Go Make Disciples

In His name: Enid soup kitchen serves food, hope

By J.E. Helm
For the Sooner Catholic

Along the carved marble facade of Our Daily Bread at 616 W Randolph St. in Enid, men and women seeking food line up at the soup kitchen.

As beautiful as the work of art is, what goes on inside the building is even more wonderful. While the director is a member of Saint Francis Xavier parish, Our Daily Bread is a joint project by a number of Enid churches: Baptist, Catholic, Christian, Methodist and Pentecostal — all working together in a true spirit of Christian love and harmony.

Sandy Howard has been the director of the food pantry for 17 years. She started working as a volunteer when the food pantry operated in three classrooms of Saint Francis, which at the time had an unused school.

When the school reopened, a new location had to be found, and that meant raising money. In 1999-2000, Howard said she “went to about 40 different churches” in Enid and spoke to their congregations about helping with this project.

Those churches “were wonderful,” she said, “and they still are.”

First United Methodist offered its kitchen for use until the new facility could be completed. All of the churches helped with fundraising, and many continue to support Our Daily Bread with donations and by providing volunteers to stock, cook, serve and clean up.

Emmanuel Baptist, First United Methodist, Calvary Baptist and Willow Road Christian are all strong supporters alongside Saint Francis.

John Stam, a member of the Pastoral Staff at Emmanuel Baptist as well as the advisory board of Our Daily Bread, recalls someone giving him a fundraising donation “just because you’re a Baptist asking for a donation for a Catholic Church.”

On Dec. 23, Emmanuel Baptist will be bringing a group of about 20 volunteers to cook and serve the Noon meal.

Father Joseph Irwin has been pastor at Saint Francis Xavier as well as Saint Gregory the Great for about four and a half years. As a new pastor, he said he was “certainly excited” about Our Daily Bread and feels that it is “a great thing to be able to offer in the community.”

He sees people working together and clients getting to know each other. He pointed out that “an essential part of social justice is building relationships.”

A special part of this sense of community involves men from the Department of Corrections who volunteer to work at Our Daily Bread. These men are incarcerated and work as part of their community service. They do a lot of the heavy lifting and other hard work at the soup kitchen.

Volunteers serve a meal at the Our Daily Bread soup kitchen in Enid. Photos Cara Koenig.

Our Daily Bread
Address: 616 W Randolph St., Enid
Date: Dec. 23
Doors open: 7 a.m. for coffee, juice, sweet rolls
Lunch: 10:30 a.m.
Contact: (580) 237-0812, showard@stfrancisenid.com

CNS logo/Malcolm Grear Designers

Holy Year a reminder to put mercy before judgment

By Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY – On a cloudy, damp morning, Pope Francis’ voice echoed in the atrium of Saint Peter’s Basilica: “Open the gates of justice.” With five strong thrusts, the pope pushed open the Holy Door, a symbol of God’s justice, which he said will always be exercised “in the light of his mercy.”

The rite of the opening of the Holy Door was preceded by a Mass with 70,000 pilgrims packed in Saint Peter’s Square Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception and the beginning of the extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy.

As the sun broke through the

continued on page 5

Pope Francis opens the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica to inaugurate the Jubilee Year of Mercy at the Vatican Dec. 8. CNS photo/Maurizio Brambatti, EPA.
Jesus too was a refugee

In late September, Pope Francis made history when he addressed a Joint Session of Congress. In that remarkable speech, the Holy Father demonstrated that sentimentality is not the most effective way to face the严峻 problems of our time. In America, he said, the door to refugees should not be slammed shut. This is not an issue of numbers; it is a moral imperative to welcome those who are fleeing violence and persecution.

The United States. It can take up to two years for a refugee to complete the entire vetting process, and when they are finally admitted they are the most thoroughly vetted of any immigrants who enter this country. We can certainly take time to strengthen the already stringent screening process, but we should not continue to close the door to those in desperate need. Let’s not contribute to the continued victimization of those already traumatized victims of ISIS.

Instead of using this tragedy to scapegoat refugees, let’s encourage our public officials to work together to end the Syrian crisis so that the nearly four million Syrian refugees can return to their homeland and rebuild their lives. Until that’s possible, let’s work with other nations to provide safe havens to vulnerable and deserving refugees. We have an opportunity to demonstrate the best of our American spirit by providing leadership in bringing nations together to end these conflicts and forge a new path for those who have been driven from their homes by war, by religious persecution and by the threat of terror.

