

# Reflections

*International*

*Catholic Family Newsletter*

January 2022

Volume 78

**Bringing Light Into a World of Darkness**

**God's Spiritual Alarm System**

**Women Saints to Know and Love**

## **Blessing to All:**

**By: Richard Pickard:**

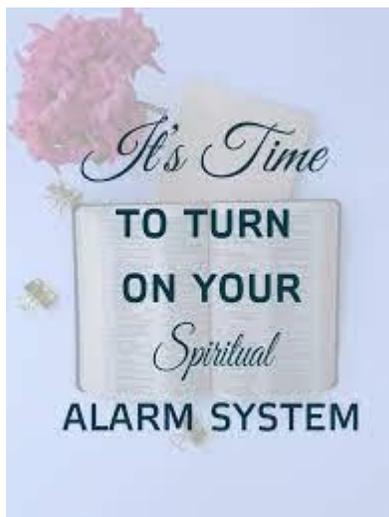
God has provided us with an internal alarm system. We instinctively know when we are in physical danger. Our body reacts with an increase of Adrenaline. Your body is hard-wired to react to stress in ways meant to protect you against threats from predators and other aggressors. Such threats are rare today, but that doesn't mean that life is free **of stress**.

On the contrary, you likely face many demands each day, such as taking on a huge workload, paying the bills and taking care of your family. Your body treats these so-called minor hassles as threats. As a result, you may feel as if you're constantly under attack. The body's stress response system is usually self-limiting. Once a perceived threat or stressful situation has passed, your body goes into normal operating mode.

But when stressors are always present and you constantly feel under attack, your body continues to react with increased stress hormones. The long-term activation of the stress response system can disrupt almost all your body's processes. This puts you at increased risk of many health problems, including frequent headaches, sleep problems, depression, high blood pressure, **short temper**, and a variety of heart issues. So, listen to you body. And remember, that **stress is something you have to manage**. If you need help, talk to a family member or seek help. Stress is a part of our lives. **But don't let it rule your life.**

God has also provided us with a **Spiritual Alarm System**. When you do something that is wrong, we realize we did something we shouldn't have done. Like when you lie about something. Your body reacts and your blood pressure and breathing rate also increases. We know this is true, because of the device called the Lie-Detector machine. Our soul also reacts and becomes a little less beautiful. As long as the wrongdoing or sin we committed are small (venial sin) our soul still has the Light of God within it. However, if the wrong we did (mortal sin) is committed, all the Light of God is gone from our soul.

Normally, our conscious kicks in and we feel guilty which is the **Alarm System, that God** has put in us, to tell us we need to stop committing these sins and to seek a change in our lives. If we don't change and continue to commit sin, venial or mortal, we can short circuit this Alarm System. And we experience **no guilt**. We become prevent God's Alarm System from operating properly. And in the case of mortal sin, we become darkness.



But as long as we have life, God's Spirit reaches out to us. He wants us to return to the Light and gives us an opportunity to change our lives.

If you know someone, that has turned off God's Spiritual Alarm System, please pray for them. Your prayers do matter. One rosary can save a soul, even at the last minute of life!

Listen to the Alarm Systems God has placed within you. Especially God's Spiritual Alarm.

## 19 Most Inspiring Woman Saints to Know and Love

The saints of the ages inspire and instruct us in how to lead lives of holiness.

### ***St. Elizabeth Ann Seton***



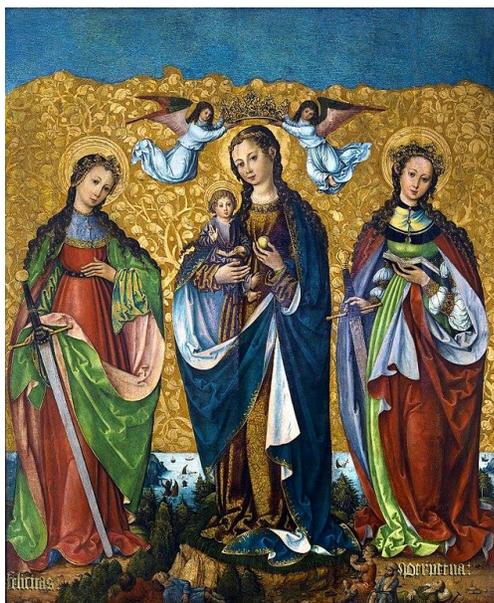
Most known for her patronage of schools, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was the first native born American to be canonized. She also established the first Catholic girls' school and founded the religious order of Sisters of Charity. As a convert to Catholicism from the Anglican faith, St. Elizabeth carried a profoundly reverent devotion to the Eucharist, Scripture, and Our Lady. She's an

incredible woman to admire, because she overcame many obstacles in her life – death of children, her spouse, and rejection and persecution from family and friends when she chose to convert to Catholicism, among others – yet she persevered and, because of this, was able to establish an indelible legacy.



