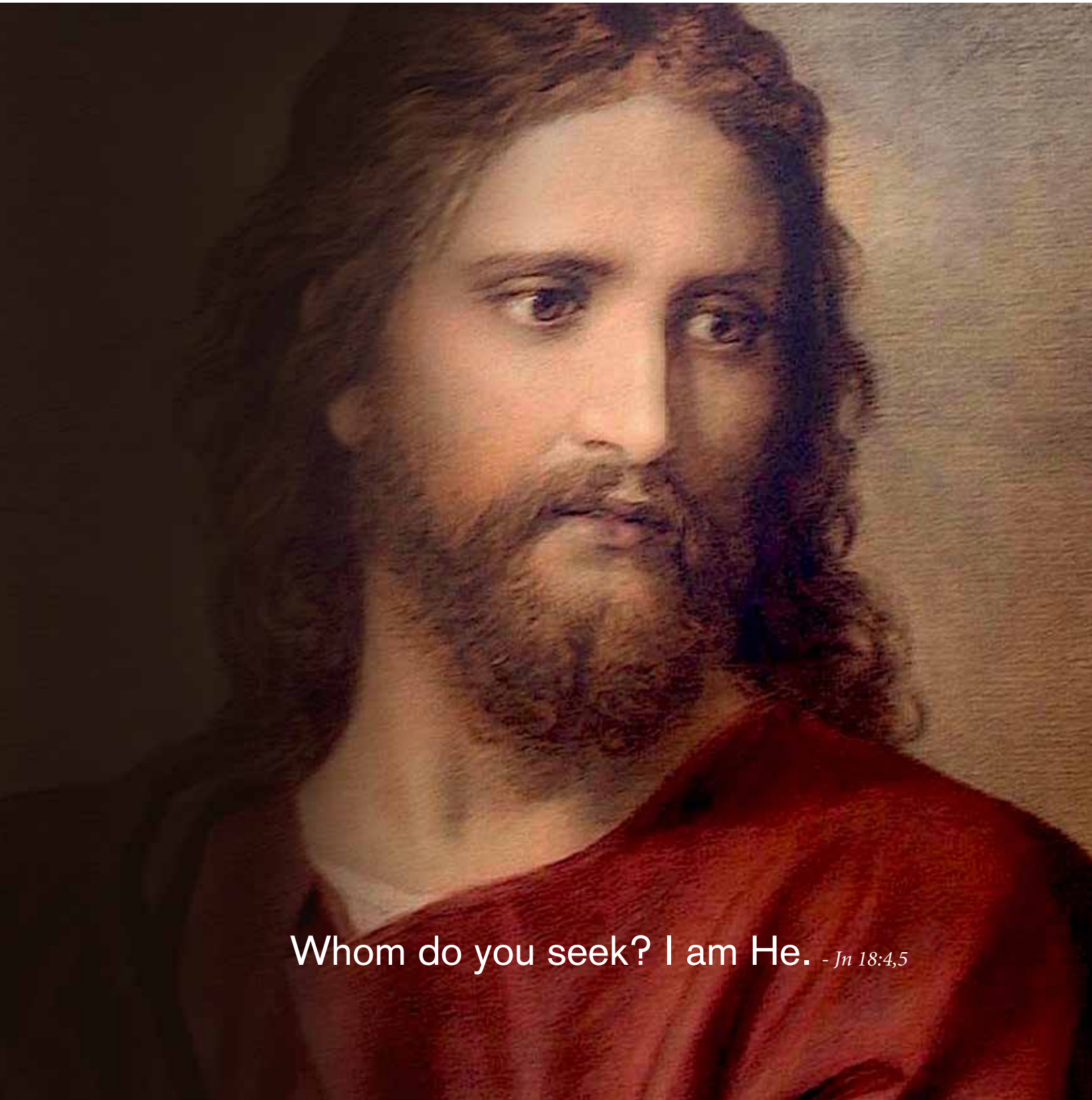


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Whom do you seek? I am He. - *Jn 18:4,5*



GOD

Dear Friends,

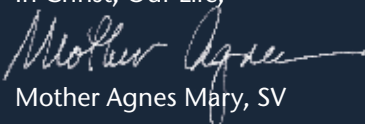
Recently, one of our Sisters was speaking with the seven-year-old son of a mother we have been serving. He pointed to the large crucifix in our chapel and said, "I'm sad because Jesus died." Sister nodded but then replied, "Yes, but then He rose from the dead. He came back to life." The little boy looked up at her, thoroughly stunned, and exclaimed, "Wait ... He came back?!" Sister explained a little more, and the boy responded, "If He came back, that means life is awesome!" Yes, indeed! The truth about Jesus changes everything.

Do we allow ourselves to be overcome with awe and wonder at the Person of Jesus? For, if Jesus really is who He says He is — God, the great I AM (*cf. Jn 8:58*), "the Resurrection and the Life" (*Jn 11:25*), "the Son of Man" (*Lk 19:11*) who brings glad tidings to the afflicted, binds up the brokenhearted, proclaims liberty to the captives and release to those who are bound (*cf. Lk 4:14-30*) — then truly, life is awesome. Then, in Jesus, we discover the God who loves us with an unfathomable and relentless love and who answers all the questions of our hearts with His very self.

While it is easy to become weighed down by the challenges of life, let us instead keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. For indeed, as our young friend recognized, Christ fills life with new splendor. He has opened the way to heaven for us and is always at work drawing us into union with the Trinity. In Jesus, our lives become a great adventure of love.

May Jesus give you every grace and fill you with His peace.
Know of our prayers for you and your loved ones.

