



take notice

Come Spend Your Holy Week at the Side of Christ

Join the Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi for a Holy Week Come and See Retreat. April 8-13, 2009. Activities include: Eucharistic Celebration of the Last Supper, Adoration on Holy Thursday, Good Friday Ceremonies, Talk on the Seven Last Words of Christ, and more. Register by March 28, 2009. For more information, view the [flyer](#).

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Holy Father

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"He Fasted for Forty Days and Forty Nights"

At the beginning of Lent, which constitutes an itinerary of more intense spiritual training, the Liturgy sets before us again three penitential practices that are very dear to the biblical and Christian tradition – prayer, almsgiving, fasting – to prepare us to better celebrate Easter and thus experience God’s power that, as we shall hear in the Paschal Vigil, “dispels all evil, washes guilt away, restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy, casts out hatred, brings us peace and humbles earthly pride” (Paschal Præconium). For this year’s Lenten Message, I wish to focus my reflections especially on the value and meaning of fasting. Indeed, Lent recalls the forty days of our Lord’s fasting in the desert, which He undertook before entering into His public ministry. We read in the Gospel: “Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry” (Mt 4,1-2). Like Moses, who fasted before receiving the tablets of the Law (cf. Ex 34,28) and Elijah’s fast before meeting the Lord on Mount Horeb (cf. 1 Kings 19,8), Jesus, too, through prayer and fasting, prepared Himself for the mission that lay before Him, marked at the start by a serious battle with the tempter.

We might wonder what value and meaning there is for us Christians in depriving ourselves of something that in itself is good and useful for our bodily sustenance. The Sacred Scriptures and the entire Christian tradition teach that fasting is a great help to avoid sin and all that leads to it. For this reason, the history of salvation is replete with occasions that invite fasting. In the very first pages of Sacred Scripture, the Lord commands man to abstain from partaking of the prohibited fruit: “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die” (Gn 2, 16-17). Commenting on the divine injunction, Saint Basil observes that “fasting was ordained in Paradise,” and “the first commandment in this sense was delivered to Adam.” He thus concludes: “ ‘You shall not eat’ is a law of fasting and abstinence” (cf. *Sermo de jejuniis*: PG 31, 163, 98). Since all of us are weighed down by sin and its consequences, fasting is proposed to us as an instrument to restore friendship with God. Such was the case with Ezra, who, in preparation for the journey from exile back to the Promised Land, calls upon the assembled people to fast so that “we might humble ourselves before our God” (8,21). The Almighty heard their prayer and assured them of His favor and protection. In the same way, the people of Nineveh, responding to Jonah’s call to repentance, proclaimed a fast, as a sign of their sincerity, saying: “Who knows, God may yet repent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we perish not?” (3,9). In this instance, too, God saw their works and spared them.

Q & A

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"Logic and Maturity"
with Fr Anthony Bannon, LC

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Q. Dear Fr Anthony,

In my search for discernment I have come upon a book by a priest from the 1980's. The points he raises are:

(1) Pressure by something or someone

(2) Self giving

(3) Coping with stress

(4) The ability to love (i.e., to want and be capable of being married and choosing not to)

(5) Getting along with people

(6) Taste for prayer

I feel that I have difficulty with points (1) (2) (3) (4) as I have never really been in love. (5) As I am a bit of a loner and have not had a great degree of social contact and also number (3) coping with stress. I suppose my main question is do I have the ability to love enough to carry out the duties.

-Joe

A. Dear Joe,

The fact of having difficulty with some of the above points is not in itself an indication one way or another as regards your vocation. What will tell you something is the type and degree of difficulty you experience.

For example, number four mentions the ability to love, to be capable of being married and choosing not to. The fact that you have not yet been in love does not of itself mean much. Some young men have never been in love because they chose not to, this is the case of many priests when they were younger -- since they knew falling in love would put in danger the vocation they thought they might have, they opted to protect their vocation, not date, not go beyond normal friendships, and enter the seminary. That is very logical and very mature. In reality they had fallen in love, but not human love, not with a woman.