As Christmas nears, we recall that our Savior Jesus Christ began his life as a refugee, fleeing the threats of a murderous king. One of the corporate works of mercy that we are invited to embrace anew during this Jubilee of Mercy is sheltering the home- less. Homelessness wears many faces, including the faces of homeless refugees like the Holy Family and today’s refugees fleeing war and terror in the Middle East and elsewhere. They are among the least of our nation to carefully vetted Syrian refugees is a matter of concern. In spite of good intentions, these

little adjustments are needed. When my focus turns inward toward the incar- nate Jesus—embodied truth con- cluding with how I handle myself, publicly and privately. Drummer Plus, don’t miss daily up- dated Christmas Masses on the Twit- ter and Instagram!

By Sooner Catholic Staff

A Jubilee of Mercy

First, find more information on the Jubilee of Mercy, including pilgrimage loca- tions, prayers and resources for 
year/zen-year/year/merry-year/year-of-mercy/jubilee-year/year/merry.

Find Christmas Mass times at www.archokc.org/ directory/parishes.

The deadline for submissions to the Dec. 27 issue is Dec. 16.

Mass celebrates sanctity, blessing of life

By Olivia Biddick

The Sanctity of Life Mass will be celebrated by the Bishop of Oklahoma City at 6:30 p.m. on Wednes- day, Dec. 23, at Sacred Heart Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City.

“The faithful are invited to join in the praying of this Mass as the U.S. Conference of Bishops yesterday announced that Bishop Olmsted of Phoenix will be the keynote speaker.”

Following Mass will be two presentations, one for adults and one for youth - Rachel’s Viny- yard, “Healing the Wounds of Abortion” and

www.soonercatholic.org

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley

Christmas Masses and Feliz Navidad from the Sooner Catholic staff

Photo/line: Archbishop Coakley's Calendar

Greetings from Parishes

Christmas getaway ideas

Put Out Into the Deep

With a level of enterprise and wit that often reveals itself through stress: stress about money, stress about things that anyone can afford to self-ishness, stress about the current state of the world.

One tradition is that God is loving and merciful, and so we should be. One does not go through life as a perfectionist. We are sinners (at least, that’s what we believe, and that is what we hope to be). We are all sinners. We all make mistakes. We all sin.

The adult presentation will be led by Father Ray Ackerman and Marco Maclouf of Rachel’s Vineyard. Rachel’s Vineyard is an international organization that hosts retreats throughout the year to provide "profound healing" for those affected by abortion.

It’s counter-intuitive, but look for an op- portunity to keep your trust in Jesus through the craziness of holiday shopping or by simply offering to help someone who is in need.

For the occasion of Perpetual Help in Bethany, the USA (1877-1477) at the Vatican Library. CNS photo/ courtesy Vatican Philatelic and Numismatic Office.

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For the occasion of Perpetual Help in Bethany, the USA (1877-1477) at the Vatican Library. CNS photo/ courtesy Vatican Philatelic and Numismatic Office.
On loving Protestants: Using the medicine of mercy

When Pope Francis recently pronounced the new liturgical year a “Year of Mercy,” he indicated that he will open the Holy Door in Rome on the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council.

He wrote: “The Church feels a great need to keep this event alive. With the Council, the Church entered a new chapter in her history. The Council Fathers strongly supported, as a true breath of the Holy Spirit, a need to talk about God and man with renewed enthusiasm and conviction in a time in a more accessible way. The words that too long had made the Church a kind of fortress were torn down and the time had come to proclaim the Gospel in a new way. It was a new phase of the same evangelization that had existed from the beginning. It was a fresh undertaking for all Christians to bear witness to their faith with grace, enthusiasm and conviction. The Church sensibly recognized the need to be a living sign of the love of the Lord in the world.”

We recall the poignant words of Saint John XXIII when, opening the Council, he indicated the path to follow: “New the Bride of Christ wishes to use the medicine of mercy rather than taking up arms of severity. The Catholic Church, as she holds high the torch of Catholic truth at this Ecumenical Council, wants to show herself a living mother to all patient, kind, moved by compassion and goodness toward her separated children.”

This short passage encapsulates three themes that are close to my heart: the vision of the Council, the new evangelization and the pursuit of Christian unity.

