

# Shepherds of Christ

2006 ISSUE NO. 3 A SPIRITUALITY NEWSLETTER FOR PRIESTS BY REV. JOHN J. PASQUINI

## CHIEF SHEPHERD OF THE FLOCK

*Jn. 10: 1-15*

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and runs away, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; he runs away because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep" (*New Jerusalem Bible, Doubleday*).



## BORN IN BETHLEHEM

*By Charles Gill*

Jesus came to us in Bethlehem, which means "house of bread," and was placed in a "manger" which is an eating vessel. Today Jesus is present in the tabernacle, those houses where the bread of eternal life, the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ is present throughout the world. He is given to us in a manger, an eating vessel, the chalice and the paten at every Mass. From the very moment of his incarnation, his entrance into the world, the Son of God was pointing to his wonderful gift of the Eucharist! As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.

Christmas is a time to remember a God that so loved us that he chose to become like one of us, to die for us, and to continually nourish us in the Eucharist, his sacramental Body and Blood, or as St. Ignatius of Antioch, the friend of the apostle John, explains: to nourish us with "the medicine of immortality, the antidote that we will never die."

***"It is better that scandals arise than the truth be suppressed."***

— His Holiness Gregory the Great

## A CHILD WITH US!

*By St. Jean Baptiste Marie Vianney*

"The angels announced to the Shepherds: You will find an infant. Without doubt, the Son of God might have appeared upon earth as a grown man. But He did not do this. He abased Himself, and lay in the crib as a helpless infant. ...[God] appeared as a child full of love, full of tenderness, full of joy. ...[A] child looks at everyone; at [the] sight of [a] child, all fear vanishes. All may approach a child without fear, the high and the low, the learned and the unlearned, rich and poor.... [A] child is born to us. Now we can go to the throne of His mercy with confidence. At the crib all fear vanishes with assurance and confidence. What opens more easily than the hands of a little child? God with us in the form of a child leads us men to God and lets us find mercy. Of a truth, He has given Himself in weakness and lowliness.

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**FR. EDWARD CARTER**  
Founder, Shepherds of Christ

*This newsletter is for priests  
and those who are interested  
in the spiritual life.*

## PRIESTHOOD

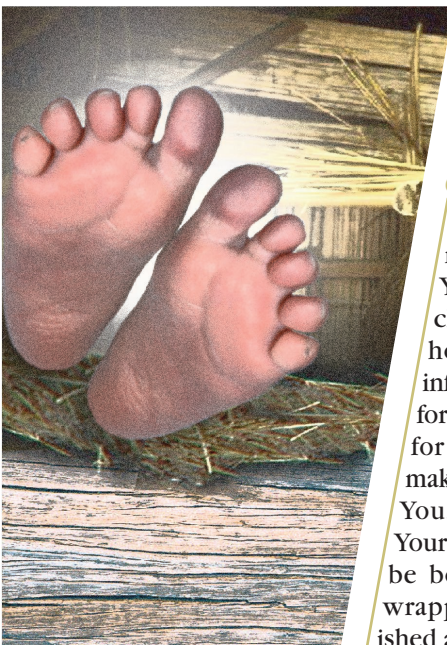
*By Charles De Foucauld*

### To a Friend Preparing for Ordination

"The priest... is something transcendent; through baptism he brings souls to birth, through the sacrament of penance he purifies them, through communion he gives them our Lord's Body as He Himself did at the Last Supper, and at their death He helps them to appear before the Beloved by giving them their final forgiveness and the supreme strength... Every single day of his life, a priest does what Jesus did during his three years of ministry—He teaches men to know, love and serve their good Master. What a vocation!"



His triumph is a triumph of love, for He, the merciful God, became a child. What is weaker than an infant? Had the Son of God come with the power of this world, to conquer the world, then, perhaps, His victory would have been reckoned amongst the triumphs of earthly lords; He comes as an infant, without the pomp of this world, to vanquish the world. He comes without human help to besiege the hearts of men. What is nothingness in the world He has chosen, so as to put to shame that which is powerful. This infant, so helpless in the crib, holds the world in His arms; by this infant, the Son of God, everything was made that has been made; in Him is life, and the life is the light of mankind. He is the life that animates the Church; in Him is the strength of the martyrs, with which they shed their blood for love of Him; in Him is the virtue of every saint. He works through the priestly office; in Him is the strength, which makes the chief shepherd a rock on which the everlasting Church is founded. What a wonderful triumph Emmanuel celebrates; God with us, in the weakness of an infant, over the obstacles in the world. If I am weak, then I am strong. God with us in the form of a child; what is more humble than a child? The Son of God preaches to us in His infancy from the crib. Unless you become as little children you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. The child is not worldly and sensual. The child is unselfish, is humble, and pure of heart. O, when we come to the crib, let us bring our Saviour a childlike, repentant heart,