In Christ, Our Life,


Mother Agnes Mary, SV



"We want God! We want God!"

The chants thundered towards heaven as the Polish people responded from the depths of their hearts to the white-haired priest who stood before them. Though nearly denied a visit to his native land, Pope John Paul II would not allow the evil of communism to have the final say. As he celebrated Mass on the Vigil of Pentecost in 1979, before a crowd of 270,000 at Victory Square, Warsaw, he reminded his people and all humanity that "man is incapable of understanding himself fully without Christ. He cannot understand who he is, nor what his true dignity is, nor what



HAS A FACE ... *for you.*

By Sr. Mary Casey O'Connor, SV

his vocation is, nor what his final end is. He cannot understand any of this without Christ. Therefore Christ cannot be kept out of the history of man in any part of the globe ... The exclusion of Christ from the history of man is an act against man ... And the history of each person unfolds in Jesus Christ. In Him it becomes the history of salvation."

The human heart wants God. We, consciously or not, seek Him in everything — in our fashions, our food, our relationships, even our sins. As Bruce Marshall once wrote, "... the young man who rings the bell at the brothel is unconsciously looking for God." But in a culture that seems to have an answer for everything, we can easily become victims to the loudest voices and the most compelling propositions of who others say God is. We can be tempted to reduce God to our own experience and projections, often the result of pain, failure, and suffering. But God does not leave it up to us to determine who He is. God is not the sum of what we think or say, nor the result of our ideas or our findings. God is Being. He is Love — a mystery of love who reveals His face and His desire for us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. God wants your heart. He, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Eternal Word through whom everything was made, chose to enter into time and space in the womb of the Virgin Mary, because He wants you. Jesus is not a neutral party — He is madly in love with you, and His love demands a response. He "would have us either worship Him or despise Him — despise Him as a mere man, or worship Him as true God and true man" (Venerable Fulton Sheen). Jesus — one

divine Person with two natures, divine and human — is an actual scandal to many modern religions, who cannot imagine God making Himself vulnerable. But what does the Incarnation show? Not that God is weak, but He is so much greater and so much closer than we could ever imagine! His love is larger, His mercy is bigger, His kindness is more. Jesus turns history upside down by coming Himself "to seek and to save the lost" (*Lk 19:10*). In Him, God has a name and a face — for you.

He chose to experience all that you experience, except sin. Jesus knew laughter and sorrow, friendship and betrayal, affirmation and rejection, hunger and fullness. He experienced every human emotion — sadness, anger, joy, etc. — perfectly and more intensely than we ever could. He knew what it was to be tempted and what it took to overcome temptation. He chose to endure all the misfortunes of life, even death itself, in order that nothing would be outside His redeeming mercy and love. He came to find us, and to bring us home to the Father's heart. He asks us to trust His saving power, to allow Him to love us, to let Him save us. For it is only in Him that we come to know who we truly are.

May we have the courage to raise our minds and hearts towards Him who is seeking us. May we boldly receive the mystery of this God of ours who has a face and a name, and who, lifted high on the Cross, arms stretched wide, answers the ache of our hearts by becoming the very bridge from this life unto eternity.

Agnes & Jesus



Margaret is a friend of our community and shares this powerful story.

An unforgettable day:

“This is probably going to end badly,” I thought, as I made my way into the church with Agnes* and her parents. We shuffled intentionally into the back pew, ready to make a quick exit if necessary. I had been working with Agnes, who had a severe form of autism, for a few years. Her parents were hesitant to bring her to church because of her behavioral challenges, but after conversation and encouragement, we all agreed it was worth trying ...

THE FACE OF LOVE

“I am the Good Shepherd ... My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (Jn 10: 11, 27).

Jesus’ look of love and the way He communicates Himself is profoundly unique and personal to each of us. He knows and understands us far better than we understand ourselves. He sees our deepest selves and loves what He sees. *His look of love is always filled with hope.*

What delights Jesus most? When we fearlessly trust in His mercy and unabashedly run to Him in all of our brokenness. When we let go of our worries, our need for control, or our self-absorption. When we keep our eyes on Jesus.

Agnes was mostly nonverbal, and social interaction was challenging for her. She was unable to engage with others unless they first initiated contact. Even after years of working with her, she would not acknowledge me unless I got down to her level, looked her in the eyes, and said “hello.” Despite these challenges, she was able to respond to the initiatives of others with sweetness. She had even learned to blow kisses when others blew kisses to her.

This morning had been rough for Agnes, with lots of behavioral difficulties. “Is this really the best day to be going to Mass?” I found myself thinking as we sat down. Agnes was instantly agitated. She started to whine, hitting her head and making a fuss. She kept trying to leave the pew. I tried to calm her down, but nothing worked.

“Okay, you show me where you want to sit,” I said, realizing this would be the only way to settle her. She grabbed my hand and walked – almost skipped – to the front of the church. Letting go of my hand and charging right past the front pew, she sat down next to the altar. Clearly, she thought this was the perfect seat. I began to imagine the worst: Agnes breaking into a tantrum in the midst of the Mass – on full display. This was not going to work. I knew the pastor well, and I explained the situation to him. He said it would be fine for her to stay there, as long as she was quiet. I resigned myself to the front pew with a careful eye on Agnes. Amazingly, she sat there through the whole Mass, mesmerized by the Crucifix, her face totally at peace.

When the time came for the Consecration, the priest spoke the words of Jesus, “This is My Body which is given up for you” and elevated the Host. Suddenly, I heard a little voice: “Hi!” It was Agnes. “Hi! Hi!” she continued. At first I thought she must have been responding to a wave from her parents or an altar server. But Agnes was not looking at her parents or anyone else. She was looking at the Eucharist. This little girl, who could not initiate a greeting, was responding to someone. “Hi!”

