



The PILGRIM

Vol. 11, No. 10 Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC)

October 2000

MESSAGE of 9/25/2000

Dear Children! Today I call you to open yourselves to prayer. May prayer become joy for you. Renew prayer in your families and form prayer groups. In this way, you will experience joy in prayer and togetherness. All those who pray and are members of prayer groups are open to God's will in their hearts and joyfully witness God's love. I am with you, I carry all of you in my heart and I bless you with my motherly blessing. Thank you for having responded to my call.

(A copy of a message claimed to be given by the Blessed Virgin Mary to Marija Pavlovic Lunetti on September 25, 2000. The Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) upholds the final decision of the Catholic Church as to the authenticity of this Medjugorje message.)

Father Slavko Barbaric's REFLECTION begins on page 23.

A PRAYER



Lord Jesus, You are the Flesh from Heaven, the Holy Blood of drink. Let my faith seize me. Let me drink fully that I may know and be Life more abundantly. You are the Chalice of my strength. Captivate my heart and fill it with the fullest knowledge of You. In flame that heart with Love that overflows to all around me. Always be with me as I walk the path of Your Cross. Embrace me fully, as I long to surrender into Your Heavenly Arms. AMEN.

(Kathleen prays from the heart for each issue.)

A DAY of RECOLLECTION with OUR LADY, Thursday, 10/26/2000



Father Jay Bowden, Pastor of Epiphany Parish, Brick, NJ, will hold a day of recollection with Our Lady on Thursday, October 26, 2000 from 10 AM to 4 PM at the Epiphany House of the PFMC. Please call to make a reservation for the day. Father has held several days of recollection for us, and has a true devotion to Our Lady. A free will offering will be accepted.

"The PILGRIM" for October 2000 is dedicated to the "Our Lady of the Rosary." The Table of Contents / "IN THIS ISSUE . . ." is on page 3.

VOTE on TUESDAY, 11/7/2000!

Educate yourself as best you can on candidate views and positions. Look at past voting records where available. Read diocesan newspapers where surveys of candidate's answers to pertinent questions are often printed. Vote for the candidate who most closely agrees with the moral and pro-life issues God teaches us in the Bible AND has a chance to win. In a closely contested race it is often best to pick the lesser of two evils rather than not to vote at all. Encourage all your friends and neighbors to vote in local, state and national elections.

(The PFMC Volunteers)

BIBLE STUDY - "TYPOLOGY" with PETER DAWSON, 1st and 3rd MONDAY'S at 7:30 PM

Due to some conflicts, the Bible study using "TYPOLOGY" as discussed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and lead by Peter Dawson will be held in the Great Room of Epiphany House on the 1st and 3rd Mondays starting in October.

Mark your calendars for October 16, November 6 and 20, December 4 and 18. Come as often as you can but don't fear coming if you have missed some of the classes. Peter always does review and will work with you to catch up on what has already been covered.

THURSDAY NIGHT SEMINARS on the HISTORY and DEVELOPMENT of CHRIST'S DIVINELY ESTABLISHED CHURCH and IT'S CONTINUING ROLE in HUMAN LIVES



Dean Pulcini will be teaching a course called "CATHOLIC APOLOGETICS – DEFENDING YOUR FAITH" which will offer a basic understanding of the Catholic faith in comparison to and contrasted with Protestantism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

The course will help the student to grasp clearly what the Church authentically teaches and will aid in dispelling myths, misinformation and misunderstanding. Persons of other faiths interested in learning about Catholicism are invited to attend as well.

Dean Pulcini holds a Master's degree in Sacred Theology from Holy Apostles College and Seminary, Cromwell, CT. His areas of expertise lie in Scripture, Morality and Liturgy.

He is also a certified Youth Minister in the Diocese of Camden. As a catechist he has taught grades 1 through 12 as well as college students and adults. His combined total experience in the field amounts to over 20 years. He has offered his services within the Dioceses of Camden and Harrisburg, the Archdioceses Baltimore and the Armed Services (formerly the Military Ordinariate), and abroad in the Archdiocese of Munich, Germany.

On line, Dean hosts a Catholic Theology chat room founded to address questions about the Catholic faith.

Dean is also active in music ministry and leads the group VOYAGE. He has composed hundreds of pieces of music, some of them being accepted for publication. He has produced several albums.

Dean is also certified by the State of New Jersey as a Psychiatric Social Worker. For nearly 12 years he has worked with homeless persons with mental illnesses in Camden County, NJ.

Some related topics of the course will include:

Where Do Catholics Find THAT in the Bible?

The Bible and Sacred Tradition, the two fountains of revelation.

Are Good Works Necessary for Salvation?

Justification and salvation: faith alone versus faith and good works.

How Can the Pope Be Infallible?

The history and development of the Petrine Ministry.

Do Catholics Worship Mary and the Saints?

A proper understanding of the role of the Mother of God and the holy angels and saints of the Lord as well as a review of mediation and intercession; also a study on the use of statues and images and iconoclasm.

Do Catholics still believe in Purgatory?

Understanding the afterlife, sin, reward, indulgences, and intercession.

Aren't the Mass and Other Catholic Practices Rooted in Pagan Rites?

Reviewing the Sacred Liturgy, the sacrificial nature of the Mass, the history and development of the various ecclesiastical rites.

Can the Catholic Church be the "Whore of Babylon?"

A look at the book of the Apocalypse (Revelation) and its relevance.

Why Is Confession Necessary; Why Not Confess Directly to God?

Understanding sin, Penance and reconciliation with God and the Church.

What about ALL the Corruption; from Inquisitions to Sexual Abuse?

A scope of the corruption of mankind and the purity of the Church.

Who Gives the Church the Right to Morally Dictate?

A look at ethics, morality and the obligation of fidelity to Christ.

The Thursday evening programs will be held in the Great Room of Epiphany House from 7 PM to 9 PM.

We recognize and accept that the final authority regarding the alleged Marian apparitions, locutions and related messages at, and to the recipients from, Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as all other private revelations, rests with the Holy See, to whose judgment we willingly submit. We give total allegiance to our One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and its Magisterium.

They will begin on the first Thursday, the 5th of October 2000, and continue every Thursday evening from 7 PM to 9 PM.

A free will offering will be accepted. Suggested offering is \$5 per night. The PFMC display room and library will be open. We would appreciate your call to 856-768-9228 if you plan to attend.

VOLUNTEERS for 2001 RETREAT CONFERENCE ARE NEEDED



Please call Dotty or Kathleen at 856-768-9228 if you can volunteer to help the PFMC.

We always need help in the PFMC in setting up the programs, particularly in the area of accepting reservations, and program planning.



If you are interested in helping out with the February 2001 Retreat Conference, we need about 40 volunteers. The Sheraton Four Points Hotel is filling up fast and we will need help finding rooms for the 700 people wishing to attend the February 2001 Retreat Conference. There is a new number, 1-800-325-3535 for room reservations. The number printed on the enclosed gold information sheet is incorrect. Please change it. We appreciate your help in evangelization.

APPROVAL for the PFMC



On August 30, 2000 Monsignor Joseph Pokusa, Chancellor to Bishop DiMarzio, Camden Diocese, visited the PFMC. After a tour of the offices and great room, it was a great gift to pray with him.

