



THE TWELVE STEP REVIEW

Fr. Emmerich Vogt, O.P.



A PUBLICATION OF THE WESTERN DOMINICAN PROVINCE

Summer 2017

Dear friends,

Here are some future retreats and parish missions:

- ✦ October 13 - 15, 2017, weekend retreat, Casa Maria Retreat House, Irondale, AL.
- ✦ October 20 - 28, 2017, Saint Jude Novena, St. Dominic Parish, San Francisco, CA.
- ✦ November 6 - 9, 2017, parish mission, Immaculate Conception Parish, Mattoon, IL.

- ✦ December 4 - 7, 2017, parish mission, Sacred Heart Parish, Terrace, BC, Canada.
- ✦ December 11 - 14, 2017, parish mission, Church of the Annunciation, Prince Rupert, BC, Canada.
- ✦ February 19 - 22, 2018, parish mission, Holy Rosary Church, Woodland, CA.
- ✦ February 26 - March 1, 2018, parish mission, St. Joseph Church, Loreauville, LA.

- ✦ March 5 - 8, 2018, parish mission, St. Anthony Church, Renton, WA.
- ✦ March 12 - 15, 2018, parish mission, St. Charles Borromeo, Peru, IN.
- ✦ March 19 - 21, 2018, parish mission, Our Lady of Victory, Paris, TX.
- ✦ April 27 - 29, 2018, weekend retreat, St. Anthony Retreat Center, Three Rivers, CA.

Please always check with the parish or retreat center, as schedules sometimes change.

The Virtue of Forgiveness

A part of any serious 12-step recovery is forgiveness.

As I write this, I've been reading about a Hindu man—Samundar Singh—who had brutally murdered a Catholic nun, Sister Rani Maria, in broad daylight while traveling on a bus in Madhya Pradesh, India. She was stabbed 54 times in front of several passengers while being dragged out of the bus and left to die on the roadside. Singh admitted that he was hired to kill the nun on the orders of local landlords who were opposed to her social work for poor farmers. Singh was arrested and given the death sentence, which was subsequently commuted to a life term. After being convicted, his wife walked out on him and their only son died. Singh was eventually freed after serving only 12 years in prison because of a petition signed by Sister Rani Maria's family, the Clarist con-



gregation to which she belonged, and the local Catholic bishop.

While in jail awaiting his release, he was planning to kill the man who enticed him to kill Sister Rani Maria, and then hang himself on a tree. But it was at that time that a Carmelite priest—Father Porattukara—came to visit him in jail. He continued to visit him in jail in subsequent weeks. At the time, Samundar was furious with Jeevan Singh (the man who hired him to kill Sister Rani Maria) because he

failed to ensure his acquittal as promised.

Father Porattukara (known to the Hindus as Swami Sadanand) "made me get over my urge for revenge. He changed my mind," recalled Samundar. Not only that, but three months after their first meeting, Father Porattukara astonished Singh by advising that he would bring Sister Selmy—Sister Rani Maria's younger sister, who was also a Clarist nun—to the jail on the Hindu festival day of Rakhi ("thread"), when "sisters" tie special threads on the hands of "brothers," celebrating their protective bond, regardless of whether they are actual relatives. "I could not believe it—the younger sister of the nun I killed tying rakhi on the hand that stabbed her sister mercilessly. It was on Aug. 22," he remembered, with tears in his eyes.

Continued on the last page

CELEBRATING AND LIVING THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA

I would like to introduce our readers to two important books on Fatima, by an organization called *Communal First Saturdays*. These books are important in that they summarize the entire Fatima Message and stress the importance of the First Five Saturday devotions with insightful explanations in the context of the entire mystery of Fatima. Jesus' teaching, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am with them" (Matthew 18:20) is important to keep in mind with regard to any devotion, and most especially with regard to the celebration of the First Five Saturdays, as this devotion is something explicitly asked of us by Heaven.

The mission of the *Communal First Saturdays* organization is to establish and sustain the communal First Saturdays liturgy and devotion, as described in the communal First Saturdays book, in Catholic parishes, shrines, and other venues as a way of bringing about salvation of souls and world peace. It is a non-profit organization dedicated to answering the appeal of Jesus to Sr. Lucia of Fatima to spread the First Saturdays devotion in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The First Saturdays is the one remaining unfulfilled request of the two important requests of Our Lady of the Rosary on July 13, 1917. These requests are an essential part of fulfilling God's wish to establish devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in the world for the salvation of souls and a period of peace.

