



The PILGRIM

Vol. 9 No. 11 Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) November 1998

Our Lady's MESSAGE of 10/25/98 via Marija Pavlovic Lunetti and the Franciscans at Medjugorje
Dear children! Today I call you to come closer to my Immaculate Heart. I call you to renew in your families the fervor of the first days when I called you to fasting, prayer and conversion. Little children, you accepted my messages with open hearts, although you did not know what prayer was. Today, I call you to open yourselves completely to me so that I may transform you and lead you to the heart of my Son, Jesus, so that He can fill you with His love. Only in this way, little children, will you find true peace - the peace that only God gives you. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Father Slavko Barbaric's REFLECTION starts on page 13

A PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we place ourselves into your loving and tender embrace. We know that you act in our lives in so many ways. When things go wrong, Lord, help us to see our errors, to laugh and learn from our mistakes. Lord, teach us to accept and not to be anxious or to worry. You are our life, and we long to have You lead in our life through Your Holy Spirit, and through the intercession of Your Holy Mother, Mary. Help us, Lord, to trust in the ways You guide us through our guardian angels. Let us never question Your will. May we live in a desire of anticipation and expectation of Your coming. Help us to see the Joy in Your will for us, as You lead us to Sainthood, where we desire to praise You forever.

AMEN

(Kathleen prays from the heart to guide each issue.)

NOVEMBER: MONTH of the HOLY SOULS

Most of us have a tendency to think of the souls in Purgatory only in November. Please be advised that praying for the souls should be a thing of constancy. There is tremendous merit in praying for these souls, so much so as to have the souls in Purgatory eternally grateful. The souls in Purgatory cannot pray for themselves, but our prayers can help shorten their time there.

Purgatory is not just a holding place until Heaven is attained. **It is a place where we atone for sins not**

"The PILGRIM" Theme for November 1998 is "Our Lady, Mother of the Holy Souls." Page 3 contains the Table of Contents or "IN THIS ISSUE . . ." block.

commuted by plenary and partial indulgences, good works and prayer. According to many well-known saints, even the pious have endured Purgatory for 20, 40, 60 years. This being the case, what would we of lesser piety have to endure?

When a relative or friend dies there is usually a deluge of Mass cards, praying the Rosary at the viewing and at the gravesite. But shortly, many of us become immersed in everyday activities and forget to maintain a prayer constancy for the deceased. If we knew how grateful Jesus and Mary are for our remembrance of the dead, we would do it with a greater fervency. **"If you have done it unto the least of these...you have done it unto Me."**

A booklet we recommend to give a better insight into the efficacy of praying for the souls in Purgatory is: **"Read Me or Rue It"**, by Fr. Paul O'Sullivan, O.P. It sounds ominous but it is another path to charity, charity for the souls in Purgatory.

A NOVEMBER ONE DAY RETREAT FOR ENGAGED, MARRIED COUPLES, SINGLE and DIVORCED PEOPLE

Have you wanted to look at your life as God sees it? You have a unique opportunity to retreat for a day at **Saint Pius X Retreat House** in **Blackwood, NJ.**, and to look at how God works in your life through Priorities in Relationships, Communication Relationships, Intimacy in Relationships, and through your prayer life. Do you think you have gaps in any or all of these areas, regardless of your marital status? **David Haggerty, M.S.W., A.C.S.W.** will help you to look into each area, and to see how we cooperate or interfere with what God is doing.

Call the **PFMC** (609-768-9228) **immediately** to register by phone, or write us with a donation check. This is the last chance for you to sign up. The cost of this weekend is \$100/couple or \$55 per person. **This includes lunch and supper.** You may call us and register by phone, and charge the registration to your **Visa, Mastercard** or **Discover**. Confession will be available, and the retreat will end about **7 PM Saturday** with Holy Mass celebrated by **Father Cadmus Mazzarella**, director of the **Newman Center at Rowan University**.

PRAISE GOD – NEW SPACE for the PFMC!!!

On *October 20, 1998*, **Keith** and **Kathleen** closed on the house and property at **61 Cooper Road** in **Voorhees, NJ**.. The 3 bedroom house on approximately 1.2 acres of land is now ready for a spruce up. Township permits are in the final stages of approval. Bureaucracy is a fact of life. The building of the 5000 square foot new building is steps away from getting permits such as Zoning and Building, then we must install new septic, wells for heating and air conditioning, upgrade the electrical service, clear the site, dig and pour footings, etc.

We are so excited to think that we have been so blessed to look forward to space for office equipment and for working space for the volunteer staff. We have been working from our home for over nine years now, and have virtually outgrown all the available space. This has been a very difficult endeavor to get to this point, but through prayer, sacrifice and hard work, as **Father Jim Sauchelli** put it, the new **Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC)** is founded on solid ground.

We are asking for anyone who can help us to paint, put in book shelves, clean and move to contact us as soon as possible. If you have a few hours, and you and your family can come over, please, we need you.

Would you consider donating any of the following. It would be a great Christmas present to us all and we need all the help we can get to set up the Werner's new 3 bedroom house, which will have more space dedicated to the PFMC than was available in the old house. Anything given to the PFMC can be deducted as tax deductible charitable donations under the 501(c)(3) status for the PFMC as a non-profit, tax exempt religious association.

We have need of a refrigerator, vacuum cleaner, washer and dryer, microwave oven, kitchen table and chairs, lamps for the living / common rooms and bedrooms and bedroom furniture for 3 rooms. We do have mattresses and box springs, but can use dressers and chests of drawers. We also need dishes, glasses, silverware, pots and pans and kitchen utensils, sheets, blankets and

bedspreads for 2 queen beds and 1 twin bed (please new sheets). We will also need towels – bath size and hand towels. We also need a new fax machine, 2 tall book cases, new folding chairs (12 if possible), plastic stacking chairs (12) and 2 futon couches. Once the new building is up (we have it projected for April 1999 completion), we will need further help.

Are you a carpenter? We have immediate need for someone to make legs for the top of an altar that was given to us. We hope to use the altar in the new center. We also have to build many feet of shelving once the certificate of occupancy (C.O.) for the new building is issued. Please call if you have some time to look the situation over, and can help us!

Until then, if you have any talents to type, light book keeping, filing and library work or would like to get involved with the monthly periodical "The PILGRIM," or books, or upcoming conferences and retreats, please call Kathleen, Dotty or Fay. We need your help. Please call us at 609-768-9228.

FEBRUARY RETREAT-CONFERENCE WITH FATHER ROBERT DeGRANDIS AND DOROTHEA DeGRANDIS SUDOL AND FATHER JOHN McFADDEN, FATHER CADMUS MAZZARELLA, FATHER LOUIS MARUCCI, AND THOMAS PETRUSKO

Father Jim Sauchelli will be our emcee for the (8th Annual) **1999 RETREAT CONFERENCE** titled **"I WILL BREAK YOUR HEART OF STONE AND GIVE YOU A NEW HEART."** **Father John McFadden** will open the **1999 RETREAT CONFERENCE** with a blessing and, prayer over the attendees and hotel, Holy Mass, and the Homily.

The weekend will begin at **7 PM on Friday, February 26th**, and will end about **6 PM on Sunday, February 28th, 1999**. This weekend will be focused on **"Healing"**. **Father DeGrandis** and **Dorothea DeGrandis Sudol** and our other speakers will delve into healing ministry: physical, emotional and spiritual healing through the Mass; healing through the Rosary; Intergenerational Healing and Healing of Memories; Healing through Deliverance and Spiritual Warfare; Healing through the Stations of the Cross; and Healing through Confession.

Monsignor Joseph James, who has a ministry in Healing through Confession will join us from **Our Lady of Mercy Center, Slaton, Texas**.

There will be daily Mass including an unforgettable holy healing Mass sung by **Father Semana Saturday** late morning. You will enjoy the healing service and

We recognize and accept that the final authority regarding the apparitions, locutions and related messages from **Our Lady** at, and to the recipients from, **Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina**, as well as all other private revelations, rests with the **Holy See of Rome**, to whose judgment we willingly submit. We vow total allegiance to our **One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church**, its **Magisterium (Cardinals, Bishops and Priests)** together with the **Holy Father, Pope John Paul II**.

experience the laying on of hands after the Saturday concert sung by **Father Michael Semana**, and the musical group "**Voyage**" conducted by **Dean Pulcini**. On *Sunday* there will be a Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Priests will be available for Confession. You will not want to miss this weekend of Blessings!!!!

One of our speakers will be **Linda Riva**. **Linda** presently lives and works at the Mothers' Home, a maternity home in **Darby, Pennsylvania**, that provides shelter, counseling and programs to homeless pregnant women before and after their babies are born. In the past she coordinated **Project Rachel** in the **Camden Diocese** where she helped individuals in the healing and reconciliation process after an abortion. You will be deeply moved on hearing her testimony.

Then from *Monday, March 1*, through *Wednesday March 3rd*, **Father Robert DeGrandis** will extend his time with us and conduct teachings and workshops on the "**GIFTS of the HOLY SPIRIT.**" Most who attended our *September, 1998* Seminar/Workshop has raved about all the teachings and the effects of the workshops in their spiritual and prayer life. So, if you can extend until *Wednesday*, you will not be disappointed. **This extension will end about 4 PM Wednesday.**

Please refer to the enclosed flyer to register **EARLY** for this **1999 RETREAT CONFERENCE**. You can register by mailing in the form or by calling us **NOW** at 609-768-9228. **REMEMBER YOU CAN NOW CHARGE YOUR REGISTRATION. WE ARE LIMITED to about 700 REGISTRANTS.**

If you are interested in funding a child for the youth segment (\$25 per youth) please help someone. We have about 45 youth that need sponsors. The youth program will focus on "**Chastity, the Sacraments and Prayer.**" **We are limited to about 80 youth.**

If you would like to have a full hot lunch with the speakers on *Saturday, February 27th*, a \$25 donation is requested. This is a time to enjoy one of the speakers at your lunch table, and a personal chance to talk to each speaker. **We are limited to 100 attendees. This is a fund raising opportunity for the PFMC.** We thank you for coming and enjoying this with us.

You may make your hotel reservations (2 queen beds in a room or 1 king in a room) **NOW** by calling the **Four Points** by **Sheraton** at 1-800-257-8262. **Don't delay this registration. We ran out of rooms at our last conference, and we do not want you to miss this weekend and extension because of delaying your call. They will hold your room on a credit card and not charge the card until after the 1999 RETREAT CONFERENCE is over.**

Priests and nuns may attend at no charge for registration. We welcome any priest to help us with confessions in private hotel rooms across from the Adoration Room during the retreat. It has always been

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an affirming and rewarding experience for any priest to hear confessions and to con-celebrate Holy Mass at **PFMC** retreats. Please call us and tell us when you can be available. Even a few hours on *Saturday* will help.

PILGRIMAGE PLANNING at PFMC

MEDJUGORJE PILGRIMAGES from NEWARK, NJ
Normally using **Virgin Air** via **London** then **Croatia Air** via **Zagreb** and/or **Split**

JANUARY 27-FEBRUARY 4, 1999 - \$1099

FEBRUARY 10-18, 1999 - \$1099

MARCH 24 – APRIL 1, 1999 - \$1299 (Over Palm Sunday)

MARCH 31 – APRIL 8, 1999 - \$1299 (Holy Thursday Arrival-Over Easter Sunday)

FATIMA to include COIMBRA (Sister Lucy), SANTAREM (Eucharistic Miracle), ALCOBACA, OBIDOS, NAZARE and LISBON

APRIL 10 – 17, 1999 \$1425 person inc. taxes. (Arrives for the Feast of Divine Mercy)

JOURNEYS of SAINT PAUL IN GREECE and TURKEY with VISITING SEVEN CHURCHES, 3 DAY GREEK ISLAND CRUISE and EPHEBUS

MAY 11 – 22, 1999 - approximately \$2800

**10TH ANNIVERSARY of the *PILGRIMS OF FAITH*
*MARIAN CENTER***

OCTOBER 3, 1999, Sunday, or OCTOBER 7, 1999, Feast of the Holy Rosary - Celebration or Pilgrimage - To Be Announced

HOLY LAND

NOVEMBER 3 – 14, 1999 - approximately \$2000

**OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY, GERMANY
and SWITZERLAND**

MAY, 2000 - approximately \$2500

MEDJUGORJE AND ROME

APRIL 5-17, 2000 - approximately \$1900. Includes air fare, transfers, guide, housing in Medjugorje with breakfasts and suppers, full spiritual program with daily Mass and priest, hotels and tours in Rome with breakfasts and suppers. Medjugorje 5 – 13th and Rome 13-17th.

