



Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will



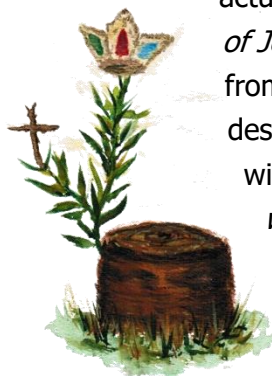
NAZARETH

The other night, Mother Gabrielle Marie and another sister were speaking to a girl discerning her vocation. She was still unsure if the Lord was calling her to the religious life and, if so, which community would be best suited for her. At one point, this young woman in all sincerity said, *"I just want my life to be meaningful. I want to do something meaningful to serve God."* The sister sitting by Mother, as the three video-chatted an ocean away from each other, felt something stir in the depth of her soul. Isn't that the cry of all our hearts, whether we're still searching for our place in the divine plan or already settled in our vocation? We all want our lives to be meaningful. We want our Father to be happy that He created us, as a friend of ours so candidly put it. St. Mother Teresa called it doing, or better yet, being

"something beautiful for God." That common ache is there for a reason and it won't go away when we finally get married and have a house full of children. It won't go away when we're ordained a priest or enter the convent. It won't go away when we finally get that perfect job, achieve success in our work or ministry, or even win the praise and esteem of others. The ache will only go away when it finds its perfect fulfillment – *living in the Divine Will*.

Living in the Kingdom of Divine Will, letting the Supreme Fiat reign completely in our souls, returning to the order, place, and the purpose for which we were created by God – these are all very big words and, if we're honest, can sometimes feel overwhelming. But Jesus, knowing our littleness, draws us a picture: a picture of a little house, with a little family, in a little town called Nazareth...which actually means little *branch* or *shoot*. *"There shall come forth a **shoot** from the stump of Jesse, and a **branch** shall grow out of His roots"* (Is. 11:1). The rest of this passage from Isaiah, read at mass every year on the second Sunday of Advent, goes on to describe the long-awaited anointed One along with the reign of peace and justice He will usher in – when *"the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion together, with a little child shall lead them"* (11:6).

It's full of powerful imagery that certainly seems like a foreshadowing of what we pray for everyday in the Our Father: *Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done **on earth as it is in Heaven***. Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, the



Holy Spirit was pointing us to Nazareth, where the prophesied Messianic King would live as a child, where the little Branch would grow in wisdom and favor with God, and where He would spend a vast majority of His life. And as we learn from Luisa's writings¹, that's where we are called to live and grow as well:

"I continued my acts in the Divine Fiat and my poor mind stopped in the little house of Nazareth, where the Queen of Heaven, the celestial King Jesus, and St. Joseph were in possession of and lived in the Kingdom of the Divine Will. Indeed, this Kingdom was not a stranger to the earth. The house of Nazareth and the family who lived in it belonged to this Kingdom and kept it fully alive. But while I was thinking of this, my great King Jesus said to me: *'My daughter, of course the Kingdom of My Will existed on earth. And for this reason, there is the sure hope that It shall return once more in Its full vigor...Now you ought to know that every creature is a kingdom. That is why anyone who lets My Will reign in her can be called a little kingdom of the Supreme Fiat. She is a tiny little house of Nazareth that we hold upon the earth; and although she is small, Heaven is not closed to her – because Our Will reigns in her. She observes the same laws of the celestial homeland, loves with the same love, feeds herself with the same heavenly foods, and is incorporated into the Kingdom of Our infinite realms. Now to form the great Kingdom of our Will on earth, we will first make the many little houses of Nazareth - that is, souls who want to know It in order to let It reign in them. I and the Sovereign Queen will be at the head of these little tiny houses...So with these tiny little houses, we will repeat our house of Nazareth. We will form so many little states and provinces of ours that, after they have been well formed and ordered as so many little kingdoms of our Will, they will unite and form one single Kingdom and one great people.'*"
(Book of Heaven, Vol. 29, 5/31/1931)