Then something even more amazing happened. Agnes began to blow kisses. “Someone must be blowing kisses to her,” I thought. And then it hit me. This is happening right now. It’s Our Lord. Jesus, truly present in the Eucharist, was loving Agnes in exactly the way she could receive. And Agnes, in all of her littleness, was responding to that love. It was just like the words of Scripture, “We love because He first loved us” (1 Jn 4:19).

After communion, the priest reposed the Eucharist in the tabernacle. Agnes became silent and then began to say, “No more.” That was her way of saying goodbye. I began to cry. She came up to me and tenderly put her hand on my cheek. “Who taught you that?” I thought. She had never done that before. I began to weep harder. And she sat beside me, as still and peaceful as could be.

Jesus knows exactly what we need. At that time in my life, I was doubting the Eucharist. I compare myself to St. Thomas ... I needed to see something [to believe] (cf. Jn 20:25). Jesus met me there with what He did in His encounter with Agnes. And I was like, “You’re no longer my family’s God – You’re my God.”

When Agnes goes to Mass, she still sits in the front. And it happens every time.

God is a poet.

He not only writes straight with crooked lines — He writes poetry with history. He has been proposing Jesus to the human heart all the way from the Garden of Eden.

“...the message found in the different books of the Bible (seventy three), written in different times, languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek), and by different authors, converge to the same point: Jesus and the fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation.” - Dr. Jose Enrique Aguilar, S.S.D.

Jesus is actually foreshadowed throughout the Old Testament, in a kind of prophetic symbolism called “typology.”

Here are some neat examples: **O** Old Testament **N** New Testament

A FRESH LOOK AT JESUS

By Sr. Marie Veritas, SV

All of history is one big love story. Your life is a love story. It may have not always felt like that, but it’s true. Everything God said or did in all of history is for you. You are His beloved one.

In fact, Jesus frequently refers to Himself as the “Bridegroom” in the Gospels — i.e. “How can the wedding guests fast when the Bridegroom is with them?” (Mk 2:19). God wedded Himself to the human race in Jesus. You, by virtue of your Baptism, are a member of the Bride, the Church, and your soul is destined to be wedded to God forever in heaven. You are made for eternal love. And nothing but that love will satisfy your heart.

“From an ancient Jewish perspective, the one true God (Hebrew YHWH) (Ex 3:15) – is not just the Creator. From an ancient Jewish perspective, the God of Israel is also a Bridegroom, a divine person whose ultimate desire is to be united to His creatures in an everlasting relationship that is so intimate, so permanent, so sacrificial, and so life-giving that it can only be described as a marriage between Creator and creatures, between God and human beings, between YHWH and Israel.”

- Dr. Brant Pitre, Jesus the Bridegroom: The Greatest Love Story Ever Told

1



O Adam ate the forbidden fruit from a tree and brought death upon the world (cf. Gen 2:17).

N Jesus hung on the tree of the Cross, and opened the gates of life (Jn 19:34).

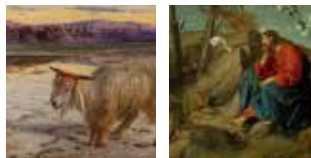
2



O The Passover lamb was cooked whole, with no broken bones, and its forelegs outstretched from side to side (Ex 12:1-11).

N Jesus was crucified, His arms outstretched, and He was pierced by a lance instead of having His legs broken (Jn 19:34).

3



O The Israelites used to symbolically confess the sins of their people over a goat, and then send the goat out to wander in the desert (Lev 16:21-22).

N After Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, taking on Himself all the sins of the world, He went out into the desert for 40 days (Mt 3:16-17, 4:1-2).

4



O Abraham was about to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, when God provided a ram caught in a bush (Gen 22:1-19).

N God so loved the world that He gave His only Son for us – Jesus, the Lamb of God. (cf. Jn 3:16).

5



O David’s son, Absalom, got caught in a tree during battle and hung between heaven and earth before his heart was pierced by three darts (2 Sam 18:9-14).

N Jesus, Son of David, hung between heaven and earth on the tree of the Cross, before being pierced by a spear (Jn 19:34).

6



O Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale (Jnh 1:17).

N Jesus was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Mt 12:40).

Why did Jesus die?

A kindergarten student recently asked me, “Why did Jesus die on the Cross for us?” Good question. Why did the all-powerful God choose to be accused, beaten, tormented, nailed, and completely exposed on a rough wooden beam by a jeering crowd — then left to die alone in His agony? Why?

To bring you home. See, the supernatural cost of sin is death and isolation. Like the prodigal son, when we sin, we choose to leave our Father’s house and give up the life of our soul. But He refuses to give up on us. God refuses to ignore us in our misery and pain. The sin of the world was so great that only someone infinite could pay the price; yet, only one who was fully human could die. Jesus — God and man — freely chose to take upon Himself all the sins that ever had or ever would be committed so we can know that we’re never alone in our suffering, and so that He might throw open the very doors of heaven that we had slammed behind us. In His wounds, we find our answers. Nothing in your life is wasted, because of Jesus.

But He didn’t just die for you and descend to the place of the dead, Sheol, for you and rise for you ...