Father Glenn Hartman has been officially assigned to assist us with "The PILGRIM." He is to help assure that what is in it is theologically and pastorally correct. Father has been helping us through the years, but this is an official assignment. Father Hartman will also join several assigned priests to oversee the future programming of events held by the Center. This panel of priests will be assigned soon. We look forward to working together so that the PFMC will be able to continue to help in the nurturing of souls and the Catholic Church.

We are working on the format of "The PILGRIM," and hope you will find it easier to read. We hope this issue is a good start with some of the changes.

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The PFMC has been given permission to hold the February 2001 Retreat Conference, to have Holy Mass there daily, to hold confessions, and to have an Adoration Room. We thank Bishop DiMarzio.

Please continue to pray for all the wonderful and generous volunteers that have worked here as a labor of LOVE. Please join us in helping, or by attending events of the PFMC.

"The PILGRIM"

As a monthly periodical, "The PILGRIM" is written for individuals who want to deepen their spiritual life. Through articles it seeks to engage its readers in spiritual reflection leading to informed commitment to spiritual growth. Men and women need to know God better than by hearsay, and "The PILGRIM" is attempting to do something about it.

You will be introduced to articles on meditation and prayer, stories of blessings, forgiveness, healing, marriage spirituality, lives of the Saints, the Catholic Church, Sacraments, the Virtues, Silence, and Poems and much more. You will often find book reports that are helpful in Christian life, as well as books and religious articles for you to order.

Retreats, seminars, conferences, or days of recollection, pilgrimages, and prayer groups are announced in "The PILGRIM". So you will know where to go for an evening, a weekend, or a spiritual escape. We hope that you will enjoy reading "The PILGRIM" over the month's time. If you do enjoy it, please let us know. We are constantly trying to provide you with material to move you toward a personal relationship with God.

If you have an interesting article, witness, poem or prayer, please send it to Kathleen. It will be reviewed for possible print. If you have a friend who does not get the newsletter, then share yours with him or her, and have them call us to be placed on our mailing list.

To keep your periodical coming to you please make some kind of contact with us once a year. We update our files, annually, and require that you contact us in writing either by e-mail (PFMCkmw@home.com) or by "snail" mail. If you have any change of address or phone number, please send it to us.

In each newsletter are an offering envelope and a petition slip. All donations are greatly appreciated toward the cost of printing and mailing. We cannot do it without your support, and ask that possibly you make a sacrifice to cover a priest or nuns copy that we send out.

Your petition slips are put in a basket and are prayed for until they are taken with us on pilgrimage and left at a holy place. Often they are taken and given to Pope John Paul II in his office.

WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

God is a little like General Electric - He lights your path.

God is a little like Bayer Aspirin - He works wonders.

God is a little like Hallmark Cards - He cared enough to send the very best.

God is a little like Tide - He gets out the stains that others leave behind.

God is a little like VO-5 Hair Spray - He holds

through all kinds of weather.

God is a little like Dial Soap - Aren't you glad you know Him? Don't you wish everyone did?

God is a little like Sears - He has everything.

God is a little like Alka Seltzer - Oh, what a relief He is!

God is a little like Scotch Tape - You can't see Him but you know He's there.

God is a little like The Copper Top Battery - Nothing can outlast him.

God is a little like American Express - Don't leave home without Him!

(Bernadette – e mail)

DONATIONS and VOLUNTEERS ARE NECESSARY to KEEP the PFMC OPEN



When we have expenses in the world we turn to you for your help through funds you donate.

We all work as volunteers. . None of us are paid any salary or income from the funds you donate. Our Lord rewards each of us in His own special way. We count on all of you who so love "The PILGRIM," retreats, Bible study, and annual RETREAT CONFERENCE, who enjoy getting the rosaries, and who so ask for intercessory prayer to help.

There are so many expenses for the facilities from which we work. We have been handling our first bills for operations from 61 Cooper Road. We are asking you to not forget us with donations for continuing operations. We very much need your help. PLEASE don't forget us.

When we needed so much to get into the new facilities, you all responded with such fine help. Now we appeal to you again. Please place the enclosed envelope with your monthly bills, and consider tithing to us monthly.

Monthly we pay for "The PILGRIM" and all of our expenses to run the various PFMC ministries. We hope to provide much more in the year 2001. If you cannot come to donate your time, you could help us so much with your generosity. Thank you so much.

PRAYER to SAINT RAPHAEL - ARCHANGEL

Glorious Archangel Saint Raphael, great Prince of the Heavenly court, you are illustrious for your gifts of wisdom and grace. You are a guide of those who journey by land or sea or air, counselor of the afflicted, and refuge of sinners.

I beg you, assist me in all my needs and in all the sufferings of this life, as once you helped the young Tobias on his travels.

Because you are the "medicine of God," I humbly pray you to heal the many infirmities of my soul and the ills that afflict my body.

I especially ask of you the favor (name it) and the great grace of purity to prepare me to be the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

THE ANT and the CONTACT LENSE – A TRUE STORY

Although she was scared to death, she went with her group to a tremendous granite cliff. In spite of her fear, she put on the gear, took a hold on the rope, and started up the face of that rock. She got to a ledge where she could take a breather. Hanging on the safety rope, it snapped against Brenda's eye and knocked her contact lens out of her eye.

Well, here she is on a rock ledge, with hundreds of feet below her and hundreds of feet above her. Of course, she looked and looked hoping it had landed on the ledge, but it just wasn't there. Here she was, far from home, her sight now blurry. She was desperate and began to get upset, so she prayed to the Lord to help her to find it.

When she got to the top, a friend examined her eye and her clothing for the lens, but there was no contact lens to be found. She sat down, despondent, with the rest of the party, waiting for the rest of them to make it up the face of the cliff. She looked out across range after range of mountains, thinking of that Bible verse that says, "The eyes of the Lord run to and for throughout the whole earth." She thought, "Lord You can see all these mountains. You know every stone and leaf, and You know exactly where my contact lens is. Please help me.

Finally, they walked down the trail to the bottom. At the bottom there was a new party of climbers just starting up the face of the cliff. One of them shouted out, "Hey, you guys! Anybody lose a contact lens?"

Well, that would be startling enough, but you know why the climber saw it? An ant was moving slowly across the face of the rock, carrying it.

Brenda told me that her father is a cartoonist. When she told him the incredible story of the ant, the prayer, and the contact lens, he drew a picture of an ant lugging that contact lens with the words, "Lord, I don't know why You want me to carry this thing. I can't eat it, and it's awfully heavy. But if this is what You want me to do, I'll carry it for You."

I think it would probably do some of us good to occasionally say, "God I don't know why you want me to carry this load. I can see no good in it and it's awfully heavy. But if you want me to carry it, I will."

God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.

(by Josh and Karen Zarandon)

HEALING through the CROSS of JESUS

The Anglican Theologian and Bishop, John A. T. Robinson, offers another possible scenario of how God might wear down the elder son's resistance by demonstrating his sacrificial love. Imagine that the elder son walks the road eventually leading to hell.

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TYPING, PROOFREADING, ASSEMBLY and MAILING: Too many wonderful pilgrims and volunteers to mention them all by name.

