



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*

♪ Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis Deo ♪



“The angel said, ‘Do not be afraid. Look, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.’ And all at once with the angel, there was a great throng of the hosts of heaven, praising God with the words: **Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace for those He favors**” (Lk 2:10-14).

Ever get a song stuck in your head, or rather, just a few words of a song that keep replaying over and over again? Well, the *Gloria* has been making its rounds in one little veiled head over here for about a month now...the same one currently staring at the computer screen. The human will found this a bit annoying, but the Divine Will continued to whisper, “*Inspiration for the newsletter.*” The angels were at it again, reminding us, as they did the shepherds two-thousand years ago, how we should approach the glorious birth of our King, Savior, and source of all our joy: glorifying the Most High God.

Many people aren’t aware of this, but Advent is like a “little Lent.” But instead of giving something up or taking on some new devotion or act of charity, are you up for something new, profound, revolutionary...and extremely simple? Let’s make the concerted effort to give glory to God in all things, at all times, in who we are and what we do! Ok, so this idea is not so revolutionary. It’s what we should always be doing all year round, but how often do we actually remember? Are we in the habit of thinking of what would glorify God most



before acting? Do love, honor, and praise for our Creator naturally fill our minds in all circumstances?



At best, most of us could probably respond, “*Sometimes...well, it depends.*” But living in the Divine Will requires constancy and constancy requires practice. The good news is that we still have a little time left before Christmas to start training our hearts, minds, bodies, and wills for the new year ahead. And we won’t have to jump through crazy hoops or do anything different...but that doesn’t mean we won’t change. Just keep living your life as you normally do, but with a greater awareness of your motives. Try to keep those selfish motives in check and replace them

with the pure intention of wanting to please your Father in Heaven. Do so as a child, with a light heart, freedom of spirit, and avoiding scrupulosity, discouragement, and self-reflections at all costs.

Little by little, you'll think less and less of yourself. You'll begin doing everything with greater love and joy. Bad habits will start melting away and more virtues will take root. You'll find it much easier to recognize God's Will in different situations, saying "yes" only to what He wants and "no" to everything else (whether good, bad, or indifferent). And in this chaotic world where everyone is constantly busy, even when they sleep, you'll notice yourself less stressed and more at peace. In fact, you'll bask in a profound happiness emanating from the Most Holy Trinity whom you allowed to reign in the depth of your soul. By inviting Jesus to come and make this Advent sacrifice in you with His own Will, together you'll be bringing infinite amounts of peace and goodwill to all men while glorifying the Eternal Father on behalf of all...just as the angels prophesied.



We probably won't arrive at perfection by Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. But that's not for us to worry about anyway. We'll hopefully be too busy gazing on our Beloved in the manger, finishing the hymn of the heavenly host with greater fervor than ever before: *We praise You, we bless You, we adore You, we glorify You, we give You thanks for Your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.*



A couple of lessons from Our Blessed Mother to spur us on:



*"My child, to you My sacrifice of living without My will may not seem great, but I tell you that there is no sacrifice similar to mine...To sacrifice oneself for one day – now yes, now no – is easy; but to sacrifice oneself in every instant, in every act, even in the very good one wants to do, for one's entire life, without ever giving life to one's own will, is the sacrifice of sacrifices. **It is the greatest proof that can be offered, the purest love – filtered through the Divine Will Itself – that can be given to our Creator ...***

*"My child, thanking the Lord and placing all of our acts into His hands as pledges of our love causes new channels of graces and communications to be opened between God and the soul, and it is the most beautiful homage that one can render to the One who loves us so much. Therefore, learn from Me to thank the Lord for all that He disposes for you, and in anything that you are about to do, may your word be: **'Thank You, O Lord. I place everything in Your hands.'**"*

(The Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will, Days 5 and 14, Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta)

**"Come to Me all you who labor
and are burdened..."**

Have you ever found yourselves wishing the holidays away? Rather than preparing the way for the Lord, we busy ourselves with preparing the Christmas gifts, the parties, the food, the decorations, the clothes, etc. etc. etc. And where does that leave our soul? Stressed, burnt-out, dissipated, and ready to zoom past what should be some of the most beautiful feast days of the liturgical year. Notice we wrote *some*, plural.