“When Christ died, He died for you individually just as much as if you had been the only person in the world.” - C.S. Lewis

Now, Jesus comes closer to you in a new, intimate way

After His Resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven ... but not because He was leaving us — because He wanted to come closer to us. Jesus cannot be separated from His Body and Bride, the Church. By giving us the Sacraments, He invented a way that we can enter into an even more intimate communion with Him than when He walked the earth. The Eucharist, in a particular way, enables us to unite ourselves to Him in His death and Resurrection. At every Mass, time folds over, and the one Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross and at the Last Supper is actually made present. At Mass, in union with Jesus, we can place all of our trials with the host to be offered up to God the Father. Here, our sufferings take on powerful meaning and are a source of grace for the world. In the Mass, we discover that the freedom, healing, and union that all the generations of Israel longed for is given to us now. In the Mass, we discover the God who has been waiting for us and who has prepared a place for us.



If Jesus had not established the Eucharist we would have forgotten the crucifixion. It would have faded into the past and we would have forgotten that Jesus loved us. There is a saying that to be far away from the eyes is to be far away from the heart. To make sure that we do not forget, Jesus gave us the Eucharist as a memorial of His love ... When you look at the Crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then; when you look at the Sacred Host, you understand how much Jesus loves you now.” - St. Teresa of Calcutta

The Profound CONNECTION: between Jewish Worship and the Holy Mass

- Dr. Jose Enrique Aguilar, S.S.D

Consider this:

- A. TWO IMPORTANT JEWISH EVENTS:** In Israel, there were two important moments in the religious life of the Jews –
1. the reading of the Scriptures
 2. the celebration of feasts, which included the celebration of a sacrifice.

Here are 3 major feasts and sacrifices of ancient Israel:

- **Passover:** The sacrifice of Passover which celebrated the liberation from slavery in Egypt
- **Covenant:** The sacrifice of the Covenant which celebrated the union between God and His people
- **Atonement:** The sacrifice of atonement of sins, which aimed to restore the broken covenant by the people

The meaning of blood to the Jews: In these sacrifices, the most important element was blood, because blood was considered a gift from God, which meant life. Blood was holy and was used as a sign of salvation (Passover); it was sprinkled upon the altar and upon the people, to symbolize the union of both (Covenant); it was poured upon the altar, to purify it from the sins of the people (Atonement).

B. SAME TWO IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE MASS TODAY:

1. the Liturgy of the Word
2. the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Like the Jewish people: In the Liturgy of the Word, we have the opportunity to read all that God has done for us from the very beginning. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist:

We are present at the Last Supper. As Jesus celebrated the Last Supper, He indicated that the offering of His life was:

- **Passover:** Connected with the sacrifice of Passover (*Mk 14:12*); indeed, Jesus is our “Passover lamb” (*Jn 1, Cor 5:7*).
- **Covenant:** He said, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood” (*Lk 22:20*).
- **Atonement:** He said that His blood is poured out “for the forgiveness of sins” (*Mt 26:28*).

At Mass we are purified, united, and set free: In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, Christians are set free from sin in order to live for God. They are purified from sin and united with God as God’s people – and even more, as children of God, as we say together the *Our Father!*

EVEN MORE. At Mass we receive the very life of God: The Liturgy of the Eucharist offers something more that was not contemplated in the sacrifices of the Old Testament: we receive the life of God. Paul exhorts Christians “to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” (*Rom 12:1*). Hence, we can say that there is also a “liturgy of life” that follows as a consequence of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Christians, having been nourished with the Word and the life of God, are to go and live their lives in union with Christ, offering their lives as Jesus did (*cf. Heb 10:6-7*).

- Dr. Jose Enrique Aguilar, S.S.D., is a good friend of our community, an expert in biblical theology, and a professor at Dunwoodie Seminary in New York. He teaches a weekly Scripture class to our postulants and novices.

Jesus wants to live His life in You.

It’s amazing: God has united Himself in some way with every person (*Gaudium et Spes 22*) – which is why whatever we do for the least of our brothers, we do for Him (*cf. Mt 25:40*). He wants to live His life in us. We can ask Him, “What mystery of Your life are You living in me right now? The hidden years at Nazareth? The Passion? The Resurrection?” And then we can pray, “Help me to follow You. Help me to not only be Your presence in the world, but to see and receive Your presence in every person I encounter.”

“Sometimes it may seem to us that there is no purpose in our lives, that going day after day for years to this office or that school or factory is nothing else but waste and weariness. But it may be that God has sent us there because, but for us, Christ would not be there. If our being there means that Christ is there, that alone makes it worthwhile.” - Caryll Houselander