and pray to Him that we may be as little children; that we, as children, may walk in the purity of our hearts, that we may be humble before God and men. There is a beautiful legend which says that a boy encountered the Mother of God in the flight from Egypt and begged for the favor of carrying the Divine child in his arms. The Mother of God accorded him the privilege. When the boy came to a stream and looked into the water and saw his face he noticed that the features of the divine Child were imprinted upon his own. We also will pray [to] the divine Child, that He may imprint the spiritual features of His childish innocence and humility upon our souls, so that we may become as children. How beautiful it is to say of a Christian man: Before the world a man; before God, a child; in the eyes of the world, a man; in the constancy of his opinions of his faith, a child. A child in his love of prayer, for the child prays; in its love of humility, for the child is humble; in the love of purity, for the child shuns what is impure. Emmanuel, God with us, in His childhood He draws our hearts toward Him, vanquishes the world, and teaches us how to become as children, that we may obtain the kingdom of heaven.” (Sermons [Long Prairie: Neumann Press, 1995], 25-23).



angelic hosts, prepare to join in the heavenly melody, sing with your lips and with your heart: ‘Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will.’” (In Gabriel St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D., *Divine Intimacy* [Rockford: Tan, 1996], 87-88).

***“Truth is love, and if love were to turn against truth, it would be mutilating itself.”***

—His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI

## SWEET INCARNATE WORD

By St. Bonaventure

“O Sweet Incarnate Word, O most amiable Infant Jesus, behold me at last at Your feet; let me contemplate You; permit me to delight in Your beauty, Your goodness, Your immense charity! In this little Child who smiles, and holds out His baby arms to me, I find Your infinite love, living, breathing—for this Babe is for You, O my God! How can I ever thank You for Your exceeding love? How can I ever make You a return of love? You, who are so great and rich, have made Yourself little and poor for us! You chose to be born far from home in a stable, to be wrapped in swaddling clothes, to be nourished at Your Virgin Mother’s breast, to be laid in a manger between an ox and an ass. Today is the dawn of the new redemption, of the old restoration, of eternal happiness; today, the heavens have distilled honey throughout the whole world! Then, O my soul, kiss the divine manger, press your lips to the Infant’s feet and embrace them. Meditate on the shepherds watching their flocks, contemplate the

## GOD SEARCH FOR MAN

By Pope John Paul II

“Jesus does not... merely speak in the name of God..., but He is God Himself speaking in His Eternal Word Made Flesh.... Christianity has its starting point in the Incarnation of the Word.

Here, it is not simply a case of man seeking God, but of God who comes in Person to speak to man of Himself and to show him the path by which He may be reached.... The Incarnate Word is thus the fulfillment of the yearning present in all the religions of mankind: this fulfillment is brought about by God Himself and transcends all human expectations. It is the mystery of grace....

In Jesus Christ God not only speaks to man but also seeks him out. The Incarnation of the Son of God attests that God goes in search of man. Jesus speaks of this search as the finding of a lost sheep....

It is a search which begins in the heart of God and culminates in the Incarnation of the Word. If God goes in search of man, created in His own image and likeness, He does so because He loves him eternally in the Word, and wishes to raise him in Christ to the dignity of an adoptive son. God therefore goes in search of man, who is His special possession in a way unlike any other creature. Man is God’s possession by virtue of a choice made in love: God seeks man out, moved by His fatherly heart. Why does God seek man out? Because man has





## MEDITATION ON THE INCARNATION

By Fr. Hans Urs von Balthasar

"[Who] will step out along...[the] road that leads from God's glory to the figure of the poor Child lying in the manger?

'Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you Good News of a great joy... This day is born the Savior,' that is, he who, as Son of God and Son of the Father, has traveled (in obedience to the Father) the path that leads away from the Father and into the darkness of the world. Behind him omnipotence and freedom; before, powerlessness, bonds and obedience. Behind him the comprehension of divine vision; before him the prospect...of death on the Cross between two criminals. Behind him the bliss of life with the Father; before him, grievous solidarity with all who do not know

turned away from Him, hiding himself as Adam did among the trees of the Garden of Eden.... Going in search of man through His Son, God wishes to persuade man to abandon the paths of evil which lead him farther and farther afield. Making him abandon those paths means making man understand that he is taking the wrong path; it means overcoming the evil which is everywhere found in human history. Overcoming evil: this is the meaning of redemption....

The Son of God became man, taking a body and soul in the womb of the Virgin, precisely for this reason: to become the perfect redeeming sacrifice. The religion of the Incarnation is the religion of the world's Redemption through the sacrifice of Christ, wherein lies victory over evil, over sin, and over death itself....

Jesus Christ meets the man of every man of every age, including our own, with the same words: 'You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free'....

Jesus Christ came to provide the ultimate answer to the yearning for life and for the infinite which His Heavenly Father had poured into our hearts when He created us. At the climax of revelation, the incarnate Word [Christ] proclaims, 'I am... the Life...', and 'I came that they might have life...' Left to ourselves, we could not achieve the ends for which we have been created. Within us there is a promise which we find we are incapable of attaining. But the Son of God who came among us has given us His personal assurance.... As St. Augustine so strikingly phrased it, Christ 'wishes to create a place in which it is possible for all people to find true life.' This place is His Body and His Spirit, in which the whole [of] human life, redeemed and forgiven, is renewed and made divine." (*Celebrate 2000!* [Ann Arbor: Servant Publications, 1996], 21-24).

are trying to obey will bring us to the place where God's Word and Son is already made man. We are assured that, in spite of all the noise and nonsense, today, December 25, is Christmas just as truly as two millennia ago. Once and for all God has started out on his journey toward us, and nothing, till the world's end, will stop him from coming to us and abiding in us.