ARE YOU INTERESTED????

We are considering setting up a trip to visit **Mother Angelica** in 1999. Would you be interested in going? We need 48 for a bus or 30 to fly. We would get the best prices possible. **We'd like your WRITTEN input** with name, address, phone number, preferred bus / fly and days / dates. We will correspond directly with those who respond with estimates for final decision. Then we will advertise the final information to all.

Bus will be about 6 days, fly will be about 4 days. In both cases, we would be present at **EWTN** for *Tuesday* and *Wednesday* like broadcasts with **Mother Angelica**.

We would also like to have response from those who would like to join us on a pilgrimage to see the **Passion Play at Oberammergau, Germany in May of 2000.**

WHISPERINGS

The truth unbeknownst to us has a way of always being simply that—the truth.

Who among us can always testify to truth?

Truth itself never changes, but truth as we see it, changes simply because we constantly change as we draw nearer to God.

We arrive at clear truth when we arrive in God, for then and only then, we are truth.

Children of God in their trials are upheld by invisible bonds of love, beginning and ending in God.

Be careful then you do not sever the bond.

What is the meaning of love, if it be not the Christ?

However small, it is still the Lord, and the bond remains intact.

When we say "It is the Lord," we say the heart of love is Christ.

The truth we are willing to die for today, may become for us tomorrow a deeper truth, or else it will only be a used toy.

It is better to stay at the foot of the cross with the suffering Lord, than to go out unattended, fully cognizant of the pitfalls.

For if the Lord sends us, He will send us with a full escort.

("LIFE IN CHRIST", By Lorra D. Anderson, Sept. 26, 1998)

**PURGATORY: REASONABLE and
CONSOLING**

Some of the doctrines of the Catholic Church are regarded by the ignorant as extremely harsh and unreasonable. It is easy for the uninstructed to say that God is not cruel, and would not condemn a soul to everlasting misery, especially if such misery includes the torment of fire; neither would the good Lord condemn anyone to suffer the pains of what is called Purgatory, whether of short or long duration.

The ignorant do not know, and it is conveniently disregarded by many of those whose conscience is of less moment than their comfort, that God does not condemn anyone. It is we sinners ourselves who do the condemning by our own sinful acts, and by persistence in the same. A reasonable examination of the doctrines of the Catholic Church always reveals that those teachings, far from being harsh and unreasonable, are the most reasonable, and that many of them are the most beautiful and consoling.

"Sail On Forever"

Of course, those who reject the "harsh" teachings, generally substitute some kind of superficial sentimentality or emotional claptrap directed at the heart rather than the head, or devised for the pleasing of man rather than of God.

Let us suppose, even if only for the sake of illustration or instruction, that an old Catholic reprobate, or profligate, or whatever you may term him has a severe heart attack. He is seventy or eighty, and has not practiced his religion since he was about twenty. Someone informs the priest that the old fellow is in some danger. When the priest arrives, he is greeted with snarls and sneers from the "ancient mariner" who thinks he is going to sail on forever; and he almost says so, too, very emphatically. But this priest happens to be a very wise, experienced old bird, who goes to work with a will, brooks no nonsense, and at least drags out sufficient disposition to impart Absolution and Extreme Unction. That last is what he managed to do in this case. Even before the anointing was finished, old toughie was tough no more. And if the Particular Judgment takes place in the twinkling of an eye, his judgment was over and his sentence pronounced.

A "pious" old lady said to the writer, once upon a time, concerning a case similar to the foregoing, "Father, why didn't you coax him?" One doesn't coax them when

there's no time to coax them. Heaven deliver all priests from "holy" women!

Purgatory

Now, whither went the soul of that man? Not to Hell, for he had confessed his sins, expressed his sorrow for them, and had received Absolution; even the Last Sacrament. Not to Heaven, since, in all probability, there were venial sins, faults and imperfections not confessed; and there was to be considered, all the satisfaction that God requires for all sins, even when the guilt of sin has been forgiven and absolved. There were all those defilements. **"Nothing defiled shall enter Heaven." (Apoc: XXI.27).**

Only those perfectly cleansed of all sin, big and small; only those who have paid all the satisfaction due to sin, only such can enter Heaven. If a person still defiled in some way could enter Heaven, then Heaven would be a place for the imperfect: It would be better than this world of people, but only in some degree: it would be a place for the defiled as well as for the perfect and perfected.

Are we to suppose that God completely forgave all the satisfaction due to sin in the above case, and does so in all such cases? Such is by no means reasonable to conclude. Therefore, **if such a case as the above, or a similar one, does not go to Hell, and cannot immediately enter Heaven, right reasoning tells us, that there must be a middle state where the repentant soul is privileged to satisfy for his unworthiness and to be rendered worthy to associate with God and His Saints forever. This middle state is called Purgatory.**

A reasonable doctrine of the Church, is it not? And yet it is called and treated as anything but reasonable by almost all outside the Church!

It is the month of *November*, during which the Church gives a very special attention to the souls in Purgatory, and directs her children to follow her example. We have already shown that this "unreasonable" doctrine of Purgatory is quite reasonable, and certainly is not the vague superstition attributed to our credulity. It were far more reasonable to believe that there is a Purgatory than not to believe it.

Great Consolation

Furthermore, the doctrine of Purgatory, far from being harsh, is of the greatest consolation. By it, we are aware that the death of our neighbor does not render us powerless to help him; neither are we past all help when our own turn comes to die. We are also consoled and heartened by the very fact of Purgatory's existence. Suppose there were no Purgatory. We are aware of this unreasonable presumption existing outside the Church: but **does any Catholic think for a moment that he can be wafted straight into heaven immediately after an imperfect death-bed confession, or less than that?** What a grand consolation, then, to think that **despite our persevering imperfections, we still have a chance of blessed eternity through the medium of Purgatory, rather than no**

chance at all, for out of Hell there is no redemption. The existence of the middle state is indeed a fillip to our hope, providing unworthy creatures as we are with a sure stepping-stone to Heaven. Without it, we would fall into abyss, unless indeed we were perfect—and who is?

Our belief in Purgatory therefore, is a beautiful and consoling one, as well as reasonable.

Let us always remember the Poor Souls in a practical way, primarily through the Holy Mass, and then otherwise, by prayer and good works. Especially however, should we be mindful of the Holy Souls in this month of November, as we hope to be remembered and assisted when each of us is one of them.

(with permission from "THE MARYFAITHFUL" dated Nov-Dec, 1990, by Father William J. Boat)

THE COMMEMORATION of the DEAD

"Is life worth living?" Sometimes this is asked in idle jest, sometimes in bitter earnest. But no Catholic can put the question in serious doubt. He knows full well life is worth living, for life is his allotted portion in the purchase of a happy eternity. The subject is far too wide to be treated in a little article. We will only point out one single truth which alone can make life worth all the pain and sorrow of earth.

This is the doctrine of Purgatory. The Church teaches, first, that there is a Purgatory, a place where souls suffer after death for a time on account of their forgiven, not wholly expiated sins, or for their unforgiven venial sins. "Nothing defined can enter heaven;" and secondly, that the soul can be helped by us upon earth. **"It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins." (11 Mach. 12:46)**

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How many must there be falling every day into that place of expiation! Through the grace of God thousands and thousands leave this world repentant, that is with the will turned in love towards God. But what a load of unexpiated sin they bear with them! **If the just man falls seven times a day, how must it be with the tepid, the careless, the indifferent?** Millions are there suffering and helpless. And they are there for unmeasured time; we can form no idea of the proportion of suffering due to sin by the justice of God.

Human justice differs according to the class, age, and circumstances of its object, and approaches divine justice more or less nearly. But divine justice is absolute truth, and will render to every man according to his works. **The prisoners there can expiate; they cannot merit. To us upon earth is given the power to help and save them.**

Power is a possession we have coveted at every successive stage in our lives. In babyhood we crowed one over the other; in the schoolroom we fought for the first seat and its honors; in society, perhaps, we claimed rights and asserted ourselves. But these were petty triumphs, indication only of a better passion within. Just think of it! A whole realm in our power, thousands of souls with their eyes turned upon us, holy helpless, uncomplaining souls. Their voices are hushed, we cannot hear their cry; our eyes are held, we cannot see their pain.

But we believe and know. Then think again of the means at our disposal! **The whole treasure of the Precious Blood, an infinite redemption, and all ours to use, to spend, to distribute.** How we love plenty, superabundance; to feel there is not stint, no need to save. But to how few is such an experience given! As a rule our hearts are eaten away with a longing for means to help our poor and needy, and so little comes; we grow gray with anxious waiting and hope deferred. **But for this giving only our good will is needed, our perseverance, our faith.** We can dip our hands into the infinite depths and revel in the thought that as long as time endures, as long as Purgatory lasts, there will be riches sufficient to reach the neediest soul there. Shall I only be wanting? Will the petty interests of life keep me from succoring those I love, those I revere and pity? Can I, who am not cruel, be guilty of such hardheartedness?

The business part of the work is easy, any child can master it. To hear Mass, to say indulgenced prayers, to make the Stations, to make the heroic act—we can do all these things. There are degrees, of course, in the doing, and consequent degrees in the help administered. **It is for us to gather from the Holy Sacrifice all possible pardon, to plead the cause of our clients with Victim offered, to make the Stations with fervent devotion, adding to each the tender aspiration: “Eternal rest give to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them,”** an aspiration come down to us from the earliest ages of the Church. All these practices require

perseverance, fidelity, faith; but these virtues are within the compass of each one of us.

Would not life be worth living had we such high aims; did we feel our power and use it to its fullest extent? Would we not lose that fretful listless, guerulous spirit that comes over us sometimes and spoils our work? Let us try, and ask our good Angel to note the change.

But not only is devotion to the Holy Souls a work of heroic charity to others: it is a wonderful help to our own sanctification. We raise up for ourselves champions who will befriend us in our time of need and repay us as only heavenly gratitude can repay. It makes us wise and prudent, circumspect and watchful; we see what sin brings with it, what it leaves behind, and we become wary, looking to our feet. **Best of all, this devotion brings us nearer to our divine Lord; we are His stewards, His helpers; He must give us His confidence, His love, and this is worth all that earth can offer.**

(with permission from “THE MARYFAITHFUL”
dated Nov-Dec, 1990)

FORSAKEN SOULS

As I pray in the silence of my room,
There's a presence I cannot explain,
It's as though there's someone calling out to me,
A spirit full of anguish and pain.

I listen intently to the voice deep within,
And try to understand,
Where are you coming from, what do you want-
I'm here, I reach out my hand.

The spirit cries out to the depths of my soul,
“Help me get out of here-
All I need is your prayers to the Almighty Father,
To wash away all of my fears.

For I am a lost soul in the hollow of purgatory,
I've been forgotten by all who love me,
There's no one who remembers,
Who cares anymore,
I need prayers for my soul to be free.

So I come a knocking at the door of your heart,
To open it up for me-
To intercede and ask forgiveness for my sins,
Till the gates of Heaven I see.
I'll pray for you and all the souls,
Who suffer and long for the light,
Release from the chains that keep you there
I'll pray with all of my might.

But I only ask one thing,
When your spirit goes to God,
To pray for me, that I may never be
Forsaken under the sod.

ALL SAINTS' DAY

A child was once heard to say: "I love the Litany of the Saints; but I wish it was longer. There are such a lot missed out, and they might feel it." Now, as the child was not at all noted for her piety, and as the Litany of the Saints may be fairly considered long, this sentiment excited a considerable amount of surprise. But she was in earnest. She felt gratified in invoking one saint after another and giving him particular honor. And she felt grieved at the number left out in the cold. To obviate as much as possible this "missing out," the Church has instituted the Feast of All Saints and made it a day of honor and all-embracing praise.

So let us turn to the duty of the day—honoring Saints. They possess the very qualities we admire in our heroes—courage, endurance, generosity! There are no saints in Heaven, except the babies, who have not won their crown by one or all of these virtues. Moral courage is grander than physical, and who can withstand the powers of darkness without magnificent strength of mind? **The Saints spent their lives, or a part of them, in the narrow path where we know the thorns grow.** They trod it day by day with the set face and determined will of a soldier, a soldier of Christ. Theirs was an endurance, not of a forced march, but of a lifetime. And their generosity! We can spend money; some of us can spend time, too. But none of us come near the saints in the renunciation of all into the hands of God. They were lavish, prodigal, wasteful, some would say, of their goods, their health, their good name. They did not reckon—how could they, when God was their banker? They left the balance to Him, and He has not failed them.

