred Heart.
8. By piously reciting the act of consecration of the human race to Christ the King, on His feastday if the recitation is public.
9. By Reciting habitually some prayers during one's life. This indulgence is gained at the moment of one's death without the necessity of the sacramental confession, Holy Communion and prayer for the intention of the Roman Pontiff.
10. By pious using on a blessed objects(cross, crucifix, crown, scapular, medal) blessed by the Pope or a Bishop; however, this plenary indulgence may be gained only on the festivity of Sts. Peter and Paul, by making the profession of faith to a legitimate formula.
11. By attending some of the talks in time of a mission, as long as the person concerned is present during the solemn closure of the mission.
12. By receiving the first Holy Communion. This plenary indulgence may be gained by the recipient of the first Holy Communion and by the faithful who assists at the pious ceremonies of the same.
13. By saying the first mass. This plenary indulgence may be gained by the newly ordained priests saying the mass with some solemnity and by the faithful who devoutly assist at the same.
14. By celebration of the 25th, 50th and 60th anniversary of the priestly ordination, be renewing before God the resolution of faithfully fulfilling the duties of his vocation. If the celebration is done with some solemnity, the plenary indulgence may also be gained by the faithful who attend the mass.
15. By the devout stational visitation to a church of Rome on the days indicated in the Roman Missal, if the person concerned assists at the sacred ceremonies performed in the said church either in the morning or in the afternoon.
16. By the devout visitation of the church where the synod is celebrated, by reciting the Our Father and Creed, This indulgence may be gained only once.
17. By reciting on Holy Thursday and on the festivity of Corpus Christi the stropes Tantum Ergo and Genitori with the versicle Panemn de coelo and the Prayers, Deus, qui nobis…
18. By reciting publicly the Te Deum, as thanksgiving, on the last day of the year.
19. By the public devout recitation of the Hymn, Veni Creator on January 1 and on the festivity of Pentecost.
20. By renewing the baptismal promises if this is done on the Vigil of Easter or on the anniversary of the reception of one's baptism.

VATICAN NEWS

Number of Priests up, Religious Sisters Down

The Vatican said the number of bishops in the world increased from 5,065 to 5,104; the number of priests went from 410,593 to 412,236, increasing everywhere except Europe.

The number of permanent deacons reported -- 39,564 -- was an increase of more than 1,400 over the previous year. 97.5 percent of the world's permanent deacons live in the Americas or in Europe.

The number of men joining a religious order showed "a setback," the Vatican said, with an increase of only 436 male religious worldwide in 2010.

The number of women in religious orders fell by more than 7,000 in 2010, despite showing a 2 percent increase in both Asia and Africa. At the end of the year, Catholic women's orders had 721,935 members.

The number of seminarians around the world showed continued growth, from 117,978 at the end of 2009 to 118,990 at the end of 2010.

Pope on the importance of Confession

Before praying the Angelus with pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square today, the fourth Sunday of Lent, the Pope dedicated some remarks to the importance of sacramental Confession during this liturgical period which, he said, is "a time in which to pay greater attention to the voice of God".

On the horizon ahead of us during Lent is the profile of the cross of Christ, "the apex of the love which brings us salvation. ... Jesus was raised on the cross so that anyone in danger of dying because of sin, by turning in faith to the One Who died for us, would be saved".

Benedict XVI explained how God's merciful love is infinite and reaches so far as the giving of His only Son as a pledge for our sins. We therefore have a great responsibility. "Each one of us must, in fact, recognise we are sick in order to be healed. Each must confess our sins, so that the forgiveness of God, already given on the cross, can have an effect on our hearts and our lives".

Archdiocesan News

Clergy Assembly in Gijalo Caramoan

The priests assembly for the month of March was held at the Parish of Nstra Sra de la Paz y Buen Viaje, Gijalo Caramoan CS last March 20.

Inspite of the bad weather and busy schedule of priests, there were still 90 priests who joined the clergy assembly. The meeting was presided by the Archbishop.

Fr. Hans Borbor, the parish priest of Gijalo, welcomed the priests. Fr. Gilbert Briguera of Bikal, Caramoan Parish gave the parish report.

Again, it was a time for the priests to be in solidarity with one another and with the archbishop

Sacristan Majores Formation

The Commission on Liturgy will hold a formation for all Sacristan Majores of the Archdiocese of Caceres on March 24-25, 2012 at the Holy Rosary Major Seminary, Naga City.

This seminar-workshop aims to provide them with proper training and formation pertaining to their unique and important functions in the parish and in the liturgical celebrations. Emphasis will be given on the correct understanding and the proper care of the liturgical books, vessels, vestments, linens and the upkeep of the church, especially the sacristy

Caceres Upgraded Website

The Caceres Commission on Communications presented the newly constructed website. The archdiocesan website, www.caceres-naga.org, has additional features: the bikol Sunday readings and homilies, the newsfeeds as well as the other information of the archdiocese.