FATIMA AND THE FIRST SATURDAYS. This is an important book for those who have read everything about Our Lady of Fatima. Yet, even beginners can find a shortcut to understanding the Fatima message. This is a message that the world needs now more than ever. Yet, many important aspects of the message have been overlooked. In this book passages are quoted in Sr. Lucia's own words and then a commentary is presented on them. Passages covered concern the appearances of the Angel of Peace, Our Lady's six appearances at Fatima, the three important appearances after Fatima, and crucial information related to the First Saturdays found in Sr. Lucia's letters and locutions up to 1945. From beginning to end, the reader will not only learn from Sr. Lucia herself but also will learn through the commentary new and original insights into the contents of the Fatima message. **One will discover the unique importance of the First Saturdays devotion within the context of the entire Fatima message.** This devotion is the only one of Our Lady's two special requests that remains to be fulfilled to help bring about peace in the world and the salvation of souls. Further, this book presents a special way in which the devotion can be propagated in each parish so that a larger number of the faithful can have access to its benefits. In addition, this book will help direct the reader toward the next steps for spreading the First Saturdays. Spreading and fulfilling the First Saturdays is urgently needed as the solution to the world's problems. This solution will lead to the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Availability: Order online at: www.communalfirstsaturdays.org/store

Publication Date: 2017 in honor of the 100th Anniversary of Our Lady's Apparitions at Fatima

Binding: Paperback. 89 pages. Price: \$8.95

ORDER OF DEVOTION FOR THE COMMUNAL FIRST SATURDAYS. This book is a must for any parish that wishes to provide the First Saturdays devotion in a communal form. It was written to make it easy for each participant in the Communal First Saturdays devotion to follow along from beginning to end. To follow exactly what Our Lady asked us to do in practicing this devotion can be quite difficult for many, but this book eliminates the most difficult part and allows the faithful to focus on what is important in this devotion.

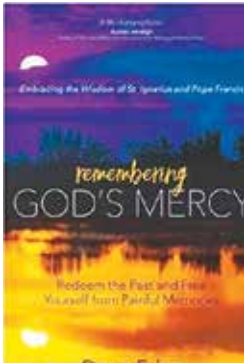
By following the order of devotion provided in the book, it is possible for the faithful to fulfill all four of the practices requested by Our Lady in reparation to her Immaculate Heart. The order of the book is arranged in such a way that in following it, the faithful can be most disposed to receiving Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and benefit from His continued presence within themselves after Mass as well.

Availability: Order online at: www.communalfirstsaturdays.org/store

Publication Date: 2017. Binding: Paperback. 141 pages. Price: \$9.95

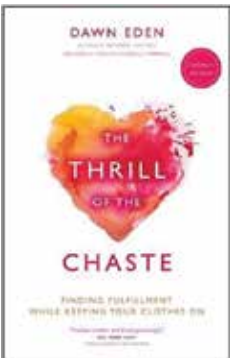
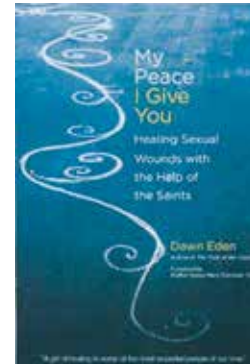
RECOMMENDATIONS:

I would like to introduce our readers to three books by Dawn Eden. She was born to a Reform Jewish household and is the grand-niece of poet Alma Denny. In 1999, Dawn had an experience that led her to become a Protestant Christian. Then in 2006, she was received into the Roman Catholic Church. From early 2002 to January 2005 she worked as a copy editor at the *New York Post*, but she was forced to leave the *Post* after edits she made to a story about *in vitro* fertilization revealed her pro-life sympathies. The firing led the *New York Observer* to publish a front-page profile of her by George Gurley, "Eden in Exile." Currently she teaches at Holy Apostles Seminary in Connecticut. Her writings, listed below, can be purchased from Amazon.



REMEMBERING GOD'S MERCY. In this book Dawn explores how memories impact and are affected by faith. She offers a guide to the process she used to heal the pain of her past. Through her own story, as well as the examples of St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Peter Faber, and others, she shows how the mercy of God, who holds all of events of our life in His own memory, can bring you healing and inner peace.

MY PEACE I GIVE YOU. HEALING SEXUAL WOUNDS WITH THE HELP OF THE SAINTS. Here Dawn shows how the lives of the saints have given her hope and aided her journey of spiritual healing after childhood sexual abuse. One in four American women and one in six American men report having been sexually abused during childhood, and this book provides a much-needed resource for spiritual healing from the isolating effects of these wounds.



THE THRILL OF THE CHASTE. In this book Dawn presents a completely revised Catholic edition of her bestselling work, *The Thrill of the Chaste*. In this version, Eden shares her story of conversion to Catholicism and invites readers into a Catholic understanding of chastity and its spiritual benefits.

RECOVERY AND THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA: In this 100th anniversary year, Fr. Emmerich—in this series of four lectures, Benediction and two homilies—expands on his *Recovery from Addiction* theme by showing how Fatima is relevant not only to today, but also to our recovery. The series consists of 5 CDs. \$35.00 + P & H.

Browse our books, CDs and DVDs page for this and other 12-Step favorites at: www.12-step-review.org.