Does not the sight of such virtue rouse our hearts to enthusiasm, and bring a song of praise to our lips for those brave, strong, generous souls who have won laurels and heavenly distinction? Of course it does. We are not so dull as not to know sterling greatness when we see it; nor so poor-spirited as to withhold praise when it is due. We will honor the Saints today with our admiration, and flatter them with the sincerity of our imitation.

Imitation! That word brings us to the second object of the Feast. **We are invited to raise our eyes from earth and to look through the heavenly gates and see our brethren in the eternal Home.** This is a sight to do us good, to rest us and encourage us. It is well to count our flock and bewail the loss of souls; such a retrospect is necessary and useful. But we must not forget the bright side of the picture, the myriads of white, glistening, blessed souls upon the shores of eternity, the magnificent array of God's redeemed—the patriarchs of old, hoary pilgrims of hundreds of years, the prophets, men with inspired sight, who looked into the unborn future, the Apostles, who with their golden tongues spread salvation over the face of the earth; the serried ranks of the red-

robed martyrs, the brave confessors, the lily-white virgins, the penitents, doubly blessed because once they mourned. We see them all with their waving palms and their shining crowns.

But is it with you as it is with me? I cannot see their faces, the light in their eyes, the expression of their lips. And this I put down to our being on a different level. **They are our kinsfolk, flesh of our flesh, blood of our race, but they have tasted joys we know nothing about. They have tasted infinite love and it has passed into their eyes, and their faces are transfigured and are so upturned we cannot see or imagine their beauty.**

Love is the secret of Heaven. Oh! When there comes upon you the dull, aching fear of eternity, even blissful eternity, remember this—we do not know what infinite love is. Human love we have felt; we have seen its power, its strength, its endurance—a living, lasting, time-sufficing element. **But Divine love, infinite by nature, infinite in its depth and height and breadth—that is the bliss-making element of eternity.** And only eternity will suffice to fathom it.

Let us trust to our Blessed Lord, to our Creator and Lord. By making known to us the secret of Divine love He will satisfy that craving of our heart which we ourselves cannot understand, much less satisfy. But He Who made it will be able to fill it, and fill it with love, full measure, overflowing.

(with permission from "THE MARYFAITHFUL"
dated Nov-Dec, 1990)

LITTLE GUIDE OF LOVE – ON THIS DAY...

Mend a quarrel. Search out a forgotten friend. Dismiss suspicion and replace it with trust. Write a love letter. Share some treasure. Give a soft answer. Encourage youth. Manifest your loyalty by a word or deed.

Keep a promise. Find the time. Forego a grudge. Forgive an enemy. Listen. Apologize if you were wrong. Try to understand. Flout envy. Examine your demands on others. Think first of someone else. Appreciate, be kind, be gentle. Laugh a little more.

Deserve confidence. Take up arms against malice. Decry complacency. Express your gratitude. Worship your God. Gladden the heart of a child. Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth. Speak your love. Speak it again. Speak it still again. Speak it still once again.

(The Society of Saint Mary Magdalene, PO Box 352,
Fountain Inn, SC 29644)

ORDER from OUR BOOK LIST for CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Each month we put out a list of books and articles available for you to order from. We try to screen all material so that we know you are not getting information

that is contrary to the true teachings of the Catholic Church and our **Holy Father, Pope John Paul II**.

We hope that you will go over the last 2 or 3 months lists and select **at least one book** to give with your gift to each person you are remembering at Christmas time. There are books on marriage, family, for children and young adults, and for individuals. There are books on prayer, the saints, theology, and much more. Possibly you might want to stop by and look at them all, as we cannot begin to put them all into the order forms. You may call us, and order over the phone. We take **Mastercard, Visa, and Discover** credit cards.

We also have a nice selection of rosaries blessed in **Medjugorje, Lourdes** or **Fatima** and/or by our **Holy Father**. We carry videos and other articles. We operate by donation for these articles only, with suggested prices based on our cost and replacement.

PFMC to DISTRIBUTE FOOD and CLOTHING for CHRISTMAS

The **PFMC** will be accepting for distribution to the **Mother's Home in Philadelphia** (expectant and unwed mothers keeping their babies instead of aborting them) new and like new baby clothes, bedding for cribs and layettes, baby bottles and toys, maternity clothing (new and like new), and new stuffed animals. We ask that anything that is NOT new be in excellent condition, be washed and folded neatly in a nicely lined box. Remember, these will be a Christmas gift! You might even want to put in a nice bottle of body wash, hairbrush and comb, hairspray, deodorant, soap, or perfume for a girl. You might even include a note thanking them for keeping their babies. These women would not be able to otherwise keep their babies if it were not for our help and encouragement.

We will also be accepting canned food items, cereals, baby food, and especially canned hams.

If you would like to make a girl happy, and help support a Catholic Pro Life activity for this Christmas, please bring your packages here to the **PFMC**, and we will distribute them to the home. **Father John McFadden** is very involved with this project as is **Linda Riva**, who will be speaking at our *1999 February* **RETREAT CONFERENCE**. Please help if you can.

A CHRISTMAS GIVING PROJECT-- BROTHER REMIGIUS SINObI and FATHER B. I. NWOLU NEED YOUR HELP

In a letter from **Nigeria**, there is a strong appeal from **Brother Sinobi** and from **Father B. I. Nwolu** for religious articles such as holy cards, rosaries, chalices, vestments for Holy Mass, Sacramentaries, Lectionaries, Holy Bibles, books, magazines, and catechism books for teaching the children. They also need crayons, pencils and pencil

sharpeners, erasers, color books, notebook paper and scratch paper to be used in teaching. Would you consider putting together a box for them for Christmas and sending it to:

Brother Remigius Sinobi
General Post Office
Nipost ABA
Abia State, Nigeria
or

Father B. I. Nwolu, Spiritual Director
Catholic Biblical Instructors Union (CBIU)
Christ the King Cathedral Unit
P.O. Box 250
Aba, Abia State, Nigeria

Please mention the **Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center** and our address in your letter to them. **We thank you – this is what Christmas is about. We all have so much, and it is such a grace to give when it extends and even hurts a little.**

'TIS THE SEASON NOT TO BE JOLLY

ADVENT is not Christmas! It is the season of PREPARATION for Christmas. It is not the time for signing Christmas carols. It is not the time for sending Christmas cards. And it is not the time for having Christmas parties.

Christmas doesn't start until Christmas Eve. But usually, by that time most people have had so much "Christmas" they are sick of it, just when the true Christmas season begins.

What can we do about putting the Christmas season and its celebrations back where they belong? For good Catholics, it shouldn't be too difficult. The most difficult part will be to go against the popular trend and not do everything everybody else is doing.

The first thing we can do to make Advent a true preparation for Christmas—like we did in Lent to prepare for Easter. We wouldn't think of celebrating Our Lord's Resurrection before the eve of Holy Saturday. It would be out of place anytime during the penitential season of Lent. And it is just as out of place and absurd to celebrate Christ's birthday in any degree during its season of preparation—Advent.

And, as we made an effort to attend Holy Mass daily in Lent, that is also the most excellent way to keep Advent and prepare for the Great Event that comes at its close. When we attend Holy Mass in Advent, we are forcefully reminded that this is a season of preparation, not celebration, for the texts of the liturgy prophetically and longingly look forward to the coming of Christ. So many of them speak of the spiritual preparations to be made in hearts and souls. "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill made low, and the crooked made straight and the rough places plain," cries Isaiah and set in

one of the world's greatest pieces of music, the "**Messiah**," by **George Frederick Handel**.

The Masses are said in purple vestments, another reminder that this is a season of penitential preparation. Gregorian chant is to be used, and the organ (and other instruments) are forbidden to be used. All singing is to be unaccompanied. Making the liturgy an effective and most dramatic preparation in itself for those who participate.

Advent is not the time for sending Christmas cards, or putting up Christmas trees and other Christmas decorations. How much better to wait until Christmas season to send out those cards? There's more time then, anyway, and the people who receive them also have more time for reading, enjoying and pondering them. And besides, **the Christmas season only STARTS on December 24, Christmas Eve, and runs for five full weeks, ending as it does on February 2nd, the Feast of the Purification of Our Lady**. Now 'tis the Season to be Jolly,' and how much fun it is in the relaxed atmosphere of post-Christmas activities and peace!

What do we do about **Santa**, or *Saint Nicholas*? In order that he not be more important than Christ, whose birthday we celebrate—not the coming of *Saint Nick*—why not do as is done in **Europe**? Celebrate *Saint Nicholas*' birthday (into heaven) – his feast day – on *December 6th*? You see, there really was a **Santa**, and he was a great **Bishop** in the Catholic Church and his feast is celebrated with great excitement in the rest of the world.

It is customary on that day for parents and heads of institutions to "treat" their children and charges in honor of *Saint Nicholas*, who is patron of many things, not the least of which is children. The stories abounding about Saint Nick are charming, and, if one can find a book of them, why not read some on *December 6th*. In some towns and institutions, a man dresses up like *Bishop Nicholas* and goes about awarding treats.

(with permission from "THE MARYFAITHFUL" dated Nov-Dec, 1990, by Rev. Frederic J. Nelson (R.I.P))

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

In spite of the many attempts on the part of some historians to trace the origin of the Christmas tree to mythology, the custom and the symbolism are completely Christian.

The Christmas tree resulted from a combination of the medieval Paradise tree and the Christmas candle. One of the most popular of the medieval **German** mystery plays was the Paradise play, representing the creation of man, the sin of **Adam** and **Eve** and their expulsion from Paradise. This play became a favorite for Advent because it usually ended with the consoling promise of a Savior. As a matter of fact, the closing scenes led directly to the story of **Bethlehem**. In this play, the **Garden of Eden** was represented by a large tree symbolizing the "tree of discernment of good and evil."

In the earlier days, when this play was performed in church, the Paradise tree was usually surrounded by lighted candles and the play enacted within a circle of lights. When the time came that it was no longer permitted to stage the mystery plays in church, the Paradise tree found its way into the homes of the people. The custom arose of setting it up once a year in honor of **Adam** and **Eve** on their feasts, *December 24th*. This particular feast, never celebrated in the **Latin** Church, was borrowed from the **Eastern Rite**.

At this time the tree was bedecked with the symbolic apple, but further than that, it bore no other resemblance to our present Christmas tree. But, at the same time, **Christ was not forgotten**. The Christmas candle in honor of Christ, the light of the world, was placed on top of a wooden pyramid, adorned with tinsel and colored glass balls. It was during the *fifteenth* century that more ornamentation began to appear on the tree. Since the Paradise tree already bore the fruit of **Adam** and **Eve's** sin, it was now thought proper to add a symbol of the "saving fruit" of the **Blessed Sacrament**.

Accordingly, small white wafers were placed on its branches. Later, when imaginations began working overtime, shapes of men, birds, roosters, lions and other animals were also hung on the tree. But it was insisted that these latter had to be cut from brown dough; the wafers were made from white dough. People living in the sixteenth century finally began to notice the similarity between the tree and the Christmas pyramid. The tree was, so to say, a living pyramid and they might well combine the two—the tree and the lights. From then on it became the Christmas tree.

As time went on, the cookie forms disappeared and ornaments made in symbolic shapes took their place. By now, these have been replaced by meaningless decorated balls. However, even these need not lose their symbolism. The colored balls become more meaningful and more beautiful if religious pictures symbolizing Christmas are pasted or painted on them. Your religious Christmas cards can supply you with ample pictures for this. The children will delight in attaching the pictures to the ornaments or even making symbolic paper ornaments to hang on the

HELP NEEDED:

Volunteer or part-time person with compensation for travel need to set up and maintain a **PFMC Web Site**. Many ideas available but no one seems to have time to maintain the web pages. Decision on methods of hosting and Internet Service Provider (ISP) still to be finalized.

Volunteer or part-time person with compensation for travel needed to set up and maintain **ACCESS** data base(s) for all **PFMC** records starting with mailing list and moving through inventory and pilgrimages.

Call **Keith** at (609) 722-5047, *Monday thru Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM, or (609) 768-9228, evenings and weekends*.

tree.

On Christmas, after the tree has been decorated, the father of the family may wish to read the special blessing for the tree. This can be found in the Christmas booklets that are obtainable at religious goods stores. You will find that explaining the true history of the tree, giving it proper decorations and reading the blessing will give it far more Christmas meaning for every member of the family.

(with permission from "THE MARYFAITHFUL"
Jan-Feb, 1989))

WAS MARY the PROVERBS 31 WOMAN?

If it stays together any length of time at all, every women's **Bible** study group eventually discusses **chapter 31:10-31** in the **Book of Proverbs**. That's the ending of the last chapter in Proverbs, the part that should be under the heading of "Superwoman." In it, we read about the ideal wife who sounds like many working mothers of our own time. She may or may not "have it all," but she certainly seems to *do* it all.