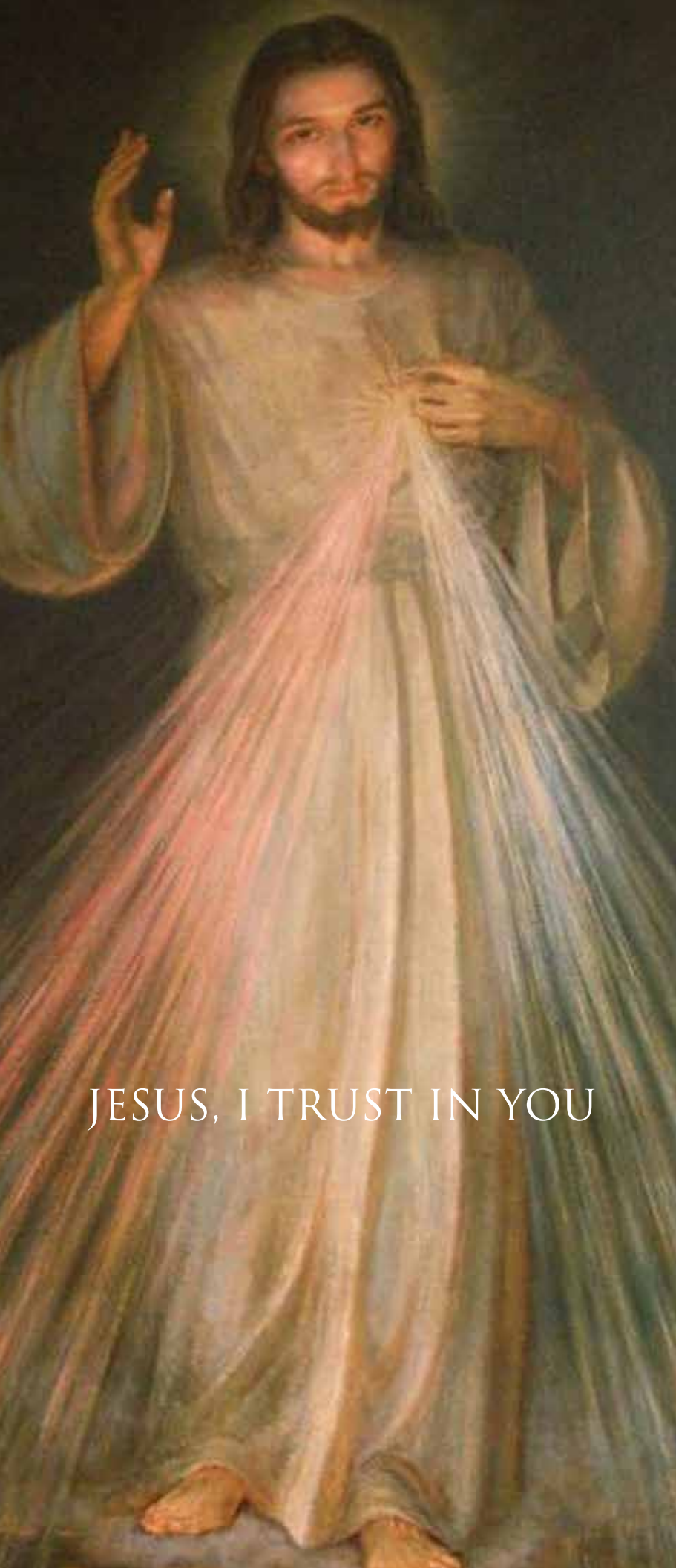


Paolina’s Story: Giving God Permission.

Jesus saw me and my need for His Mercy. Six years ago, after attending my first healing retreat, His Spirit moved my heart to follow Him, and I did. I keep doing it. Certainly, He did call me many times before, but the hurt of my abortion and the lies of the enemy distracted me from His call.

Following Jesus, I still stumble and fall, but I am afraid no more, for He is the “repairer of the breaches” (*cf. Is 58:12*) of my heart. I can keep going, because little by little Jesus is restoring the ruins of my past, and they no longer define me.

**named changed for anonymity*



JESUS, I TRUST IN YOU

Following His Voice:

Sr. Caroline Caritas, SV



I was five years old. My mom took me to Holy Mass at a Carmelite Monastery, and I stared, wide-eyed, at the sisters. In the loud whisper of a child I asked, “Mom! Who are those women? And why are they wearing that on their heads?” I have never forgotten her reply. “These are women who have fallen so in love with God that all they want is to give up everything to be with Him, forever.” The pursuit had begun, and I was captivated. As a teenager, voices from the world almost drowned out the call of Jesus ... almost. Through the years, on retreats, in nature, through music, I heard His voice again, calling, not with words, but with a Presence I remembered.

As long as we live, voices will threaten to drown out the voice of Jesus as He calls to you and to me. But Jesus will never give up – not until all we want is to be with Him, forever.

Sr. John Joseph, SV



Throughout my entire life, when I felt like something was missing, Jesus gave me a desire for more. I got involved in many things, like youth group, and He would keep putting people in my path to help me find my way. The desire for more kept growing, so I started going to Mass daily and getting there early to pray. One day as I got out of the car [to go to Mass], there was an excitement inside of me I’ve never felt before. I realized Jesus had been waiting for me, and He was excited that I was coming. And not only this, I’d never been more excited to be with anybody than I was that day to be with Jesus. He wanted me for Himself, and I just wanted Jesus too.

Sr. Elizabeth Grace, SV



After college, a friend invited me to join her on a walking pilgrimage. I was seeking to find the Lord’s will for my life, but I was quickly swept away by the opinions of others and spiritually running from Jesus. My friend called me higher and challenged me to break away from some unhealthy companions. Even when I felt like I was running from Him, I realized that the Lord was pursuing me and leading me to Himself all along. After a good confession, free at last, I was finally ready and able to hear His tender call in the depths of my heart to be His.



*Then I Knew in the Core
of my Being that Jesus is Truth.*

THE FACE OF MERCY

Jesus loves me as I am.

*"The person God loves with the tenderness of a Father, the person He wants to touch and to transform with His love, is not the person we'd have liked to be or ought to be. **It's the person we are.**"*

God doesn't love 'ideal persons' or 'virtual beings.' He loves actual, real people. He is not interested in saintly figures in stained glass windows, but in us sinners."

-Jacques Phillippe, Interior Freedom

"I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6).

An interview with Evan Barton

By Sr. Rose Patrick O'Connor, SV

Evan Barton is a dear friend of our community and a faithful volunteer at our convents. His joy, generosity, zeal, and humor bring light to all he encounters.

When did you first encounter Jesus?

I was born in Yorkshire, England. My family life was good as a whole, at least in the first years. However, in my early teens my parents divorced, and it all disintegrated. When I was sixteen, I got to liking a girl at school, and I asked her out on a date. Her reply was, "I can only go out with you if you know Jesus." So, I started going to a local church. I had no intention of getting deep into the faith; I just wanted to do whatever I needed to do for the girl to go out with me. But when she broke up with me, I continued to attend church and became quite devout.

