

Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia

LAUDARE, BENEDICERE, PRAEDICARE

TO PRAISE, TO BLESS, TO PREACH



HUNGER AND THIRST FOR HOLINESS

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*Jesus the Bridegroom: The
Greatest Love Story Ever Told*

January 2019

Blessed are Those who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

A REFLECTION ON THE FOURTH BEATITUDE

The Church begins each year celebrating the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God - a woman who trusted deeply in the power of God within her because she was empty of her own self-sufficiency. Those who hunger or thirst are also empty in some way. Mary, emptied of all that might take the place of God, was a pure vessel in whom the Lord could dwell fully and fully satisfy her desires. Our Lady served the Lord with her whole heart, not fearing what this would cost her, because she was rooted in the joy promised to those who love God. She is thus an excellent example of the virtue of fortitude which Saint Thomas Aquinas correlated to the beatitude, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

The Lord uses the image of hunger and thirst since we must pursue righteousness with the fervor of those who long for nourishment from the depths of their being. Father Jordan Aumann, in his book *Spiritual Theology*, suggest basic means through which one can grow in the virtue of fortitude: "to constantly beg it of God," "to accept with a generous spirit the annoyances of daily life" and "to intensify our love for God [since] Love is as strong as death (Song 8:6) and it does not yield to any obstacle in the pursuit of pleasing the beloved" (p.310-311).

Following Christ is not for the faint of heart. We must set our eyes on the joy of Heaven and not fear any adversity but trust steadfastly in the Lord who will give us the strength to set our hearts on Him - to "hunger and thirst" for holiness and righteousness in every circumstance. So whether we are having a hard time finishing an assignment or persevering in a new resolution that can lead us closer to God, we can pray to the Holy Spirit for an increase in the virtue of fortitude, striving to imitate Our Lady whose desires were satisfied by God alone.



Coronation of Mary. Unknown Artist.
1475-90. Alte Pinakothek, Munich

Recent Travels

FOCUS SEEK CONFERENCE

January 3-7

Right: The Dominican Friars and Sisters prayed Compline together with over 100 participants.
Below: Sister Bernadette Marie and attendees from NYU Campus Center.



Every other year FOCUS (The Fellowship of Catholic University Students) hosts a SEEK Conference. This year several of our sisters joined over 17,000 young people in Indianapolis for the Conference, where they had the privilege of meeting many participants, catching up with old friends, listening to excellent speakers and sharing the joy of the Dominican life.



Left: The Sisters visited with the young adults of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Carmel, Indiana where our sisters serve.



Left: Sister Bernadette Marie and attendees from Benedictine College.



MARCH FOR LIFE

January 18



Many of our sisters travel to the March for Life in Washington D.C. with their high schools and other groups.

Far Right: Our Sisters pray at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.



Below Right: Our Sisters and students from Baton Rouge, LA pray outside a Planned Parenthood in D.C.



Below: Our Sisters with their students from Saint Cecilia Academy.



Left: Sister Rosaria marches for life.



UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

January 20-22



Sister Peter Marie and Sister Bernadette Marie traveled to the University of Virginia on January 20. While on the grounds, they met with the Women's Ministry Group, had time to talk to various students and presented some thoughts on vocations and discernment at the Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic Center.



Inspired by Saint Agnes

SAINT AMBROSE OF MILAN

Part of this excerpt from Saint Ambrose's letter to his younger sister, now known as a book entitled *On Virginity* ((Lib 1, cap. 2, 5,7-9: PL 16 [edit. 1845], 189-191), is in the Office of Readings of the Liturgy of the Hours for the Feast of St. Agnes, January 21.

Today is the birthday of a virgin; let us imitate her purity. It is the birthday of a martyr; let us offer ourselves in sacrifice. It is the birthday of Saint Agnes, who is said to have suffered martyrdom at the age of twelve. The cruelty that did not spare her youth shows all the more clearly the power of faith in finding one so young to bear it witness.