[Who] will step out along...[the] road that leads from God's glory to the figure of the poor Child lying in the manger?" (Excerpted from *You Crown the Year with Your Goodness*, cf. Ignatius Press, 1989).

***"The first law of history is not to dare to utter falsehood; the second, not to fear to speak the truth."***

—His Holiness Leo XIII

## MARY OF THE INFANT JESUS

By Fr. John J. Pasquini

Mary, Mother of the Infant Jesus, grant me a spirit of authentic love.

In the stable of Bethlehem, Jesus was born. You were rejected, refused, and even scornfully turned away from lodgings.

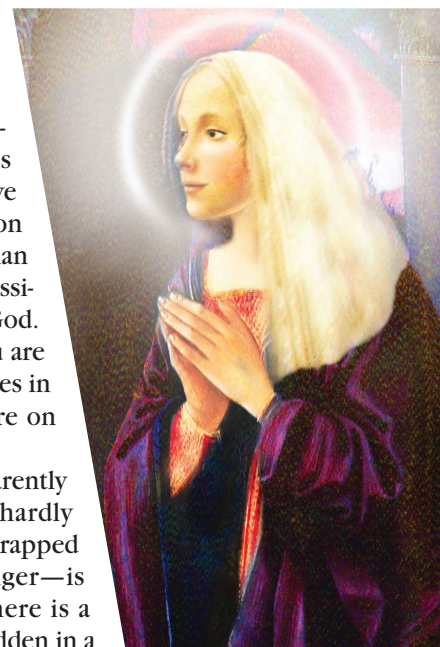
How lonely it must have felt?

How abandoned you and Joseph must have been during the severe, cold weather?

Yet, you were in peace and filled with the spirit of love as you gave birth to

the Father, do not want to know him and deny his existence. Rejoice, then, for God himself has passed this way! The Son took with him the awareness of doing the Father's will. He took with him the unceasing prayer that the Father's will would be done on the dark earth as in the brightness of heaven. He took with him his rejoicing that the Father had hidden these things from the wise and revealed them to babes, to the simple and the poor. 'I am the way,' and this way is 'the truth' for you: along this way you will find 'the life.' Along 'the way' that I am you will learn to lose your life in order to find it; you will learn to grow beyond yourself and your insincerity into a truth that is greater than you are. From a worldly point of view everything may seem very dark; your dedication may seem unproductive and a failure. But do not be afraid: you are on God's path. 'Let not your hearts be troubled: believe in God; believe also in me.' I am walking on ahead of you and blazing the trail of Christian love for you. It leads to your most inaccessible brother, the person most forsaken by God. But it is the path of divine love itself. You are on the right path. All who deny themselves in order to carry out love's commission are on the right path.

Miracles happen along this path. Apparently insignificant miracles, noticed by hardly anyone. The very finding of a Child wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger—is this not a miracle in itself? Then there is a miracle when a particular mission, hidden in a person's heart, really reaches its goal, bringing God's peace and joy where there were nothing but despair and resignation; when someone succeeds in striking a tiny light in the midst of an overpowering darkness. When joy irradiates a heart that no longer dared to believe in it. Now and again we ourselves are assured that the angel's word we



of  
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the infant Savior amidst His creatures and His shepherds. In among the poorest of the poor, you, O blessed Mother, found the treasure of all treasures. Deprived of much, you found all! (In *Imitation of Two Hearts* [China: Shepherds of Christ, 2006]).

## A SINGLE HUMAN HEART

By His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI

"[When] we realize that a single human heart stands on a higher scale than the whole extent of the universe...then we can begin to understand that the act by which God becomes man, that he who is the Creator, the eternal Logos, comes down to enter into human existence and unites himself with it, so that he himself is this man—that this act is an event of a far greater significance [than the creation of the world]. God himself comes into the world and becomes a man. This opens up a dimension beside which the apparently immeasurable material dimensions represent a significantly lesser order of magnitude....

...It is a tremendous event, God really became man. That he did not disguise himself as man, did not just play the part for a while in history, but that he truly is man—and that finally when he stretches out his arms on the Cross, he makes himself into a wide open space into which we can enter. If, then, this God-Man wants to make us all, as Scripture says, into his Body, to

draw us into a living corporate unity, just as, according to the Bible, man and woman become one flesh, then we can see that this is not just a matter of a single event, which happens and then is past. No, it is a breakthrough, a beginning, in which Christ wants to involve us through the Eucharist, through the sacraments, through baptism. In this sense, what happens here is something that surpasses any kind of evolution, the union of God and man, of creature and Creator.... [It is] an intervention, a personal act of love, which opens up for man, from this moment on, a new sphere and a new realm of possibility." (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *God and the World* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002], 215-219).

