

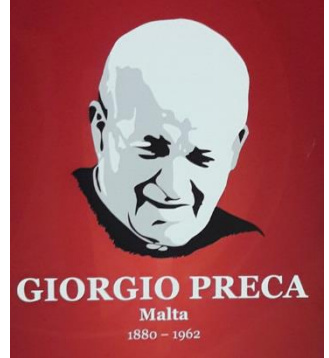


Diocese of Westminster

AGENCY FOR EVANGELISATION  
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

‘Learn From Me’

Reflecting on the Lives of Saints  
and Blesseds of Catechesis



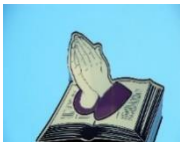
*“God has chosen you to teach his people.”*

*“Contemplating the face of Christ”*

**St George Preca. Memorial: 9<sup>th</sup> May**

### **Opening Prayer**

God our Father,  
by whom the humble are exalted,  
in Saint George Preca you have given us an example of a committed  
priest and apostle of the faith,  
devoted to the formation of the laity.  
May we work constantly to spread the Gospel for the salvation of all.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.



### **Scripture Reflection: 2 Timothy 2:1-15**

Accept the strength, my dear friend, that comes from the grace of Christ Jesus. You have heard everything that I teach in public; hand it on to reliable people so that they will in turn be able to teach others.

Put up with your share of difficulties, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. In the army, no soldier gets himself mixed up in civilian life, because he must be at the disposal of the man who enlisted him: or take an athlete – he cannot win any crown unless he has kept all the rules of the contest; and again, it is the working farmer who has the first claim on any crop that is harvested. Think over what I have said, and the Lord will show you how to understand it all.

Remember the Good News that I carry, 'Jesus Christ risen from the dead, sprung from the race of David'; it is on account of this that I have my own hardships to bear, even to being chained like a criminal – but they cannot chain up God's news. So I bear it all for the sake of those who are chosen, so that in the end they may have the salvation that is in Christ Jesus and the eternal glory that comes with it.

- Is there a word or phrase that stands out or remains with you after reading this passage?

## **Biography**

- Born: 12 February 1880 at Valletta, Malta
- Frail child due to numerous illnesses; nearly drowned in the harbour. Just before ordination diagnosed with acute pulmonary tuberculosis and given a poor prognosis. Recovery attributed to the intercession of St Joseph.
- Studied Latin, English and Italian before began seminary studies.
- Ordained : 22 December 1906. Appointed assistant priest at St Gaetano, devoted himself to teaching the youth.
- Founded a society, known as MUSEUM, or SDC (*see below*)
- 1952: Pope Pius XII nominated him as Papal Privy Chamberlain; became a 'Monsignor', though he never claimed the document from the archbishop's office nor wore the vestments
- His preaching and writing draw on the rich spiritual writings of Carmelites Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, as well as his models as a Third Order Carmelite, Elijah and Mary. He had a flair for making Carmelite thoughts, teachings and traditions clear and simple for working people.
- Composed the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary in 1957.
- Died evening of 26 July 1962 of natural causes at Santa Venera, Malta; relics near the Society's motherhouse at Blata l-Bajda
- Venerated: 28 June 1999 by Pope John Paul II
- Beatified: 9 May 2001 by Pope John Paul II; his beatification miracle involved the healing of an irreversibly detached retina of a member of the Society
- Canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on 3 June 2007, being described as "Malta's second father in faith" after St Paul.

## **Foundation of SDC**

As an assistant priest, he began to teach the Catholic catechism to people, including labourers, along the waterfront. He gathered male catechists to help him in this work. Meetings and conferences led to the founding of MUSEUM which stood for Magister, Utinam Sequatur Evangelium Universus Mundos, or "Master, would that the whole world would follow the Gospel." or SDC (Societas Doctrinae Christianae (Society of Christian Doctrine).

(or Society of Christian Doctrine), a new religious movement, on 7 March 1907. The work of the Society attracted criticism and an eventual enquiry in 1916. The movement was cleared of any negative behaviour and paved the way for ecclesiastical recognition of the Society on 12 April 1932.

In the 1950s, George Preca sent 6 members of the Society to Australia to serve the Maltese who had emigrated to Melbourne. More recently new centres were opened in England (1988), Kenya (1989), Albania (1993), Peru (2003), Poland (2010) and Cuba (2011)

### **Work of SDC in England**

The Society is based in South London. In the words found on their website: "S.D.C. ....works in the field of Catechesis and the spreading of the Word of God in different ways. ...We ... aim to provide catechists and teachers with free resources that can be used in different situations to help passing on the faith to others." Go to their website to see what they offer: <http://sdc.me.uk/default.html>

### **Writings of George Preca**

Taught and wrote in Maltese, the language of the common people, so that everyone could understand. From leaflets to books, he published approximately 150 works.

### **St George's 'Luminous Mysteries'/Mysteries of Light**

- 1957, George inspired by John 8:12 : 'The light of the world'.
- Concluded that the Rosary had a missing link: the public life of the Lord; heard saying that he relished praying these 'new' mysteries and contemplating the Lord who is 'the light of the world.'
- Became 'public property' after two publications, one in 1973 and the other in 1987
- 16<sup>th</sup> February 2002: Saint Pope John Paul II inaugurated the Year of the Rosary (Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*) where he introduced the five new Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary. Debatable as to whether the Pope was influenced by George Preca.

#### **St George Preca's Work**

1. After Jesus was baptised in the Jordan, he was taken into the desert
2. Jesus reveals himself as true God by word and miracles.
3. Jesus teaches the Beatitudes on the mountain.
4. Jesus is transfigured on the mountain.
5. Jesus takes his last supper with the Apostles.

#### **St Pope John Paul II's Work**

1. Jesus is baptised in the Jordan.
2. Jesus reveals himself through the miracle of the wine at the wedding at Cana.
3. Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of God.
4. Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor
5. Jesus institutes the Eucharist

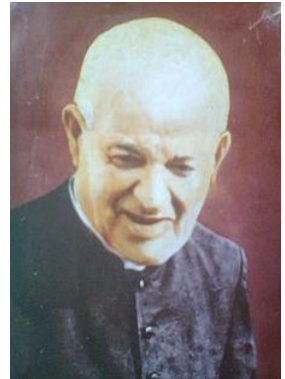
## Significance for Catechists

For reflection: What does the life of St George Preca say to us as catechists? What can we learn from him?

## Closing Prayer

Father, breathe your Spirit upon your people gathered together to do your work.

We ask that you give us,  
a new sense of your mystery,  
a new experience of your presence,  
a new commitment to your Gospel,  
a new dedication to your kingdom.  
May the spirit of George Preca be our inspiration  
and may our work contribute to the  
coming of your kingdom,  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.



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## 'Take Away' : Going Deeper

Biographical Videos:

<https://youtu.be/D6QOonaKZ1o>

<https://youtu.be/Tahn5PEa8gI>

Article: by Jean Pierre Fava, 1920

<https://aleteia.org/2020/12/08/meet-saint-gorg-preca-the-maltese-apostle-of-the-word/>

SDC United Kingdom website: <http://www.sdc.me.uk/>

Main website: <https://www.sdcmuseum.org/>

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## Acknowledgements

Information on the Mysteries of Light, <https://ocarm.org>

Biographical notes: <https://catholicsaints.info/>

<https://catholic.org/saints>

<https://www.sdcmuseum.org/>

(Society of Christian Doctrine, main website)