As regards the other points you have to keep I mind your age and temperament. To follow a vocation you do not have to be perfect in all respects, what you need is enough to work with. Unless your shyness, reaction to stress, etc. are pathological (extreme, causing major upheavals...) you will probably be able to work on them over time and improve.

I encourage you to visit a seminary and speak to the priest in charge of formation to let him get to know you, and ask him for his impressions.

God bless.

-Fr Anthony

Q & A

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"I 'Ink' Not"
with Fr Anthony Bannon, LC

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Q. Dear Fr Anthony,

I was wondering if religious orders have anything against tattoos. I have one (non-offensive) on my arm-- would this be a conflict?

Thanks for your time!

-Lily

A. Dear Lily,

Of itself, a non-offensive tattoo would not be a reason for a religious order to turn down a vocation.

However, individual orders may have their own criteria so I would say that you should pursue your interest, and once you find a particular order that you think you may be called to, it would be a question of asking them if it is a problem.

God bless,

-Fr Anthony

Meditation- 3rd Sunday in Lent

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"When the Lord Enters Your Temple"
John 2:13-25

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When the time of the Jewish Passover was near Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting there. Making a whip out of cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, sheep and cattle as well, scattered the money changers coins, knocked their tables over, and said to the dove sellers, "Take all this out of here and stop using my Father's house as a market." Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: "I am consumed with zeal for your house." The Jews intervened and said, "What sign can you show us that you should act like this?" Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple: are you going to raise it up again in three days?" But he was speaking of the Temple that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciple remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and what he had said. During his stay in Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he did, but Jesus knew all people and did not trust himself to them; he never needed evidence about anyone; he could tell what someone had in him.

Introductory Prayer: Lord Jesus, by Baptism you made me a Temple of the Holy Spirit. You often come to visit this Temple, I invite you in often, as when I receive you in Communion and open my soul to you in prayer. I believe in you, I hope in you and I love you. Stay with me always and never allow me to separate myself from you.

Petition: Lord, I want to be worthy of you, so come into my soul in this time of prayer and during this season of Lent to show me what I must change, and give me the courage to put you in the first place in my life.

1. God's Temple. Different buildings have different uses, and are designed by their owners/creators with that particular purpose in view. Everything is chosen and put together for the purpose for which the building is built. God built us "after his image and likeness", and he came to visit daily with our first parents. He always wanted for us to be able to have the joy that can only be had knowing him and being with him. "You made us for yourself and our heart is not at rest until it rests in you." We will always seek the true purpose of our lives, and we will never achieve it until we find and accept God into our heart, until we become "his Temple". We could not do it on our own, so Christ came to redeem us and open for us the possibility of God entering our soul. And this possibility was made real the day we were baptized. From then on we are truly children of God, Temples of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, it is true that we often realize that we are unworthy; it is true that we often forget the reality of God's presence in our lives; it is true that we often drive him out and fill our souls with many other things that are not him, such as possessions, but through all of this it remains that Jesus is always willing and ready to come into our soul and restore it to its true dignity by restoring his presence in Grace. Let us open the door of our Temple and invite him in, humbly.

2. Take These Things Out of Here. The people in the Temple were surprised at Jesus' actions. They

resisted him for they thought they were correct and he had not right to upset their profitable businesses. It is not so with us. God enlightens our conscience through faith in the teachings of Jesus, through his example in the Gospel and through the teaching of the Church, so we are the ones who know that "the just man falls seven times a day", and for that reason, moved by his grace, we spontaneously invite him in. But we know we do so at a price. Many things we are attached to will have to go. We will have to readjust our criteria. In many things we are not acting like the Christians we say we are – whether it be in our prayer-life, in our lack of charity, in our absorption in material things and human ambition, in our omission of the good, in our passivity to bring the message of Christ to those around us, in our acquiescence to those who do not respect the gift of life.... How will we know what Jesus wants to change and correct in our lives? We have to learn about our faith to understand what Christ expects of us, we have to form our conscience to know not only what is right and wrong but what is better, we ought to have a spiritual director who can help us clear up what is unclear to us. All of this is letting Jesus do his work in making the temple of our soul and body a true Temple of God.