***"If you want a religion that is really comfortable, I don't recommend Christianity."***

— C.S. Lewis

## PRO-LIFE CHRISTMAS SERMON

By Fr. Thomas Euteneuer, President, Human Life International

***Keep Christ in the unborn baby this Christmas.***

If Matthew 25 has anything to say about our spiritual lives and how we will fare on that Last Day, our relationship with the poor, downtrodden and unfortunate of this world will be the substance of our particular judgment. "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or away from home or naked or ill or in prison and not attend to you in your needs?" (Mt 25:44) is a question that many will ask of Him, but how many will like to hear that He was found in His "distressing disguise," as Mother Theresa put it, on a daily basis right down the street from them, at the abortion mills?

The abortion parallel is not far-fetched for the modern exegete if we consider a few uncomfortable facts: unborn children are hungry for love when mother and father have both abandoned them and even sold them for a price...; they thirst for compassion from those who run the dirty business. "Will anyone—anyone—help me, please help me?" is their silent scream from the womb.

If Christ is not identified with the unborn children as His "least brethren," then there is no one on earth that deserves that exalted title. We must never allow our people to forget that Christ was a fertilized egg before He was an embryo before He was a fetus before he was an infant and a toddler, a boy and a man. He took that unborn condition on Himself voluntarily in order to experience the very depths of abasement in the humility of our human condition. In other words, He profoundly feels the plight of our unborn brothers and sisters

because He was once one of them, and He only wants us, His brother priests, to come to the aid of those poorest of His poor by our pastoral care for all those most in need. He wants us to make sure that the people under our care get that message too.

There's nothing wrong with a sermon about materialism at Christmas, but the people have heard that message already. Perhaps it's time to give them a message on the day of Christ's birth that they have not heard in a long, long time: let us see Christ in our unborn neighbors.

## WHY THE INCARNATION!

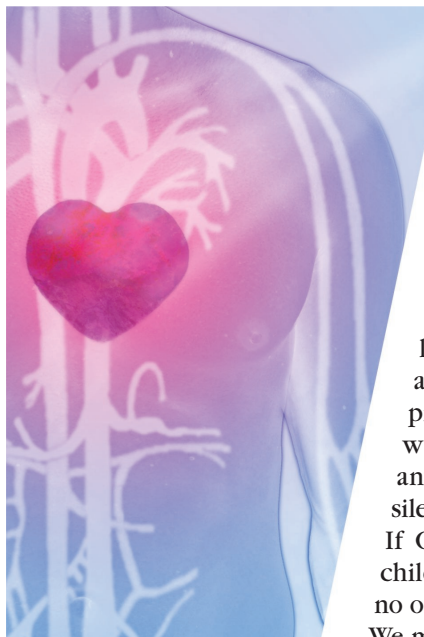
By Fr. John J. Pasquini

There was a man, Harold, who could not understand why God would choose to come to earth? It just didn't make sense to him? Why couldn't he help us from "up there?" Why did he need to come among us?

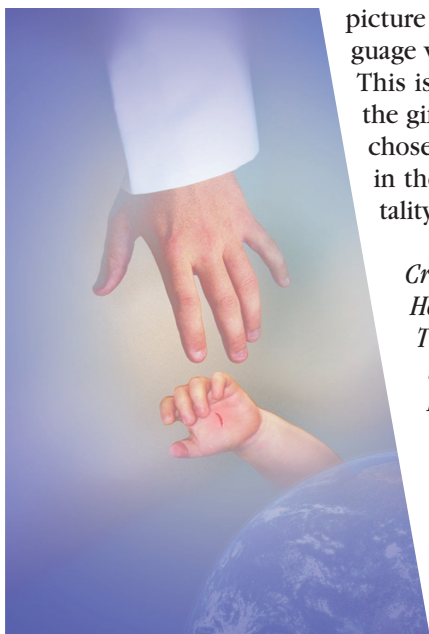
One day while Harold was cleaning up the leaves from his front yard he noticed a few Canadian geese on the lawn. It surprised him because it was so late in the season for these geese to still be up north. Harold knew that if these geese did not find some place to keep warm they would die and would not make it south. A cold front had impacted the weather and the geese were unfortunately trapped in it.

Harold decided to try to corral the geese into his warm garage until the cold front could pass—then they could go free and continue their flight south to the warm weather.

But despite all his attempts to get the geese into the garage, they would flee away from him. At one point, in desperation and exhaustion, he looked up to the sky and cried out, "If only I could speak 'goose' they would understand that I mean them no harm and that I only want to save them."







picture of the Father for us! He spoke in a language we could understand! This is truly a joyful season, for we rejoice in the gift of a God that loves us so much that he chose to be like us. This Christmas we rejoice in the gift of immortality being joined to mortality, spirit to flesh, heaven to earth.

