



Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will



“Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs.” Luke 18:16-17

For His mercy endures forever...



Earlier this year, a slip of the tongue made all of the religious in our diocese laugh when the “end of the consecrated life” was announced. A quick correction reminded those present that we were about to commemorate the solemn closing of the *Year of Consecrated Life* and not the religious life itself. And the same goes for the Year of Mercy. Though the physical Holy Doors were shut, bringing the extraordinary jubilee year to an end on the Solemnity of Christ the King, God has not suddenly crossed His arms and said, “Sorry, you had your chance. Too late now.” Much like the season of Advent, we should look back at the Year of Mercy as a beginning, a time for renewal. We wait and yearn for the birth of our Savior, not to forget Him once again on December 26th, but rather to revitalize our love that can often grow so tepid. And as we wait for Jesus, He waits for us also...to return to His Most Sacred Heart with true repentance, deep affection, and childlike trust in His mercy. Yes, we are aware that this is sounding more like a Lenten newsletter than an Advent one. But if we truly reflect on Who we will be adoring in the manger on Christmas morning, four weeks wouldn’t seem like enough. We would instead long for those forty penitential days of Lent to prepare ourselves to kneel at His feet.



“...A new star shines under the vault of the heavens, and with its light, it goes in search of adorers, to lead them to recognize and adore Baby Jesus. Three individuals, each distant from the other, are struck by it, and invested by supreme light, they follow the star, which leads them to the grotto of Bethlehem, to the feet of Baby Jesus. What was not the astonishment of these Magi Kings, in recognizing in that Divine Infant the King of Heaven and earth – the One who had come to love and save all.” (The Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will - Day 23, Luisa Piccarreta)



What's in a name?

Wedding bells rang once again for the Benedictines of Divine Will this past October. Both Sister Maria Maddalena of the Divine Will and Brother Raphael Joseph Mary of the Eternal Fiat professed their first vows in a double ceremony complete with Holy Mass celebrated by the bishop on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

It never fails. Whenever we write about one of these momentous moments in our brothers' and sisters' lives, there's always one really long sentence in the beginning with their full religious names. Obviously we

don't refer to one another on a daily basis nor introduce ourselves to others with our full names and titles. But we do sign our vows and consecrations with them because they have great significance for us spiritually. Just like our birthdays, baptismal names, and confirmation saints have been chosen by Heaven for a reason, the Holy Spirit also inspires superiors to choose certain names and titles for their sons and daughters when they enter the novitiate.

Sister Maddalena's primary patroness is not who you'd think. Mother Gabrielle Marie actually named her after the little daughter of the Divine Will, Luisa Piccarreta, using the Servant of God's own religious name as a Third Order Dominican - Mary Magdalene. Both holy women were called to make big announcements: Mary Magdalene, the dawn of the Resurrection and Luisa, the new daybreak of the Kingdom of the Divine Will. But that's not all. In order to be able to understand the Divine Will – and the indescribable greatness of this gift that God wants to give back to us – one must fully and deeply understand His mercy first. The devil has worked very hard sowing his seeds of confusion, attempting to replace true divine mercy with his own false imitation. Yet we need not get lost if we learn from the beloved Magdalene herself...one of the most comforting and shining examples of Our Lord's merciful love for us poor sinners.

So what was so special about her? First and foremost, Mary Magdalene felt a deep sorrow for her sins and humbly accepted their consequences. As she knelt at the feet of Jesus, bathing them with her repentant tears,

never once did Mary defend herself to the accusing Pharisees, justify her sinful lifestyle, or blame anyone else for her actions. She recognized the fact that she was a sinner in desperate need of God's mercy. Can we say the same for ourselves?

Yes...Mary Magdalene knew her nothingness, but that's only half the reason why she's so great. So great that Jesus defends and praises her more than once in the Gospels. So great that she received the grace and courage to remain at the foot of the Cross. So great that she was chosen to be the first, after the Blessed Mother, to see Christ resurrected. Like the good thief, Magdalene received such huge graces because in the same figurative breath in which she acknowledged her

sinfulness, she also unconditionally trusted in God's mercy. And those two pieces put together transformed Mary into all gratitude and love for her Lord and Savior.

That's what true mercy does. It asks us to confess the truth about our sinfulness so that we may be set free from our miseries and enjoy lasting peace. It leads us to a stronger love and thanksgiving for the Father who has forgiven us so much. It fills us with profound humility, thereby deepening our union with God. What does false mercy do? It skews the truth and even makes an enemy of it, bearing fruits of presumption, lukewarmness, and pride. It's the wide gate that's easier to pass through but, in Jesus' own words, leads to destruction. If we ever feel in doubt of what road we're on ourselves or what gate we may be encouraging others to pass through, let's look to Mary Magdalene for guidance so that we may also choose the better part.