Somewhere along the first road, far or near from its beginning, man meets Someone, a figure stooping beneath the weight of the Cross. "Lord, why are you doing this?" each of us sometime or other asks. "For you, to prove that you are greatly loved by God." No man can indefinitely meet such great love, especially in his bitter emptiness and loneliness of self-love, and continue to resist. Man will not lose his choice to resist. He will want, like a feverish thirsting man on a desert, to stretch out to drink this life-giving water.

Again, whether or not Robinson is right that neither the elder brother nor anyone else could finally resist such personalized love, what we do know is that Jesus will reach out in every possible way to heal. Although we and the Roman Catholic Church hold that it is a possibility to choose hell, Robinson shows how unlikely it is that anyone would ever actually make such a choice.

**(from "Healing the Greatest Hurt" by Linn –
available through the PPMC)**

TODAY - TOMORROW

My brother-in-law opened the bottom drawer of my sister's bureau and lifted out a tissue-wrapped package. "This," he said "is not a slip. This is lingerie." He discarded the tissue and handed me the slip. It was exquisite, silk, handmade and trimmed with a cobweb of lace. The price tag with an astronomical figure on it was still attached. "Jan bought this the first time we went to New York, at least 8 or 9 years ago. She never wore it. She was saving it for a special occasion.

Well, I guess this is the occasion." He took the slip from me and put it on the bed with the other clothes we were taking to the mortician. His hands lingered on the soft material for a moment, then he slammed the drawer shut and turned to me. "Don't ever save anything for a special occasion. Every day you're alive is a special occasion."

I remembered those words through the funeral and the days that followed when I helped him and my niece attend to all the sad chores that follow an unexpected death. I thought about them on the plane returning to California from the Midwestern town where my sister's family lives. I thought about all the things that she hadn't seen or heard or done. I thought about the things that she had done without realizing that they were special.

I'm still thinking about his words, and they've changed my life. I'm reading more and dusting less. I'm sitting on the deck and admiring the view without fussing about the weeds in the garden. I'm spending more time with my family and friends and less time in committee meetings.

Whenever possible, life should be a pattern of experience to savor, not endure. I'm trying to recognize these moments now and cherish them. I'm not saving anything; we use our good china and crystal for every special event such as losing a pound, getting the sink unstopped, the first camellia blossom. I wear my good blazer to the market if I feel like it. My theory is if I look prosperous, I can shell out \$28 for one small bag of groceries without wincing.

I'm not saving my good perfume for special parties; clerks in hardware stores and tellers in banks have noses that function as well as my party going friends. "Someday" and "one of these days" are losing their grip on my vocabulary. If it's worth seeing or hearing or doing, I want to see and hear and do it now.

I'm not sure what my sister would've done had she known that she wouldn't be here for the tomorrow we all take for granted. I think she would have called family members and a few close friends. She might have called a few former friends to apologize and mend fences for past squabbles. I like to think she would have gone out for a Chinese dinner, her favorite food. I'm guessing.

It's those little things left undone that would make me angry. Angry because I put off seeing good friends whom I was going to get in touch with someday. Angry because I hadn't written certain letters that I intended to write one of these days. Angry and sorry that I didn't tell my husband and daughter often enough how much I truly love them.

I'm trying very hard not to put off, hold back, or save anything that would add laughter and luster to our lives. And every morning when I open my eyes, I tell myself that every day, every minute, every breath truly is ... wonderful.

(Sent to us by a reader of "The PILGRIM")

ONE

To realize the value of ONE MONTH, ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby.

To realize the value of ONE WEEK, ask the editor of a weekly newspaper.

To realize the value of ONE HOUR, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.

To realize the value of ONE MINUTE, ask a person who missed the train.

To realize the value of ONE-SECOND, ask a person who just avoided an accident.

To realize the value of ONE MILLISECOND, ask the person who won a silver medal in the Olympics.

Treasure every moment that you have!

Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is mystery. Today is a gift, that's why it's called the present!!

(att00003.html– INTERNET)

TRUST IN GOD – THREE MAJOR NEEDS of the HUMAN PSYCHE

People have to have trust in Him and not in themselves. Most of us want to trust in ourselves and feeling secure we say, "I can do this. I can do that." Jesus, however, is calling us to trust in Him and not just our own ability.

There are three major needs of the human psyche:

1. To be loved
2. To be useful
3. To be secure

I would imagine that the Lord is calling us to a "type" of insecurity. The lives of the saints really boggle the mind because of the way that they trusted the Lord. To the people around them, they were crazy and today's saints are still called crazy.

Christian life doesn't make sense unless you see it from the faith view that the Lord will provide. **No matter who or what your condition is, you are helpless without God and the goal really is to become dependent upon Him, not independent.** When a baby is born into the world, he is totally dependent.

In the spiritual life, you are born independent and you come to a point in life where you say, "Lord, I need You!" That is what we find in the lives of the saints – a life of total dependence.

In natural life, we are trained to be independent.

In the spiritual life (through self-acceptance) you become totally dependent: you become as a little child. What did Jesus say? "...Anyone who does not

welcome the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it" (Mark 10:15)

(edited from "Growing in Jesus" by Father Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J., available through the PFMC)

SELF, WILL and SELF-WILL

Our self is that which is distinctly us, and no one else.

When we visit friends, they invite us to make our "self" at home. When we feel an ongoing discomfort with our "self", we can turn to prayer, or therapy, or addictions, or a host of other things. We can even engage in "self" examination in order to "get in touch with our self", but this, if carried to extremes, can make us pathologically "self" conscious.

Jesus advises his followers to "die to self" in the famous parable about the seed which must fall into the earth and die if it is ever to bear fruit. (John 12:24) And in what is perhaps his ultimate paradoxical statement, Jesus boldly asserts that, "Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it". (Matt. 10:39) In the Jerusalem Bible, this section of Matthew is prefaced with an unambiguous heading: "Renouncing self to follow Jesus".

Why is it at once so difficult and so necessary to renounce self?

Primarily because each of us is undeniably "selfish"; that is, we are only ourselves and cannot in any meaningful way be grafted onto, or substantially linked with, any other person/self.

Thus the greatest saints and the greatest sinners and everyone else in between have no choice but to be selfish.

However, when we remove the hyphen, we find ourselves facing a different situation entirely; for God has gifted each of us with the ability to choose and the obligation of choosing how we wish to live.

Each of us can, does, and must choose whether we wish to live our lives in an (un-hyphenated) selfish manner and consequently move away from God and the Good Life for which He created us, or whether we are willing to "die to self" and thus draw closer to our God and Savior.

(Brother Larry Holley, OSB, "The Pecos BENEDICTINE" Feb. 1998, used with permission)

CHAPLET to OBTAIN a GREAT CONFIDENCE

What a beautiful chaplet to say daily. We hope you will enjoy it.

The ordinary prayer beads may be used. On the large beads repeat the prayer, "See where, etc." On the small beads, repeat the ejaculation, Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in Thee.

Our Lord has for some time past deigned to work many wonders through the invocation:

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in Thee!