### ***St. Faustina***

She's revered as the Apostle of Divine Mercy, and countless devotees throughout the world have read her lengthy Diary, which reveals locutions and visions she received from Jesus about the message and image of Divine Mercy. Naturally, St. Faustina experienced skepticism and many obstacles when she faithfully revealed the message of Divine Mercy to her superiors, yet her confessor always guided her with compassion. Her fidelity to God's will, despite the potential consequences, is an example of exemplary faith. If we could but carry an iota of burning love for Jesus that St. Faustina expressed, we would likely know what it means to experience Heaven on Earth. Her feast day is October 5.



### ***Ss. Felicity and Perpetua***

Two of the earliest Roman martyrs, these saints are honored together because Felicity was the slave of Perpetua, a young noblewoman who was nursing a newborn.

Pregnant herself, Felicity gave birth to her daughter only moments before her execution. They were martyred because they refused to apostasize their Christian faith, so they were sentenced to die in the "celebration games" in honor of Roman Emperor Septimus Severus' birthday. Their heroism in the face of such barbarism,

especially as they entrusted their babies to God's care, is unprecedented, which is why we hear of them in the Litany of Saints on high feast days in the Church.

### ***St. Katharine Drexel***



St. Katharine was born into high society and wealth. Her estate would have been worth about \$400 million in today's standards, but after a surprise suggestion that she become a sister from the Pope, Katharine reconsidered her marriage proposals and discerned that the religious life was, indeed, for her. She gave everything to God, including her entire inheritance, and dedicated the remainder of her life to educating and caring for the Native Americans and Black Americans. By the time she died, she and her religious sisters had established about 50 Indian missions in the United States. As women, we are often tempted toward materialism and the security that marriage affords. Katharine's heart was so full of charity that she renounced everything in order to give her all to others.

### ***St. Joan of Arc***



The "Maid of Orleans," St. Joan of Arc is a legendary French saint who led her people to victory during the Hundred Years' War. Controversially, she claimed to receive visions from St. Michael the Archangel, St. Margaret, and St. Catherine of Alexandria, which led her to approach the throne of King Charles VII with the concept of leading the French Army into battle with the English. She became quite a laughingstock and was unjustly tried as a sorceress or witch (essentially as a heretic) by a pro-English tribunal of Catholic clerics, who sentenced her to be burned at the stake. While she was undergoing trial and spent time in prison, she was severely tempted to apostasize in order to be freed, but she overcame it with grace. A true and timeless heroine –

both spiritually and militarily – St. Joan of Arc exemplified courage and fortitude in the gravest of circumstances.

### ***St. Teresa of Calcutta***



St. Teresa of Calcutta is quite a popular and famous modern saint. Most people today have at least heard her name and she was recently canonized. Her order, the Missionaries of Charity, consists of nearly 5,000 sisters worldwide, and they oversee homes for people who are dying of various diseases, as well as soup kitchens, mobile clinics, counseling programs, orphanages, and schools. Along with the three traditional vows, the MC sisters take a fourth vow – “wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor.” More people are becoming aware of St. Teresa’s long and arduous dark night of the soul, but few were aware of it during her lifetime. Apparently, she experienced this intense spiritual aridity for decades, even questioning God’s existence and love for her. Those of us who don’t feel God close to us would do well to turn to this faithful and heroic saint for intercession when we are tempted to despair.

### ***St. Catherine of Siena***



A mystic and Doctor of the Church, St. Catherine lived as a tertiary for the Dominican order and used her gifts of philosophy and theology to encourage peace among the Italian territories of her time (during the papacy of Gregory XI). At one point, she was engaged to be married, but she received a vision of St. Dominic during a period of time when she became violently ill. After she made a full recovery, she donned the Dominican habit and devoted her life to speaking the truth boldly but with charity – a rarity for a woman during the era in which she lived. This charismatic zeal as a woman can encourage us when we are uncertain whether or not we should use our spiritual gifts openly.

### ***St. Rose of Lima***



Another Third Order Dominican, St. Rose of Lima is most known for her severe austerity and care for the poor through her own initiatives, rather than by way of a religious order. Even as a young girl, St. Rose would secretly fast and offer extreme penances for love of Jesus. Her parents were displeased at her rejection of a potential marriage suitor, yet she persisted in her contemplation of the Blessed Sacrament for hours on end. Because her parents refused to permit to her to become a full-fledged religious sister, she became a perpetual virgin as a lay Dominican instead, experiencing spiritual ecstasies throughout her life. She is a role model for us in times of persecution, especially when it comes from our closest family members and friends.

