



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*



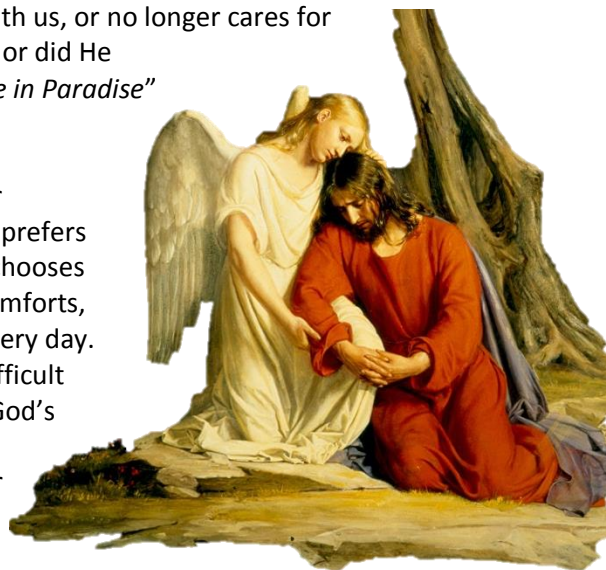
Jesus asked him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ He replied, ‘**Lord, please let me see.**’

(Luke 18:41)

Why do we have such an aversion to suffering? We’ve all heard it said before...*If the angels could envy us of anything, it would be that we can suffer and they can’t.* But it’s almost impossible for us to understand this weird kind of jealousy because deep down, we don’t really buy it. That’s the root of it all, isn’t it? We refuse to see the cross for what it truly is – a gift. The blindness with which we endure our pains makes them so heavy to bear, not the size and substance of our crosses. For who will ever have to carry a greater cross than Our Lord’s, yet He Himself was able to say, “*My yoke is easy and my burden is light*” (Matthew 11:30).

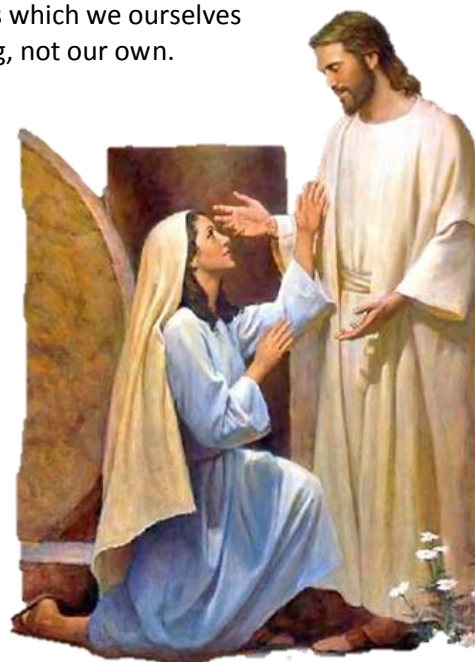
Like the Apostles who could not comprehend Jesus’ words as He spoke of His impending Passion, the immense value of suffering still remains hidden from us. Hidden behind our own human weakness, behind the illusions of the world, and behind the wiles of the devil which we allow to deceive us. We believe the lies and doubt the truth, perceiving the cross as God’s wrath rather than His love, His punishment rather than His mercy. We choose to look at the Lord as a vengeful judge instead of our loving Father who disciplines only to heal. When our prayers seemingly go unanswered and our sufferings are not taken away, we complain God has abandoned us, is angry with us, or no longer cares for us. Did Jesus save the Good Thief from the pain of the cross or did He promise him something greater? “*Today you will be with Me in Paradise*” (Luke 23:43).

Maybe we fail to recognize the cross when it is laid upon our shoulders, distracting ourselves with the sacrifices our pride prefers rather than patiently accepting the sufferings that the Lord chooses to send ...the injustices, humiliations, rejections, pains, discomforts, disappointments, inconveniences, etc. that we encounter every day. Sometimes even facing our own miseries can be the most difficult cross of all. But it counts! It all counts and can be used for God’s glory, for the salvation of souls, and for our own sanctification. Don’t let Jesus agonize alone in the garden or suffer without company on the cross. He needs us and wants us with Him. It is His Will! Lent is not a time to run



away in our shame as Adam and Eve once did, but to humbly yet courageously run towards the Savior who our Eternal Father has given us in His infinite love and mercy. With confidence let us acknowledge our sinfulness, ask for His forgiveness, and offer our help to relieve the pains which we ourselves have inflicted. We must learn to fix our loving gaze upon Jesus' suffering, not our own.

And when our spirit is willing and flesh is weak, we must imitate beloved John at the Last Supper, placing our heads on the heart of Jesus and resting in His boundless love. There lies the fount of all our strength. For who was the only Apostle with enough courage to remain at the foot of the cross and suffer with Our Lady? But he was not alone. When we find ourselves tempted to doubt in God's mercy, let us then turn our eyes to the fearless Magdalene that very first Easter morning. The one who loved much was not only forgiven much, but was chosen to be the first witness of the Resurrection. There is much to see...all we have to do is ask.



Would you like to console Jesus in His Passion this Lent and repair for the so many offenses that His Sacred Heart suffers? Visit the "Family Tree" page of our website and scroll down to the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta to download *The 24 Hours of Our Lord's Passion*.

A little help carrying our crosses...