I was on a spiritual high at that point. Then, after some time, suddenly the almost tangible feeling of faith disappeared. I felt numb and empty. I continued to attend church in the hope that the high would return. Over the next couple of months my faith slowly drained away. I stopped attending church, gave up on faith altogether, and sank back into the world I had come from.

What brought you back to the faith? It wasn't a sudden moment or event, but more of a gradual realization. In the fall of 2001, I married my wife, Elizabeth. We were living the big city life in New York and were very happy together. For our third wedding anniversary, she surprised me by bringing me to a retreat with the Sisters of Life and Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. Initially, I was not amused. I had not been religious in over fifteen years. However, unexpectedly, I ended up having a very pleasant experience and ended the weekend a different man.

But my re-found faith barely lasted two years. I sank back into the world, stopped going to church, and acquired a new English "best drinking buddy" who was a bad influence. I started to be quite unhappy in my marriage. Elizabeth and I then separated due to what can only be described as thoughtless selfish behavior on my behalf.

Was there a moment or situation that changed everything for you?

Approximately four months later, Elizabeth was diagnosed with breast cancer, and I returned to take care of her. It was a long and difficult journey, which required me to put aside all thoughts for myself and focus totally on her.

After my wife's passing in 2016, I had all the time in the world to reflect on what had happened. A fundamental change had taken place in me. I felt like I had been flipped inside out. I no longer wanted to focus on myself. I started to take my faith more seriously, learning all that I could. (At a certain point, one transitions from "believing" to "knowing" — where you feel in the very core of your being that Jesus is the Truth. It's no longer just a belief; it becomes a fact for you.)

I also began to develop a strong sense that I needed to get involved with something where I could give myself unselfishly. Then, an email unexpectedly arrived in my inbox from Sr. Mary Karen. The Sisters of Life were looking for volunteers at their new convent, St. Andrew's. And the rest, as they say, is history.

How have you seen yourself transformed as you've gotten closer to Him?

I started to make Jesus my central focus. I began giving myself an extra hour to read and pray in the peace and stillness before dawn. When the Sisters began weekly Adoration at St. Andrew's, it became a pillar of my prayer life. I keep returning to Adoration to be with Him because there's simply no better place I could possibly be. [And because of that], everything has changed. He has made "all things new" (cf. Rev 21:5). They say the first gifts of Spirit are peace and joy, and I can testify to that. I used to have so many worldly desires — to have this, to go there, to be this. They're all gone now. I am perfectly content with what I have, where I am, and who I am. I know this comes from my relationship with Christ; it could not come from anywhere else. I know how I have changed, and I know it's not something I could ever have done by myself. However, it's not a "one time" event. I believe as time goes on Jesus will make Himself more present and alive to me, until the day I finally encounter Him in heaven in all His glory.

What would you say to those who want to begin or grow in a relationship with Jesus?

For me, knowing that Jesus wants a friendship with me deepens the realization of just how important our love is to Him. Now, I know it's not possible to lie and keep secrets from Jesus (we only deceive ourselves), but in my relationship with Him I don't want anything to come between us. I don't want to hide anything. That's why I started to go to confession — so there would be no separation between us. It's such a relief to have someone know everything about you, specifically your failings, and yet still love you. He wants us to invite Him into all the little details of our lives. Talking with Jesus is not just limited to prayer and holy places. He wants you to treat Him like your best friend who you can just relax with and be yourself. We can chat with Him while cleaning, doing the dishes, making dinner, etc. The Almighty, Ever-Living, Lord of the Universe wants us to be His best friend. It doesn't get better than that.



FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS Growing in freedom

"Live in His presence; talk to Him, ask Him for the things we need, tell Him about the things that are making us suffer, share our joys with Him instead of letting them drive Him from our thoughts ... This is an excellent way of making very rapid progress."

- St. Teresa of Avila

THE POWER *in the name of* Jesus

When you call, He comes.

The name of Jesus is the most powerful name in all of heaven and earth. Throughout the Scriptures and history, we see the name of Jesus casting out demons, healing the sick, raising the dead, bringing about peace, and instilling heroic courage.

Why is this? It's because when we invoke the name of Jesus, we actually invoke His Person – He is made present within us and among us, in all His power and love. "Jesus" literally means "God saves!" The name Jesus is derived from the same Hebrew name as "Joshua," who was Moses' helper and successor – the one who would lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. Jesus leads us into the true Promised Land – heaven – through His death and Resurrection. His is the name above all names, the only name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved (cf. Acts 4:12). When we call on Him, He comes.

HOW ABOUT THESE PRAYERS?

The Jesus Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Protection for families

Lord Jesus Christ, I ask that You pour out the power of Your Spirit and Your Precious Blood upon me and my family. Please protect us with Your grace, surround us with Your angels and saints, and cover us with Our Lady's mantle. I ask this in Your Most Holy Name.

Book recommendation:


Deliverance Prayers: For Use by The Laity by Fr. Chad A. Ripperger

Jesus wants to free us from the evil we experience in our lives, brought about by our own or other's sins. This book offers powerful prayers that allow us to claim the authority of our Baptism, to renounce any ways that we have cooperated with evil, and to place ourselves and our loved ones under Jesus' protection.