The Holy Family is our tangible model of what it means to live in God's Will. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph provide the perfect, living and breathing example of the incredible knowledges laid out for us in the Book of Heaven. So doing something meaningful for God, being something beautiful for Him, and having your heavenly Father take delight in you involves nothing more than making Nazareth your

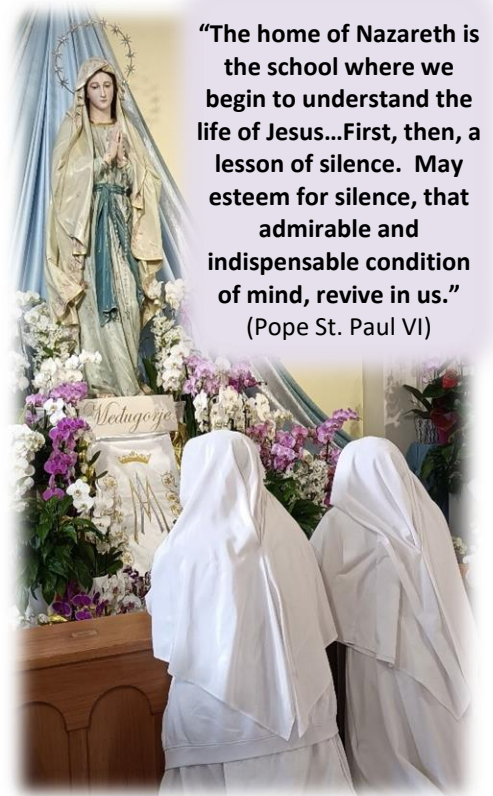
¹ The Divine Will writings of the Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta include her 36-volume diary entitled *Book of Heaven, The 24 Hours of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, and *The Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will*. If you'd like to start reading, contact us at daughtersofdivinewill@gmail.com and we'll get you started.

home, too. And that can be done regardless of age, state in life, or wherever we may be on our journey with the Lord. We can begin right now!

If you haven't noticed yet, we're very practical. We're not satisfied with beautiful, profound truths remaining stuck in our heads or simply tickling our spiritual ears. Our primary interest is always allowing the Lord to plant them deep within our hearts so that they may manifest themselves, concretely, in every aspect of our lives. That's why it's called the gift of *living in* the Divine Will and not the gift of knowing a lot about the Divine Will. *So how am I supposed to be a little house of Nazareth?* Well, we can't answer that question for you, but we do invite you to begin praying with the Holy Family this Christmas season. Contemplate the lives of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph at Nazareth and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal how your life fits into theirs...for it certainly does fit in!

Here are a few little lights that have been coming to us in prayer. Though we are all so wonderfully different, being made in the image of the same God and being born with the same original sin, our hearts all tend to have similar struggles and desires.

However, the Lord still awaits you personally and intimately, to speak one-on-one to your own heart and enjoy a firsthand relationship with His beloved son or daughter.



"The home of Nazareth is the school where we begin to understand the life of Jesus...First, then, a lesson of silence. May esteem for silence, that admirable and indispensable condition of mind, revive in us."
(Pope St. Paul VI)

The place where it ALL matters

"During the greater part of His life, Jesus shared the condition of the vast majority of human beings: a daily life spent without evident greatness, a life of manual labor...Jesus' obedience to His Mother and legal father...was the temporal image of His filial obedience to His Father in Heaven. The everyday obedience of Jesus to Joseph and Mary both announced and anticipated the obedience of Holy Thursday: "Not My Will..." The obedience of Christ in that daily routine of His hidden life was already inaugurating His work of restoring what the disobedience of Adam had destroyed. The hidden life at Nazareth allows everyone to enter into fellowship with Jesus by the most ordinary events of daily life." (CCC 531-533)



At Nazareth you'll find a place where *everything* mattered because *everything* was animated by the Divine Will. As the Eternal Word - God Himself - Jesus divinized all human acts, rendering each of them a precious way of giving honor, glory, and love to the Father. Mary participated in everything by grace while St. Joseph, inundated with the light, love, and fullness of the Divine Will that came forth from his Wife and

Son, lived completely from Their reflections. And the almost unbelievable, too-good-to-be-true news is...we can also join in! All we have to do is what we normally do as human beings, what we're called to do according to our state in life, and whatever the Lord may be asking us in the present moment. But in everything, we must call the Divine Will to take on the lead role and aim to do even the most menial tasks for pure love of God and for His glory...just like the Holy Family. Yes, we can even delight our heavenly Father when we floss our teeth or take out the garbage!