## ***St. Clare of Assisi***



One of the first followers of St. Francis of Assisi, she founded the Order of Poor Ladies, or the Poor Clares as they are known today, as a group of monastic religious sisters who live the Franciscan charisms and follow their Rule. Born the daughter of a wealthy Italian count, St. Clare grew up with a deep love for prayer and experienced the privilege of pilgrimages to holy places during her childhood. Once she met St. Francis, she immediately decided to join him in his mission. Her rite of passage was her choice to cut her hair and exchange her extravagant clothes for a plain robe and veil. Oddly, she is the patroness of an assortment of professions, such as goldsmiths, laundry, television, embroiderers, and good weather. Though she lived in the 13th century, her astounding and radical transformation from riches to rags still serves as a role model for those of us living in a consumerist society today.

### ***St. Teresa of Avila***



A contemporary of St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila was a Spanish mystic, Doctor of the Church, and a reformer of the Carmelite Order (the Discalced Carmelites). Her spiritual, mystical treatise, *Interior Castle*, has won the hearts of innumerable amounts of people throughout the centuries. Most of her devotees are drawn to her depth of wisdom and understanding of the interior life, especially as it pertains to the process by which a soul journeys to complete union with God. She appeals to those who appreciate mystical theology and is the patroness of those ridiculed for their piety, those in need of grace, and those who are gravely ill.

### ***St. Kateri Tekakwitha***



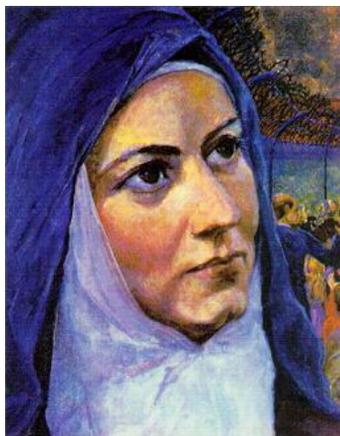
Born an Algonquin-Mohawk tribe, St. Kateri developed smallpox as a child, which left her face pock-marked and disfigured. She chose to become Catholic at the tender age of nineteen, much to the chagrin of her tribes members. Among other notable attributes of this unpretentious saint, St. Kateri chose not to marry and instead made a vow of perpetual virginity. She died young, at the age of 24, but witnesses of her death claimed that her pock marks instantly vanished as she died, and her face became radiant – perhaps one of the first miracles attributed to her. She has been the intercessor for many miracles and is the first Native American saint to

be canonized.

### ***St. Elizabeth of Hungary***



A real-life princess, St. Elizabeth became widowed at a young age (24) and thereafter donated her entire dowry for the service of the poor. Always carrying a love for the poor, Elizabeth grew up performing various works of mercy on behalf of the suffering, sick, and homeless. Once her husband died, she joined the Third Order Franciscans and took vows similar to religious ones, including celibacy. She is most known for the “miracle of roses,” in which she was taking a bundle of loaves of bread to feed the poor, which were hidden underneath her cloak. When she came upon her husband and his comrades who were returning from a hunting trip, they questioned her about it, but when she opened her cloak, a cascade of roses fell at their feet instead of the loaves. She is a true miracle worker of healing and can be invoked by those who are discouraged by their illnesses.



### ***St. Edith Stein***

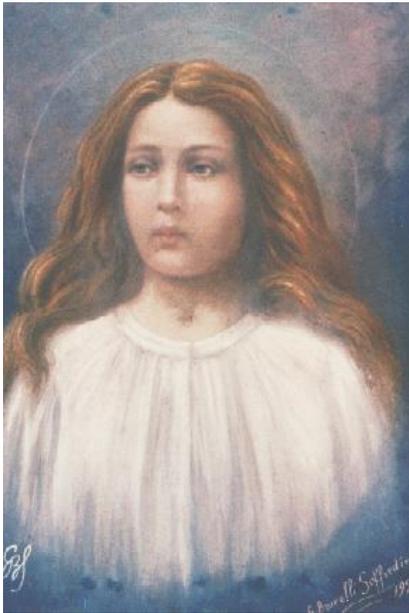
Edith left her Jewish faith and became an atheist. She eventually converted to Catholicism because of her discovery of the True Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and joined the Discalced Carmelites. She was martyred at Auschwitz in 1942 by way of the gas chamber. Though she suspected she may die there, she was not deterred. Instead, she had a burning desire to offer herself and her life as a true sacrifice in atonement for the sins against peace. Her hope and dying prayer was that peace would be restored once again after the War ended. Honored by scholars and theologians alike, St. Edith Stein is a true testament that the ultimate act of love is to offer one’s life for the sake of another.