Sure, Christmas day is the climax, but don't forget what comes before and after. We've got the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 8th and the 12th. Each Sunday of Advent builds up our hope and



anticipation for the coming of Our Lord. The purple candles we light call us back to the prayer, penances, and good works we *should* be doing to prepare our souls while the pink one reminds us to rejoice as well. Midnight Mass transports us back to the little grotto of Bethlehem at the hour and moment when the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin. The shepherds invite us to join them adoring the newborn Savior on Christmas morning while the wise men teach us not to approach a king empty-handed on the feast of the Epiphany (Jan. 6th). In between, the Church calls us to celebrate Jesus, Mary and Joseph as the most holy model of families on December 30th and Mary as the Mother of God on January 1st. Isn't our faith so beautiful? Aren't we so blessed to be Catholic?!



these things consume every second of your life. We were made for union with *God*, to know, love and serve *Him*. Yes, Jesus also commanded us to “love one another *as I have loved you*.” But how can that ever be possible if we don't allow ourselves the time to experience that divine love in prayer and in silence. Without a deep interior relationship with the Most Holy Trinity, we will have absolutely nothing to share with others, no matter how much time we spend with them or how much we do.

Take a second to reflect. How do you spend your Advent, your holiday season? Where is your focus? What is the majority of your time devoted to? Our Lord reminded us in Matthew 6:21, “*Wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*” A lot of people suffer from

depression, loneliness, anxiety during Christmas time. Why? Because we've stored up for ourselves the wrong treasure. But God is so good to allow us to suffer from this because, sick of feeling miserable and finding no solace in people or the things of the world, we eventually search for Him alone. And only in His most tender Heart will we find true rest.

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[Jesus to Luisa]: “*The creature was made by Me and, as My own, I wanted to keep her on My lap, in My arms, in continuous rest. The soul was to rest in My Will and sanctity, in My love, in My beauty, power, wisdom, etc...But what sorrow! The creature escapes from My lap and goes in search of vigil, passions, sin, attachments, pleasures; vigil the fears, the anxieties, the agitations, etc. So, as much as I long for her and call her to rest in Me, I am not listened to...I so much love this rest of the creature in Me that I not only wanted to sleep, but I wanted to walk in order to give rest to her feet; work, to give rest to her hands; palpitate and love, to give rest to her heart. In sum, I wanted to do everything so that the soul might do everything in Me and would take rest.*”
(Luisa Piccarreta, Book of Heaven, Vol. 11, 12/14/1916)

Clearing things up a bit about the *Benedictine* *Oblates of Divine Will*



We've been encountering some confusion lately about our Third Order, so we thought it might be helpful to make a few clarifications for the “whole class”. For those wondering about Oblate profession ceremonies, membership certificates, whether we keep an official log of every BODW all over the world, the short answer is: none of that is really important. But rather than go into too much detail ourselves, we invite all of our Third Order members and anyone interested in the BODW to read (or reread) Fr. Elijah's letter on the “Oblates” page of our website. He explains everything both beautifully and clearly.

Begone Satan! Suggest not to me thy vain things. The drink you offer is evil; drink that poison yourself.

Can you spot Sister Francesca and little Luisa amongst our Long Island Oblates?

Someone, a bit confused



about the simplicity of it all, questioned the point of becoming an Oblate when she had already consecrated herself to the Divine Will many years ago. What would be the difference in terms of heavenly recognition? In terms of Heaven, there is no difference. Benedictine Oblates of Divine Will are no better or worse than anyone else sincerely trying to live in the Divine Will. However, many of our Third Order members have expressed that they've been able

to understand and immerse themselves in the Divine Will much better since making the Oblate consecration. We believe it's because it keeps everyone accountable for reading Luisa's writings faithfully for at least 30 min. every day and for living their Catholic faith to the fullest. They are also receiving graces from the countless prayers offered by all the sisters, monks, and other lay members of our order. Plus, they feel specifically called to live the Divine Will writings according to our Benedictine charism, with a particular focus on littleness and the Holy Family of Nazareth. After discernment, all of our Oblates should believe that they can glorify God best as members of the Benedictines of Divine Will. That's what it all boils down to – the glory of God, not us.



Divine Will in a nutshell



In just these few pages, the words “Divine Will” have been mentioned eighteen times (not including all of the other references to God’s Will). Can you tell we’re a bit excited? Stealing a catchphrase from some of our dear friends in Texas, we know that “THIS IS IT.” The sanctity of sanctities, the pinnacle of the spiritual life, the greatest union that can exist between a soul and the Almighty God. But we understand that this can all sound a bit too much, or crazy even, for those who know nothing about the Divine Will writings of the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta.