*"My fingers are in yours and they work. My daughter, when I was on earth, didn't My hands lower themselves to work the wood, hammer the nails, and help My foster father Joseph in the smith work?...By lowering Myself to all those little actions and those acts which men exercise during their daily life, such as eating, sleeping, drinking, working, starting the fire, sweeping, etc. - all acts which no one can do without - I made flow inside their souls a tiny divine coin of incalculable price...My hidden life provided each human action, **even the most insignificant one**, with divine merit and with infinite value."* (Book of Heaven, Vol. 11, 8/14/12)



The place where it's ok to fail

In reading stories of Jesus' birth and younger years in the Gospel, trials and difficulties certainly weren't lacking for the Holy Family. Yet they don't disturb us because, two thousand years of Church teaching later, we can see the divine plan through it all. But let's put ourselves in the shoes of Joseph and Mary. How many of their hardships must have felt like failures at the time? Joseph was entrusted with the task of husband and father, protector and guardian, yet he couldn't even find a suitable place for Mary to give birth to Her divine Son. The immaculate Virgin, the Mother of God and model of maternity, had no choice but to lay her Newborn on a pile of hay in a little box where the animals fed. The Holy Family's life was marked by exile, poverty, and hard work. And at the celebration of Passover when Jesus was only twelve, Mary and Joseph suffered the "failure" of having lost their Son – their God! – for three days. Isn't it also interesting that



early on in His public ministry, Jesus achieved the least success when He returned to His hometown? His sermon at Nazareth was met with rejection, offense, and the desire to throw Him off a cliff!

Never trying to prove themselves or produce certain results, the Holy Family sought only to be faithful to what the Father was asking of them every step of the way. For them, living the Divine Will was not about arriving at a final destination but, rather, obedience in the "right now." So when Jesus, Mary, and Joseph encountered seeming failure,

they responded with acceptance and trust. Sure there were tears and anguish, but there was also great surrender knowing that Providence was at work in those very circumstances. God doesn't demand success. All He asks of us is faithfulness and humility. You may argue: *The Holy Family was perfect, but my failures are my own fault, the result of my own weakness.* That may be true, but that won't stop God from working miracles of grace through our mistakes. In fact, it gives us all the more reason to cling to Him with unshakeable confidence, releasing us from the pressure to always perform perfectly and transforming our shame into channels of deeper union with the Lord.

So when we find ourselves in the midst of failure, let us turn to Our Blessed Mother. When She finally found Jesus in the temple after having lost Him for three days, She didn't hide Her pain but expressed it to Him. In total sincerity and intimacy, She asked, "*Son, why have You treated us so? Behold, Your father and I have been looking for you anxiously*" (Lk 2:48). Mary wasn't rebelling or doubting or even reprimanding, but simply seeking to understand God's Will...ready to learn, correspond, and ponder it all in Her heart.

The place where the Bread of Life dwells



Did you know that Bethlehem actually means "House of Meat" in Arabic or "House of Bread" in Hebrew? The Bread of Life, our Savior who gives us His very own flesh in the Eucharist, was born in a town that means just that! Our Blessed Mother described Bethlehem as Heaven on earth: "*I continued My stay in the grotto Bethlehem with Jesus and dear Saint Joseph. How happy we were. **Because of the presence of the Divine Infant and of the Divine Will operating in us, that little grotto had changed into Paradise.***"² That same Paradise continued in Nazareth, where Mary and St. Joseph dwelt in the constant company of the living God. How often the young couple must have sat together, simply gazing upon the holy face of their divine Child as He slept? How many times did Jesus find rest and comfort in His Mother and father's strong and loving arms? Mary and Joseph delighted in Jesus and He delighted in them. What adoration! This same delight awaits us in the Blessed Sacrament, where Christ is also really and truly present. We can enjoy the same privilege Our Lady and St. Joseph enjoyed for thirty years by just spending some time before any tabernacle or monstrance. How blessed we are! Jesus is there waiting to gaze upon us as we gaze upon Him, to love us as we love Him. Please, find the time. What could be more important?