### ***St. Gianna Molla***



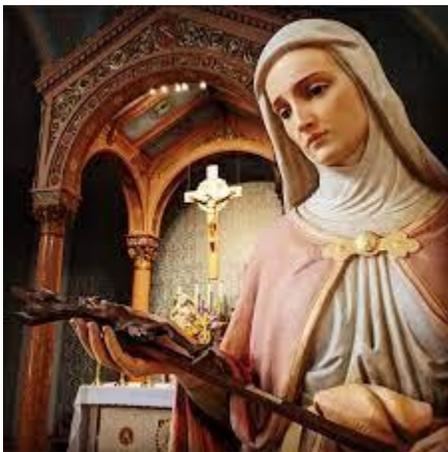
A true pro-life pioneer, St. Gianna was a pediatrician in Italy when she became pregnant with her fourth child. During her pregnancy, a fibroma was discovered on her uterus. The options were grave: have an abortion, hysterectomy, or remove the fibroma with no guarantee of recovery. St. Gianna bravely opted for the third option, as it was the only one that would protect her unborn child. She gave birth to her daughter, named after her, but died shortly thereafter. Her daughter, Gianna Emanuela, is a physician today. St. Gianna sacrificed herself for the sake of her child, a most unusual and extraordinary decision, especially in our era.

### **St. Maria Goretti**



St. Maria is the epitomized role model of chastity and upholding virginity. As an 11-year-old, she almost fell victim to the sexual advances of a teenaged boy named Alessandro. When she refused him, he stabbed her fourteen times, eventually killing her. Before she died, she freely and wholeheartedly forgave him, and Alessandro experienced a true conversion of heart while he was imprisoned. He ultimately became a lay brother in a monastery and died in peace. St. Maria is an example of costly faith. She understood at her young age what a gift her purity was and was willing to sacrifice her life in order to preserve it. More so, her example of total forgiveness to her perpetrator is a true act of love.

### **St. Monica**



Perseverance is the key spiritual attribute we can learn from St. Augustine of Hippo's beloved mother. Her suffering was extensive and prolonged, especially as she grieved her husband's adultery and her son's capricious and wayward lifestyle. Yet she patiently prayed for decades that her son might be converted, and her tears were not in vain. She is the patron saint of grieving mothers, difficult marriages, victims of abuse, and conversion of relatives.

### ***St. Philomena***



St. Philomena's cult didn't begin until the nineteenth century, when her remains were discovered in the Catacombs of Priscilla. She lived during the reign of Diocletian, and she was martyred under his rule, as well – at the age of 13. The details of her history are, at best, sketchy, but several people have reported visions of her independently of each other and report the same story. Diocletian lusted after her beauty and wanted to take her as his wife, but she had already made a secret vow of perpetual virginity. Because she refused him, he had her tortured, and she escaped death several times, only to be martyred by way of decapitation. Immediately after her remains were discovered, miracles were attributed to her intercession. She is known as a St. Rita or St. Jude of sorts – a patron saint of impossible cases and is invoked by those who are desperate.

## ***Mary, Mother of God***

### ***Hail Mary Full of Grace***



How could a list of inspiring women saints be complete without the ultimate saint – Our Lady. As the Mother of God, her “fiat” was unending and complete. From the moment she was chosen to be Jesus’ mother to her Assumption into Heaven, she was faithful and trusted in God with total surrender. It is said that it would be impossible to separate her heart from Jesus’ heart, as they experienced the ecstasies and sorrows of life and death in conjunction with each other.

## Politicians All Over The World Have Chosen Sides

If you vote for people in Government, who vote to kill babies in the womb, then please look at this picture. The baby is without representation. Although the picture alludes to a non-voter, the truth of this picture is real. Which party do you support? The party of Life or the party of Death.



<sup>1</sup>Abortions worldwide 2021:  
73,000,000 est.

**America Abortions 2021 800,000**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-worldwide>

## **James: 3:14-16**

But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

### **The International Catholic Family Newsletter Is Published Monthly**

**Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.**

**<https://www.catholicfamilynewsletter.com>**

**I am watching over you. Pray my children,  
Pray, Pray, Pray, My Rosary For The Salvation of  
Sinners**