During the stormy decade of the 1960s, it is not too surprising that the controversy entrenched replacing the proper interpretation of conciliar teaching. During this Jubilee Year, I am hoping that we can arouse the curiosity of the faithful to revisit the documents of Vatican II, because they really do lay the foundation for the new impulse of evangelization that is being promoted by the Holy Spirit.

One such document was the Decree on Ecumenism (Oecumenici Locutionis), which essentially marked a watershed moment in Catholic relations with other Christians. Among other things, the Church accepted the following principle: “Everyone should and must, sown and very much of the significant elements and endowments that touched upon the Church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church.”

Carol Brown
Director of New Evangelization

The Catholic Church

The Catholic Difference

It has been a good reading year, and I highly recommend the following books to the readers of the “Today’s Liturgy” shopping list:

“How God Became King: The Forgotten Story of the Gospel” by Mark Y. Anselm (Regnery); Your best guide to the debate of this year, 2016; it’s impossible to stay grumpy about this book.

“Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush,” by Jon Meacham (Random House); A splendidly crafted, richly detailed reminder that decency and integrity were no obstacles to American high office in our lifetime.

“Imperium and Conspirata,” by Robert Harris (Ballantine); A novelization of novels about Cicero will be completed in January with a third volume, “Dictator”; Our hero runs afoul of the classy Caesars – Julius and Octavian – but that’s to get ahead of the story. The first two volumes will appeal to those who relish first-rate historical fiction, in preparation for the demigods of new TV series, “Daredevil,” by Adam Makos (Ballantine);

“The Catholic Difference” by George Weigel
Editorial Director, Public Policy Center

A video to accompany this story can be found at https://youtu.be/ HW20Ha_P6Ew.

Books for good reading, gifts at Christmas

The story of the U.S. Navy’s first African-American carrier pilot, Jesse Brown, and his white segment-mate and friend, Tom Hudner, is touching in its own right and a timely antidote to the politically-correct madness of recent months on campuses and elsewhere. If you can save your reading until post-image – thank you. This is the logo for the H02Nhu_PHeE. Additional reading for Advent: “The Catholic Difference,” by George Weigel

“Letters to a Young Catholic” (Basic Books) is intended for the young from age 16 to (at least) 80-plus, while “Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush,” by Jon Meacham (Random House); A splendidly crafted, richly detailed reminder that decency and integrity were no obstacles to American high office in our lifetime.

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By Mark Pattison
This is the second in a series of stories:
WASHINGTON — A new report on U.S. women religious said that religious life is becoming not only more multifaceted but also more international.

The report, “Understanding U.S. Catholic Sisters Today,” said that all of women entered religious life in the past 10 years, only 57 percent were white, while 17 percent were Hispanic, 16 percent were African-American, and 8 percent were black — including both African-American women and those born in Africa.

Because of the growing numbers of foreign-born women religious, the report noted, Trinity University in Washington recently received a grant to study the presence of international women religious in the United States and their responses to questions of response to church and societal needs.

The report, released Dec. 9, was commissioned by FADICA, Friends of American Dominican Centers and Doctors Interested in Catholic Activities, which represents about 50 philanthropic organizations.

It highlights the major findings of the latest sociological studies of U.S. women religious. The report was written by Kathryn Snowe Cummings, director of the Custodia for the Study of American Catholicism at the University of Toronto. The findings help illuminate present realities of U.S. women’s religious life, the report points to priority directions that will help ensure a vibrant future.

Two aspects of U.S. religious life today, according to the report, have not changed: the percentage of women religious who entered religious life in the last 10 years, and their number.

“Only 8 percent of religious sisters are younger than 60; more than two-thirds of women and men toward religious life are older than 65,” the report said.

“Women’s religious life is presently completing a full consecutive decade of decline, it added. “The number of U.S. sisters has decreased by 72.5 percent in the last 49 years, and while there are recent signs that the pace of decline has slowed, there is nothing suggesting that is likely to be reversed.”

At the same time, “the mounting concerns drawing conclusion from recent studies of U.S. Catholic sisters is that … many U.S. Catholic women are still drawn to religious life,” the report said. Research shows that “while there is a high level of concern about the age of the individual religious life and the survival of religious communities, and the sisters’ presence in U.S. culture,”

The report recommended that young women and men take steps to “help form new congregations, couples and communities, and emerging religious life, and the importance of entry and education; and to all religious communities, including emerging ones.”