See where Thy boundless Love has reached, my loving Jesus! Thou of Thy Flesh and Precious Blood hast made ready for me a banquet whereby to give me all Thyself. Who drove Thee to this excess of love for me? Thy Heart, Thy loving Heart! O Adorable Heart of Jesus, burning furnace of divine love! Within Thy Sacred Wound take Thou my soul, in order that, in that school of charity, I may learn to love that God Who has given me such wondrous proofs of His great love. Amen.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, etc. (ten times)

(by Patricia Quintiliani "My Treasury of Chaplets" Worcester, MA, 1994. Available through PFMC)

HEALING through the COMMUNION of SAINTS

Through the communion of saints, Jesus and the Father also extend their healing to a person who starts to choose hell. The communion of saints is the name given to all people living and dead as they find themselves connected to one another by being connected to Jesus. For, "if one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it;" (1 Cor 12:26). So, for example, all those at afterlife's banquet belong to the communion of saints. Thus if there is something between the elder brother and the father, not only the prodigal but all those at afterlife's banquet hurt with the father. Those "saints" at afterlife's banquet grow in self-giving love and in their love for the father by reaching out to the elder son and all the broken ones, whether still on this earth or those who have died in need of healing.

Not only the saints in heaven but also the members of

the communion of saints on earth can enter into the Father's love and into the infinite scenarios, which offer DREAMS of healing. For example, the story of Edward in Chapter 6 tells of a person released from a hell-like schizophrenia when others prayed for his ancestors. Whenever I see such a new and creative way of bringing healing to another, I am aware that I have just begun to enter into the infinite number of creative ways of healing extended by the Father, Jesus and all the saints as they reach out to offer healing to the deceased. During such an awareness, I begin to taste a little more the infinite hope that the Father and all the saints have for healing everyone, including those like the elder brother who have started to choose hell.

(from "Healing the Greatest Hurt" by Linn- book available through the PFMC)

ASK for SPIRITUAL and MATERIAL GOODS – SAINT AUGUSTINE

We should ask for spiritual and material goods insofar as they bring us closer to God

For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

In Our prayer to God, the first things we should seek from Him are spiritual goods - the grace to love Him more each day, to have an authentic desire for sanctity. We should also ask God for material goods insofar as they serve to bring us closer to Him. These goods can include good health, economic well-being, getting a job, . . .

Saint Augustine advises us: Pray for temporal goods in private, and rest in the knowledge that they come to us from him who knows what is best for us. Did you ask and not get what you wanted? Trust in your Father. If it would have been good for you, you would have received it. Before God, you are much as a little child is before you. All day long, the child cries his eyes out so that you will give him a knife to play with. You wisely refuse his plea and pay no attention to his wailing. When the child demands to ride your horse, you won't let him. The child doesn't know how to ride, and may get injured or even killed as a result. You deny him in little things so as to preserve the more important things. You want the child to grow up safely and possess all his own goods without danger. This is how the Lord is with us. So many

times we are like the child who doesn't realize what it is he is asking for.

God **ALWAYS** wants what is best for us. Man's happiness, therefore, is always to be found in his full identification with the Divine Will. Even though what God wills may sometimes not seem so appealing from a human point of view, it necessarily leads to what is in our best interests.

Pope John Paul II once recalled how impressed he was by the cheerfulness of a man he met in a hospital during the Warsaw Uprising. This man achieved happiness by some other way because visibly, judging his physical state from the medical point of view, there was no reason to be so happy, to feel so well, and to consider himself heard by God. Yet he was heard in another aspect of his humanity. This aspect was the identification of his human will with the Divine Will.

We have to want the Will of God: thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. This is the best path to follow. IT is the one prepared for us by the Lord. Tell him: *"Lord, I want nothing other than what you want. Even those things I am asking you for at present, if they take me an inch away from Your Will don't give them to me. If you don't want these things, why should I? You know best. Your Will be done."*

(quotes from Saint Augustine, Sermon #80, 2, 7-8:
John Paul II, "Homily, 27 July 1980: and J.
Escriva, "The Forge", pg. 512)

HAVE CONFIDENCE that OUR LADY KNOWS OUR SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Mary [Our Lady] is Mother of men. She knows all their spiritual needs. It is a principle admitted by all theologians that the happiness of the blessed in heaven would not be complete if they did not know what happens on earth to the extent to which it concerns them by reason of their office, their role, or their relations with men. Such knowledge is the object of a legitimate desire which must find its satisfaction in beatitude, and with all the more reason when the knowledge they desire is of men's spiritual needs and is therefore desired in charity: it is in charity that the saints desire men's salvation so that they may glorify God with them for all eternity and share thus in their happiness. Fathers and mothers, for example, know from heaven the needs of their children, especially

those which bear on their salvation. The same may be said of the founders of religious institutes. With all the more reason may the same be said of Our Lady, who has the highest degree of glory after her Son: as Mother of all men she must know everything which bears directly or indirectly on the supernatural life which she has been commissioned to give us and to nourish in us. This universal knowledge, certain and detailed, of all that concerns our destiny--our thoughts, desires, the dangers in which we are, the graces we need, temporal affairs which have some connection with our salvation--is a prerogative which belongs to Mary because of her motherhood of God and her spiritual motherhood of men.

Knowing our spiritual needs and even the temporal needs which are connected with our salvation Mary is obviously impelled by her great charity to intercede for us. If a mother but suspects that her child needs her help she flies to its side. There is no question here of Mary's acquiring new merits in heaven but simply of her obtaining that her merits--and her Son's--be applied to us at the appropriate moment.

**("THE MOTHER of the SAVIOUR" by Father
Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., Tan Books,
available from PFMC)**

HAVING CONFIDENCE in EVERYDAY LIVING

The Lord Jesus Christ wants us to experience the fullness of joy in living. Isn't it a shame that not everyone can really open up and express their happiness with such words as, "What a beautiful day today!" Instead, many people are so filled with problems of anxiety, frustration, guilt, resentment, self-condemnation, that if they could kill themselves and escape the wrath of God, they would. Scripture paints the opposite picture for us. Jesus did not come to condemn, but to build up, to save, to give peace and joy and love. "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10, RSV). His plan of salvation unfolds as we believe in Him. This is why we are constantly encouraged to spend some part of our day in private prayer, to be with the Lord, talking with Him privately. We are asked to spend these moments daily reading the Word of the Lord, opening our Hearts and minds to His Word, thereby letting that seed bear fruit in our lives. "All scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching

them to be holy. This is how the man who is dedicated to God becomes fully equipped and ready for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17, JB).

(from “GROWING IN JESUS” by Rev. Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J., Queenship Publishing)

GOD’S CRAZY ABOUT YOU

If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it.

If He had a wallet, your photo would be in it

He sends you flowers every spring.

He sends you a sunrise every morning.

He re-assures us with rainbows after the storms have passed.

Whenever you want to talk, He listens.

Your birthday is on His calendar.

He never rests when you stay away too long without calling.

He’s happy when you read the Book He wrote.

He’s joyous to see you completely satisfied with what He gives you.

He can live anywhere in the universe, yet He chooses your heart.

Face it, friend – He is crazy about YOU!

(bulletin from Saint Peter Church, Merchantville, August 13)

A MORNING PRAYER

Good morning, Father! Good morning, Jesus. Good morning, Holy Spirit. Today Heavenly Father according to Your Word, I present my body, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable in your sight. Because I am not contending against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, world rulers of this present darkness and spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places, I take the whole armor of God so that I may be able to withstand in the evil day.