Fr. Marlon Tebelin, the webmaster, said that it is more interactive with the inclusion of the prayer requests. The visitors can also send message for inquiries about the archdiocese.

BASILICA NEWS

Novena in honor of Jesus Nazareno

Photo by J.Levina

The novena in honor of Jesus Nazareno started last March 21 during the 5:15pm mass. A procession also follows after the mass. The feast of will be celebrated on March 30 (Friday) in the afternoon with the mass and a procession.

The devotion to Jesus Nazareno is famous in Quiapo, Manila. Its feast is usually held every January, but the basilica decided to hold the feast here every Friday before Holy Week to allow the faithful prepare well for the celebration of the Paschal mystery - the death and resurrection of Christ.

In addition, a beautiful chapel, donated by Mrs Rosario Lo and Family, was constructed at the right side of the basilica to allow devotees pray before the image of the Crucified Christ.

PYP Lenten Recollection

The Lenten Recollection of the Penafrancia Young Professionals was held last March 18 at the Naga Parochial School. Fr. Marc Real was the speaker while Fr. Rex Alarcon and Fr. Allan Fenix heard confession.

There were 25 participants in the recollection. They also welcomed 10 new recruits of the PYP.

iRUN and iBike for INA 2

Meanwhile, on April 21, at 5:00am, the PYP will sponsor a Fun Run and Bike for INA with a proceeds for the construction of the Pope John Paul II Prayer Garden at the Basilica.

There will be 3 categories. 5k, 10k and 15k run-bike relay.

The registration fee is P100.00 for 5k (with Bib Number), P150 for 10k (with Bib Number) and P250 for Bike and Run Relay.

Registration starts on April 1 at the Basilica Office and Canteen as well as at SM Basilica and Canteen.

Basilica Schedule of Activities for the Holy Week 2012

21 – 30 March - Novena in Honor of Jesus Nazareno
5:15 pm – Novenary Mass
5:45 pm - Procession around the Basilica Grounds (except Sunday)
March 30 5:00pm – Mass/Procession around the Patio
Feast of Jesus Nazareno

1 April (Palm Sunday)
5:45 A.M. - BLESSING OF THE PALMS
6:30 A.M. MASS - Msgr. Rodel M. Cajot, H.P.
Note: The Blessing of the Palms will be done right after the succeeding masses.

2 April (Holy Monday)
5:45 P.M. Lenten Retreat/Confessions
Lenten Talk – Fr. Alfonso Grageda
Confession: Fr. Buena /Fr. Zaldy Zapian

3April (Holy Tuesday)
6:00 P.M. Lenten Retreat/Confessions
Lenten Talk Fr. Danilo Imperial
Confession: Fr. Tria / Fr. Ibanita

4 April (Holy Wednesday)
6:00 P.M. Lenten Retreat/Confessions
Lenten Talk – Fr. Louie Occiano
Confession: Fr Grageda /Fr Cortes

5 April (Holy Thursday)
Mass in the morning will be celebrated only in the Cathedral for the Commemoration of Institution of the Priesthood and the Blessing of the Crism and Oil for the sick.

4:30 P.M. -Washing of the Feet/Holy Mass
Msgr. Rodel Cajot
Transfer of the Blessed Sacrament to the Eucharistic Chapel Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.
Confessors: All Priests
6:30 PM - Assembly of the Pilgrims for Visita Iglesias (c/o Peñafrancia Pilgrimage Foundation and Lectors)

7:00 PM – Start of Visita de Iglesias
Route of the Visita Iglesia
1. Basilica Minore c/o Lay Ministers
2. Penafrancia Shrine c/o Lady Lectors
3. Franciscan Chapel c/o Pilgrimage Foundation
4. Mater Salutis Parish c/o Auxiliaries
5. St Jude Parish c/o PYP
6. Carmelite Monastery c/o Voyadores
7. Immaculate Concepcion Parish c/o Lady Lectors

6 April (Good Friday)
6:30 A.M.-VIA CRUCIS / CONFESSIONS
4:30 P.M.-VENERATION OF THE CROSS (Lord's Passion)
Communion- Msgr. Rodel Cajot

7 April (Black Saturday)
6:30 A.M.-VIA CRUCIS / CONFESSIONS
9:00 P.M.-EASTER VIGIL – Msgr Rodel Cajot

8 April (Sunday)
EASTER SUNDAY(same Sunday schedule)

Announcements:
1. For those children who want to join the Hosanna, please call 4733644 for more details.

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