*Create me, O Lord, in your image and likeness.  
Help me to love as you love,  
To live life as you lived it and the way you lived it.  
Help me to bring the truth which you are,  
To see the light which you bestow,  
To live the peace which you confer.  
Lord, help me to be poor the way you were poor,  
To be small, helpless, dependent, and weak the way you were,  
To be unwanted, uncared for, and unloved by so many the way you were.  
Lord, help me to be where you were and to live as you are.  
Where you are there is the way, the truth, and life eternal.  
Where you are there is all that I have been called to be.*

Suddenly it dawned on him. He now understood why God chose to be like one of us! He understood the core of the mystery. God came to share in our life, and to walk the same road of life we walk. Jesus came to paint a picture of the Father for us!

The American statesman Adlai Stevenson was fond of telling the following story wherever he went. A little girl, Amy, was sitting on the kitchen floor. She had her box of crayons out and was busy drawing a picture. This intrigued the little girl's mother. She looked at her daughter and at her drawing and said, "Whose picture are you drawing, Amy?" "I'm drawing a picture of God," said Amy. "But, darling," said the mother, "nobody knows what God looks like." She retorted, "They will when I get finished!" (Stories adapted from Fr. Mark Link, S.J.).

Jesus came to proclaim the "good news" that God the Father loves us, each one of us, so much that he sent his very own Son into the world.

Jesus came into this world naked, helpless, fragile, and vulnerable. He knew hunger, thirst, and pain. He knew ridicule, rejection, and death. He came to identify with us!

He came to personally find the lost, heal the broken, feed the hungry, free the sinners, and bring peace and music to hearts. He came to show us the way to living life authentically and to its full. He came to be like us in all things, except for sin—thereby showing us what it means to be fully human.

The Son of God came into the world to share in our journey and to show us the way to live life with purpose and meaning, even amidst the trials and tribulations of everyday life. He came to make our joys more joyful and our difficulties easier to overcome.

He came to open the gates of heaven for us by dying on the cross. He came to rescue us from darkness and bring us into the light. Jesus knows the Father and by following him, we too, find our way to the Father. Jesus painted a

***"All that is necessary for evil to succeed is for good men to do nothing."***

— Edmund Burke

## AN AUTHENTIC CHRISTMAS

By His Holiness John Paul II

"[God] became man. That is, he entered into human history, not so much to challenge it as to enlighten it, to orient it, to save it, by redeeming every single soul. This is the meaning of the Incarnation of the Word; this is the authentic meaning of Christmas, the feast of true joy and true hope.

Comprehending and accepting the message of Christmas means living the perennial contemporaneity of Christ. In our history as intelligent, free men and women, Jesus remains salvation for ever and for all. That is, he remains the answer to the supreme questions tormenting man and the grace for rising out of evil and living in the perspective of eternity. Bring this meaning of Christmas in your minds, in your life, in your human and Christian ideals! Man of today is bewildered by so many contrasting ideologies and shocked by so many dramatic and dolorous phenomena. He has need to know with certainty that, in spite of all, there is hope and joy, because God became man, Christ was really incarnated for us, the Savior announced by the Prophets came, and has remained with us!

We must believe in Christmas, strongly, deeply!

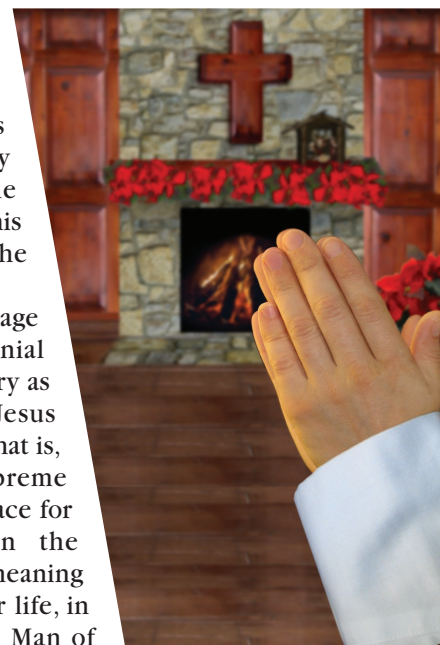
...[Jesus] comes to redeem us.... He comes to reconcile us to God. As St. Augustine well emphasizes, with his usual expressiveness, 'By means of our Head we are reconciled with God, since in Him the divinity of the Only Begotten became a sharer in our mortality, so that we should be sharers in his immortality'.... Christmas is the beginning of that 'marvelous exchange' which unites us to God. *It is the beginning of the Redemption.*

'A child is born, a son is given us' (Is. 9:5).

My brothers and sisters! All you for whom this Nativity is the sign of hope! I invite you to such spiritual union! Let us surround the place where God was made man with a vast—so extensive!—crown of hearts! Let us form a circle and court about this Virgin, who gave Him human life on the night of the Birth of God! Let us form a court about the Holy Family!

Emmanuel, You are among us! Together with us, You have condescended to the extreme consequences of that Alliance which has been concluded from the beginning with man, even though it had been so often violated and infringed.... You are with us, Emmanuel! O truly admirable! God Almighty in the feebleness of a child."

(Prayers and Devotions, trans. Firman O'Sullivan [Norwalk: Easton Press, 1984], 35-37).