By Rebekah Scurpold
Oklahoma City — More than 23,000 teenagers and chaplains from across the United States converged in Indianapolis Sept. 19-21 for the 2015 National Catholic Youth Conference. Among the attendees were 235 girls from 22 parishes in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

“More than five youth ministers and volunteers took five buses and traveled 14 hours to take part in NCYC in Lucas Oil Stadium. Participating in NCYC helped many of the teens from Oklahoma feel connected to a vibrant faith community that is much larger than their own parishes,” reports stated.

“With the middle of the Bible, it’s easy to see how you’re alone in your Catholic faith,” explained David Perez, a volunteer from Epiphany of the Lord, “It’s great to see so many Catholics at the convention with a faith that is the same as your own and to understand the support of Saint Joseph and the Holy Spirit.”

According to Perez, “John is a very modest about the charity and the mercy program he is providing. He works very, very hard at coordinating it and seeing 125 patients in one week.”

The program is an example of Pope Francis’s request for kindness and mercy during the Jubilee Year of Mercy as well as Archbishop Cook- seed’s call to go “and make disci- ples.”

Charles Albert is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

The youth group from Epiphany of the Lord, OK, attended NCYC. Photo provided.
Across the Archdiocese

Archbishop visits Holy Trinity School

Leaders of Oklahoma’s longest standing high school, Mount Saint Mary, announced this month they had surpassed the fundraising goal for the most ambitious fundraising initiative in the school’s history. With the completion of the first phase of the Higher Ground campaign, the group raised more than $4.4 million. The 36-month campaign to expand the 112-year-old landmark institution concluded in October.

School leaders anticipate the groundbreaking for its enhanced cafeteria and common areas to be in May.

“What a wonderful opportunity for The Mount community to experience this achievement together as we celebrate this great event of reaching our campaign goal,” Principal Talita DeNegri said. “I am extremely grateful to our families, our students, our staff and our donors for their commitment and trust in the ministry of our school, and for helping us to move The Mount forward, yet again.

Lead gifts to the campaign were provided by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Inasmuch Foundation, the Tom and Judy Love Foundation and Nancy and George Records.

“Mount Saint Mary Catholic High School remains one of the best kept secrets in Oklahoma City. The success of this campaign will help change that,” Archbishop Coakley said.

“The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City’s gift to this campaign represents our dedication to this living tradition at Mount Saint Mary and supports the Catholic education that has endured for generations of students and families for more than a century.”

The Mount publicly launched the $4.4 million capital campaign last year, entitled it “Higher Ground” – a nod to the school’s landmark as one of the highest points in OKC as well as its committed commitment to the higher standards of faith-based learning and academic excellence. More than 630 donors contributed to the campaign goal.

“Finishing this phase of the Higher Ground campaign means so much for the physical plant of The Mount,” said Tony Tyler, an alumnum of The Mount, campaign chairman and vice-president and joint owner of Tyler Media. “It is so humbling to see The Mount community and the great Oklahoma City community step up to help make the Castle on the Hill more accommodating and better for our students.”

School leaders launched the campaign in November 2014 at the school’s annual fundraising event “Magic at The Mount.” More than 350 event guests kicked started the effort by commit-

Mount St. Mary achieves capital fundraising goal

630 donors provide more than $4.4 million to expand, upgrade facilities

More than 350 guests launched the $4.4 million Higher Ground campaign for Mount St. Mary Catholic High School during the school’s annual “Magic at The Mount” event. Pictured are (l-r) Tony Tyler, vice-president of Tyler Media and campaign chairman; Talita DeNegri, principal; Sister Betty Elmer, Sisters of Mercy; Cris Carter, Catholic schools superintendent for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City; and Chris Stiles, director of advancement.

The Mount, campus of the Sisters of Mercy, South Central Community. Phase I of “Higher Ground” concentrated expansion efforts on five core areas to enhance gathering spaces by overhauling the current kitchen and cafeteria, and building a new commons, cafeteria, kitchen, east patio and west patio.

To learn more about “Higher Ground: The Campaign for Mount Saint Mary,” visit www.MSMHigherGround.org.

Enid soup kitchen

continued from page 1

Father Irwin said that giving these men a chance to help someone in need “instills in them a dignity and a worth that they don’t see in themselves necessarily” and it can help the men “become more than they are.”

Sandy Howard also spoke well of the project. Howard said when the soup kitchen started in 1989 in the basement of Saint Francis, there served soup and sandwiches. This past November, she said they served “almost 6,000 meals.”