"I saw all of Heaven studded with crosses – some small, some large, some medium; some which were larger, emanated more splendor...Then it seemed that Heaven opened, and one could see and hear the feast that the Blessed were making for the cross. **Those who had suffered more were celebrated more...One could distinguish in a special way the martyrs and those who had suffered in a hidden way.** Oh, how esteemed were the crosses and those who had suffered more in that blessed dwelling! As I was seeing this, a voice resounded throughout the whole Heaven, saying: 'If the Lord did not send the crosses upon the earth, He would be like a father who has no love for his own children – who wants to see them poor and dishonored instead of honored and rich.'" (from the writings of the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta, *Book of Heaven*, Vol. 3 – May 3, 1900)

"How happy you will feel, thinking that your sufferings serve to save souls, to console Jesus, to kiss His wounds, to tell Him that you love Him!...Love Him always, and Jesus will be wounded by your love and will love you more...Think that every pain you suffer is an 'I love you', a kiss, an affection, a hug that Jesus sends you. In this way you will feel strength in your sufferings, and the joys which the pains suffered for Jesus bring."
(from the letters of the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta)

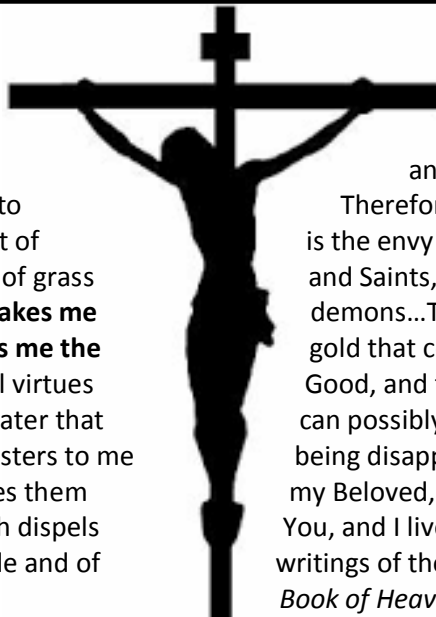


"Heaven contains various places, more or less glorious; and these places will be distributed according to the sufferings suffered down here, more or less heavy. **Oh, if all knew the preciousness of suffering, they would compete with one another to suffer more!** But this science is not recognized by the world, and so they abhor all that can make them richer for eternity." (Our Lord to the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta, *Book of Heaven*, Vol. 2 – March 31, 1899)



“The life of the heart is love. I am like an infirm person who is burning with fever and keeps looking for refreshment, for a relief, from the fire that devours him. **My fever is love; but from where do I extract the refreshments and the reliefs which are most suitable for the fire that consumes me? From the pains and toils suffered by souls beloved to Me, only for love of Me.** Many times I wait and wait for that moment in which the soul turns to Me to tell Me: ‘Lord, only for love of You do I want to suffer this pain.’ Ah, yes, these are the reliefs and refreshments most suitable for Me, which cheer Me and dampen the fire that consumes Me.” (Our Lord to the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta, *Book of Heaven*, Vol. 2 - September 16, 1899)

“The Cross is fecund and gives birth to Grace in me. The Cross is Light, It disillusion me of what is temporal, and reveals to me what is eternal. The Cross is fire, and reduces to ashes all that is not of God, to the point of emptying my heart of the tiniest blade of grass that might be in it...**The Cross, then, makes me know myself; not only this, but It gives me the knowledge of God.** The Cross grafts all virtues into me...The Cross is like beneficent water that purifies me; not only this, but it administers to me the nourishment of the virtues, It makes them grow...The Cross is like dry wood, which dispels and puts to flight all the smokes of pride and of vainglory, producing the humble violet



of humility in the soul. The Cross is the most powerful weapon that offends the demons, and defends me from all of their claws. Therefore, the soul who possesses the Cross is the envy and admiration of the very Angels and Saints, and the rage and indignation of the demons...The Cross is the chain of most pure gold that connects me to You, my Highest Good, and forms the most intimate union which can possibly be given, to the point of making my being disappear. And it transforms me in You, my Beloved, to the point that I feel lost within You, and I live from Your very Life.” (from the writings of the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta, *Book of Heaven*, Vol. 3 – December 2, 1899)

News from the male front...

Congratulations to Michele Magini and Ander Andreani who officially entered the novitiate on December 8th, 2014, *Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception*. The newest Benedictine Monks of Divine Will became Brother Giovanni Maria Giuseppe of the Child Jesus and Brother Bernardo Giuseppe Maria of Christ the King upon receiving their white, Benedictine habits during an evening Vespers ceremony celebrated by the bishop. May St. Joseph’s perfect example guide Father Elijah in the formation of these young men, teaching them how to be both humble servants of Our Lady and strong protectors of Her Son.



(from left to right) Bishop Andrea Turazzi, Brother Giovanni, Fr. Elijah, and Brother Bernardo honoring their Mother with the *Salve Regina*.

Would you like to help support the Daughters?

As our little family continues to grow, living expenses have increased as well. Plus, with two more young women hoping to enter the community in the next few months and our bedrooms almost all occupied, we need to begin creating and furnishing additional cells for both our new sisters and future vocation guests. God, in His goodness, has been blessing us with vocations. Would you prayerfully consider being an instrument of His Providence to help us provide for them?

You can make a one-time donation by credit/debit card or sign up for automatic monthly payments on the "Donations" page of our website (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



Thank you to those who have supported us in the past and continue to support us with your financial assistance, your friendship, and especially with all of your prayers. You help keep us afloat and please be assured of our deepest gratitude for all you do. Not a day passes when we do not pray for our benefactors – whether spiritual or monetary – and for all those who have asked us for prayers. May God reward your generosity to us in a way that only an infinitely loving Father knows how!



(from left to right) Sister Nunzia, Sister Maria Scholastica, Sister Maria Francesca, Mother Gabrielle Marie, Sister Mary Rose, and Sister Nancy.



A blessed Lent and
a very happy Easter
to all of you from
the Benedictine
Daughters of
Divine Will!!!

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all
circumstances give thanks, for this is the Will of God for
you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)