# CHILD IN OUR HEARTS

By Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa

“St. Bonaventure said that a person conceives Jesus in his soul when, dissatisfied with his life, prompted by holy Inspiration, and filled with holy fervor, he resolutely breaks away from his old habits and sins; he is, as it were, made spiritually fertile by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and he conceives the proposal to lead a new life. Christ has been conceived! Once the blessed Son of God has been conceived, he is born in the heart, as long as the person, after making the right discernment, seeking the right advice, and invoking God’s help, immediately puts his holy proposal into practice and begins to act on what has been developing in his mind but which he disregarded for fear of failure.

However, the proposal must be carried out immediately, it must bring about an outward visible change, if possible, in our way of living and in our habits. If the proposal isn’t put into practice, then Jesus has been conceived but is not born.... The second feast of the Child Jesus, Christmas, will never be celebrated! It is one of the many postponements that have perhaps marked our lives and one of the main reasons why so few reach holiness.

[Let us imitate our Mother Mary.] [As Saint Augustine explained in *Sermons*, 189, 3, PL 38, 1006:][Jesus’] Mother carried him in her womb, may we carry him in our hearts; the Virgin became



pregnant with faith in Christ; she brought forth the Savior, may our souls bring forth salvation and praise. May our souls be not sterile, but fertile for God.’ [Or as St. Francis of Assisi said], ‘We are mothers of Christ when we carry him in our hearts and bodies through divine love and a pure and sincere conscience; we bring him forth through works which must be a shining example to others....’” (*Letter to All the Faithful*, I, Writings, cit., 96). (*Mary, Mirror of the Church*, trans. Francis Loneragan Villa [Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992], 72-74).

## HAIL MARY

By Fr. John J. Pasquini

When I pray, “Hail Mary, full of grace,” may I seek to live a life filled with grace.

When I pray, “The Lord is with you,” may the Lord be with me and protect my soul.

When I pray, “Blessed are you among women,” may I recognize that all those who are with Your Son are blessed beyond imagination.

When I pray, “Blessed is the fruit of thy womb,” may I recognize that within me is the presence of Your Son’s image and likeness, that within me is the temple of God.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me, now, and at the hour of my death. (*In Imitation of Two Hearts* [China: Shepherds of Christ Publications, 2006]).

**“You are deceived if you think that Christians can live without persecutions.”**

— Saint Jerome

## MARY AND CHILD

By Romanos the Melodist

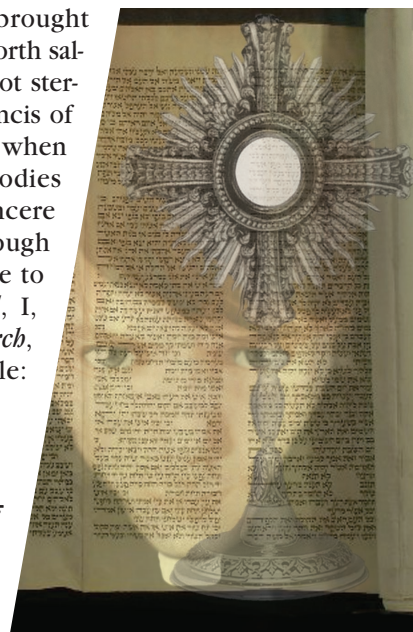
“Hail, untouched Virgin! Hail, chosen spouse of God! Hail, holy one! Hail, delightful and beautiful! Hail, joyful sight! Hail, unseeded earth! Hail, uncontaminated! Hail, Mother who knows not man! Hail, Virgin Bride!

All of heaven, with its fiery throne, is too small to contain my Lord. And this poor maiden, how will she be able to receive him?

O luminous woman, I see a flame, I see an ember glow surrounding you. It frightens me, Mary! Protect me, do not consume me! Your chaste womb has suddenly become a furnace full of fire. Do not let me melt, I beg you....

[The angel’s greeting], resounding in my ears, made me the luminous woman; it made me a mother. I cannot understand my Child’s conception, yet behold, I am great with child, and, as you see, my virginity is intact....

Tell me, my Child, how were you planted in me, and how were you formed in me? I see,



O my womb, and I am stunned.... [I see about me your] swaddling clothes and perceive that the seal of my virginity is still intact, for it was you that kept it intact, when you deigned to be born, my little Child, God before all ages!

O you, my fruit! O you, my life! Through you, I knew that I am what I am and that you are my God. Because of the inviolate seal of my virginity, I can proclaim that you are the immutable Word become flesh.... You left my womb just as you found it; you kept it whole.

[One day I will go with you to the Cross]. Let me go with you, for it heals me to look upon you.... [And what shall I see, my child]. [I] will see life hanging on the cross. And what is life? My Son and my God.” (*Mary and the Fathers of the Church* [San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999], 328-336).