Pray His name with conviction: Demons flee at the name of Jesus when it is prayed with conviction. The devil's a hater, a bully, an abuser ... and he can distort our perception of reality. But in Jesus we can overcome every obstacle. Maybe I haven't ever really prayed with conviction about the name of Jesus, because I take it for granted. I think the Lord acts in proportion to faith. The disposition we need in order to "plug into" the power of Jesus' name is that we recognize that without Him we are nothing, have nothing, can do nothing. The greater we're acquainted with our poverty and the more we pray with faith, the greater we'll experience the power of the name of Jesus.

The power of praise: And it's important to praise His name, regardless of whether we feel like it or not. Praise frees people. Praise not only causes the demons to flee, but it also opens up a space where the Holy Spirit is welcome and His fruits and gifts can become active. If you are a person of praise, and you have a pure heart, you become an instrument by which He lives and moves and breathes. And others will experience healing and liberation in your presence, because you know the power of the name of Jesus used with faith and conviction.

- Fr. Vincent Druding



JESUS,
YOU ARE
MERCY ITSELF.
I PRAISE YOU.



I praise You,
Jesus for this
time with friends.
Bless this
conversation.
I praise You, Jesus.
I thank You.
I love You, Jesus.

Jesus,
I know You are
here. Give me
courage.
Give me hope.
I trust You, Jesus.
You take over.

JESUS!
Cast out my fear
and fill me with
Your love.

Jesus,
Jesus,
Jesus.
Reign
in me.

Jesus, You are
King of the
world. I trust
in You. Jesus, I
praise You
for all You have
done for me.



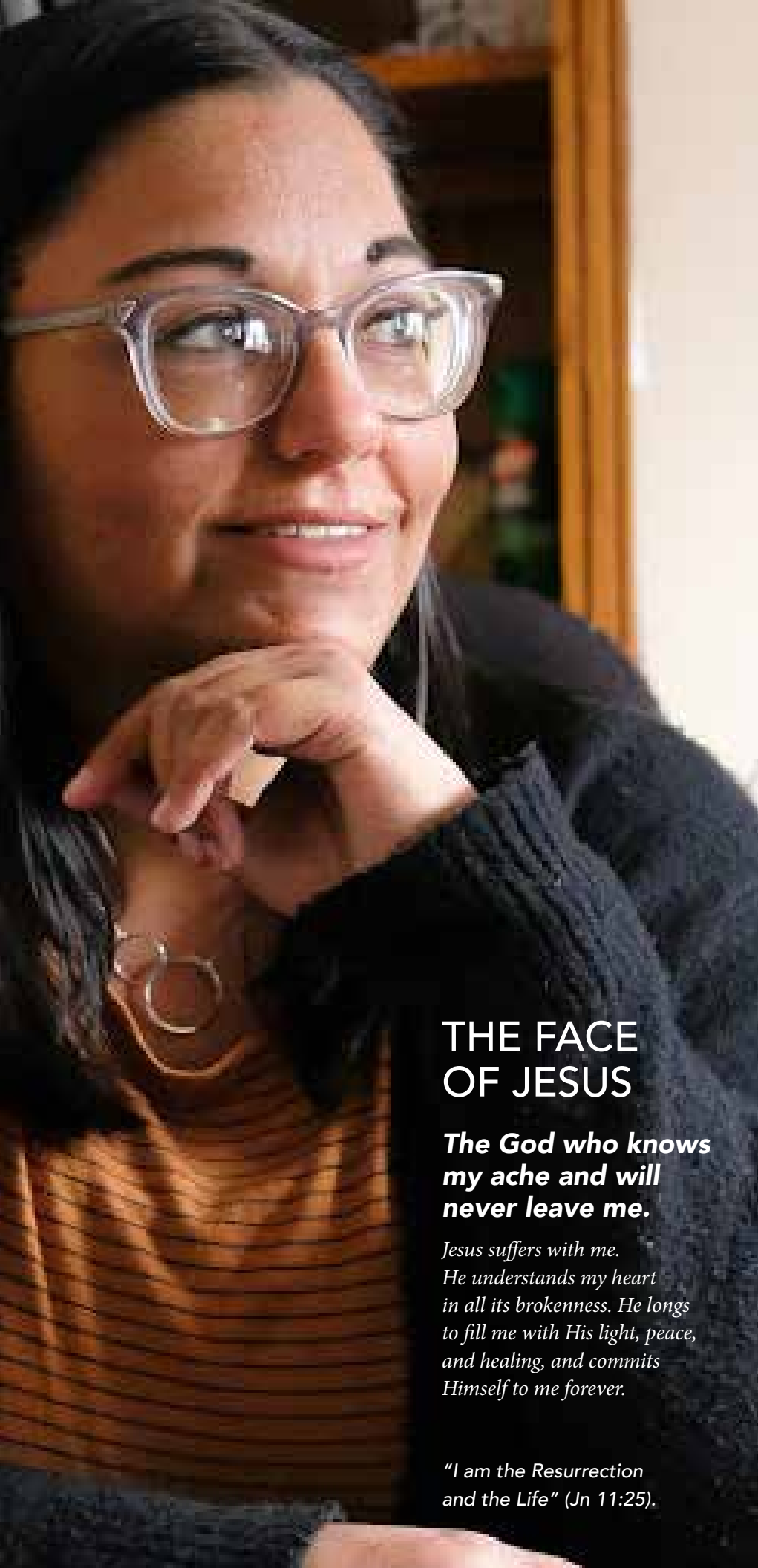
Often I pray with the image of my heart as a vast, interior landscape that is waiting to hear the Gospel proclaimed in every place. This is what I see...