So today I stand and gird my loins with truth. I put on the breastplate of righteousness. I shod my feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all these, I take the shield of faith

to quench ALL the flaming darts of the evil one. I take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

I pray at ALL times in the Spirit with ALL prayer and supplication for ALL God's family and for me that I may open my mouth boldly TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL. The weapons of my warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. Today I destroy arguments and EVERY proud obstacle to the knowledge of God and take EVERY thought captive to OBEY Christ. Thank you Father that according to Your Word the glory of the Lord is my rear guard. I praise You and thank You for the armor of light You've provided for me this day. I am completely covered now. Upon Jesus I have built my life. The gates of hell shall not prevail against me.

Jesus, I apply Your Precious Blood to my life, my family, my home, and all my possessions. You are my Shepherd and I shall not want. For You have supplied ALL my needs according to Your riches in glory. I can do ALL things through Christ who strengthens me. I praise You for walking in divine health, for You are my God who heals all my diseases. I praise You and thank You for my prosperity and good health even as my soul prospers. For the joy of the Lord is my strength. Father, I have prayed according to Your Word.

You said You would watch over Your Word to perform it. I am reminded that every word spoken becomes a living thing - either to minister life or death and destruction. Lord Jesus, let my meditation be sweet to You as I will rejoice in You all day. Just rise up and live big within me. For I am Yours and You are mine in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

Print out the above prayer and put it in a prominent place in your home. Pray the prayer every morning!

(E-mail to PFMC - no source)

NO SMALL MIRACLE

This story goes back quite a few years, the early fifties. It is a story of faith - belief in a miracle.

I had developed planter warts on both feet. They were extremely painful, like trying to walk with

several sharp stones digging into your feet. I was being treated by a podiatrist, but no matter what he tried, it did not work. The pain was hardly bearable.

Finally, I remembered that I had some dried rose petals that had been touched to a first class relic of Saint Theresa, the Little Flower. I decided to put some of the petals in a sock and put it on the foot that was affected the most. Before getting into bed, I knelt down on the side of the bed and begged Saint Theresa to heal my feet.

When I woke up and got out of bed, to my great relief there was no pain. I got up on my bed, pulled off the sock and examined my feet. I was thrilled to discover that all the planter warts had disappeared from both feet, not just the one exposed to the rose petals.

I told my family and friends about my miracle and they were happy for me. But they doubted a miracle had happened. I heard things like, "Warts at times disappear on their own." I did not care then, nor do I now because I know the Little Flower had given me one of her "roses", and I was overjoyed and very grateful.

(by Barbara Schmit "International Newsletter of the Association of Christian Therapists" May/June 2000)

MY ANGEL

I passed the threshold of Eternity,
My Guardian Angel accompanied me there;
I saw the light of Infinity,
The face of Jesus was so fair.

I asked my Angel, "Am I really here?"
He smiled at me and gave me a nod,
He answered, "Yes, my dear,
And took me to the throne of God.

I had so many questions to ask,
On Earth, there was not enough time;
In Heaven's Peace, there was no task,
All my answers were so sublime.

I asked about the Universe,
And all its mysteries;
I had an eternity to converse,
With all the Heavenly Court;
About the world, Church and their histories.

Soon I joined the Celestial Choir,
I was happy Our Lord admitted me there.

I would never be tired as I sang,
It wasn't like when I was on Earth;
All praises and joy from my heart sprang,
Sweet melodies and mirth.

I met all my loved ones at the Throne,
And asked them to join with me and sing;
We were filled with love as we did intone,
For all my questions were asked;
And forever more, I was there with the King.

(Donna Keye Rock, Third Order of Saint Francis,
"The Catholic Yearbook" 1997)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Servants of Mary,

Thank you for continuing to send me the Pilgrim. I read it from front to back. It is very inspiring to me – It makes me pick up my rosary and pray for others. I love the prayers by Kathleen. You can tell she's very close to the Blessed Mother.

I wish I lived a lot closer, so I could help too. I would love to join in the programs being offered. Is there a chance I can get some materials being offered at the Bible study program? The articles written in last issue were great. I love reading all about the pope, and Fatima. The poems were so touching. The Lovely Lady one I used to sing with the Felician Sisters in

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.

There is no "subscription" fee but we do ask for free will donations to support **"The PILGRIM."**

The real 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 at the address printed in the box on page 5 or near the mailing label on the last page.

Detroit, when I was in convent school learning to be a sister. I went to take my vows, but left after 4 years to take care of my dad. When he died 2 years later I continued to stay at home, and I got married, had 2 children, who are grown now. But I never forgot "Lovely Lady". It meant a lot to me to find it in the Pilgrim. I always love the general overview of our Lady's Message. It's like I'm getting a lesson to live my life.

Please continue to send me the Pilgrim. I really need it. I was so happy to hear about Padre Pio – I always loved him.

Prayers and hugs for all of you,

Linda Thatcher

Dear Kathleen,

I want to thank you for your letter letting me know that your news letters we're given to us to "pass on" and no donation is appreciated. It is so very kind of you to do this because your newsletters are a joy to read and so for many others your letter raises their spirits. For me, I love them!

Thank you and love for your understanding. Every good wish,

Sister Brendan, Society of Saint Mary Magdalene

Dear PFMC,

Enclosed is a check to help with the newsletter. I can't wait until your conference in February. I haven't been to any of your conferences, but have heard how powerful they are. Your guest speakers Father Hampsch and Father DeGrandis I am looking forward to seeing and hearing. I know they are in healing ministries, and I sure can use anything the Lord throws my way.

All my Love and Prayers,

Audrey Bernhauser

PILGRIMS of FAITH MARIAN CENTER (PFMC)

We are not a store. We operate like a church pamphlet or bookrack where you make selections and offer a donation based on value posted or received. See the center section of the July issue of "The PILGRIM" for a partial listing, four pages, of items that can be obtained through donation. We carry these items because of requests from pilgrims

and other readers of "The PILGRIM." If you wish to order, please fill out your order request, make out a check or complete the information for use of a credit card and mail to PFMC, 61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043-4896.

If you do not have an order form, call us at 856-768-9228 with a FAX number or mailing address and we will send you an order form.

The PFMC is a lay Ministry made up of dedicated Roman Catholics. It is totally dependent upon financial donations. Every person working in the PFMC is a volunteer for Our Lady's work of converting souls to her Son, Jesus.

The PFMC is permanently approved as an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Code Section 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax exempt religious association which can accept tax deductible contributions or donations in relation to its organizational functions. These functions include pilgrimages, retreats, days of recollection, presentations, Bible Study, Rosary making, books, and religious articles.

Enclosed is a donation slip and envelope for you to use.

We operate the PFMC and all of our programs on donation only. We ask you to remember us in a special way as you pay your bills. Please place the slip and envelope with your bills or in your checkbook.

You are the hands of Jesus and Our Lady. Your help is important. We want to thank all of you who have been faithfully supporting the PFMC. Your donations have meant that we have been able to touch so many people through "The PILGRIM," through retreats and conferences.

We are grateful for every donation that helps us cover the printing and mailing of "The PILGRIM," the heat, water, insurance, and setting up of programs. We are excited with how Our Lady is guiding us for the year of 2000. We cannot do it without you.