There was little or no room in that small body for a wound... Yet she shows no fear of the blood-stained hands of her executioners. She stands undaunted by heavy, clanking chains. She offers her whole body to be put to the sword by fierce soldiers. She is too young to know of death, yet is ready to face it... She puts her neck and hands in iron chains, but no chain can hold fast her tiny limbs.

A new kind of martyrdom! Too young to be punished, yet old enough for a martyr's crown; unfitted for the contest, yet effortless in victory, she shows herself a master in valor despite the handicap of youth. As a bride she would not be hastening to join her husband with the same joy she shows as a virgin on her way to punishment, crowned not with flowers but with holiness of life, adorned not with braided hair but with Christ himself.

In the midst of tears, she sheds no tears herself. The crowds marvel at her recklessness in throwing away her life untasted, as if she had already lived life to the full. All are amazed that one not yet of legal age can give her testimony to God. So she succeeds in convincing others of her testimony about God, though her testimony in human affairs could not yet be accepted. What is beyond the power of nature, they argue, must come from its creator.



"To hope that any other will please me does wrong to my Spouse. I will be his who first chose me for himself. Executioner, why do you delay? If eyes that I do not want can desire this body, then let it perish."

- Saint Agnes of Rome

Recommended Reading

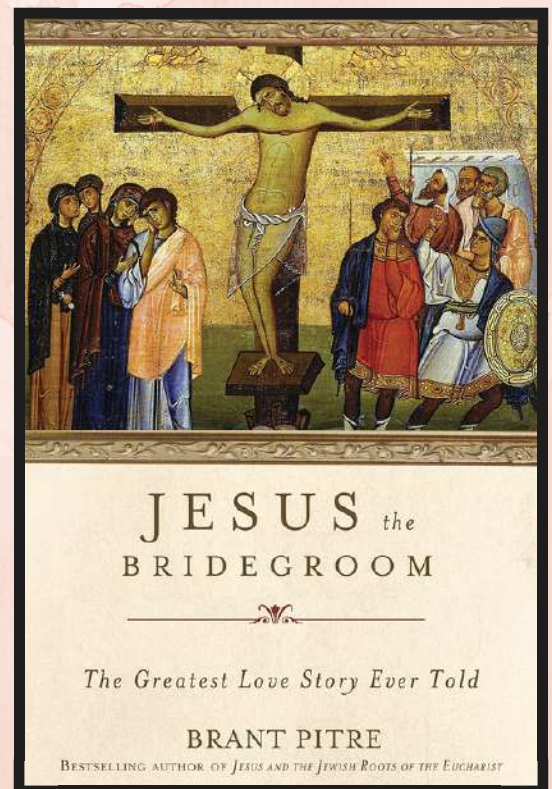
JESUS THE BRIDEGROOM

THE GREATEST LOVE STORY EVER TOLD

BY: DR. BRANT PITRE

Every man deeply desires to be known and loved. The book *Jesus the Bridegroom* is an excellent exposition of a largely unknown, but extremely important theme in the Bible: the Bridegroom's love for his bride, the Church. Dr. Brant Pitre uses his knowledge of ancient Jewish culture as well as Sacred Scripture to provide the reader with both background knowledge and personal application regarding various themes related to Jesus as Bridegroom. He discusses Scriptural passages in which Jesus identifies himself as the Bridegroom, as well as various aspects of Jesus' ministry that fulfill Old Testament references to the Bridegroom. This book is worth the read for anyone who wants to see the God's love for them through a new lens.

"As the Bridegroom Messiah, his mission was not just to teach the truth, or proclaim the kingdom, but to forgive the sinful bride of God and unite himself to her in an everlasting covenant of love..." (p.4)



Click on the image above for a link to order the book.



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YOU CAN GIVE.

Because of the gift
that you are.



2019 GIVEN Catholic Young Women's Leadership Forum June 12-16 | Washington, D.C.

Join this engaging event sponsored by the CMSWR (Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious) for a week of leadership training, mentorship and faith formation designed for young Catholic women. Sister Mary Madeline, a member of our community, will be giving one of the keynotes.



For more information about the GIVEN Forum, [click here](#).
To apply for the GIVEN Forum, by February 4, [click here](#).