

## PARISH FAMILY ABLAZE: APRIL 23, 2017

### PRAYER OF RESOLUTION

O my God: Henceforth I resolve  
to strive earnestly to be patient and gentle,  
and not to allow the waters of contradiction  
to extinguish the fire of that charity  
which I owe to my neighbor. Amen.

(Saint Francis de Sales)

### KEYNOTE: “THE END TIMES—A KINGDOM BURNING, NOT CONSUMED”

#### I. Theophanies of Moses—Burning Bush/Pillar of Fire

A. Burning: Love (Holy Desire)—Stillness and Movement/Steady and Restless

B. Not Consumed: Living Flame

C. True Devotion—Saint Francis de Sales

“To conclude, charity and devotion differ no more from one another than does flame from the fire. Charity is spiritual fire and when it bursts into flames, it is called devotion. Hence devotion adds nothing to the fire of charity except the flame that makes charity prompt, active, and diligent not only to observe God’s commandments but also to fulfill His heavenly counsels and inspirations.”—*Introduction to the Devout Life*

#### II. Burning Out rather than Flaming Forth

A. Waters that extinguish the fire of charity and the flames of devotion

1. Discouragement

2. Anxiety (Fear/Distress/Peevishness)

B. Jesus to Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska: “My child, know that the greatest obstacles to holiness are discouragement and an exaggerated anxiety. These will deprive you of the ability to practice virtue. All temptations united together ought not disturb your interior peace, not even momentarily. Sensitiveness and discouragement are the fruits of self-love. You should not become discouraged, but strive to make My love reign in place of your self-love.”—*Diary* 1488

C. Saint Catherine of Siena: “None of our actions is effective if we act out of slavish fear. No matter what our position, we will fail in small things as well as great, and will never finish what we have begun. Oh how dangerous such fear is! It cuts off the arms of holy desire. It binds us and keeps us from seeing or knowing the truth, because the source of this fear is the blindness of self-centeredness. For as soon as we love ourselves selfishly and merely on the level of feeling we become fearful. Why? Because we have set our love and trust in something weak, something completely unstable and inconstant, something as passing as the wind.”—*Letters*

#### III. Flaming Forth rather than Burning Out

A. According to Saint Faustina, the Fire of God’s grace CONSUMES all sufferings and sorrows and is EVEN SUSTAINED AND INFLAMED BECAUSE OF THEM—“God’s

blessings, like a fierce fire, consumed my soul, and all sufferings and sorrows were like wood thrown in to the flames, without which the fire would go out. I called upon all heaven and earth to join me in my act of thanksgiving.”—*Diary 1369*

PARADOXICALLY, Jesus tells Saint Faustina that such flaming desire does NOT ELIMINATE SUFFERING but CROWNS AND TRANSFORMS IT through increasing holy desire expressed in perfect love (mercy): “The flames of mercy are burning Me. I desire to pour them out upon human souls. Oh, what pain they cause me when they do not want to accept them!”—*Diary 1074*

B. So, instead of experiencing discouragement and anxiety by avoiding sorrow and suffering, we accept and experience the sorrow and suffering in Communion with the Eucharistic Sacrifice of Love. As Saint Catherine of Siena writes in her *Letters*—“It is [God’s] will that this food be eaten only on the cross, that is, by bearing physical difficulties with constant restless desire. This is what God’s Son did. As He endured torments in His body He endured also the pain of desire, and the cross of desire was greater than the physical cross. And this was His desire: hunger for our redemption in fulfillment of his eternal Father’s commission—and He suffered until He saw this accomplished.”

## QUESTIONS

- I. Benedetta Bianchi Porro suffered from a painful terminal disease from a few months old until she died at the age of 27. She said, “Now that suffering dwells in me, everything in me has been purified.” How might her words encourage us?
- II. Benedetta also said, “Charity is living in others.” Does her definition accord with the Gospel, and what is required to live this type of charity?

## MISSION

- I. Morning Prayer of Resolution
- II. Mental Prayer: 5/5/5 (children) or 10/10/10 (teen/adult)
  - A. Gospel of the Day or Any Passages from Scripture
  - B. Stories or Writings of Saints
  - C. Passages from Theological or Catechetical Writings
  - D. Particular Decades of the Rosary
  - E. Visual Images
- III. Examination of Conscience followed by an Act of Contrition:
  - A. Was the greatest pain I endured today the holy desire to love God and neighbor perfectly, or the pain of preoccupation with my own sorrows and sufferings?
  - B. Did my sufferings and sorrows today help to purify my mind, heart, and affections or serve to pervert, harden, and pollute them?
  - C. Did I allow suffering and sorrow to promote anxiety and discouragement or to perfect peace and increase trust in God?
  - D. Did my suffering and sorrow this day open my heart to give myself more generously in loving communion to God and to others, or close my heart to keep myself alienated from God and from others?