WE DO NEED VOLUNTEERS - If you are interested in doing some typing, light bookkeeping, answering phones, working with books, working on conferences and retreats or "The PILGRIM," please call us at 856-768-9228 and give us your phone number and name.

We need regular help and help once a month – whatever you can give.

We will give you a good orientation, and make use of the gifts that God has given you.

We want to keep the PFMC open from 10 AM to 5 PM daily. In order to do this we need a solid list of volunteers we can count on to meet their scheduled times.

Please come and see the new PFMC. We know you will enjoy what you see and finding a way of helping out.

Thank you and God bless you,

Kathleen and the Volunteer Staff

BOOKS and RELIGIOUS ARTICLES

The new PFMC offices in Epiphany House are open Monday through Friday from 10:30 AM to 5 PM. We are also open on nights that we have events in Epiphany House. Come and meet us. Tour the new building.

You may look over the thousands of book we have available for you by sitting in our library and looking at each book for materials you might need. We have books, religious articles, medals, rosaries, chaplets, crosses, blessed oil, pictures and statues available in our little display room. Pope John Paul II has blessed all rosaries taken before him in Rome.

Be sure to get a book for your home reading and get one for a friend or relative. We also have children's books and coloring books. Do you need a gift for a birthday, Christening, Wedding, or Anniversary? We hope we can help you in finding or ordering just what you need. Please consider coming and browsing. If there is something you want and we don't have it, we can order it for you.

If you cannot come to the new building at 61 Cooper Road in Voorhees, NJ, then you might look over our book and religious article order form enclosed and see if you would like to order something by mail.

Any donation over and above the value received is tax deductible and greatly helps the PFMC with its many expenses.

We hope you will remember us when shopping for Christmas.

BLESSED OIL

Bottles of oil blessed at Holy Mass in Saint James, Medjugorje, and then carried to Vicka's house to

be present in the room during an apparition are available from the PFMC. Volunteers transfer the oil to small bottles for you or members of your prayer group to use as a sacramental.

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. If you no longer have these articles or never received them, you may request copies from the PFMC.

Oil from Medjugorje 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. People being blessed should not be misled into thinking that blessing by the laity in any way replaces blessing by a priest, whose Holy Hands are consecrated by the Bishop in the sacrament of Holy Orders.

We request a \$5 donation per small bottle. This covers \$3 for the bottle, packaging and special handling plus \$2 mailing or postage expense.

COMPLETE ADDRESS — USE RETURN ADDRESS LABEL or STAMP!!!



Always complete any order forms or give us full address with any letter order. Consider using one of the many mailing labels each of us receives in our mail so that we can see your address clearly printed and often with the ZIP+4 which is supposed to speed the mail delivery.

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

FOR ORDERS – PLEASE DO NOT PLACE THEM ON DONATION SLIPS

When ordering books, tapes or oil, we kindly ask you to NOT place them on the donation slips, but rather use the form inside the newsletter, or write us a separate note.

The donation slips go to a separate department from our order section, and your order may get lost or not noticed. Thank you for your cooperation.

PHONES – PLEASE BE PATIENT, ALLOW 8-9 RINGS for a MESSAGE MACHINE



The PFMC phone system at Epiphany House has been set up so that all previously used numbers ring through Epiphany House.

When no one is at Epiphany House, particularly at night and on weekends, (856) 768-9228 and (856) 753-9252 ring over to new phone lines at 129 Deerfield Avenue.

When the ring through is active because no one is picking up before 4 rings at Epiphany House, some extra rings will be heard before you can leave a message.

Please be patient and wait at least 8 or 9 rings.

BOOKS NEEDED for OUR LIBRARY



We are seeking OLD books on Our Lady, on the Eucharist, Priesthood, Sacraments and Holy Mass for our library.

If you have some, particularly if priests have some on their shelves or stored away in boxes, we would love to have them.

We hope to have a fine library for the lay person as well as religious to reference.

Please send them to the PFMC. We would be grateful.

PRESS BULLETIN #150 – 8/23/2000

FEARS AND FEAR OF GOD

“The world is full of fears since we lost the fear of God. Hundreds and thousands of fears – fears of oneself, of the other, of the world, of the future, make us sick. The only one free from fear is the one who has the fear of God.” (Klaus Hemmerle)

With the progress that is taking place in many areas of human life, and the ever increasing insignificance of a sense of the religious in the life of those who acknowledge themselves believers, it was expected that the feeling of fear would diminish – more so even disappear. However, it has been shown that the

greater the attachment and dependence on material security, the greater also are the kinds of different fears. Such a condition curtails real freedom and becomes the driving power for conflict and manipulation. The fear of God, about which the Bible speaks, is the least fear. It is really speaking about confidence. And confidence is a sign that man cannot be sufficient unto himself, but that he needs someone else.

The believer finds that o t h e r in God and that which we call fear of God is in reality faith.

Father Ivan Landeka

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION

On the feast of Assumption August 15th in the parish of Medjugorje there were about ten thousand visiting pilgrims from all continents. Among them, by all means, must be emphasized the great number of Croatian pilgrims who from all different parts of our homeland came bare-foot on pilgrimage to Mary Queen of Peace. The feast itself was preceded by a prayer novena during which a large number of the faithful gathered for the evening prayer program and the sacrament of reconciliation. Because of the variety of language groups holy masses were celebrated in nine languages during the course of the day. And over and above that variety of languages the pilgrims were bonded by prayer and petitions directed to Mary, mostly by prayer for the peace that we need so much. The festive evening mass, together with 52 concelebrants, was presided at by Father Bozo Vuleta who in his inspired sermon proclaimed, “. . .that by the assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven God made possible for us a view from Heaven to earth, a view on transience. Thus we can see our own life through Her eyes, Her heart, and feel the beauty of submission to the will of God that we have to bear throughout life. . .”

DECLARATION

The international conference of representatives of humanitarian organizations and of individuals inspired by the messages of Medjugorje was held in Medjugorje June 26, 2000. About 250 participants from 16 countries and the priests who work in Medjugorje took part in this conference.

Listening to what has been done through these ten years for displaced persons and refugees, the destitute and the infirm, invalids of war, war orphans and other

needy people, we became more conscious that we must thank God through Mary Queen of Peace for the experiences of deepened faith and for the aid that we afforded to the imperiled people in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina during and after the war.

We also became more aware that there is still much need on various sides and therefore we decided, according to our capacities, to continue to do good, to broaden the areas of our activities, stirring others also to do the same, confident that we are doing to Jesus whatever we do to one of his least brethren (Mt 25:40).

The presence of representatives from the Jewish, Muslim and Orthodox confessions shows that our help was not limited only to those “in the household of faith” (Gal 6:9). Therefore, we decisively reject all accusations that were expressed in various media about individuals and associations abusing humanitarian work.

We invoke the intercession of the Queen of Peace on all and invite men of good will to join us in helping our brother in need.