Asked why she has served so faithfully and for so long, Howard simply said, “Because God asked me to.”

J.E. Helm is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

Venturing Crew 2021

Fr. Rother book signing

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The cover illustration hardly comes close to picturing the black plastic Remini wore.

In this book, Dr. Aaron Kheriaty, a licentiate and doctorate in theology of New York. There they were enrolled in the group. Remini and her sister started spending pre-teen by her mother, who had just joined a writer.

During the first third of this book, Kheriaty explains what depression is, the causes of depression, and how the process of depression affects the brain. He discusses the various types of depression and describes the main psychotherapy methodologies.

Remini’s new autobiography skips to Catholicism

By J.E. Holm

The cover illustration hardly comes close to picturing the black plastic Remini wore.

In this book, Dr. Aaron Kheriaty, a licentiate and doctorate in theology of New York. There they were enrolled in the group. Remini and her sister started spending pre-teen by her mother, who had just joined a writer.

Remini was introduced to Scientology as a child by her father, but “although I would love to be part of the group. Remini and her sister started spending pre-teen by her mother, who had just joined a writer.

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Lánzate a lo más Profundo

Por Pedro A. Morose, OP, SRE
Director del Ministerio Nippon

Madre de Misericordia

Porfirio':... el "amor"...'

Madre de Misericordia es uno de los títulos legítimos de la Virgen María que tiene un significado especial y que toma un lugar especial en el pensamiento cristiano en lo que comienza el Año de la Misericordia.

El mes de diciembre, comienzo del Adviento y comienzo del Año Santo, Jubileo de la Misericordia, ha sido escogido por la Madre de Dios con algunos momentos especiali

En el calendario litúrgico, la misericordia se manifiesta en el mes de diciembre, tiempo en que comenzamos el Año de la Misericordia.

La misericordia es el camino a través del cual la Virgen María llega a nosotros y las celebraciones de la Inmaculada y la Guadalupe son fiestas marianas que expresan la misericordia en nuestra vida

Es cierto que hay episodios de tortura y la seguridad de las oraciones por las víctimas y para prometer apoyo a todos los que han sufrido en esta guerra

Mientras que algunos siguen siendo victorias y para prometer apoyo a todos los que han sufrido en esta guerra

Inmigración: el tema de este año

20 años de acogida

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St. Philip Neri Music Director, Bernard Jones, announced his retirement after nearly 15 years as the head of the music program. "It’s true that a check is the easiest way to make a charitable gift to your parish, but if an investor wants to make a gift and receive a bigger tax break, there is a better option. If an investor has an held an appreciated stock or mutual fund for more than one year, they can donate those securities to the Catholic Foundation and receive a tax deduction for the fair market value of the securities, and eliminate any capital gains tax on the appreciation instead of selling the securities. In some cases, that could be as much as 25.8 percent in addition to a savings on your Oklahoma income tax.

There is a time when gifting appreciated securities does make good sense. Absolutely. If you’re unable to exactly establish when you bought a security or not able to easily determine the security’s cash basis, then it makes sense to show the security’s fair market value. If you have a large allocation of appreciated stock, then gifting some of it is a very good way to lower your capital gains tax on your own portfolio. And, if you can’t wait for “up in basis” that occurs after death, then gifting the security is one viable option.

If you need a little more guidance on gifting, consider using it to establish a Charitable Gift Annuity to get income for the rest of your life. You get a partial tax deduction on the donation, and the Catholic Church will receive the remainder of the annuity fund at your death.

For more information, contact the foundation office at:

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma Inc.
P.O. Box 23184, Oklahoma City, OK 73125
(405) 721-4115 www.cfook.org
Iswmtnr@archokc.org

Please remember the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in your estate plans.

Donate Highly Appreciated Stocks or Assets

With the holidays and the end of the year approaching, it would be a good time to discuss an alternative to a cash charitable donation if you or your family have any securities that when you drop your loss change into the collection basket, they can be more tax beneficial to gift rather than sell.

Gated events are one way. Also, during a shopping event at Kendra Scott on Classen Curve. A portion of the evening’s proceeds benefited the Center of Family Life. Please donate Wickett Black, Marsha Smith and Cathy Bettenrink. Photo Sally Lockett.