This woman is described as weaving cloth and making clothing for her family, and also some to sell (verses 13, 24), and even spinning the wool and flax to make the threads (verse 19). Now that's getting back to basics! She is a skillful shopper (verse 14) and household manager (verses 15 and 27). When she's not doing all that, she is buying a field and planting a vineyard (verse 16). The **Bible** tells us she rises before it is light, and stays up late, too (verses 15 and 18). Small wonder! Nobody could possibly do all she does in a "normal" workday, whatever that is.

When the leader of my **Bible** study read us those verses from **Proverbs**, one woman commented that she was glad this woman didn't live in *her* neighborhood. Others snidely wondered whether she had any time to spend with her husband and children. I wondered why **Lemuel's** mother, to whom these verses are attributed at the beginning of the chapter (**Proverbs 31:1**) would set such an impossible standard against which her son should judge women. Weren't women downtrodden enough in those times?

Later, in prayer I asked Mary whether she, the perfect woman who I hoped to make the model for my own life, had been held to that standard. Did she not only manage the Holy Family's home life, but also sell clothing and run a vineyard? As I continued to pray about this, I found myself becoming more and more irritated. How could any woman, issued only 24 hours a day, live up to this ideal? Talk about a woman's work never being done!

But then the answer came to me, gently as the words of a patient mother might be spoken to a frustrated two-year-old. **Proverbs 31** does not tell us what we are *required* to be. It tells us what we are *allowed* to be!

This insight put the whole chapter into a different light. Now I could see the wisdom of **Lemuel's** mother urging him not only to find himself a wife who went beyond the confines of women's traditionally restricted roles, but also to reward and honor the woman who did so (verses 28-31). The wife she describes not only ventures out into the world of commerce, but enjoys her success there (verse 18). As many mothers with young children also do in our own time, she runs a business from her home (verse 24). She gets up early and stays up late because she loves what she is doing, not because she can't get everything required of her done in a standard workday.

This description of what she does is liberating, when considered as a series of permissions rather than requirements. The description of what she *is* breaks down traditional notions about women still further. For instance, verse 17 tells us she "**girdeth her loins with strength.**" Verse 21 tells us she is "**not afraid of the snow,**" and in verse 25 we learn that "**strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.**" So much for weak, fearful stereotypes of womanhood!

This woman does not hide in the shadows of man's world, either. She personally helps the poor and the needy (verse 20), apparently not needing her husband's permission to obey God's repeated command to all people to help those less fortunate. She is the one who buys the field for her vineyard (verse 16), again acting on her own and using her own intelligence and good judgment. She is not the silent type, either, since in verse 26 she "**openeth her mouth with wisdom.**" Her children may even listen when she does so, since in verse 28 we learn that they, along with her husband, "**arise up and call her blessed.**"

Does this smart, savvy, and hard-working woman take any time for herself. or enjoy any of the fruits of her work? You bet. In Verse 22 we read that "**her clothing is silk and purple.**" I doubt she bought that kind of clothing at the discount marketplace! The writer approves, too, since the last verse (31) says "**Give her the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.**" The fact that she "**feareth the Lord**" (verse 30) suggests that she also makes time for prayer and perhaps study of **Scripture**.

So yes, Mary was the **Proverbs 31** woman all the way! She spoke with wisdom to her children of all times in her beloved hymn of praise, the **Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)**. When her friends ran out of wine at the wedding in Cana, Mary didn't leave it to the manfolk to solve the problem. She was quick to speak up and convince her divine Son to do something about the situation (**John 2:3-11**). She traveled a great deal, following her son even to Calvary (**John 19:25-27**).

After the Resurrection, Mary didn't just retire to some quiet place, figuring her work was done. Instead, she

joined the disciples in **Jerusalem** and took part in the formation of the new Christian community (**Acts 1:14**). It would seem she must have helped *Luke* write his **Gospel**, since much of what he records in his first two chapters would have been known first-hand only by this good mother. *Luke* supports this inference by noting that Mary “**kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart**” (**Luke 2:19**).

Now that I see the **Proverbs 31** woman as liberated, successful, but also completely feminine in the best sense of the word, I wouldn't mind a bit if she moved into my neighborhood. A few families and homes managed by strong, competent, and wise women like her would do wonders for property values. If she were living today, I bet she would know where to find a good mechanic, dentist, or even a handyman who knows how to repair metal roofs. But then, I also wouldn't be that surprised to find she relines her own brakes, fixes the roof herself, and has a degree in dentistry.

So, to paraphrase, a popular bumper sticker, “**Never underestimate the power of a Proverbs 31 woman!**”

(By Mary L. Hickey “**QUEEN OF ALL HEARTS**”, July-August, 1997)

REESTABLISHING AMERICA'S MORAL IDENTITY

These days almost everyone acknowledges that America's most pressing problems are rooted in the decline of our national moral identity.

Crime, rampant illegitimacy, the deteriorating educational environment in many of our schools, even the escalating cost of health care—all these can be traced to the lack of respect for decent values in society.

Our first priority as a nation should be restoring the moral and material support for the marriage-based, two-parent family. The disintegration of the family is the major contributing factor in poverty, crime, violence, the decline in educational performance, and a host of other expensive social problems.

Yet when our current political leaders pretend to address these issues, most of them still run away from the fundamental moral dimension of the problems.

In contrast, during his visit to **America** (*October, 1995*) our Holy Father spoke the following words:

“Catholic parents must learn to form their family as a ‘domestic church,’ a church in the home, as it were, where God is honored, His law is respected, prayer is a normal event, virtue is transmitted by word and example, and everyone shares the hopes, the problems, and sufferings of everyone else. All this is not to advocate a return to some outdated style of living: It is to return to the roots of human development and human happiness! (Homily at Aqueduct Racetrack, NY, October 6, 1995).

But since **Americans** come from many different religious backgrounds, in dealing with issues of public policy we must locate these ideas in sources that are open to support from all of our citizens. Nothing meets this purpose more completely than the principles and logic of our own **Declaration of Independence**, so I have made it the explicit basis for dealing with the moral crisis we now face.

The **Declaration** is fundamentally a statement of the principles of justice that define the moral identity of the **American** people. It presents a certain concept of our human nature and draws out the political consequences of that concept.

All human beings are created equal. They need no title or qualification beyond their simple humanity in order to command respect for their intrinsic human dignity, their “unalienable rights.”

The purpose of government is to secure these rights, and no government is just or legitimate if it systematically violates them.

But the **Declaration** is more than just an assertion of rights. It also makes a clear statement about the ultimate authority which commands respect for these rights. God the Creator, the author of the laws of nature, is that source.

Thus the essential prerequisite for the recognition of human rights is respect for God's authority and His eternal law. This is also the prerequisite for the idea of government based upon consent, which includes free elections, representation, due process of law, etc.

If we accept the logic of our **Declaration of Independence**, this reverence for God is not just a matter of religious faith. It is the foundation of justice and citizenship in our republic. Therefore, our freedom is expressed in our respect for law, especially the highest law as embodied in the will of the Creator.

In our time, however, freedom has been confused with mere licentiousness—freedom divorced from law. We have spurned our duty to respect the foundations of freedom embodied in the laws God has written on every human heart. As a result, our nation is wracked in the throes of a moral identity crisis. And that is why we can no longer follow leaders for whom the moral challenge facing this nation is an afterthought.

Those who want to finesse or avoid the issue of abortion are not good enough either, because at the heart of the “pro-choice” movement is an attitude that destroys the entire possibility of family life. It claims as a principle of right in this society the notion that other human beings—including those who are the closest to us of any human beings in the world—can be regarded by us as objects, dehumanized instruments of our pleasure and passion and convenience. Abortion strikes at the very heart and soul and principle of what it means to be part of a family.

As a result, that issue and that issue alone epitomizes the cause of our entire moral and social crisis in **America**.

And politicians who don't want to talk about it, who are unwilling to confront the killing spirit of our time, thereby declare their moral cowardice and forfeit the right to lead us.

For I believe this nation has a special purpose and a special destiny. Our mission as **Americans** is to demonstrate to the world the capacity and fitness of ordinary people to govern themselves. The proposition that men are capable of self-government is but another way of saying that man was created in God's image and likeness.

Consider the **Holy Father's** recent words at **Camden Yards**:

“Christian witness takes different forms at different moments in the life of a nation. Sometimes, witnessing to Christ will mean drawing out of a culture the full meaning of its noblest intentions, a fullness that is revealed in Christ. At other times, witnessing to Christ means challenging that culture, especially when the truth about the human person is under assault. America has always wanted to be a land of the free. Today, the challenge facing America is to find freedom's fulfillment in the truth: the truth that is intrinsic to human life created in God's image and likeness, the truth that is written on the human heart, the truth that can be known by reason and can therefore form the basis of a profound and universal dialogue among people about the direction they must give to their lives and their activities (Homily, October 8, 1995).”

The eyes of the world are upon all Americans as we struggle to meet this challenge.

America was founded on the principle, articulated in our great **Declaration**, that each and every human being has an intrinsic worth determined not by our choice, but by the choice of God. On that ground we can stand together. On that ground we have built the mightiest and the most prosperous nation in the history of the world. But it shall surely fail its great enterprise if, in this time of seeming success, we abandon that basic principle.

America's mission is to vindicate the God-given dignity of mankind. This is a mission that can lift the eyes of our children to a nobler hope and a nobler destiny, to a nobler understanding of what it means to be **Americans**, to be human, to be Christian. Let us reach out for that nobler hope and let us not stand back now in the moment of trial—for the great crisis of character is upon us. And it will not be decided by me or other leaders. It will be decided by all of us: Will we choose in the privacy of our consciences and our hearts to be a people that stands with the Declaration, stands with its noble principles of right and justice, stands with its promise of justice from Almighty God?

In elections, I'd say let that be the question before you. And if you answer it rightly then let that answer, and not any calculation of likely victory, be your guide. Because **Lincoln** was right: We can nobly save or meanly lose this

last, best hope. Let's save it, in the only way that we know how—by putting our hands in one another's hands and our faith and trust in the will and authority of God. Let us move forward to a future based upon His will, upon the principles that make us one. Let us go forth into the 21st century not on the false, materialistic hopes of science and technology, but on the true hopes of those moral principles that extend, through us, a hope to all mankind.

God bless you...and God bless **America!**

(with permission from “**LAY WITNESS**” dated **Jan-Feb, 1996** by Ambassador Alan Keyes)

THE “LABORIOUS BAPTISM”

The **Council of Trent** (1545), citing *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus* (390 AD) and *Saint John of Damascus* 384 AD), stated that the Sacrament of Penance “has rightly been called by the **Holy Fathers** ‘a laborious kind of baptism’.” In the same place the **Council of Trent** also asserted, against certain teachings of the day, that it is a sacrament distinct from Baptism. It is called a kind of Baptism because it restores Baptismal holiness, and “laborious” because it cannot do this without many tears and labors on our part.

Penance does really restore or renew baptismal holiness. When this holiness has been lost, it can be recovered in the Sacrament of Penance. **A Catholic who has committed grave sin is obliged to ask forgiveness for it in this sacrament.** One should do so promptly. Church law requires confession of sins once a year, though strictly speaking, this particular law does not bind those who would have no grave sins to confess.

But Penance is also useful to renew baptismal innocence, that is to return it to full splendor, even when there are only venial sins or faults committed amidst the moral struggles of everyday living. In fact, “frequent and careful celebration of this sacrament is also very useful as a remedy for venial sins. This is not a mere ritual repetition or psychological exercise. **It is a serious striving to perfect the grace of baptism so that, as we bear in our body the death of Jesus Christ, his life may be seen in us ever more clearly.** (Excerpt from “*The Teaching of Christ*”, 3rd edition, Edited by **Bishop Wuerl**, and **Thomas Lawler**, *Our Sunday Visitor*, p. 423.)

Comments: If you have not been to Confession—the Sacrament of Penance, for a long time, and feel that you are “doing OK” you are simply fooling yourself. Mary at **Medjugorje** recommends *monthly confession*. Pray for all those people who do not have this Sacrament of the Church or who cannot go to Confession.

Did you know the Pope goes to Confession at least every other day? Jesus Christ does not limit His forgiveness and mercy for any sin that is confessed, *including mortal sins*. If someone (or yourself) tries to tell you that you have committed a sin too big to be forgiven—you are being lied to—they do not know Christ! **GO TO CONFESSION** and

RECEIVE HIS MERCY, FORGIVENESS, LOVE and the innocence of your Baptism into Christ Jesus.