In Medjugorje, June 16, 2000 Father Ivan Landeka, Pastor Saint James Parish – Medjugorje Father Leonard Orec, President, Association “Medjugorje–Mir” Split

VISIT of BELGIAN BISHOP

In mid July the bishop of the Belgian city Namour, Msgr. Leonard Andre - Mutien made a three day visit to Medjugorje. On that occasion Father Slavko Barbaric spoke with Bishop Leonard Mutien for Glas Mira. We present here a part of that conversation:

Bishop Mutien: “I met Medjugorje through my seminarians. When I was rector of the school of theology at Saint Paul in Louvain-la-Neuve, 1982 and 1983, some of my students of theology went to Medjugorje. That was at the very beginning of the apparitions. I had never heard it spoken of before. Some students of theology came to me seeking permission to go to Medjugorje during their vacation. I knew nothing about it and I asked them if there existed a position of the Church on Medjugorje. They told me no, that it had only begun a few years earlier, and that the Virgin seemed to be appearing there. They gave me an article to read and I told them, “Go and see, go and see!” They spoke to me several times about it and in 1984 I decided myself to go and see. Four of us priests came with the students of theology

to Medjugorje in June 1984. I must say that what I saw in the parish church in 1984, that folk piety, the manner in which the rosary was prayed, the Eucharist celebrated, the meeting that I had with the visionaries two times during the “apparitions” in the sacristy – all that seemed to me very positive, especially the manner in which they prayed here.

Glas Mira: How many times have you already come to Medjugorje?

Bishop Mutien: This is my second time. The first time, then, I came in 1984. I kept a very positive impression about what I saw here. Later I kept informed. I read the books of Father Laurentin, not all, but a few. I read some articles, and, accordingly, took an interest. Especially while I was a professor at Louvain, I saw among the students some who had been to Medjugorje and who there had discovered prayer, confession, Eucharist, fasting, and I remember that in the theology I began fasting Fridays quite regularly, following the example of some of my students of theology or other students who I met at the university and who had fasted after pilgrimage to Medjugorje. When I became a bishop I met some believers of my diocese who fasted every Friday, who discovered the sacraments, thanks to their encounter with Medjugorje. I established the fact that regularly among the students of theology there were those who experienced conversion and received a vocation, thanks to Medjugorje. Now I have thirty students of theology, among whom there are some who have undergone a spiritual experience here which has marked their vocation. Such fruits are of interest to me. I know that from false premises according to logic we can draw exact conclusions. But still, the fact that so many positive discoveries take place, just with thanks to Medjugorje, is positive evidence in favor of Medjugorje. Accordingly, I continued to inform myself and said that some day I would be able also to return to Medjugorje. In the year 2000 I thought I might be able to take advantage of the Jubilee for a short pilgrimage. The fact that at the present time in France and in Belgium there exists much opposition to the Medjugorje events, books which criticize Medjugorje, moved me to come and see with my own eyes. I do not wish to judge things, situations, and persons from a distance, only from books. I would rather take a little more personal look. After I informed the bishop of Mostar about my coming, I came here as a pilgrim to pray, but also personally to convince myself, and I must say that what I see in the parish church on the pastoral level seems very good: praying the rosary, the Eucharist, adoration, solid

devotion, balanced piety, cultivated devotion. As far as the Medjugorje events are concerned, it is not up to me to decide about that. It up to the local bishop, the bishops of Bosnia-Herzegovina, after a detailed study of the situation, to formulate a judgment about the authenticity or non-authenticity of the apparitions. That is not my business! In every case, I will accept the official judgment of the Church.

Glas Mira: Why does the Church hesitate when good fruits are visible?

Bishop Mutien: I think that the Church in her wisdom with these kinds of phenomena wishes first to investigate the facts, and only then the fruits. I think that is the rule that Cardinal Seper already formulated when he was prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. First the facts are studied, and only then the fruits. Investigating the fruits is not enough. The facts have to be investigated, but the abundance of positive fruits is in itself positive evidence, even if it seems to me that there are, as in every human affair, also negative fruits. Wherever there are people, there are also human moments, sometimes far too human. As also among the twelve apostles . . .

Glas Mira: From where does the opposition come?

Bishop Mutien: I understand why questions are asked about the phenomena of Medjugorje and why there exist objections against the apparitions in Medjugorje. I understand why, for example, questions like these are asked: the multitude of apparitions, the fact that in some manner they are foreseen, known for a certain day. I understand why there is opposition. Personally there are not many a priori thoughts about what the Most Blessed Virgin would need, or what she would not need to do. I prefer to accept things, even if they disturb my personal ideas, but I understand why questions are asked and I believe that, according to what I have been able to see, there are in this phenomenon of Medjugorje essential things, but there are also parasites. I believe there exists that which is fundamental, but also accidentals. One is more positive, and the other is more negative. In Lourdes the testimony of Bernadette impressed me very much, I would say 100% pure. It seems to me that here there were parasites surrounding the central events. I understand why questions are asked. I keep informed also on the questions that the opponents of Medjugorje are asking. One has to hear them, and therefore I read the book of Joachim Boufflet from beginning to end. It is written in a polemical tone which does not seem to me to be in place, but there

are real questions which are asked and which one day have to receive a clear and historically established answer. Accordingly, I accept those questions, but I wish to stay open to the event. I know bishop friends whose rule of behavior is to say: "Look out, if we are open to the events of Medjugorje, we can perhaps encourage something that is not authentic." There exists a risk. I am more sensitive to the opposite risk and say: "Just the same, it is possible that Heaven has spoken to people at that place and I do not wish to take the risk of a priori being closed to that grace." Two risks exist: the risk that we are being deceived in Medjugorje and the risk that we are bypassing a gift of grace.

Glas Mira: A gift from Heaven?

Bishop Mutien: My desire is that those who have the grace and the competence for that, the local bishop, the Bishops' Conference of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a theological and investigative commission, continue to study this phenomenon, to formulate one day the judgment of the Church about what has happened here. Until then, between the two risks, I prefer to take the risk of being open rather than the risk of a priori being closed to the grace of God which can be operating in this place. Accordingly, therefore, I take the position of openness and prudence.

Glas Mira: We Franciscans, awaiting the final judgment, are placing ourselves at the service of the persons who come here. The bishop considers us "disobedient" because of the "apparitions", but we do not have a big choice: if people come here, we have to serve them . . .

Bishop Mutien: As far as I can see, your pastoral work in the parish church is not based on the apparitions as such. It seems to me that there is not a lot of mention of the apparitions when Holy Eucharist and the sacraments are being celebrated. From time to time I even hear: "All the fruits of Medjugorje come simply from the fact that the Eucharist is celebrated, that there is adoration of the Eucharist, that there is confession, that there is prayer. The fruits, accordingly, if there are some, do not come from the alleged apparitions but from the sacraments of the Church." I hear this from time to time.

Glas Mira: Some say: "Where there is prayer, there is grace and miracles."

Bishop Mutien: That logic does not seem to me completely correct. It is true that there where there is prayer, Eucharist, confessions, fruits do come. But there are many other places in the world where there is

prayer, where there is confession, where Eucharist is celebrated, but there are not the same kind of evident fruits!

Glas Mira: You, then, think that this dimension can be attributed to the apparitions?

Bishop Mutien: I believe that it is an indication which has to be studied, an indication that leads to consideration. I regularly meet young people who think about the priesthood or who have had a profound experience of conversion coming here, much more so than in relation to other places and that makes me question. I cannot accept without reservation that the fruits of Medjugorje are connected only with the living of the sacraments. They are also lived in other places. Here there exists something that presents a special question. It is not up to me to pronounce about the reality of these fundamentals, but there is a question that cannot be avoided.

