



## Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will



### Be of Good Cheer



*“Hope,” Jesus said, “provides the soul with a garment of fortitude, almost of iron, in such a way that, with all of their arrows, the enemies cannot wound her; not only this, but they cannot cause even the slightest disturbance. Everything is tranquility in her, everything is peace. Oh! it is beautiful to see this soul invested with beautiful hope, all cleaving to her Beloved, all distrustful of herself and all trustful in God.”<sup>1</sup>*

In the face of suffering and trials, sorrow is normal. Sadness is normal. In fact, it is beautifully human. When Jesus took on our humanity, He gave meaning to our sorrow. He sanctified it, divinized it, and associated it with love. John tells us that Jesus wept at Lazarus’ tomb, filled with love for His friend and deeply moved by Martha and Mary’s own tears. On the night before His passion in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus wanted Peter, James, and John nearby as He prayed in agony, vulnerably revealing that He felt sorrowful even unto death. Our Blessed Mother is the Queen of Sorrows, whose maternal Heart was pierced with sadness and mourning thousands upon thousands of times throughout Her life on earth. Yet, in the midst of unheard of pains and anguish, Jesus and Mary were also filled with infinite peace and even seas of joy.

Allowing ourselves a healthy expression of grief without falling into discouragement, anxiety, and hopelessness can often feel like an impossible task for us. And it always will be unless we learn to live, little by little, as Jesus and Mary did – rooted and grounded in the Divine Will. Divine Will is not an abstract concept or a mere word to throw around reminding us to do only what God wants, but the Divine Will is a *Who*, a Trinity of Persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And these three Persons love us unreservedly, desire *only* what’s best for us, and are ready to transform even the darkest areas of our lives into light if only we would just let Them reign.

Most of us already know this intellectually, but our brokenness often makes such radical trust and obedience very difficult. Both the wounds inflicted on us by others as well as those self-inflicted by our own sinfulness have severely damaged our image of God. We’ve put up walls, developed bad habits, and relied on unhealthy coping mechanisms (even if only subconsciously) in order to hide our shame as well as protect ourselves from further pain. Unfortunately, we’ve also closed ourselves off to grace and the

<sup>1</sup> from the diary of the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta, *Book of Heaven*, Volume 1

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fullness of God's love in the process. Living in a broken world that seems to be getting darker each day doesn't foster a whole lot of hope either. The wonderfully comforting thing is that the Lord understands it all. He's not scandalized by our weaknesses, disgusted by our wounds, nor disappointed with our struggles. Jesus just wants us to bring them to Him...in the manger, on the Cross, as He walks through the streets of Galilee, before Him in the Blessed Sacrament, or wherever we feel the most comfortable.

*"Come to Me all you who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest."* (Mt 11:28)

With His power, wisdom, and love, God *will*s to heal us and can make us whole again...in His timing and according to His ways. The Holy Spirit never stops working to restore each of us in Christ to the Father's loving embrace - the safe haven where we were created to live, both in time and eternity. Living like this in the arms of the Trinity, in perfect rest and security, is what it means to live in the Divine Will. This is the source of our hope and strength, the reason for our peace and joy even while still in this valley of tears. And this is also how God is going to renew the world and restore His Kingdom – soul by soul. *"I have said this to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33)

If we want the Holy Spirit to work miracles in our souls, we have to be disposed and ready to cooperate with His grace (even if imperfectly). That can be as simple as replacing our bad habits with good ones...learning to **live** in the Divine Will. We don't know when we'll get to the finish line, but that's not our job. All we really have to do is remain faithful to the map given to us for the journey and, as Jesus often reminds Luisa, *"Let Me do."*

A couple of those good habits to keep us moving forward...

### **To grow and journey, one must keep moving:**

#### *Acts in the Divine Will*

[Jesus to Luisa]: "My daughter, each time the soul does her acts in My Will, she grows more and more before Me in wisdom, in goodness, in power and beauty. In fact, as she keeps repeating her acts in My Will, she takes more bites of wisdom, of goodness, etc.; and the soul grows with the food from which she feeds herself. This is why in the Holy Gospel it is written that I grew in wisdom before God and before men. As God, I could neither grow nor decrease. My growth was just in My Humanity which, growing in age, came to multiply My acts in the Supreme Volition; and each additional act I did was additional growth in the wisdom of the Celestial Father...The same happens to the soul. My daughter, sanctity in My Will grows in every instant - there is nothing that can escape growing and that the soul cannot let flow in the infinite sea of My Will. The most indifferent things - sleep, food, work, etc. - can enter into My Will and take their place of honor as agents of My Will. If only the soul wants it so, all things, from the greatest to the smallest, can be occasions to enter My Will." (Vol.13, 9/14/1921)





The sisters bound for San Marino marvel at God's majesty and love as they check out their new view.



## Grounded in Gratitude: *Rounds in the Divine Will*

Quite a few books came out this past year or so with advice on how to maintain a deep and constant spiritual joy. The number one strategy always seems to be grounding our lives in sincere gratitude. A grateful soul is one who not only recognizes how much she has received from God, but knows how much she is deeply loved by Him. Even when the gifts are not so obvious and the graces and blessings arrive in disguise, she looks continuously for that divine love hidden inside and always manages to find it. And so, her only natural response is to overflow with thanksgiving to the affectionate Giver...using His very gifts and His very Heart to love, adore, praise, and bless her God and Father in return. Who wouldn't be happy living in such an exchange, or round, of love! **"It is truly right and just, our duty**

**and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord."** (Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer of Holy Mass)

*"Let your memory be the bell that rings continuously within you, and reminds you of what I have done and suffered for you and of how many graces I have given to your soul, so as to thank Me and be grateful to Me, since gratitude is the key that opens the divine treasures. Let your intellect think of nothing and occupy itself with nothing but God. If you do this, I will find again My image in you, and I will take the satisfaction which I cannot receive from the others. And you must do this continuously, because if the offense is continuous, continuous must be the satisfaction."*

(Vol. 5, 6/6/1903)

Fr. Sante's first public mass after an almost 5-month battle with Covid. He recounts with gratitude all that he learned through all that he had suffered.