## PREACH THE WORD

By St. Augustine of Hippo St. Bonaventure

Preach the word; insist upon it, welcome and unwelcome. Welcome to whom? Unwelcome to whom? By all means welcome to those who desire it; unwelcome to those who do not. However unwelcome, I dare to say: ‘You wish to stray, you wish to be lost; but I do not want this.... I shall recall the straying; I shall seek the lost. Whether they wish it or not, I shall do it. And should the brambles of the forests tear at me when I seek them, I shall force myself through all straights; I shall pull down all hedges. So far as the God whom I fear grants me the strength, I shall search everywhere. I shall recall the straying; I shall seek after those on the verge of being lost. If you do not want me to suffer, do not stray, do not become lost. (*Sermo* 46, 14-15: CCL 41, 541-542).





## HOW TO BECOME A SHEPHERD OF CHRIST ASSOCIATE

The Shepherds of Christ has prayer chapters all over the world praying for the priests, the Church and the world. These prayers that Father Carter compiled in the summer of 1994 began this worldwide network of prayer. Currently the prayers are in six languages with the Church's *Imprimatur*. Fr. Carter had the approval of his Jesuit provincial for this movement, writing the Newsletter every 2 months for 6 1/2 years. After his death, and with his direction, we in the Shepherds of Christ circulated the *Priestly Newsletter Book II* to 95,000 priests with other writings. We have prayed daily for the priests, the Church, and the world since 1994. Associates are called to join prayer Chapters and help us circulate this newsletter centered on spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart and Immaculate Heart and helping to renew the Church through greater holiness. Fr. John J. Pasquini is a tremendous gift on this 12th anniversary year of the newsletter. Form a Prayer Chapter & order a Prayer Manual.

Also we have people who spend 2 hours weekly before the tabernacle praying for these intentions: 1.) For the spread of the devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary culminating in the reign of the Sacred Heart and the triumph of the Immaculate Heart. 2.) For the Pope. 3.) For all bishops of the world. 4.) For all priests. 5.) For all sisters and brothers in the religious life. 6.) For all members of the Shepherds of Christ Movement, and for the spread of this movement to the world. 7.) For all members of the Catholic Church. 8.) For all members of the human family. 9.) For all souls in purgatory. This movement, *Apostles of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus*, was begun by Fr. Carter. Please inquire. Shepherds of Christ Ministries P.O. Box 627, China, Indiana 47250 USA Telephone: (toll free USA) 1-888-211-3041 or (812) 273-8405 Fax: (812) 273-3182 Email: info@sofc.org

## PRAYER AT CHRISTMAS

By Fr. Karl Rahner, S.J.

"God, Eternal Mystery of our Life, by the birth of Your own word of love in our flesh You have made the glory of Your life in its eternal youth into our life, and have caused it to appear in triumph. Grant us that when we experience the disappointments of our lives we may be enabled to believe that Your love, which You Yourself are and which You have bestowed upon us, is the eternal youth that is our own true life." (*Prayers for a Lifetime* [New York: Crossroads, 1986], 46).

## A GRACED PERSON

By Fr. Edward Carter, S.J.

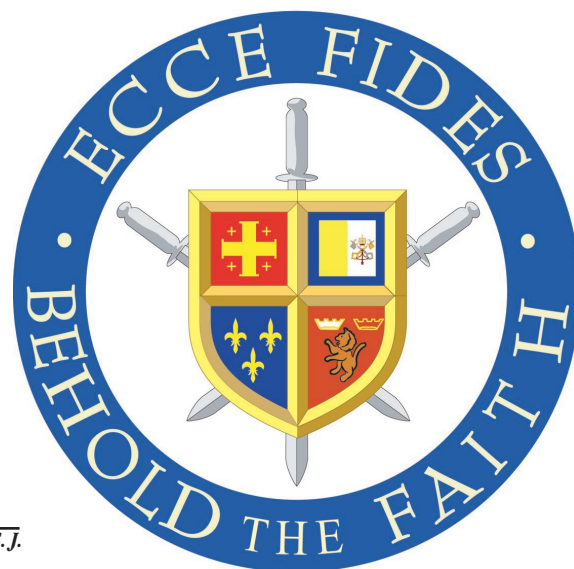
"[The Incarnation forever changed the nature of the world and of the human person]. The Christian is a graced person. The Christian life does not in any way destroy or lessen anything which is authentically human. Rather the Christian life gives human nature a deepened capacity for fulfillment. In our elevation through grace, we possess a deepened capacity for love, for joy, for suffering, for peace, for happiness. Whatever we do, as long as it is authentically human, is also meant to be Christian.... From experiencing life I am led to seek prayer, and from experiencing prayer I am led to seek life.... Prayer is intimately bound up with life in that it helps us find ourselves and our role in life. Prayer shows us how to live. Prayer helps us achieve self-identity, and in achieving self-identity we see what our relationship to God and our fellowmen should be." (*Prayer is Love* [Meinrad: Abbey Press, 1974], 10-11).

## EDITOR'S CORNER

Fr. John J. Pasquini is a columnist, author of more than a dozen books, guest speaker, lecturer on topics of systematic, moral and spiritual theology, a retreat leader, and a parish priest in the Diocese of Palm Beach, Florida. He feels blessed to serve the Shepherds of Christ as the editor of their newsletter. The newsletter is dedicated to renewal, fraternity, and the building of the Kingdom of God. It is a spirituality newsletter particularly dedicated to priests, religious, and all interested in the spiritual life. Comments and insights are always welcome.

