

# ENCOURAGEMENT

January 2026 – Issue 174  
'Sacrament of the Present Moment'

January's issue, I always find the most difficult to do. Because of The Christmas deadlines for postage, the concentration is focused on these and Advent and Christmas itself. It is always challenging to start writing for January with its cold winds and icy blast not to mention a lack of enthusiasm for the month itself with its dark nights. Writing for January early to mid-December therefore is always a challenge. I was pondering this and a thought popped into my head the 'Sacrament of the Present moment'.

Every moment of our lives is blessed with a present, that is *that* moment. We cannot know if there is going to be another one. We cannot say for certainty that there will be another month or many. We cannot always plan what we may have to do in spite of the plans that we make. We cannot assume that they will be constant and not change. No two minutes are the same or will ever be repeated. The world however requires of us to make plans, attend meetings, go to work, deal with mishaps, ill health and so many other things that pop up for all of us. How therefore, are we to get through all this and both stay 'sane' and manage our own expectation and crucially those of others.

It is an important question as it is one that can determine not only our peace but also our Spiritual wellbeing. Many people get distraught when their plans have to change or get ruined by circumstance. Some people cannot cope at the slightest variation in routine as if it were a fixed reality which of course it can never be. Knowing the future would not necessarily help matters and would maybe bring other complications. Would it really help us to know that on such a such a day we might fall over or miss a train or forget to post an important letter. Would it really help us to know the outcome of any results, or exams etc.?

So how do we move from moment to moment with a grateful ease and full of peace? For someone who



feels that control is important this is especially challenging as they want to be the masters of every situation which of course can never happen. But for nearly everyone it can be a life's journey to live out a holy nonchalance... a kind of 'whatever it will be it will be' and concentrate on the present moment. Some may recall a famous song called 'Que será', whatever will be will be...

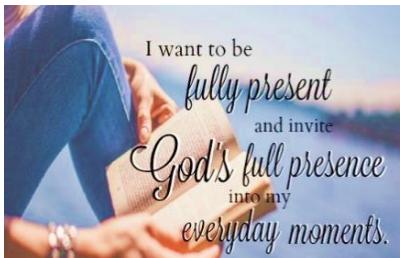
There is no shortage of writers on this important subject each with their own particular slant on how to deal with the issue of time. In the days of 'bells' that required instant obedience as in convent and monasteries of old (and some today) that must have been especially difficult as every moment did not belong to the individual in a real sense. It is for such as these that Jean-Pierre de Caussade wrote a famous

Spiritual classic 'The Sacrament of the Present Moment'. Writing primarily about time he says *Leave the past to the infinite mercy of God, the future to His good Providence, and give the present wholly to His love by being faithful to His grace*, 'at such times-- "There is not a moment in which God does not present Himself under the cover of some pain to be endured, of some consolation to be enjoyed, or of some duty to be performed." Every moment that we have is an opportunity to serve and glorify God in whatever we are doing, whether it is our work, leisure, or some trial we are undergoing. It is all an opportunity for grace. When we ask God to be with us at every moment of our day to help us cooperate with the graces He is offering us, we sanctify the present moment and take full advantage of this little sacrament that He has instituted for us."

Many Saints have discovered the sanctifying grace of the sacrament. A sacrament or 'sacramentum' makes us holy and leads us to God who gives the grace if we respond. A more contemporary Saint Gianna Molla, Wife, Mother and Doctor said: Consider what God is asking of you *right now*.

St. Gianna also said, “Whatever God wants.” So, decide what he is asking of you at present, whether that’s finishing a work project, helping a family member or friend or taking time for prayer amid errands or spending time with Jesus at Mass or adoration.

It’s wonderful saintly advice. But in today’s fast-paced world, focusing on being truly present, let alone holy, each moment can be a challenge. But St. Gianna strove to balance faith, family and work responsibilities, too, as a Catholic wife, mother and paediatrician. She was also active in the Church and enjoyed hobbies like skiing and others.



Another way of looking at it is to ask God for clarity and work out what is essential, what is the duty of that moment. What can safely be left to providence? We rush around trying to do everything when the actual work of that moment may be to pause and reflect on the essential and leave the rest to God to sort out, for maybe another time. Or maybe it is even just to pause...and rest or pray?

It is also important to remember that some things can actually be omitted and do not have to be done. How many times, by happy providence, a supposed error has proved to be a blessing. Not everything that we plan is indeed in God’s plan and in fact may impede it. It may even prove to be an ultimate blessing.

So maybe in the long month of January and as a - *New Year plan or resolution* you could consider this sacrament and let go of the less important and concentrate on what is God’s plan for that moment or that day. You will be richly blessed by this process and peaceful.

Halina Holman © 2025



### Reflection

When we are left with nothing *but* the present moment, can we still find ‘infinite treasure’ in it?

*You do not have to cope with everything – only with this moment.*

*This moment is all the reality there is.*

*If everything seems to come on top of you at once – give it to God.*

*Tell Him you can’t cope on your own so you are giving Him the whole mess to sort out. Then forget the future and your worries: They are no longer your worries.*

*Allie died at 21, written when terminally ill*

*(Quoted in ‘Vale of Tears’ Allie’s Song by Allison Brown. Copyright Tony and Brid Browne 1999, Herne Bay Kent Rauch Ministries)*

### **Pope Leo XVI**

*“Evangelization, dear brothers and sisters, is not our attempt to conquer the world but the infinite grace that radiates from lives transformed by the kingdom of God.”* Rome 2025

*New year Blessings for a peaceful year in God’s service.*

*Thank you to all for all the support, donations and help during the year.*

### Feast Days in January

**1<sup>st</sup> Theotokos – Mary Mother of God**

**2<sup>nd</sup> St. Basil the Great**

**3<sup>rd</sup> The Holy Name of Jesus**

**4<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday after the Nativity**

**5<sup>th</sup> St. John Neumann**

**6<sup>th</sup> Epiphany Holy Day of Obligation**

**7<sup>th</sup> St. Raymond of Peñafort**

**10<sup>th</sup> St. William**

**11<sup>th</sup> The Baptism of the Lord**

**12<sup>th</sup> St. Aelred of Rievaulx**

**17<sup>th</sup> St. Anthony, Abbot**

**18<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**21<sup>st</sup> St. Agnes**

**22<sup>nd</sup> St. Vincent de Paul**

**24<sup>th</sup> St. Francis de Sales**

**25<sup>th</sup> Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**26<sup>th</sup> Sts. Timothy and Titus**

**27<sup>th</sup> St. Angela Merici**

**28<sup>th</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas**

**31<sup>st</sup> St. John Bosco**