[Jesus to Luisa]: "*My daughter, when a soul is convinced that she has done evil in offending Me, she already performs the office of Magdalene, who bathed My feet with her tears, anointed them with balm, and dried them with her hair. When the soul begins to look within herself at the evil she has done, and she feels sorrow for it, she prepares a bath for My wounds. In seeing her evil, she receives bitterness and feels sorrow for it, and by this she comes to anoint My wounds with a most exquisite balm. From this knowledge, the soul would want to make a reparation, and in seeing her past ingratitude, she feels love toward a God so good arise within her, and she would want to lay down her life to prove her love; and this is the hair which, like many gold chains, binds her to My love.*" (Luisa Piccarreta, Book of Heaven, Volume 2, 10/28/1899)



Sr. Maria Maddalena's first Thanksgiving as a bride of Christ.





Behold your Mother

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Patroness of the Americas: December 12th

Five years ago on the eve of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother Gabrielle Marie and Sister Maria Francesca professed perpetual vows as the first Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will. There's so much that could be said about the "Woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under Her feet" (Rev 12:1): the historical account of Our Lady's apparitions in Mexico, Her striking resemblance to the woman described in the Book of Revelation, Her appearing as three months pregnant to combat the widespread practice of human sacrifice among the Aztecs of that time, Her significance for the pro-life movement today, the numerous scientifically inexplicable aspects of Her miraculous image, etc. etc. etc. But all of that can be found in detail with a quick internet search (which we highly recommend). For us Our Lady of Guadalupe is, above all, our Mother...

"Know and understand well, My most humble son, that I am the ever Virgin Mary, Mother of the True God who is the Author of life, the Creator of all things, the Lord of Heaven and earth, present everywhere. And it is My wish that here, there be raised to Me a temple in which, as a loving Mother to you and those like you, I shall show My tender clemency and the compassion I feel for the natives and for those who love and seek Me, for all who implore My protection, who call on Me in their labors and afflictions: and in which I shall hear their weeping and their supplications that I may give them consolation and relief...Nothing should frighten or grieve you. Let not your heart be disturbed. Do not fear that sickness, nor any other sickness or anguish. Am I not here, who is your Mother? Are you not under My protection? Am I not your health? Are you not happily within My fold? What else do you wish? Do not grieve nor be disturbed by anything." (Our Lady to Saint Juan Diego in 1531)

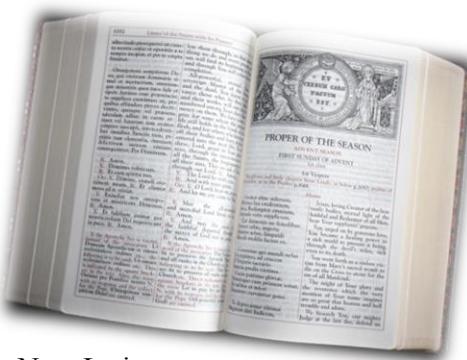
One can easily see why the image of Guadalupe is so frequently chosen to represent the very same Blessed Mother who, four hundred years later, renewed Her motherly promise of love and protection through the writings of the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta: "*I, Celestial Empress, will take care of all your needs, provided that you agree to live united with Me.*"

Want to hear more loving messages straight from Our Lady's lips and learn how to live in Her Son's adorable Will?

Download the entire PDF of *The Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will* from the "Family Tree" page of our website (just scroll down to Luisa).

Laudate Dominum

We finally did it! After several promptings from the Holy Spirit and enthusiastic discussions at table, Mother Gabrielle Marie decided to make the leap back in time to the traditional Roman Breviary. In other words, we're now praying the Divine Office as a community in Latin. So why the change? Above all, we feel it's the Will of God. Though the change seemed a bit overwhelming at first, we just knew it was something that we had to do. With evil running rampant in the world today, Mother also felt our prayers could use an extra boost. No...Latin doesn't have magical powers, but there are special graces that accompany the royal language of the universal



Church. In fact, many exorcist priests that Mother Gabrielle Marie befriended during her years in Mother Angelica's Poor Clare monastery have confided that the devil actually hates Latin since exorcisms are most effective when prayed in the classical tongue. So as Mother so simply puts it: "*Whatever the devil doesn't like, we want to do more of.*"

Apart from the language difference, the Roman Breviary is also far richer in psalms than the Liturgy of the Hours. It covers the entire Psalter (Book of Psalms, 150 in total) every week as opposed to the four-week cycle in the English language breviary. Though the Divine Office now takes quite a bit longer and we're still stumbling through the Latin pronunciation and chants, we all do feel the Holy Spirit much more present in our common prayers since making the change. Perhaps that's why the Second Vatican Council encouraged clerics and contemplative religious communities to maintain the official language of the Latin Rite of Holy Mother Church whenever possible. Plus, singing a few extra songs of praise each day – the very ones Jesus and Our Lady themselves prayed over 2,000 years ago - sure doesn't hurt.