("LIFE IN CHRIST", Sept. 26, 1998)

REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of OCTOBER 25, 1998

I greet all those who are trying to follow Mary's messages and again we will first look back at what Our Lady told us last month. In it there were three main points about which we should think. Mary called us to live the faith of our fathers and this means for all of us that we first become conscious that we belong to Jesus, that we are part of the Catholic Church, that our fathers too had been pagans with many gods, and that they then accepted the Gospel and through it came to know Jesus who is life, truth and light. In this belief in Jesus our fathers, in spite of their weaknesses and sins, formed their lives around it, and in this belief also formed our country in cooperation with God. Our inheritance, that was formed by way of our fathers' faith, is rich. Our history of faith is rich in the people who really lived their faith, who suffered for their faith, who prayed and who went to confession, who formed their family lives in faith and then in this way passed it on to us. Because of this especially the Priests, the catechists and the parents are called on to live their faith so that they may pass this faith on to the children and the younger generation. Doing this is especially difficult in this time because right now there are so many different ideologies being offered to the people. It is not always easy to discern everything correctly and to avoid the false paths and the false ideologies, but without becoming fanatics we are called upon very consciously to live our faith in our families. All the excuses that we have found not to live our faith, not to pray and to distance ourselves from our spiritual inheritance -- in so doing staying without the path, the truth and the light -- are why so many people today have lost any reason for life and no longer know who they are. Especially for these people this call to return to the faith of their fathers becomes important. When we do so we will find the path, we will live the truth and we will know who we are. In the September message we were called upon to discover the daily miracles of God's love and the love of people, and that this alone is the condition for peace. We must really practice this and also pray that we see the good in others and in ourselves, that we become grateful for God as well as for man, and that we also express this goodness, while if we only react when someone does something wrong, then we will never be able to find the way to true peace. In order to see the good and to recognize it, and to recognize the good in others, we must remain humble, and it is in this that a true conversion of the heart happens -- a true conversion to which Mary called us in that message. A true conversion of the heart consists of an entirely conscious fight against sin and against all bad habits, and on the other hand an entirely different perspective toward what is good and

toward our own spiritual growth. And so we may hope that we can overcome all fatigue and then stay with Mary on her path.

At the moment **Vicka, Mirjana** and **Ivanka** are here in **Medjugorje**, while **Jacov** and **Marija** are in Italy, and Ivan is in the **United States**. The *three* -- **Vicka, Marija and Ivan** -- are still having their daily apparitions, while **Jacov**, once he returned from the **US**, told us that he cannot yet speak with the pilgrims because he immediately becomes sad when he starts speaking about the topic of apparitions.

This month the pilgrim groups from all continents have again increased. So the church is over-filled every day. Almost at every Mass, whether **Czech, German, Slovak, Italian, English, French, Polish, Hungarian, Romanian**, the church is full. In the evening it is then again full inside, outside and all around the church. In this way Mary is calling her children and, thank God, many are in fact responding. There are also many Priests and especially so from **Poland** and the **English**-speaking countries. This month there have, at times, been between 40 and 50 Priests concelebrating at the evening Mass. At the beginning of this month, or more precisely from *September 25* until *October 2*, the **Spanish**-speaking pilgrims from 18 countries held a Marian Conference here and this entailed some 500 people who all week long thought intensely about Mary's messages and promised in a declaration that they composed that they had firmly decided to remain on Mary's path. Next week, from *October 26* until *November 1*, we will have about 1,000 French here, and because they have holidays this week, they have decided to respond to Mary's messages by all coming here. Besides these we will of course also have many more languages here and we are very grateful to God for every person who is ready to hear Mary's message and to put it into practice in their lives. Mary herself, and we may simply not forget this, is constantly thanking us for our response to her.

We must really stay completely aware that the main messages of peace, conversion, prayer, fasting, and love always stay the same, and that in these monthly messages Mary has repeatedly reminded us by way of various points with which she wishes to help us to remain with her on the path to God. And so in this message she first tells us...

TODAY I CALL YOU TO COME CLOSER TO MY IMMACULATE HEART

This is a motherly call, because every mother carries within her heart the deep yearning to be with her children and to be there for them so that here children can also be there for her. So that we may better understand this wish of Mary's, let us think a bit about Mary's heart. We believe that she was conceived without sin as she told **Bernadette** in **Lourdes** when she said that she was the **Immaculate Conception**. Her heart was obedient toward God, her heart was full of love, trust, hope and faith. Her

heart was merciful, and she was also the mother who kept her Son's words in her heart and thought about them a lot. Her heart was full of peace and completely subservient toward God and toward others. That is why she went to visit *Elisabeth*, that is why she could, out of this peace and love, see at the wedding of **Cana** that the people had a problem, and her heart inspired her to intercede with Jesus for this family. And when Mary wishes of us to come closer to her, then this also means that our hearts should become more similar to hers. So every opportunity of practicing patience and trust in faith, hope and love and every attempt at forgiving really makes our hearts more similar to hers, and especially so when we are in difficulty or have problems and then remain firm and do not lose faith, hope and love, we are coming closer to her heart -- her heart that also knows suffering and that still remains loyal to Jesus throughout His sufferings. Here it becomes important for us to ask ourselves whether the yearning exists within us to remain close to our mother? This means that we should ask ourselves what hinders us in this yearning, or what suffocates our yearning for being near to her. Every one of us will certainly find something in our lives that distances us from Mary's heart. But in general one can say that whoever wishes to come closer to Mary must dispose of all pride and to practice humility at all times. Whoever wishes to come closer to her heart must dispose of every uncleanness in order to become more similar to her **Immaculate Heart**. Everything positive that we do brings us closer to her heart, and especially so when we carry in our hearts and reflect upon God's words. This way we will come closer to Mary and in our lives Jesus will then become alive as He did in Mary's life. This way we will also discover what it means when He says that those who do the will of the Father are also His brothers, His sisters and His relatives. The second point is also very important in which Mary reminds us how things happened in this Parish during the first days of the apparitions.

**I CALL YOU TO RENEW IN YOUR FAMILIES THE
FERVOR OF THE FIRST DAYS WHEN I CALLED YOU
TO FASTING, PRAFIRST DAYS WHEN I**

There really was a true fervor here -- in the visionaries, in the population, and among those who started to come here. The fervor was great in that the population really started praying, fasting and converting. How beautiful it is today to think of the people, once they had started to believe that Mary was in fact appearing here, who therefore discarded their bad habits. Only the Priests who sat hearing confessions for hours on end can attest to that. There were cases of people who, being members of the Communist Party, discarded their little red books, that were the symbol of their membership, or who even left them up on Apparition Hill. Here we must also think of those many people who, due to the communist ideology, had become atheists and who then announced that they had become believers. All the families were fasting and there was

fasting even in the factories. People prayed, and it became visually noticeable that people were changing. The increase of fervor was so great that the Communists reacted very harshly and declared this village as being a Counter Revolution -- something that was acting against the State. During the first questions posed by the visionaries, a Doctor said that the visionaries had invented all this in order to ruin Communism. The Communists then also began with the pressure and locked up some Priests and other people and held the visionaries and their families under constant surveillance and pressure. But there was nothing that could squash or silence the people's response. Repeatedly the story is told that a Policeman, who stopped an old woman who was going by foot to the Apparition Hill, told her that she may not go up there, and she is said to have responded: "My son, who can forbid me to place my foot on a spot where Mary touched the ground?" It was truly unbelievable what was happening here in those first days, weeks, months and years. Without Mary's special presence and God's grace one can simply not explain any of it. Certainly many pilgrims experienced this fervor when they arrived here, but now we have the question how far we still are from being full of fervor about Mary's still being with us. Here we run the risk that we could get too accustomed to this great occurrence and to this enormous grace of Mary's presence here, that we might no longer use it as an impulse, and that people might slip back or become tired. Here we ought to think of *Saint John's* words when in the **Book of Revelation** he says to one of the seven churches that the initial love had simply cooled off and when he calls for a renewal of that initial love. In this sense, let us think of our first days, of all those who responded with fervor, of all those who had to suffer, and also to pray that all pilgrims will have the strength to follow along with Mary on her path to Jesus. Along with Mary's wish that we remember those first days she says...

**YOU ACCEPTED MY MESSAGES WITH OPEN
HEARTS, ALTHOUGH YOU DID NOT KNOW WHAT
PRAYER WAS**

It is true that many people promised to pray although they did not know what prayer meant. In the 17 years and 4 months certainly many people turned into pray-ers, many families again found the time to pray and thousands of prayer-groups throughout the whole world carried this spirit of prayer to others. And this is the most important of all things that has happened due to **Medjugorje** -- that many people said 'yes' and that they obeyed. Furthermore, this message wishes of us that we conquer any fatigue and that we can remain on Mary's path. Then Mary says...

**TODAY I CALL YOU TO OPEN YOURSELVES
COMPLETELY TO ME**

And then she also says what she wishes to do with us.

**SO THAT I MAY TRANSFORM YOU AND LEAD YOU
TO THE HEART OF MY SON JESUS**

If we come closer to Mary's heart, then we will quite naturally also come closer to Jesus' heart. He said about Himself that He is of humble and mild heart, and He called us to come to Him -- all those who are burdened, all those who are sad, and all those who are tired should come to Him and will, He says, discover peace and joy. Jesus permitted that His heart be opened up on the Cross, and this was a physical sign that He loves us, and that He always remains open for us. Then that is a new call for us to really do everything we can with Mary so that we may be led to His heart, so that we, as Mary tells us, may find peace and love and...

SO THAT HE CAN FILL YOU WITH HIS LOVE

Saint Francis often cried before the cross and said: "Love is not loved." Once we have experienced the love of Jesus' heart, then changes in our lives will become possible. We must again ask ourselves, as we did in the beginning of this reflection, what it is that hinders us from accepting a change within us? It is primarily the bad habits, because it is they that make us tired and discourage us from undertaking something new. Every sin deforms the person and soon the person is destroyed, and this is why so many family relationships and relationships in the world are so wounded, damaged and even destroyed completely. It is THERE that we need the changes -- changes of our convictions, changes of our attitudes in prayer and our attitudes toward Mass and Confession. We all need changes wherever love is not strong, wherever hope has been lost, and wherever faith no longer exists. Here it is simply a call that we may have the courage to say 'yes' and to open our hearts to God, and He will then, by way of His Holy Spirit, change us and we will then grow in God's image, because that is God's will, and as it was said about the creation of man, "Man is created after the image of God, and he has been given the gifts that he may grow in the image of God." We have been created with freedom and the abilities to love, to believe and to hope. Jesus, the new man, will also help us to become new men, and experiencing His love is our condition for this new and decisive path with Mary to Jesus. At the end of the message we again hear...

**ONLY IN THIS WAY ... WILL YOU FIND TRUE PEACE
-- THE PEACE THAT ONLY GOD GIVES YOU**

Every time we love we experience true peace, yet every time we hate and do something negative, when we drink too much or take drugs, when we live loosely, when we only seek the material, all these are done in the hope of finding peace, and so there is a true peace that comes from God, and there is a false peace that is hoped for by way of the worldhate and do something negative, when we drink too much or take drugs, when we live loosely, when we only seek the material, all these are done in the hope of finding peace, and so there is a true peace that comes from

God, and there is a false peace that is hoped for by way of the world. We are all in danger of choosing the easier path, when we wish to have peace at the cost of others we only become the creators of distress and of chaos. The peace of God comes out of love -- love toward ourselves and toward humanity, and only God can give us this true peace. That we may decide for this peace, all we need to do is to constantly request of God, in the name of Jesus, the King of Peace, that He may give it to us. And how many pray

God, our Father, we thank You that You created Mary -- Mary, Your humble servant, with her clean and humble heart without sin. We thank You that You are giving us the opportunity of becoming similar to her heart. We ask You, give us the grace and cleanse us of everything that distances and separates us from her, so that we in our thoughts, feelings, words and relationships may become an image of her. We especially ask you on behalf of the fathers and mothers and the teachers that their hearts may all become similar to her heart, that they may carry over only goodness, love and mercy to their children and to those that have been entrusted to them. Father, we thank You for the apparitions here in Medjugorje, and for all the people who in the beginning responded with fervor, and we ask You that we may remain loyal on the path and free all those who have become tired of their fatigue. God our Father, open our hearts so that with Mary we may reach Your Son, Jesus, and we ask You for the experience of His love, which is Your love, and fill our hearts with Your true peace. Free us, our families and the whole world of all lack of peace. Lord, bless all the sick who are suffering spiritually, mentally and physically, and transform their suffering into goodness. Through the intercession of Mary, Your humble servant, give us true peace and give us the grace that we may with her become similar to her Son, Jesus, and thereby become witnesses of Your love in this world through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Fra Slavko

**PLEASE READ THIS NOTICE and RESPOND -
STAY ON the MAILING LIST -**

We do need to hear from you in writing at least once a year in order to keep you on our mailing list. So, **if you haven't written us a note asking to stay on the list, please do so this month.**

The value of **"The PILGRIM"** is appreciated in the hearts of you the readers. **"The PILGRIM"** serves to provide you with overviews to plant seeds in your life to fulfill all the above needs. If you know someone who would enjoy the **"The PILGRIM"**, please ask them to contact us.