*"I give my heart to Jesus and Mary with you in love."*

— Shepherds of Christ



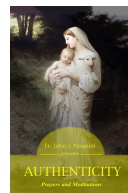
## ECCE FIDES BEHOLD THE FAITH

By Fr. John Pasquini

The Shepherds of Christ encourage Bishops, Pastors, and Parochial Vicars as well as lay individuals to foster the mission of Ecce Fides. Please check the website for instructions on building Catechism-based faith communities: [www.eccefides.org](http://www.eccefides.org).

## FR. JOHN PASQUINI

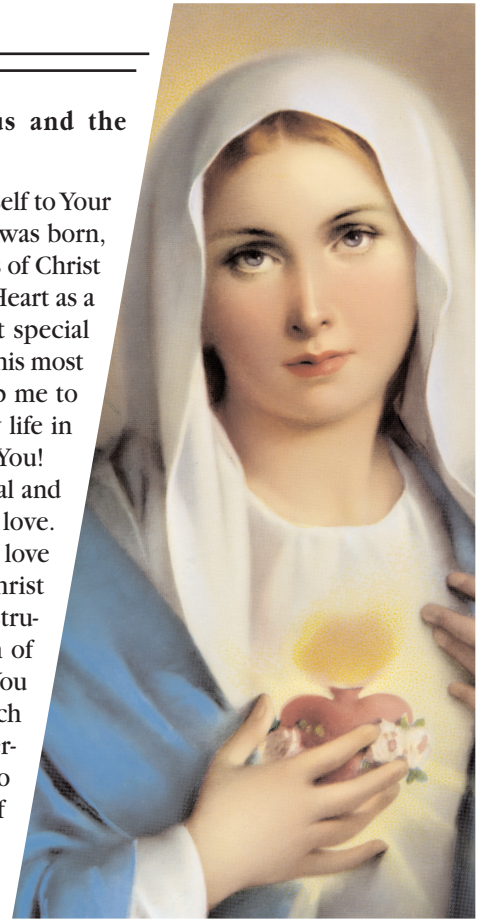
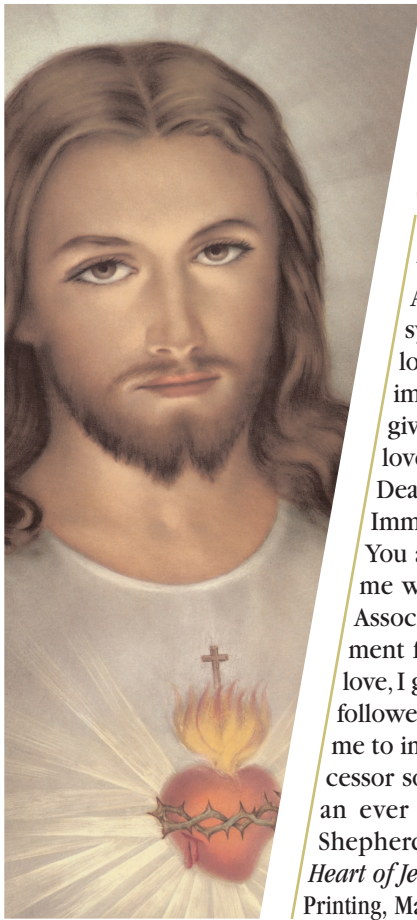
*Authenticity*, the Yellow Book of prayers by Fr. John Pasquini, can lead the soul into deeper intimacy with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, can lead to greater love of Mary which leads to the unitive life and greater holiness. It is available through SofC as a special offer to priests for \$5 plus postage.



## ACT OF CONSECRATION

### Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary

“Lord Jesus, Chief Shepherd of the flock, I consecrate myself to Your most Sacred Heart. From Your pierced Heart the Church was born, the Church You have called me, as a member of Shepherds of Christ Associates, to serve in a most special way. You reveal Your Heart as a symbol of Your love in all its aspects, including Your most special love for me, whom You have chosen as Your companion in this most important work. Help me to always love You in return. Help me to give myself entirely to You. Help me always to pour out my life in love of God and neighbor! Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in You! Dear Blessed Virgin Mary, I consecrate myself to your maternal and Immaculate Heart, this heart which is symbol of your life of love. You are the Mother of my Savior. You are also my Mother. You love me with a most special love as a member of Shepherds of Christ Associates, a movement created by your Son as a powerful instrument for the renewal of the Church and the world. In a return of love, I give myself entirely to your motherly love and protection. You followed Jesus perfectly. You are His first and perfect disciple. Teach me to imitate you in the putting on of Christ. Be my motherly intercessor so that, through your Immaculate Heart, I may be guided to an ever closer union with the pierced Heart of Jesus, Chief Shepherd of the flock” (Rita Ring, *Mass Book: A Journey Into the Heart of Jesus*, El Paso, Texas: [Shepherds of Christ Publications, Second Printing, May 2000], pp. 204f).



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