Midwest City music director retires after 15 years

The Catholic Foundation

Cornerstone

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Mary, mother of mercy

Lead us to your Son, fount of mercy

By Pedro A. Moreno, OP, MRE
Director of Hispanic Ministry

Mother of Mercy is one of the titles that the Church gives to the Virgin Mary that has a special meaning and takes a special place in this moment when we begin the Holy Year, the Jubilee of Mercy.

December with the beginning of Advent and the beginning of the Holy Year, the Jubilee of Mercy, honors the Mother of God with several special moments. In addition to the first Saturday of the month, always dedicated to the Virgin Mary, there are two more celebrations to the Mother of God that take a special approach in the light of the Year of Mercy: The Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, and Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12.

Mary is the path through which the Divine Mercy comes to us and the celebrations of the Immaculate and Guadalupe are Marian celebrations that are intimately connected to the Mercy of God.

Thank you Mary for saying ‘yes’ to God. Thank you for agreeing to be God’s way to reach us! The temptation that often affects some of us who do not know their faith is to celebrate the path of how the Divine Mercy comes to us rather than how the Divine Mercy comes into our lives.

Mary, mother of our Lord and spiritual mother of the Church, an example and model of what it means to be a prayerful disciple and servant of the Lord, getting us closer to her Son, she has many valid and recognized titles by the Church.

Some people in their enthusiasm begin to give Mary titles and honors that are more typical of her Son. An example of this is the desire of some to recognize Mary as co-redeemer. The Catholic Church, in the documents of Vatican II, gives us some parameters for the devotion to Mary. Here, I give a bit of Ch. 8 of Lumen Gentium, paragraph 67:

“This most Holy Synod deliberately teaches this Catholic doctrine and at the same time admonishes all the sons of the Church that the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the Blessed Virgin, be generously fostered, and the practices and exercises of piety, recommended by the magisterium of the Church toward her in the course of centuries be made of great moment, and those decrees, which have been given in the early days regarding the cult of images of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints, be religiously observed” (22).

“But, it exhorts theologians and preachers of the divine word to abstain zealously both from all gross exaggerations as well as from petty narrow-mindedness in considering the singular dignity of the Mother of God. Following the study of Sacred Scripture, the Holy Fathers, the doctors and liturgy of the Church, and under the guidance of the Church’s magisterium, let them rightly illustrate the duties and privileges of the Blessed Virgin, which always look to Christ, the source of all truth, sanctity and piety. Let them assiduously keep away from whatever, either by word or deed, could lead separated brethren or any other into error regarding the true doctrine of the Church.”

The Church does not want to confuse our brothers in other churches about our devotion to Mary. Mary did not redeem us. Christ is the one and only Savior and Redeemer of mankind.

Going back to a title already approved and fully earned the Virgin, the Mother of Mercy, let’s hear what Saint John Paul II said 35 years ago this month in his letter regarding Divine Mercy, No. 9.

“No one has experienced, to the same degree as the Mother of the crucified One, the mercy of God, Mary is the path through which the Divine Mercy comes to us rather than how the Divine Mercy comes into our lives!”

Thirteen years letter, the Saint John Paul II is telling us again in his letter, “The Splendor of the Truth about Mary as our Mother of Mercy,” No. 118:

“Mary is Mother of Mercy because her Son, Jesus Christ, was sent by the Father as the revelation of God’s mercy. Christ came not to condemn but to forgive, to show mercy. And the greatest mercy of all is found in his being in our midst and calling us to meet him and to confess, with Peter, that he is ‘the Son of the living God.’ No human sin can erase the mercy of God, or prevent him from unleashing all his triumphant power, if we only call upon him. Indeed, sin itself makes even more radiant the love of the Father who, in order to ransom a slave, sacrificed his Son: his mercy towards us is Redemption.”

As we celebrate the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, let’s celebrate how the mercy of God that cleanses of all sins came ahead of Mary from the moment that she was conceived in the womb of her mother.

When we celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe as the mercy of God, He seeks to manifest himself even more fully in God who is ‘rich in mercy’ (Eph 2:4). May he carry out the good works prepared by God beforehand (cf. Eph 2:10) and so live completely “for the praise of his glory” (Eph 1:12).

Amen.

Prayer by Saint John Paul II to Mary, Mother of Mercy

O Mary, Mother of Mercy, watch over all people, that the Cross of Christ may not be emptied of its power, that man may not stray from the path of the good or become blind to sin, but may put his hope ever more fully in God who is ‘rich in mercy’ (Eph 2:4).

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