THE PICTURE SURROUNDING the LIFE of MAN

Man is always the center of Creation With his intelligence, he tries to understand and to explain. Yet, in this investigation he realizes that everything around him is worthy of amazement and awe. For God, he feels within him a profound sense of admiration, gratitude and love.

Worthy of delighted wonder is the picture surrounding the life of man... this immense, mysterious world this world with its thousands of forms, its thousands of laws, its infinite beauty, and its innumerable subtleties...I greet you and I praise you with immense admiration and gratitude.

(by Pope Paul VI)

THE POPE'S CORNER

Excerpts on Prayer - taken from a Retreat given by the Holy Father.

PRAYER

One can recollect the self or meditate on the self, which are two different methods. And contact with God means prayer! Prayer can take on various forms but it is always contact with God and means leaving dispersiveness behind us and entering into recollection—not in order to be alone, but to be close to Him.

Why do you pray? Why do I pray? Why do we pray? Why? And if you do not pray, the question would be: Why not? If this is your interior, spiritual situation, we must look for the answer to this latter question, because there can be a number of possible reasons, since the lack of prayer can mean many different things.

It can simply mean that you have outgrown childhood prayers, just as you have outgrown children's clothes, and that you have not yet put on an adult's clothes. It can also mean a certain lack of form or methods or expression; in these cases little effort has usually been made to find that means of expression for prayer.

The lack of prayer can never be taken to mean that you do not need prayer. Indeed, the longer we do not pray, the greater the need grows, so that at a certain moment it explodes in the search for some outlet.

Not praying does not necessarily mean that we do not feel the need to pray. In this case your prayer needs a little more interior basis, a more spiritual attitude, and a deeper orientation...

I pray because God exists. I know that God exists, and this is why I pray...because I am always seeking God.

I pray because I believe. What does believing mean? By believing means bearing Jesus Christ's witness within oneself.

These two ways—that of thought which leads to God, and that of the witness of Jesus Christ (in other words, faith)—

meet, join together and mingle within us. It is wise to distinguish between them so what forms part of the one and what comes from the other, what is the work of human thought regarding God and what is the light of Divine revelation to man.

Prayer is conversation, and we are well aware that conversation can take various forms. Sometimes it is a simple exchange of words, and this is simply the exterior aspect. **Deep conversation takes place when we exchange not only words but also thoughts, hearts and feelings, in other words, when we give of our own selves.**

(The Way to Christ, Spiritual Exercises, Pope John Paul II, Karol Wojtyla; Excerpts from Part 2 Chapter 1: Prayer by Debbie Smith. "LIFE IN CHRIST", Sept. 26, 1998)

LETTERS TO "The PILGRIM"

Kathleen & Keith Werner:

My wife and I had a wonderful experience at Father DeGrandis's seminar. It deepened and renewed our faith in the Spirit.

I'm just writing this note to show our admiration of your life and efforts.

Thank you,

Jim and Mary Whelan

Dear Keith and Kathleen,

Thank you for sending us *The PILGRIM*. We very much enjoy reading it. I like the different articles. My daughter Michelle, who is a Medjugorje pilgrim, especially likes the messages and updates on Medjugorje.

Please kindly keep us on your mailing list. We also pass it around for family to read.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Joan McGovern

Dear Keith and Kathleen,

Thank you for sending us here at the Society of Saint Mary Magdalene your paper "The Pilgrim". The reading was very interesting. I haven't finished the reading as yet, but I intend to find the time to do so. I will pass "The Pilgrim" to people who appreciate your kind of information.

Every good wish and our love,

Sister Brendan

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I just received my copy of "The Pilgrim." It was so powerful and rich with wonderful information. Thank you, thank you, thank you! The article on receiving communion confirmed all that we have been feeling in our prayer group. The quotes of the saints on priesthood was confirmation that we are not to criticize our priests but rather hold them up in prayer. I appreciated so much the whole paper. I am sending a donation and asking you to add the following names on your mailing list so that they

too may receive your paper. Continue your fine work of telling the truth about our faith for so many are hungry for the truth. I will uphold you in prayer as you struggle to do God's work.

In His Love,

Philomena Jacox from **South Dakota**

Dear Keith and Kathleen,

Thank you for continuing to send me the PFMC newsletter. If not for your newsletter, I would not know about the prayer and fasting for the conversion of all Nations and the end to abortion which I now have the opportunity to fight.

During prayer before the Tabernacle the other day the thought occurred to me to ask your readers if they have a copy of a book which may be titled "Agnes de la Gorce, St Benedict Joseph Labre, translated by Rosemary Sheed (Sheed and Ward, 1952). I have been asking about this book though no one so far has come up with a copy of it. If any of your readers do and will trust me to read it and send it back to them, I would be most grateful. Thank you very much.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph's Love,

Kim Davidson,

RA 928 Mengha Road,

Smithton 7330 TAS., Australia

(*Note – please if you can help Kim out, write to her direct. We know she will appreciate it.)

Dear Keith and Kathleen,

May the Peace of Christ be with you! I had to write you to tell you how much I enjoy reading "The PILGRIM". May God Bless you for your time and effort that you so lovingly give in producing this blessed publication. Thank you for such needed spiritual food! I pray that we meet one day – perhaps in **Medjugorje!**

God Bless,

Domenica Marchese

(*Note from Editor: Thank you for all your letters. They mean a great deal to us. There are many people who help with the newsletter, and we give them credit for typing help, and editing, researching, etc. We appreciate that you'll take the time to write to us.)

CORPUS CHRISTI

On one of my many visits to *Saint Peters* in **Rome**, I was celebrating Mass for a group of **American** pilgrims in one of the large side chapels. When I started the Mass it was just my group of **English** speakers but by the time I had reached Communion the congregation had swollen to several hundred multi-racial people.

As I distributed the hosts to those I knew to be **American** I said, "Body of Christ" but when I was not sure of the nationality I greeted them with the **Latin**, "Corpus Christi." After ten successive **Americans** received, a tall,

well-built, muscular man stood in front of me. As he was about to receive the host I said "Corpus Christi." He looked very pleased and with a surprised grin responded, No, Father, **Houston!**"

He meant no disrespect. He was obviously unfamiliar with the feast of Corpus Christi and the meaning of the **Latin**.

June was the month when we celebrated the feast of The Body of Christ which we old-time Catholics remember as the feast of Corpus Christi. I have found memories of the large Corpus Christi processions when we preceded the priest through the streets as he carried the monstrance which contained the **Blessed Sacrament**. Even in **England** where I grew up, the streets were lined with onlookers as little, white-veiled girls in Communion dresses strew rose petals along the way of the procession. It was easy to recognize the Catholics among the onlookers since they would kneel as the Blessed Sacrament passed them; the others just stood and stared.

Each year I would look forward to this public witness to our faith as I proudly joined the many altar boys who were dressed in cassocks and surplices. The priest looked very regal dressed in a gold cope and the humeral veil, which covered his shoulders and hands as he grasped the monstrance, walking under a beautiful canopy carried by four men. Choir and incense completed the scene. This was a Proud to be Catholic day.

Now times have changed. **May years later, in a post Vatican II Church, I am no longer an altar boy but a priest. I have much nostalgia for the feast of Corpus Christi and the way we used to show the world our belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Today, when it is claimed by pollsters that even many Catholics no longer believe in the Real Presence, we have a greater need to stress the meaning of this feast.**

The loss of faith in the Real Presence has been blamed on **Vatican II** and the removal of the tabernacle from the central place of honor, which brought about a whole generation of Catholics who no longer genuflect since there is no tabernacle to which to genuflect. This coupled with the fact we do take communion in the hand, some believe, causes a lack of reverence. It is still the teaching of the Church that Christ is truly Present. It is still, Corpus Christi.

Karl Rahner, a leading, modern, post **Vatican II** theologian, writes, "What Christ gives us is quite explicit if his own words are interpreted according to their **Aramaic** meaning. The expression, 'This is my Body' means 'This is myself.'" No denial here.

Saint Justin Martyr from the second century reminds us how ancient is this belief. "not as common bread or as common drink do we receive these... We have been taught that the food that has been Eucharistized by the word of prayer, that food which by assimilation nourishes our flesh and blood, is the flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus."

Saint Cyril of Alexandria, another ancient writer says, "When we ingest the Eucharist, in reality we are ingesting the Godhead... because His Body and Blood are diffused through our members and we become partakers of the divine nature."

The loss of faith in the Real Presence is no joke! Even if we no longer have processions, we can still adore Christ present in the tabernacle. We can still reverently receive Him in Holy Communion. Every day can and should be a Proud to be Catholic day.

(with permission from "MEDJUGORJE MAGAZINE" dated Summer, 1998, by Father Ken Roberts)

LEGEND from RUSSIA

Babushka, the grandmother, Snug in her room,
Sat nodding and nodding, Over her Loom.
Sat suppered and snug, with no desire
But a welcome bed and an ample fire.
When out of the winter's rush and roar,
Came Shepherds knocking upon her door.
"Grandmother, grandmother, old and wise,
In Bethlehem's barn a Princeling lies.
Lie Mother and Child, where oxen feed,
Hurry, Grandmother, to nurse their need!"
Babushka listened, but made no stir
She thought of the sheets turned down for her.
Of shutters latched and larder dressed,
And her bones that ached for rest.
"Tomorrow," she muttered, "Wait till then."
But sternly the Shepherds knocked again,
"Grandmother, grandmother, rich and skilled,
Then send but a kindly basket filled
With comforting gifts, with meat or bread,
And we will carry it in your stead."
Babushka listened, nodding anew,
"Tomorrow," she muttered, "Tomorrow will do!
I'll bring the best from my cupboard's store.
Tomorrow!" The Shepherds knocked no more.
Babushka slept, though her dreams were troubled,
At dawn while the porridge bubbled,
She packed a basket brimming with sweet
Loaves and oranges, cakes and meat.
A shawl for the Lady, soft as June,
For the Child in the Crib, a silver spoon,
Rattles and toys and an ivory game,
But the stable was empty when she came!
So now with provender weighted down,
She wanders the world from town to town
At Christmas time, though the winds are shrill,
Through brier and brush, over heath and hill,
Seeking the Manger still!
And wheresoever a good child sleeps,
Dreaming of day, Babushka creeps,
Silently, hopefully, up the stair,
And leaves three gifts from her basket there,
One to marvel at,

One to enjoy,
And one for the Kingly Boy!

(Moral: Don't put off till tomorrow what MUST be done today. How do we know we'll have **tomorrow**?

(with permission from "THE MARYFAITHFUL" dated January-February, 1989)

THE PRODIGAL FATHER

Saint James Church, Medjugorje, March 22, 1998

Editor's note: This Sunday homily, given by Father Pavich at the Mass for the English-speaking pilgrims, touched us deeply. We could hear soft crying around the church and we knew those tears were mostly ones of healing. After Mass, everyone was talking about the power of Father's words and we are deeply grateful to him for allowing us to print this somewhat edited text, taken from the tape of his homily.

As we reflect on the beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son, we have to accept the fact that the prodigal son can be each one of us. Each of us has gone astray at some point of our lives and has experienced the merciful love of God the Father who is ever waiting for us. You may also be carrying the burden of your loved ones who you are waiting and praying for to return. That is a pain parents bear for children, husbands or wives for their spouses, children for their parents.

Naturally, it's a joy to have a baby but the full joy of parenthood, is when your children become your brothers and sisters in the Lord. That is God's joy, too, when we become not just eternal creatures by conception but when we become children of God, members of His family in the Body of Christ.

There's an amazing text that says there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 who don't need it. He's not trying to neglect those who already belong to Him. That text stands by itself. The return of a sinner makes heaven even happier. What a wonderful truth. We can't repent for those who are in sin; we can only respect for ourselves. Let us thank the Lord for the grace that brought us back:

Father, You have revealed Your infinite, loving, merciful, kindness in the mystery of the Prodigal Son. In revealing to us this truth, You have exposed to us the heart of Your Father. For our refusal to accept You and Him and His love for us in the power of Your Spirit, forgive us, Lord, Holy Spirit, You continue to minister the treasures and riches of heaven. Forgive us for our deafness to Your wee, small voice.