PRAYER CARDS AVAILABLE. Our series of eight recovery prayer cards is available for free. A free set is sent with each order. In addition, if you would like any of them as a series or individually, please give us a call. All we ask is a donation to cover the shipping and packaging costs.



ORDER FROM THE 12-STEP REVIEW

August 22 is the feast day of the Queenship of Mary. Regarding this feast, Pope Pius XII noted (*Ad Coeli Reginam*, No. 39):

Mary, too, as mother of the divine Christ, as His associate in the redemption, in His struggle with His enemies and His final victory over them, has a share, though in a limited and analogous way, in His royal dignity. For from her union with Christ she attains a radiant eminence transcending that of any other creature; from her union with Christ she receives the royal right to dispose of the treasures of the Divine Redeemer's Kingdom; from her union with Christ finally is derived the inexhaustible efficacy of her maternal intercession before the Son and His Father.

There are many kinds of alms, the giving of which helps us to obtain pardon for our sins; but none is greater than that by which we forgive from our heart a sin that someone has committed against us.

St. Augustine

Mary's powerful role in "disposing of the treasures" of the Divine Mercy (which we focused on in our last Newsletter) is always at work in our lives as Christians to move us to imitate the love of her Son and to treat our enemies as Jesus treated His. This was her renewed message at Fatima.

In all His words and deeds Jesus revealed God as unrestricted love and mercy. There are no limits to His forgiveness. When the Pharisees drag before Jesus a woman caught in adultery, to stone her to death, Jesus speaks on her behalf, offering forgiveness (John 8:1-11). Even when Judas comes to betray Him, He addresses him as "friend" (Matthew 26:50), and from the Cross Jesus prays for those who spit on Him and drove nails into His hands and feet, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). This is such a wonderful thing that Jesus invites us to do the same. Are we willing to give the grace of forgiveness to a fellow sinner, or will we simply be like the Scribes and Pharisees? Isn't it great hypocrisy for sinners to want to harm other sinners because of sin?

We find the love of Jesus expressed in the lives of Sister Rani Maria's family members who have embraced her murderer with bonds of forgiveness. Now every year, on Raksha Bandhan, the Hindu festival celebrating the love of siblings, Sister Selmy ties a "rakhi" (sacred thread) around Singh's wrist, symbolizing the bond of protection between a brother and a sister. Samundar considers Sister Maria Rani's family as his own. He regularly visits her tomb which, he says, is a "sanctuary of peace and strength."

Catherine McGilvray, an Australian-Italian director who heard of Singh's story from an Indian missionary, said, "I was deeply moved by the images of the mother kissing her daughter's murderer and of the assassin becoming like a real brother to the sister of his victim." And so Ms. McGilvray did a film on this true story, a film which won an award at the World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival in Los Angeles.

Regarding her sister's murderer, Sr. Selmy said when interviewed, "It is immaterial to me if he remains a Hindu or

becomes a member of any other religion. He will continue to be my brother."

On the night before He was betrayed, Jesus took the chalice and said, "This is the cup of My blood which will be shed for you and for many so that sins may be forgiven." Later, when Jesus rises from the dead, He calls His disciples to preach the forgiveness of sins to all nations. The forgiveness of sins by God is central to the mystery of our Christian faith. It is part of our vocation as sons and daughters of our Father to become like God. It is so important that Jesus exhorts us to leave our gift by the altar, go and be reconciled, then come back to the altar. This is part and parcel of the Christian Gospel: to forgive, to be reconciled. It is part of any serious 12-step recovery.

I focus on this theme in this summer's newsletter because, as many of our readers know, back in December of 2015 I was falsely accused of abusing someone. As a result, and following Church protocol, I was removed from ministry and had to cancel my missions and retreats until the issue could be researched. After attempting to get others to join in the lawsuit by having the case reported in the news media (newspapers and TV) both in Oregon and in California (where members of SNAP stood outside both churches after Masses with a large photo of me), they were without success. No one came forward to join in the lawsuit. In addition, my accuser's own family came to my aid, revealing that their brother was lying. The case was finally dropped by my accuser's lawyer, and subsequently by my accuser himself. However, with my name still not cleared, a thorough investigation had to be carried out by an outside investigator. With that investigation done, I was cleared this past June.

What's important about the case from my perspective is that I firmly believe that "God makes all things work together for the good of those who love Him" (Romans 8:28); however, the emphasis is on loving God, and there can be no loving God without living His precepts. The one precept that makes us more Christ-like is the love that offers genuine forgiveness, as Christ did from the Cross.

And so I make an appeal to anyone reading this newsletter to join with me in making an appeal to the Immaculate and Sacred Hearts for special graces for my accuser, that God in His power may use this false accusation to bring about a greater good, not simply for myself, but indeed for my accuser. My thanks to all who will join me in this. ❀

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