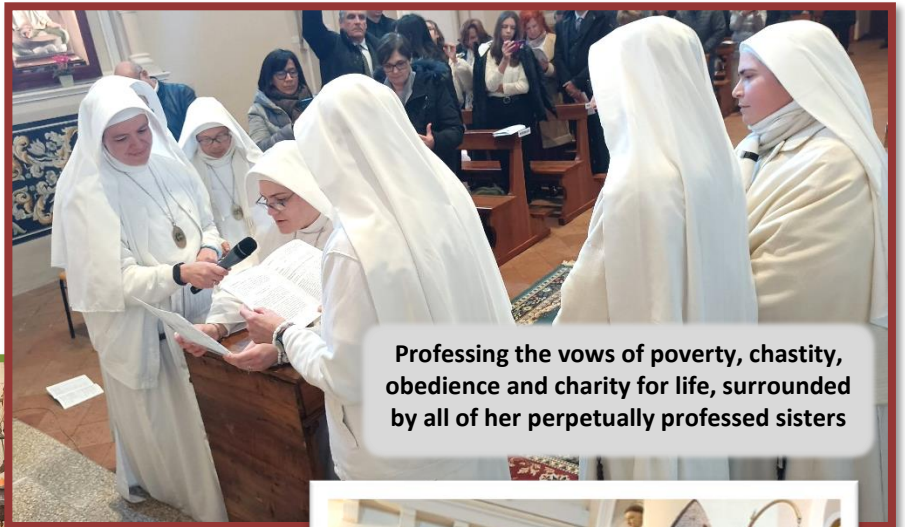


If you're looking for more food for contemplation on Nazareth in addition to Sacred Scripture, visit the "Family Tree" page of our website and under the Holy Family you'll find a document entitled "Nazareth" which contains a variety of passages from Luisa Piccarreta's writings that focus on this topic. Then by scrolling down to Luisa, you'll find a PDF of *The Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will* which contains several meditations on the life of the Holy Family.

² *The Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will*, Day 23

Final Profession:
**Sister Maria Teresa
of the Merciful Heart
of the Eternal Father**

November 21, 2022



Professing the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and charity for life, surrounded by all of her perpetually professed sisters



Under the pall during the Litany of Saints

“My
Beloved
is mine
& I am
His.”

Song of Songs
2:16



Receiving the
wedding ring



Embraced by our very paternal
bishop, Msgr. Andrea Turazzi



With her
family
from
Avellino,
Italy

Investment Ceremony of Sister Marija Elizabeta of the Eternal Fiat



The haircutting



Clothed in
the white
habit



With her family
from Croatia



We're all business here.

It's official! On December 12th, Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, our Public Association of the Faithful was transferred to the Diocese of Knoxville, TN. Mother Gabrielle Marie and Fr. Elijah went there to celebrate the official signing of Bishop Richard Stika's decree. Our new monastery has yet to be built, but the cement for the foundation is about to be poured. Please pray for us as we prepare over the next several months to make the big move. It'll be bittersweet for those of us going and those staying behind in Italy. It's never easy when family has to separate, especially one as close as ours, but we're ready to follow the Divine Will wherever It leads. And in the Will of God, no time or space could ever really separate us anyway!



Bishop Stika, Cardinal Rigali, Deacon Sean Smith



If you feel called to help support the Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will this Christmas season or on a regular basis, 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

You can also simply send a check or money order to the address of our U.S. non-profit organization below: *(All donations are tax-deductible)*

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



In thanksgiving for
all the love and
support of our
families, friends, and
benefactors, Holy
Mass will be offered
for all of your needs
and intentions.
**Merry Christmas and
a blessed New Year!**