3. He Could Tell What Someone Had in Him. These might at first seem ominous words and threatening when the Gospel adds that for this reason Jesus did not trust man. But in reality they are reassuring. No one knows us like God does. Our failings and sins do not surprise him. He loves us not for our failings but for that "part of himself" that he breathed into us at creation and then that transformation of our soul that he worked in Baptism. He knows our weakness on our own, but he also knows our possibilities when we let his grace work in us. Because he knows what we are like, he doesn't leave us to our own devices. He gives us his grace, he offers us his pardon, he gives us the help of his sacraments, he gives us the support of his family in the Church. God never abandons us. He invites us to seek him more sincerely again this Lent. God knows that we can be his followers one moment and the next moment deny him, as happened from Palm Sunday to Good Friday in Jerusalem. On the other hand, he is always faithful, as he demonstrated so well on Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Pentecost, when he fulfilled his promise to those who had abandoned him. He is still fulfilling his promise through the Holy Spirit whom he sent to lead us to the fullness of truth. Let us renew our faith and trust in this great mystery of the mercy and kindness of our Good Shepherd who laid down his life for us.

Conversation: Lord Jesus, thank you for giving me life. Thank you for making me your Temple in Baptism and your presence in my soul through grace. I know you are leading me. Give me the love and trust I need to open my heart for you to come in and change what you want. I know you are only looking for what is best for me and for those you want to reach through me. I embrace your plan. Jesus, I trust in you, for you are the true friend of my soul.

Questionnaire:

1. How much of a "Temple of the Holy Spirit" am I in my daily life? Am I growing in the life of grace?
2. What is the first thing that Christ would want to "clean out" of God's temple, my life? And what is the first thing he would notice is missing in that same temple?
3. Do I have absolute faith and trust in the power of God's grace to transform me if I work along with it?

First of all, prayerful. We will not be able to accomplish anything secure, effective, lasting or stable for the good of Christ's Kingdom without an interior spirit of prayer and union with God. Being prayerful, does not mean having to spend all day in church or walking around with our heads bowed. What it takes is our making a constant prayer of each and every act of our day, injecting into everything all our love Christ and a great purity of intention. Never undertake anything unless you are motivated and guided by love and purity of intention. However, this indication as regards having a prayerful spirit does not exclude the need to dedicate a specific time of the day entirely and exclusively to speaking and conversing with God.

If we do not have this prayerful spirit and are not successful in being prayerful, our attempts at being Christian apostles will only be so much playacting, and for all the practical energy we expend we will not be effective in making the Kingdom advance either in ourselves or in souls.

Special

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"Story of Aloysius Schwartz"
Saints of Asia: 1500 to the Present
Vincent J. O'Malley, C.M.

" Born in Washington, D.C., the third of seven children, Aloysius Schwartz(1930-1992) attended Holy Name Grammar School, Saint Maryknoll College at Lakewood, New Jersey and Glen Ellyn, Illinois: and matriculated in theology at Louvain University, in Belgium. After visiting the shrine of the Virgin of the Poor at Banneux, Belgium, he dedicated his life to serving the poorest of the poor.

After ordination on June 29,1957, Father Al was assigned to Pusan, South Korea, where he arrived on December 8. Evidence of post-war poverty abounded, especially among orphaned or abandoned street children. These children lacked the necessities of life. For these innocent victims, Fr. Al conceived and oversaw the construction of a Childrens Village to provide the poorest youth with basic necessities. To assist him in this mission, he founded two religious congregations: in 1964, the Sisters of Mary; and seventeen years later, the Brothers of Christ.