In fact, you can’t really explain the Divine Will in a nutshell. Our Lord told Luisa that all of eternity wouldn’t be enough to discover everything, yet He did give her thirty-six volumes of lessons to get us started here on earth. Unfortunately we live in a fast food culture that wants everything quick and easy. We want everything explained to us in thirty minutes or less so we won’t have to actually read and pray ourselves. But the Divine Will doesn’t work that way. Jesus explains that His word is creative, not only communicating knowledges, but creating them in the soul. His teachings are like drops of light that enter our hearts and transform us into His images. That’s why He named Luisa’s diary, *Book of Heaven*. Though talks, retreats, and conferences on the Divine Will can be helpful, they will never be enough...for who can explain the Will of God better than God Himself.

So for those of you new to the Divine Will, please don’t hesitate to contact us about how to get started reading. There are already quite a few resources on our website as well, including a



A few friends from one of the many Divine Will groups in the great state of Texas. Guess what another motto is:

Read the books!

powerful Christmas Novena (just go to the “Family Tree” page and scroll down to Luisa). For those of you who have already been introduced to this great gift, we remind you not to take it for granted. Don’t pick up the writings sporadically and open them up randomly. Read them cover to cover and then start over again. Make them part of your life and allow God to teach you and mold you in His time, at His pace. We can go on and on, but it’s not necessary. Once you really start reading, you’ll have everything you need.



One little drop of how your soul will learn to pray...

[Luisa to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament]: *“Therefore, today I want all of You - always together with me in the prayer, in the work, in the pleasures and displeasures, in the food, in the steps, in the sleep - in everything. I am certain that, being unable to obtain anything by myself, with You I will obtain everything; and everything we do will serve to soothe each of Your pains, to sweeten every bitterness of Yours, to repair for any offense, to repay You for everything, and to impetrate any conversion, no matter how difficult and desperate. We will go begging for a little love from every heart, to make You more content and happy. Isn’t it good like this, O Jesus?”* (Luisa Piccarreta, Book of Heaven, Vol. 11)

Something old and someone new

Another anniversary for Mother Gabrielle Marie, but Sister Maria Francesca will be joining the celebration for this one. Seven years ago on the evening of December 11th, Mother and daughter professed vows with His Excellency Msgr. Luigi Negri in the diocese San Marino-Montefeltro – birthplace and hometown of the Benedictines of Divine Will. For Mother Gabrielle, it was a renewal of the same solemn consecration she made to Our Lord twenty-five years earlier as a Poor Clare. However, this time she’d be vowing to live in poverty, chastity, and obedience at the feet of the Most Blessed Sacrament with a new charism, a new outfit, and the new mission of forming a family centered on living in and spreading the Divine Will.



For Sister Francesca, that third Sunday of Advent (dedicated to rejoicing!) has become a bit blurry with the passing of time. But she still remembers that feeling of completion. She finally found the answer to that “something missing” question she always felt out in the world, despite having led an otherwise fulfilling life.



Sister had a great group of friends, the love of family, and a rewarding teaching career that kept her financially secure and always entertained. But it wasn’t enough. God had set her aside for something else. For a few days after her profession, Sister Francesca would sit in the chapel before the Blessed Sacrament in her plain white habit, without the make-up and jewelry she had often worn in her pre-convent single days, feeling like the most beautiful woman in the world because she had just married the King.

From two, we’ve grown to nine, with seven perpetually professed sisters, one novice, and our newest postulant - Sister Esther. Born

and raised in Korea, she spent her high school years in Germany and eventually immigrated to the U.S. where she and her family have been living for the past ten years. Esther's journey to the religious life passed through a nursing career and even two years of military service before God eventually led her to the tiny town of Talamello in northern Italy. Having fallen in love with Luisa Piccarreta's writings a few years earlier, she knew her vocation would have to be centered in the Divine Will.

But we're not done growing yet. From all eternity, Jesus may have also chosen you to be a Benedictine Daughter of Divine Will. Visit the "Vocations" page of our website and drop us an email at daughtersofdivinewill@gmail.com if you'd like to begin the discernment process with us. We promise, if you faithfully respond to God's call, He will grant you all the desires of your heart...and then some!

Keeping the sisters going

If you feel called to financially 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 or money order to the address of our non-profit organization below:



Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will
P.O. Box 1002
Hanceville, AL 35077



(All donations are tax-deductible)

A warm hug of gratitude to all of you who so generously contributed to our growing community in 2018. Thanks to you, we were able to live out our contemplative vocation for another year. Since we know that your love for Jesus was at the heart of your goodness to us, we want to give Jesus right back to you in thanksgiving. Holy Mass will be celebrated for the intentions of all of our benefactors this Christmas season in addition to all of the daily prayers that we will be offering up for our family and friends during the entire Octave.



We love you all!
Merry Christmas and a
Blessed New Year!!!