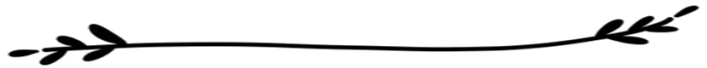
## Embracing the Cross

[Luisa]: "The Cross, suffered by You, freed me from the slavery of the devil and espoused me to the Divinity with an indissoluble bond. The Cross is fruitful 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 it 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 is coin of inestimable value and...the currency that circulates in Heaven is the Cross suffered on earth. The Cross makes me know myself more; not only this, but it gives me the knowledge of God...So, only the Cross will reveal to me the most hidden mysteries, the most secret things, the most perfect perfection, hidden to the most erudite and learned of the world. The Cross is like beneficent water



that purifies me; not only this, but it nourishes the virtues in me...The Cross is like celestial dew, which preserves and embellishes for me the beautiful lily of purity. The Cross is the nourishment of Hope...the beacon of operating Faith...solid wood that preserves the fire of Charity, keeping it always ignited. The Cross is like dry wood that dispels all the fumes of pride and of vainglory, producing in the soul the humble violet of humility...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 my paradise on earth, in such a way that if the paradise of the Blessed up there is of delights, the paradise down here is of sufferings. The Cross is the chain of purest gold that connects me with You, my Highest Good, and forms the most intimate union that can possibly be given...It transmutes me into You, my Beloved, to the point that I feel lost within You, and I live of Your very Life.

[Jesus responds]: 'Brava, brava, My beloved - you spoke well...The Cross is so powerful, and I communicated to it so much grace, as to render it more effective than the very Sacraments; and this because, in receiving the Sacrament of My Body, the dispositions and openness of the soul are needed in order to receive My graces, and many times these may be lacking; while the Cross has the virtue of disposing the soul to grace.'" (Vol. 3, 12/2/1899)



**Rooted in Christ:** *A few of Jesus' parting words to lean on (from the Last Supper discourse)*

"Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me...I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father, but by Me." (John 14:1,6)

"I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you...The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things...Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you...Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." (John 14:18, 26-27)



"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:4-5)

"As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:9-13)



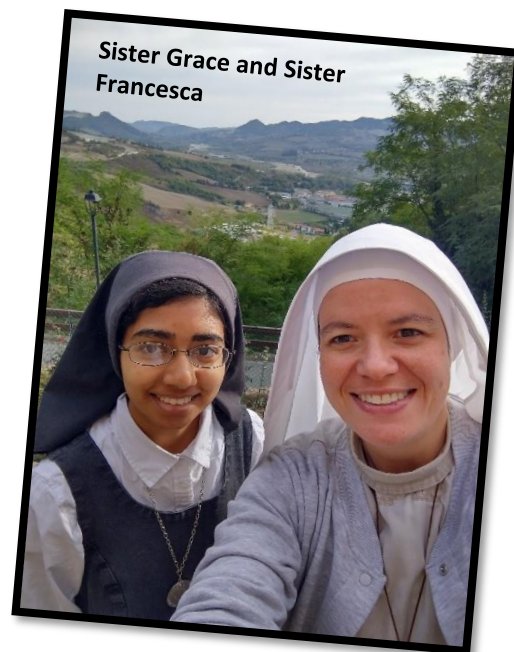
*"So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you." (John 16:22)*



## A picture says a thousand words



Meet our newest postulant, Sister Grace Thomas. She came fresh out of high school and entered the BDDW on August 15<sup>th</sup> at 18 years old!



Sister Grace and Sister Francesca



Sr. Gemma  
&  
Sr. Teresa

Getting ready for San Marino! God-willing, Sr. Gemma, Sr. Benedicta, & Sr. Teresa will be moved into our second foundation house by the end of the month.



Sr. Benedicta





Meeting Immaculée Ilibagiza, survivor of the Rwandan genocide and author of *Left to Tell: Discovering God amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*. Listening to her testimony of suffering, love, and forgiveness was a grace we will never forget!

Another  
stray kitten  
found,  
cared for,  
and placed  
in a loving  
family



Sister Scholastica, our cat whisperer



Looking for a simple, practical, and fun approach to the Divine Will? Join us as we journey together at...

- ***The School of Mary: A Kindergarten in the Divine Will***, hosted by Peter DePalma on Radio Maria every Thursday at 11am (EST). Go to [radiomaria.us](http://radiomaria.us) to listen live or [radiomaria.us/divinewill](http://radiomaria.us/divinewill) for all of our past episodes along with other Divine Will programming on Radio Maria.
- ***Mary's Hill Online Contemplative Divine Will Cenacle***  
To receive regular invites, drop an email to Peter DePalma at [maryshill@queenofthedinewill.org](mailto:maryshill@queenofthedinewill.org).

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**[www.benedictinesofdivinewill.org](http://www.benedictinesofdivinewill.org)**

You can also simply send a check or money order to the address of our U.S. non-profit organization below:  
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Thank you for your goodness to us! Be assured that you remain always in our daily prayers.