In 1985 and 1990, he extended his ministry to the Philippines and Mexico respectively. His focus remained the poor, and especially children. He founded Children's Villages in South Korea at Pusan(1964) and Seoul (1975); in the Phillipines at Manila (1985), Talisay (1990) and Silang (1991); and in Mexico at Chalco (1990).

in November 1989, this servant of the poorest of the poor was diagnosed with ALS, known popularly as Lou Gehrig's disease, and medically as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. As his muscles gradually weakened, his mobility lessened, and he became increasingly dependent on the use of a walker, and the wheelchair. As his voice weakened, he no longer preached to large crowds, but to small groups, and eventually, his spoken word gave way to written messages. He, nonetheless, continued his ministry. As his activities diminished, his prayers increased; he spent hours praying in front of the Blessed Sacrament, also saying the rosary, and hearing confessions. He writes in an autobiography:

"Pain is pain and suffering is suffering no matter how deep the faith, how bright the hope and how pure the love. At the same time, in the depths of the pain there is this oneness of spirits, and in the heart of the suffering there is this union of souls. And from this oneness and this union there rises a very pure, spiritual peace- this peace of God which surpasses all human understanding."

In recognition of his extraordinary contribution to society, he was nominated twice for the Nobel Peace Prize- in 1984 and 1992.

On March 16, 1992 he died at Manila. The funeral procession took several hours to wind its very way through Silang as the poor poured out of their hovels to line the streets in demonstration of their affection for their advocate. Dignataries followed the cortege in grateful recognition of all that this priest had done for the church and the community. His remains were buried at the Children's Village at Silang, in Cavite Province, Phillipines.

Upcoming Events & Retreats

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((Listed here are retreats directed by the Legionaries of Christ and Regnum Christi members. For a listing of diocesan activities and other events, click here to go to the vocation.com website))

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- Retreats for Men
 Retreats for Women

LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST

Mark Your Calendars! Test Your Call Weekends for the 2009

Calendar Year. Experience the novitiate in Cheshire, CT with retreats for young men ages 16-27 sponsored by the Legion of Christ. These weekend retreats combine time for personal reflection, preached meditations, conferences, and opportunities for confession and spiritual direction with the experience of the day to day life of the seminarians. For more information, please call Br. Francois at (800) 420-5409 or email vocation@legionaries.org. Dates in 2009: March 20-22, April 8-12, April 24-26, May 22-25, June 19-21, July 3-5, July 24-26, August 14-16, September 4-6, October 23-25, November 25-29, December 19-23, and December 26-30.

Test Your Call Weekends, Canada! Experience the novitiate in Cornwall, ON with retreats for young men ages 16-27 sponsored by the Legion of Christ. These weekend retreats combine time for personal reflection, preached meditations, conferences, and opportunities for confession and spiritual direction with the experience of the day to day life of the seminarians. April 9-12, 2009. For more information, please contact Br. Xavier Kleiner mann de Lance at xkleiner mann@legionaries.org or (001) 613-203-3776.

Holy Week Missions in Mexico! Door to door evangelization missions in Guadalajara, Mexico for young men ages 15-25. Spend 10 days spreading the faith like the first apostles. Training provided. Sponsored by the Legion of Christ. Cost \$550 plus airfare. For more information please contact Fr. Daniel Wilson at dwilson@legionaries.org or (914)409-2930.

REGNUM CHRISTI consecrated women

Come and See Weekends. Spend a weekend with the consecrated women of Regnum Christi, learning about their life, spirituality and mission within the Church. Activities include: Talks/conferences about the Church, Regnum Christi, the Spiritual Life, and consecrated Life in Regnum Christi; a half-day retreat; opportunities for confession and Spiritual Direction; daily Mass and time for prayer, silence and reflection; sports and meals with the consecrated women; vocational panel: Questions & Answers with consecrated women. Ages 16-30. For more

information, contact Jill Swallow at vocation@inteducators.org or 401-949-2820. 2009 dates: March 20-23, May 22-25, and July 10-13

Holy Week Vocational Discernment Retreat. Greenville, RI. A vocational discernment convention featuring conferences, meditations, and opportunities for Mass, Confession and spiritual direction, for young women ages 16-30, interested in discerning a vocation to the consecrated life. Sponsored by the Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi. April 8-13. For more information please contact Jill Swallow at vocation@inteducators.org or 401-949-2820.

ShoreLines

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