Do you ever think of God as the Prodigal Father? Does God live up to your expectations? Some people wonder how He could let babies get murdered, let guns kill and blow people's brains out, let enemies run over villages and make genocides. They smear Him like He's some kind of strange, dysfunctional guy, a retarded father-god.

“We can’t believe in a God like that!” they say when God doesn’t live up to their puny, pin-headed expectations. They have a different god than the God of Revelation. They try to fashion God to **their** image and **their** likeness.

We have been fashioned to **His** image and likeness. When He created us, God gave us a share in His creative power and a precious body that can be vasectomized and ligated, that can be abused with alcohol, drugs and food and sexually abused with all kinds of disease. How we squander what He gave us! We’re the foolish ones, the dysfunctional ones. He gave us everything. He doesn’t hold anything back, even if He knows we’re going to mess it up. God’s not that kind of a giver. God’s love is unconditional. A gift is a gift is a gift. He doesn’t take back gifts.

Please don’t smear God’s image. He doesn’t say, “I only give gifts on the condition that you do with it what I say.” Then it wouldn’t be a gift. If you give a gift, say good-bye to it. Don’t put conditions on your gifts.

You are an eternal creature. The moment you were conceived, you were eternal. He gave you everything it is possible to give. We can go off and squander it and He won’t bop us on the head. How many people think they will be struck by lightning if they every do this or that? Some people feel rather pleased and surprised when they find they can get away with something. But the bill does finally come in—empty stomach, pig food, away from church, away from the synagogue. This kid was Jewish, remember. And pigs aren’t kosher. So if you find yourself rootin’ around in a pigsty, you are far away from the synagogue. All those dear, Catholic kids are far away from their home if they’re rootin’ around in sin.

Who is this God who gives gifts with freedom? I invite you to see Him this way. **He doesn’t hold back a gift because He knows you’re going to go blow it. God loves an honest sinner.** He says, “OK, but you can’t do that at home, son.” He doesn’t say, “Oh son, please stay. I’ll build an upstairs, an outside entrance for you. You can have girls come and go all night if you like. Just stay home.” No way. You have to do your sinning far away from home.

The mystery, friends, is that the one who stays home often becomes the bitter sourpuss. He’s the symbol of the dishonest sinner because he never really was with the father. He’s lukewarm. He’s vomit! **God says, “I would that you were either hot or cold. I can deal with you then. If you’re hot, great! You’re on my side. If you’re cold, Satan will be your tormenter, who will whittle you down to size until you come to your senses.” God does not torment. God does not do anything which you, in your conceit, think gives you the right to be angry with Him.**

Repent. Go to Confession. I shudder to think how often we blame God for wrongdoing. Don’t you ever dare get angry with God. You’ve insulted Him; you’ve blasphemed Him because you’ve accused Him of

wrongdoing. Remember, you only forgive wrongdoing, so don’t ever try to forgive God. What is this strange distortion? Who is always distorting the image of God? The father of lies!

I’d like to relieve all you parents. If God looks like a retard, who do you think you are that you can get so pompous and upset because your kids have turned into sinners. What pride, what conceit! Who do you think you are? I dare you to be angry at your kid’s sin! You say, “Well, they’re hurting the family name. They’re not living up to our reputation. I sent them to Catholic schools.” So it was God’s fault? Was God defective, a bad parent?

Your children are free. Remember Jesus’ words: “You must be born again to enter God’s kingdom.” There’s a first birth and a **SECOND BIRTH**. That’s the flip side to the Immaculate Exception. There’s only one Immaculate Exception. You and I aren’t it. **When you birthed your children, you birthed them into the rule, not the exception.** You birthed them into **Satan’s** power, the curse of original sin. You can’t avoid it. It’s not your fault. You don’t have the power to birth them into God.

When we take them to baptism, Jesus is there to adopt them. No child can deny the source of its life. They had nothing to say about it. “I didn’t ask to be born!” That’s right, son. **You’re a gift of God’s love and existence. You had nothing to say about your first birth but you have everything to say about your second birth—everything.”**

The longer you parents take the blame for your sinful children, the longer you prevent them from coming back. Because if you’re the problem, then you have to change. They can’t come back on their own. You have to change, if it’s your fault.

How are they going to get back? You say, “But I didn’t send them to Catechism. I was always away on business. I was never home.”

OK. If that’s your sin, confess it. It’s correct to confess your sins regarding your children. **Parents do sin. They’re not perfect. They can’t be everything to their children.** But you are not big enough to keep Jesus from reaching your child.

As soon as you confess your sin, you start the process for your kids to come back. You can’t stand on any family stock, any family genes. It’s not going to stop anyone from sinning because they’re stuck with original sin. God isn’t going to have any trouble judging your child. You’re not going to be called in as a witness. So your daughter dies. She comes before Jesus and He says, “OK, honey, I’m your Savior, Jesus. I did everything I could for you...”

“But my mother...”

“No, honey, please don’t talk about your mother. This is just between you and Me. **I’m your Savior. I did everything necessary for you to be saved.** Your

mamma's not big enough to stop Me from saving you. She can't put Me out of business."

See the conceit? Parents think they're big enough, by their sins, that they can actually stop Jesus from reaching their children. What an illusion! That's not true. Usually if I ask the parent who's angry about their sinful child if they blame their own parents for their sins, they'll tell me, "No, of course not." **Anyone who's still blaming their parents is in spiritual kindergarten.** Anyone blaming their parents hasn't learned the most fundamental lesson of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Savior didn't have to undo ANYTHING your parents did to you. **When you grow up, you get out of spiritual kindergarten when you can say, "Well, my mom and dad weren't perfect but they were good people."** No matter what the circumstances of your conception, God wanted you to live. It doesn't even matter for those **Bosnian** women who were gang-raped and impregnated by **Serbian** soldiers. Some were so hurt they don't want to see or hold their child when it's born.

We have to believe that God is a bigger Savior than any sin that could ever have been committed and therefore, Jesus and Mary adopt each one of us. **Adoption is a mutual TWO-WAY relationship.** Natural birth is not; it's one way. In the first birth, you are an eternal creature whether you like it or not. You're going to exist forever. You've got nothing to say about it. But you've got everything to say about how you're going to exist. That's in your power, and in the power of your children. **So when your child goes astray, do like the Prodigal Father. Wait. Watch. Pray that they'll come to their senses.** This father let the boy go with such love that the kid knew he could come back home. Isn't that amazing? He didn't say, "Don't you ever darken the door of this house again. I disown you. I never want to see you again." If the kid had come to his senses with that, he'd have said, "Oh Lord God, have mercy. I can't go home. My old man will kill me. I can't go back to my dad, He's so mad at me, I never can go back home now."

Wouldn't it have been terrible if the father had sent him away with such anger and hatred and bitterness that he knew he couldn't come home? It is a compliment to God, Jesus' own revelation of His Father, when we come to our senses and say, **"I know I can go back to my father. Mom will be so glad to hear that I went to confession. She's been praying for me all these years. I can hardly wait to tell her."** If we have parents like that, we know we can come home again.

Your children can join you at the altar and in praying the rosary. Your children can become your brothers and sister in the Lord. What a happy day when your wayward children join you at the Communion table.

Accept this, dear parents, that you will bear children under the curse of sin. You will not be a perfect parent. You will not be able to stop them from sinning.

You will not be able to stop them from going astray. But you will have a great power to help bring them back if you consecrate them to Jesus and Mary. You will be partners with Jesus and Mary.

Mary says to each pregnant woman, "You are about to start something you can never finish. Only I can finish it. You and I are co-partners. You can't do without me and I can't mother them into God without you. When they wander into sin, just start praying the rosary to help me do my job to bring them back to their senses, back to my Son."

Can you imagine if you were the mother of the good thief? She's crying, "My son went off and got himself into bad company. The last I heard he got crucified in **Jerusalem** on **Calvary** next to some prophet." And later she dies and goes to heaven and there's her son. She says, "Son! You're in heaven, too?" "Yeah, Ma. The best thing I ever did was I died next to that prophet of **Nazareth** and HE let me into heaven. He was the Son of God." Wow!

What if you never know how your sinful child dies? What if your child dies in a car accident or drowns or disappears somewhere? You won't have that satisfaction of knowing how he died. Go to the mother of the good thief. I'm sure she wasn't at **Calvary**. I'm sure she didn't know how her son died. What a surprise she had-Jesus' love is great and big.

I find such hope in that for all parents. Don't you try to demand that you're going to know how everything runs. Give them to Jesus and Mary. **Consecrate them, pray and trust. They will come to their senses. You hold Our Lady to it. "Holy Mary, you're the only mother of God there is. I'm not it. I'm just helping you do your job."**

Dear people, this is a wonderful gospel. Let's just rejoice in it. Rejoice that the Lord's given us the grace. If you've got someone out there who's going to do 30 years of sin and it's only year 20, they've got 10 more years before they'll come to their senses. Just pray. Don't clobber them. Don't be mean. Just love them. Be sure they know that you'd be happy to hear they came to confession.

Let God be God. He's not dysfunctional. Thank Him for what He's doing. Just join Him and our Blessed Mother to continue to let us all see more and more of the Blessed Fruit of her womb. Amen.

(with permission from "MEDJUGORJE MAGAZINE"
Summer, 1998, by Father Philip Pavich OFM)

GOD ANOINTED JESUS of NAZARETH with the HOLY SPIRIT and with POWER

In the second volume of his writings to **Cornelius**, the one we call the "**Acts of the Apostles**" (the first volume corresponds to the present third **Gospel**), *Saint Luke* dedicates a great deal of space to the conversion of the centurion **Cornelius**, of the **Italian Cohort**, a "religious man who worshipped God." The episode is narrated at

length in the tenth chapter and is even continued in the next chapter. By a strange combination of circumstances, *Peter*, enlightened by God, goes to Caesarea from Joppa where *Cornelius* had sent some men in order to find him.

The account is a lively one and easy to read for Luke's recounting of Christian events is fresh and descriptive.

The high point which interests us is his exposition to *Cornelius*, who is in his house together with his family and friends, of the primitive "Kerigma."

This term of Greek origin is used to express the essential core of the Christian announcement which is the basis of the faith. Let us look at it once more. **I need not tell you what happened lately all over the land of the Jews, starting from Galilee after the baptism proclaimed by John. You know about Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we can bear witness to all that he did in the Jewish countryside and in Jerusalem. He was put to death by hanging on a gibbet; but God raised him to life on the third day, and allowed him to reappear, not to the whole people, but to witnesses whom God had chosen in advance—to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to proclaim him to the people, and affirm that he is the one who has been designated by God as judge of the living and the dead. It is to him that all the prophets testify, declaring that everyone who trusts in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.**

The quotation is a little long, but it offers the undeniable advantage of condensing the whole announcement of the primitive Church: that is, of the Apostles and of those who shared their ministry in the period immediately following Jesus's life on earth.

The figure of *Peter* stands out among the Apostles. Not for nothing *Saint Luke* gives him a prime function in the first part of the **Acts of the Apostles**, from the first to the twelfth chapters.

We should not miss a detail of special importance. When *Peter* had finished giving *Cornelius* a condensed version of the Christian events, something strange happened. **Peter was still speaking when the Holy Spirit came upon all who were listening to the message. The believers who had come with Peter, men of Jewish birth, were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit should have been poured out even on Gentiles. For they could hear them speaking in tongues of ecstasy and acclaiming the greatness of God. Then Peter**

ordered them to be baptized because he said: Is anyone prepared to withhold the water for baptism from these persons, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did ourselves?

Now we understand why Luke gave such importance to the Baptism of *Cornelius*, and not just him, but all his family, perhaps including children, and his friends who had been invited to his house. *Cornelius* is the symbolic figure of every gentile, that is non-Jew, who becomes a Christian. For some time the primitive Church was afflicted by the question, tenaciously debated sometimes to the point of brawling, of whether a gentile could become a Christian without first becoming a Jew, including circumcision and the following of all the laws of Moses.

The gentile was to reach Christ via *Moses*. Theoretically, it would not be difficult to show that, if this were the case, then Jesus would lose a lot of his dignity as Son of God and efficacy as a Savior because he would be subordinate to *Moses*. First would come the founder of the Jewish people of the **Old Testament** and then would come Jesus. There is no reason for subordinating the Son of God to the mission of *Moses*. But what was quite obvious as a principle, after a bit of reflection, caused considerable difficulties in relations between Christians of Jewish origin and those of non-Jewish origin.