IMAGINE **your heart is an** **interior landscape:**

Jesus is walking through your heart, and you invite Him to let His name claim every piece of it – the goodness, the weakness, the brokenness, every desire, every hope and dream. You invite Him to cast out all your fears by the power of His name, and to replace them with His perfect love. When you allow the name of Jesus to reign in your heart, you are free and joyful, even in the midst of suffering, because He is with you, and He comes to save.

- Sr. Lucia Christi, SV



The Man Who Satisfied my Hunger:

An Interview with Maggie Bodeep

By Sr. Beata Victoria, SV

Maggie Bodeep was in the depths of despair, battling a serious eating disorder and drug addiction when she encountered and was set free by the Love she was searching for her whole life.

THE FACE OF JESUS

The God who knows my ache and will never leave me.

Jesus suffers with me. He understands my heart in all its brokenness. He longs to fill me with His light, peace, and healing, and commits Himself to me forever.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life" (Jn 11:25).

What did your life look like before you encountered Jesus?

When I was young, I felt really unstable and felt pressure to live up to what the world says is beautiful. I just wanted to be seen and loved. I was a competitive swimmer and was always striving to be better, because I thought if I won my races, then I'd be loved and accepted. I remember having a big swim meet, and, after I lost a race, my family looked so disappointed. I thought, "I'm never going to be loved." That's when my eating disorder began.

My mom passed away when I was 17. I kept thinking, "If my mom were here, I would be loved." I was constantly seeking love.

My eating disorder became very serious during college. I had been violated by men and was so full of shame. I felt like I had to hide. My friend offered me some pills, and, because I was a mess, I was ready to do anything people said would make it better. This turned into an addiction to prescription drugs.

My feelings of unworthiness blocked me from really accepting Jesus. I met a Christian friend, and she took me to a worship night. I remember sitting there the whole

time, crying. That was the first time I was like, “Maybe there’s something here.” But I still felt so shameful and that I wasn’t worthy of Jesus’ love, so I ran away from that encounter with Him.

What changed that allowed you to let Jesus into your life?

I met a young couple who showed me what real love looks like. There was a girl in their Bible study who was entering a rehab program. It got me thinking, “What would it look like for me to really get well?”

That question led to a massive search. I called about 25 centers, but many couldn’t take me. And then I called *The Father’s Heart* [in Pennsylvania]. Three days later, I was in their program. It was the hardest year of my life. It took me months to really accept that even after all that I’d done and all that had happened, God loves me. I reached a point where I really needed a savior. And so I made a very honest prayer, which I recorded in my journal:

“God, are You even real? If You are real, why aren’t You with me? Why did You leave me? Do You even love me? Why did You do all these horrible things in my life? I don’t believe in You, but I think I want to. I feel like I don’t deserve You, and I don’t even know what to believe. I’m so lost. Help me. If You’re real, I need a sign; I need something to believe in, because I’m so lost right now. Show me who You are, God, because I think I need You. – Doubtfully, Maggie”

He answered that honest prayer. That night, I went to church, and the Holy Spirit took hold of my heart. The next day, I wrote in my journal, “You are real.”

How did your relationship with Jesus grow?

I remember praying, “Okay, Jesus, if I’m really going to let You in, I need to know a little bit more about You.” So I immersed myself in the Gospels. And He really met me in that place. [Initially], I still feared that if I messed things up, it would be over. I’ve been through seasons in my walk with the Lord where for some reason I didn’t feel His presence. My automatic reaction, coming from old Maggie, is, “Oh, He left. I did something wrong.” But, the truth is, He is Love. That’s really powerful because it means no matter what I do, I can’t lose that love. [Love is who He is]. That was the first time in my life that I realized if God is love, then it must mean He loves me! From there, I was finally able to let Him in.

The first time I experienced that my relationship with Jesus wasn’t going to look like what I planned was when my aunt passed away. We were very close. I liked to envision me and Jesus sitting at a table, having coffee. And I told Him, “Wait a minute; [being in a relationship with You] was supposed to be nice and pleasant.” We think that in coming to Christ, our life is going to become like rainbows and butterflies.

I turned to scripture and read *John 16:33*: “In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world.” And I realized, “Lord, You never promised me rainbows and butterflies, but You promised You would be with me.”

I was able to put my faith in God’s promises by looking at who He is. Not only is He Love, He is Faithfulness, and He is Truth. If He is Truth, that means He can’t lie.

How has your relationship with Jesus affected your understanding of yourself?

One of the first things I had received in *The Father’s Heart* program was a paper that lists who I am in Christ: I am loved; I am chosen; I am accepted. My eating disorder was so wrapped up in identity that I felt like it was my identity. In order to really go on a journey with Jesus, I had to learn who He says I am.

I am loved; I am chosen; I am accepted; I am precious; I am beautiful; I am His masterpiece. If you think of a masterpiece, it’s an artist’s most prized piece of art. To think that I am His masterpiece, was really powerful to me. I’m never alone. He never leaves!

Why is Jesus worth getting to know?

I always wanted to be loved and seen and to know that I mattered. What better way to feel loved than to be in a relationship with the One who is Love? What better way to be known than to be in relationship with the One who created you and knew you even when you were in your mother’s womb? What better way to be seen than to be in relationship with the One who never looks away?

A lot of times we feel too broken to even attempt to come close to Jesus. The truth is, our brokenness is the most beautiful thing we could ever offer Him.

Jesus will never let you down and never leave you. He wants us to draw near to Him. I’ve learned to turn to Him in those times when the old Maggie would have run away. Whenever I want to run, I picture Jesus running right next to me. I’m not alone; I’m not forgotten. I am seen; I am heard.

“A lot of times we feel too broken to even attempt to come close to Jesus. The truth is, our brokenness is the most beautiful thing we could ever offer Him.”

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