Plenary Indulgences:

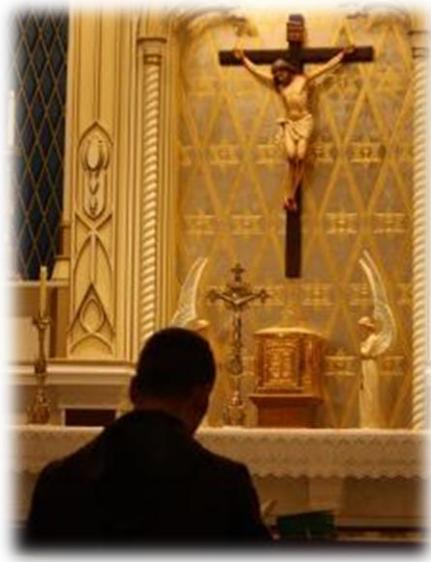
What you'll definitely want to know

What exactly is an indulgence?: "An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins ***whose guilt has already been forgiven***" (CCC #1471). A plenary indulgence cancels *all* of the punishment due to sin and can be gained for oneself or applied to a soul in Purgatory.

Too good to pass up! How can I gain one?: Holy Mother Church gives us lots of ways, most of which include the word "special" - on special days or special occasions, in special places or during special moments in one's life. This is what we all enjoyed during the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy every time we walked through one of the Holy Doors. But there are also a few ways to obtain an indulgence on any given day or in any place, some of which may already be a part of your ordinary life...

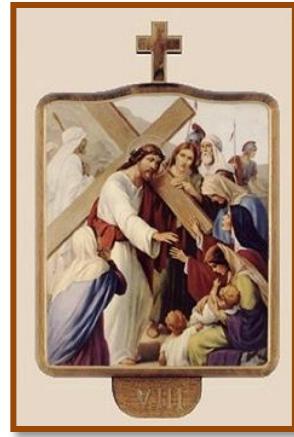
- Reading from the ***Sacred Scriptures*** for at least 30 minutes
- Recitation of the ***Holy Rosary*** (five continuous decades) in a Church, public oratory, family group, religious community, or pious association accompanied by meditation on the mysteries
- Pious exercise of the ***Way of the Cross*** before legitimately erected stations (fourteen crosses usually accompanied by images associated with each station).
- ***Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament*** for at least 30 minutes

Anything else I have to do?: Yup...because an indulgence is not just a "get out of jail free" card. By offering its faithful the opportunity to "obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the temporal punishment" we all deserve for our sins, the Church also wants to "spur



[us] to works of devotion, penance, and charity" (CCC #1478). So here's what's left to seal the deal...

- 1) **Sacramental confession**, on the day of or within several days (about 20) before or after the indulged act. One confession would suffice to fulfill the requirements for several indulgences within the same time period, though only one indulgence can be obtained each day. Since one must be in a state of grace at the time the indulged work is completed, sacramental confession beforehand would be necessary for those with a mortal sin on their souls.
- 2) **Reception of the Holy Eucharist**, preferably on the same day that the indulged work is performed, but can also fall within the same time frame allowed for confessions. A separate Holy Communion must be received to obtain each plenary indulgence.
- 3) **Prayers for the Holy Father's intentions** (customarily, but not limited to, an "Our Father" and "Hail Mary").
- 4) **Complete detachment from all sin**, even venial. In other words, though we all have our human weaknesses, we must at least be willing to renounce all sin without exception.



So what's the catch?: Nothing. God is just that good and His mercy flows in abundance through His Church.

(For more detailed information on indulgences, visit www.ourladyswarriors.org/indulge/plenary.htm)



'Tis the season to show mercy! (extra mercy, that is)

How 'bout a little Catechism refresher to give us a few ideas:

Spiritual Works of Mercy

1. Admonish sinners
2. Instruct the ignorant
3. Counsel the doubtful
4. Comfort the sorrowful
5. Bear wrongs patiently
6. Forgive offenses
7. Pray for the living and the dead



Corporal Works of Mercy

1. Feed the hungry
2. Give drink to the thirsty
3. Clothe the naked
4. Shelter the homeless
5. Comfort the imprisoned
6. Visit the sick
7. Bury the dead



'For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? And when did we see You a stranger and welcome You, or naked and clothe You? And when did we see You sick or in prison and visit You?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me.'

(Matthew 25:35-40)

Thank you to all those who have been merciful to us both spiritually and corporally and who continue to support our little family with you prayers and financial support. May God continue to bless your generous and loving hearts in His Most Holy and Divine Will!



Please be assured that you and your families will be remembered in all of our prayers this Holy Advent and Christmas season. If you'd like to unite with us in praying a novena in preparation for Holy Christmas beginning on December 16th, you can download *The Nine Excesses of Love in the Incarnation of the Word* from the "Family Tree" page of our website. Just scroll down to the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta.

*All praise, honor, glory, and thanksgiving to our newborn King!
Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!*

If you feel called to help support the Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will this Christmas season or throughout the following year, visit the "Donations" page of our website to make a one-time donation by credit/debit card or to sign up for automatic monthly contributions...

www.benedictinesofdivinewill.org

Or simply send a check to the address of our non-profit organization below:

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Greetings from Talamello!