One of the fundamental points of *Peter's* announcement, and with him of all those who preached about Christ, was the **resurrection of Jesus from the dead**. In the above quotation, this event is only mentioned with no special emphasis. The last chapter of each of the Gospels talks about it with one voice. In the **Acts of the Apostles**, *Saint Luke* talks about it at length. It is sufficient to mention *Peter's* speech on the day of **Pentecost**, when the people gathered in amazement after what had happened in **Jerusalem** that day.

That Jesus that you crucified on the cross, **"God raised him to life again, setting him free from the pangs of death, because it could not be that death should keep him in its grip" (Acts 2, 24).**

When the Christians of **Corinth** came up with a lot of difficulties in accepting the resurrection from the dead, *Paul* wrote to them: **For if the dead are not raised, it follows that Christ was not raised; and if Christ was not raised, your faith has**

KATHERINE WERNER GETTING MARRIED!

Katherine Werner, our youngest child and only daughter, is marrying **Ralph Bagnato** at **Saint Peter Church** on Route 537 in Merchantville, NJ at 2:30 PM, **Saturday, December 26, 1998**. They also regret that their invitation list for their reception has a limit but have asked us to invite everyone to attend the Holy Mass at which they will share the Sacrament of Matrimony.

nothing in it and you are still in your old state of sin. It follows also that those who have died within Christ's fellowship are utterly lost. If it is for this life only that Christ has given us hope, we of all men are most to be pitied (1 Cor. 15, 16-19).

Note the statement: if Christ was not raised, *you are still in your old state of sin*. It is true: if death had defeated Jesus and He had been held a prisoner of death, Jesus would have been annihilated, He would have had no power. Everything would have ended in His tomb.

But it was not like this. **God's power resuscitated Him, and He carried the whole of humanity with him.** In the same **Chapter 15** of the **First Letter to the Corinthians**, one of the most beautiful and meaningful in the **Bible**, *Paul* foresees the final moment of history when Christ, resurrected from the dead and in triumph, gives up the Kingdom He has built on earth to God the Father. He has completed His mission, He has obeyed the will of God the Father, He has completed His task: the Kingdom of God has been fully and definitively achieved.

The resurrection of Christ has therefore a dual aspect.

We may call the first aspect an apologetic one. It shows that **Jesus is the envoy of God**, dispatched by Him, He whom Our Father has sent. If He had not been raised then everything would have been in vain. Instead, death did not win over Him and Jesus overcame it. The last word is not with death but with God who, through the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, is shown to be superior to death.

The second aspect may be referred to as ontological.

This means that the resurrection of Christ, is itself for what it is, forms the redeeming and saving value of Jesus and is a real part of His personality. **Jesus could not help but be raised again.** Paul told us that if Christ had not been raised we would have been left in sin. It means that from the risen Christ comes all the vitality of grace that bedews the life of his mystical body—the Church.

If on Sundays throughout Easter, or rather during the whole of Eastertide, we were to make our own what is celebrated ceaselessly by the Liturgy, we would find ourselves in continual contact with this event: **the Resurrection of Our Lord.**

It is the mystery of Easter with its two aspects which form a unit: the Passion, the Death and the Resurrection of Our Lord

(from "MEDJUGORJE TORINO" dated April, 1998, by
Guiseppe Marocco)

ARE YOU REVERENT IN CHURCH?

Our Saviour, at all times forbearing and humble, severely rebuked the money changers in the Temple. What changed the merciful benefactor of men into a severe judge? It was the desecration of the House of God!

What a terrible threat to those who are in the habit of offending God in His own sanctuary. The Lord will drive them out with the scourge! Indeed it is a great offense to affront Him in His own dwelling - great ingratitude to dishonor Him in the very place where He distributes His graces in abundance.

What a disgrace to appear there in immodest, vain attire, wishing only to attract attention. What indecorum to walk into Church gazing and waving at everyone, talking and joking, even distracting those who are praying, not sparing even the priests of the altar, conversing there about worldly affairs. Where is there an earthly ruler who would tolerate such irreverence? Should the King of Kings, upon whose power the universe depends, have to endure contempt in His own abode? Is this not the grossest offense, the greatest indignity? Let them remember that God will avenge the insult, that He will pour out His wrath upon such abominable ingratitude. **"I will lay thy ways upon thee, O ungrateful nation,"** He says through the prophet **Ezekiel**, **"and I will pour out my wrath upon thee."** Woe to those who profane in the House of the Lord! The sudden death of **Oza**, the fire which consumed the sons of **Aaron**, the destruction of the **Bethsamites**, the defeat of the **Philistines**, the chastisement of **Antiochus**, the fall of **Jerusalem** - these are examples of the divine wrath at the profanation of His sanctuary.

Even in our own days, the calamities that befall cities and nations - must we not interpret them as the warning of **Jeremias**? "It is the vengeance of the Lord, vengeance because of the profanation of His Temple.

Dear Brethren, take these warnings to heart. Come to the Church with due reverence and be not forgetful of the honor due to the Lord of the Universe. Remember the words of the Apostle: "For if anyone violate the Temple of God, him shall God destroy."

WHERE IS YOUR REVERENCE

Where is your faith? Instead delight to remain with Him. Do not lose such an excellent time for talking with Him. This time is very profitable time for the soul - therefore do not lose it. If you take your thoughts elsewhere and pay no more attention to Him than if He were not there, how can He make Himself known to you? How can you hear Him and what He has to say to you if you don't care to listen? How can you shut your bodily eyes and open the eyes of your soul when you are walking out of the Church talking to people as though He had gone back to heaven and were no longer there? Poor, poor Jesus!! What can He do? Would you like Him to drag you by force to look at Him, love Him and be with Him just because He desires it?

He will not reveal Himself openly and communicate His glories and bestow His treasures except on those who greatly desire it! From the look of it, many Catholics go to Church to offend Him rather than to worship Him.

PURGATORY

Talking in Church before His Majesty is not only a venial sin but can become a much more serious sin if you disturb others who desire to love Him. The saints who have seen Purgatory have said that the average time a Catholic spends there is 40 years. This is shortened by daily Mass and devout Communion, many ejaculations and indulged prayers and works, while living; and Masses and prayers for the dead said by others after death. For a devout Catholic it is much less! And for a devout Catholic carrying a cross of pain offered up to Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, it is possible to go directly to heaven.

If you can show reverence to a flag, a priest, a nun, the Holy Father or a human being - how much more should you keep your eyes on that tabernacle and altar from the moment you enter the Church until you leave, and show Him the Reverence He deserves and demands!

(Read I Corinthians: 11 and Deuteronomy 22:5)

THE PILGRIMS of FAITH MARIAN CENTER (PFMC)

We are not a store. We operate like a church pamphlet rack where you make selections and offer a donation based on value posted or received. We are NOW able to accept credit card payments. Please patronize your local Catholic Book Store as well as the PFMC.

DONATIONS by CHARGE CARD AVAILABLE

We accept DISCOVER/PRIVATE ISSUE, MASTER CARD and VISA for all donations to the PFMC. This includes for books and religious articles, pilgrimages, retreats and for "The PILGRIM" or the building fund.

This availability does not come without its cost to us. Every charge card use costs us about 3% of the total charged. Since we had to invest heavily in new equipment and must pay fees beyond the per charge cost to us, there will be 3% PROCESSING FEE, non-refundable if credit is necessary, added to each charge card bill that is processed.

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We appreciate the communication so that we can correct our mailing labels and list. ORDER and SPONSOR "The PILGRIM" for your favorite religious or priest.

BLESSED OIL

Kathleen has bottles of blessed oil from Medjugorje blessed at Holy Mass in Saint James and then carried to Vicka's house to be present in the room during an

apparition. Volunteers transfer the oil to small bottles for you or your prayer group to use as a sacramental. We also have blessed oil from the Little House of Our Lady in Loreto, Italy.

Read the articles in the November and December 1994 issues as well as the Bible readings for the Holy Week Chrism Mass about Blessed Oil and Oil of Gladness.

Oil from Medjugorje and Our Lady of Loreto is a sacramental and should be handled as such. It is NOT the same as the oils blessed by the Bishop for official church ceremonies or during administration of the sacraments by a priest.

We request a \$5 donation per small bottle, this covers \$4 for the bottle, packaging and special handling plus \$1 mailing or postage expense.

BULLETIN NOTICES

We need YOUR HELP, with your Parish Bulletin Coordinator. Would you be so kind as to take the following BULLETIN NOTICES to your Pastor and / or Parish Bulletin Coordinator and ask them to publish these notices for your interest and because you an active parishioner has asked.

Thank you.

CATHOLIC RADIO

Listen to Dominic Lettieri and his *In His Sign (IHS) Ministries* guests on *Putting It on the Line, WTMR-AM 800, Monday thru Friday, 5 PM to 6 PM.* Call in on (610) 527-2906 or (888) 34 FAITH [343-2485].

One Day RETREAT for MARRIED COUPLES

Saturday, November 21, 1998 Saint Pius X Retreat House in Blackwood, NJ. Retreat master is David Haggerty, M.S.W., A.C.S.W. Cost is \$100 per couple or \$55 per person. This includes Lunch and Supper. Call Kathleen or Dottie at (609) 768-9228.

PFMC 1999 RETREAT CONFERENCE (RC)

The teaming of Dorothea DeGrandis Sudol with her brother, Father Robert DeGrandis, will enter the areas of healing through the PFMC 1999 RETREAT CONFERENCE (RC), FRIDAY thru SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 27 and 28, 1999. This will be the first weekend in Lent. The PFMC 1999 RC will again be held at the *Four Points Inn by Sheraton* in Cherry Hill, NJ.

The FEBRUARY 1999 RC will have an extension for those who can stay over MONDAY, TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1st, 2nd and 3rd. Father Robert DeGrandis, SSJ will make himself available for an intense and deeper teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Call Kathleen or Dottie at (609) 768-9228 for an information sheet with more details and a reservation form for the PFMC 1999 RETREAT CONFERENCE and the THREE DAY EXTENSION.

CALENDARS:

In *November*, the Church celebrates the Solemnities of **ALL SAINTS (1)**, **ALL SOULS (2)**, **CHRIST the KING (22)**, the Feast of the **Dedication of Saint John Lateran (9)** and **Saint Andrew the Apostle (30)**, Memorials of **Saints Martin de Porres (3)**, **Charles Borromeo (4)**, **Leo the Great (10)**, **Martin of Tours (11)**, **Josaphat (12)**, **Frances Xavier Cabrini (13)**, **Gertrude (16)**, **Margaret of Scotland (16)**, **Elizabeth of Hungary (17)**, **Rose Philippine Duchesne (18)**, **Columban (23)**, **Clement I (23)**, **Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions (24)** as well as **Blessed Miguel Augustin Pro (23)**, the **Dedication of the Basilicas of Saints Peter and Paul in Rome (18)**, and the **Presentation of Mary (21)**. Church calendars recognize **Veterans Day (11)** and **Thanksgiving Day (26)**.

In *December*, the Church celebrates the Solemnities of **IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (8)** and **CHRISTMAS (25)**, the Feasts of **Our Lady of Guadalupe (12)**, **Saints Stephen (26)**, **Holy Family (27)**, and **Holy Innocents (28)** and Memorials of **Saints Francis Xavier (3)**, **John of Damascus (4)**, **Ambrose (7)**, **Damasus I (11)**, **John of the Cross (14)**, **Peter Canisius (21)**, **John of Kanty (23)**, **Thomas Becket (29)** and **Pope Sylvester I (31)** and **Blessed Juan Diego (9)**.

AROUND THE PFMC AREA

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Please see article on pages 3 and 4 as well as the enclosed information sheet for more details along with a reservation form for the **PFMC 1999 RC.** Call 609-768-9228 for additional information.

MARIAN PILGRIMAGE PRESENTATIONS

Keith and **Kathleen** are always willing to schedule presentations to prayer group, **Altar Rosary Society, Legion of Mary** or other parish group meetings. The experiences and continuation of ministry for **Our Lady** in this time of graces and manifestation of Our Lord's Mercy are shared through videotape, witness and/or slide presentations followed by a question and answer session.

There is no charge. Free will offerings are accepted especially for books, tapes and religious articles which are made available at the presentation sites just like they are at the **PFMC** which operates like a church book rack.

INTERNET

Surf for the **PFMC** presence on the Internet at either <http://geocities.com/Heartlands/Woods/6240> or <http://www.PFMCkmw.org> with both sites still very much under construction.

Thank you for your patients and kind words about our efforts with "**The PILGRIM**" and the Internet.

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The PILGRIM

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