Glas Mira: Finally, is it your wish to give some message here to the world?

Bishop Mutien: I think that on the spiritual plane we are living in a period that demands urgency. I am convinced, as is also Pope John Paul II, that the time of the Jubilee is a time of special grace, as John Paul II has said several times, that is preparing a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church. That which I am expecting from Medjugorje is that it contribute to the preparation of that new outpouring of the Holy Spirit which the Church and world need. Therefore I think that it is more useful to concentrate on the most fundamental, as you are doing here in this parish: to concentrate on the Eucharist which is the source of Christian life, and for the rest I think we need to cultivate the grace of peace and seek for the discernment in connection with Medjugorje to be done in the best possible climate, for the good of the Church.

Glas Mira: We will pray for you. Bless us! Thanks!"

VISIT of STATE OFFICIALS

In recent days Medjugorje was visited by the Vice President of Croatia, Doctor Goran Granic who was interested in the events of this shrine.

Not long ago Medjugorje was visited by the family of the President of Bolivia, his wife, and daughter, two sons-in-law and two grandchildren. On that occasion Mrs. Yolanda de Banzer proclaimed: "I fervently desired to come to Medjugorje. After several attempts it seemed to me that it would also remain an

unfulfilled wish. Now it is fulfilled and I am exceedingly happy." Her stay in Europe began with a meeting with the Holy Father and ended with pilgrimages to Lourdes, Fatima and Banneaux.

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PRESS BULLETIN #151 – 9/6/2000

THE CROSS and THE CRUCIFIED

The celebration of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in the parish of Medjugorje has acquired a special significance by the construction of a large cross on Mount Sipovac. The erected cross has changed the name of the mountain: from then on it is Krizevac: Cross Mountain. Since 1981, catching site of that cross from near and far, millions have prayed, wept and rejoiced. Under that cross the Crucified has changed many human destinies, under that cross innumerable conversions from disbelief to faith have taken place. A cross vowed by the parish on the occasion of the Year of Redemption has become the common good of Christians from the whole world.

The cross, by itself, separated from the Crucified, does not mean much. The Crucified gives it sense and significance. Also those who stood beneath His cross give it meaning, especially the Lord's Mother. Human life has from time immemorial been confronted with suffering and the search for relief. In the cross and in the Crucified both are contained - the reality of suffering and dying and that reversal that took place in the Crucified. In the cross and on Cross Mountain we commemorate that and build it into our life.

Father Ivan Landeka

THE BISHOP of SAINT VINCENT and GRENADA to YOUTH

At the recently held Eleventh International Youth Prayer Festival on the theme: "The Word Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us", one of the speakers was Msgr. Robert Rivas, Bishop of Kingstown, Saint Vincent and Grenada. On that occasion he addressed the assembled young people:

"My dear young people, I am writing to you in the spirit of the Great Jubilee Year. What a privilege it is

to be here with you in Medjugorje for this International Youth Prayer Festival. Thank you for hearing the call and responding to our Blessed Mother's invitation to come together in this oasis of prayer, devotion and spiritual renewal. I admire you for coming from many continents to bear witness to your faith in Jesus Christ, her Son. Thank you for keeping your appointment with Jesus for the Jubilee Year.

Our great Jubilee profession of faith is centered in Christ, in the mystery of the Incarnation. Saint John, the beloved disciple, beckons us to take a deep look into the mystery of the Incarnation and the birth of Christ when he writes in his Gospel: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. These are words of life. This is how close God has come to us. The divine has touched the human. All that was waiting, indeed all of creation, jumped for joy at the announcement of Christ's birth. This is the great event we are celebrating in this Jubilee Year. Young people, may your hearts leap for joy today for your God dwells with you.

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14).

Mary is at the heart of this great mystery of faith. She said "yes" to God and gave Christ to us. The birth of Christ opens the door to the greatest love story ever told or written. Again, Saint John takes us to the heart of the story: "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life" (Jn 3:16.) Mary is the bearer of that love incarnate. Her message to you, young people, is to be bearers of that love to your friends and your peers at the beginning of this new millennium. We are all part of this great love story which has to be lived and told until the end of time. He promised to be with us for all time. This is love, love that lasts for ever. Your faith in Jesus Christ is the most precious 'gift' of love you could share with others. Remember always your Mother's words to you: "Do whatever He tells you!"

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14).

Jesus emptied Himself (Phil 2:7) and identified with us in everything except sin (Heb 4: 14-16). Jesus, therefore, knows where He stands with us. Where do you stand with Jesus? Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, says that Jesus expects great things of young people. Indeed, at the beginning of this new millennium a great responsibility is being placed in

your hands: To receive the faith, to preserve it and to pass it on to your peers and to future generations. Therefore, you cannot wait to see what others are doing. You have to be a light! Do you have a vision of the way forward for you as young Christian women and men? Do you have a plan for deepening and strengthening your commitment to Christ? Where you stand with Christ is a commitment that requires the energy and vibrancy of your youth. Give your youthful zeal to Christ today! Empty yourselves in service and love for others. You could make a big difference in the Church and your society.

Do not be afraid to be the saints of the new millennium!! (15th World Youth Day, message of the Holy Father #3). Do not be afraid to be women and men of hope. Your bishops are counting on you! The Church is counting on you. In his message to you for this year's World Youth Day, our Holy Father points Christ out to you as the one Who is there for you and the one to Whom you must go. "Turn then to no one, except Jesus", he says. "Do not look elsewhere for that which only He can give you" (#3).

Seek always to find Christ everywhere, in everything and in everyone. See Him in the disfigured faces of young people, your peers. Hear His cry in the cries of the poor, the rejected and those crushed by suffering. Hear the cries for justice and be concerned about the needs of others. Meet Christ daily in His Word and fall in love with Him in the Eucharist. Let your prayer be nourished by Eucharistic Adoration. Without a personal relationship to Christ, our lives are empty. Endeavor to make this one of your youthful priorities. Christ wants you to be happy. Therefore, live your faith joyfully. Jesus did not come to take away your joy but rather that through Him you would come to know real joy.

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14).

Young people, I exhort you to make God's choice for life, your choice for life. Become missionaries of life. Listen, as Mary did, to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and be ready and willing to go where Christ needs you to represent Him today. Do not be afraid. Jesus, the Word made flesh, the Bread of Life, your brother, is with you!

I bless you, with your families, your priests, Religious and friends.

Our Lady, Queen of Peace, pray for us.

Medjugorje, August 3, 2000

FATHER IVAN LANDEKA LEAVES MEDJUGORJE - NEW PASTOR

After twelve years of unselfish and dedicated service to God and all the pilgrims who have sought their way to Him, and to the parishioners of the parish of Medjugorje, Father Ivan Landeka has gone to a different ministry. Father Ivan is undertaking the ministry of pastor in the parish of Humac which is known to pilgrims as the starting point of the traditional Peace March for the anniversary of the apparitions and the parish from which Franciscans have for years come to Medjugorje to hear confessions.

In the name of all of you who have felt Father Ivan's concern and care in the course of your pilgrimages to Medjugorje we wish to thank him heartily for every good deed he has done. And there was an abundance of them! We promise him also in this way that our prayers will accompany him in his continuing service to the brothers and sisters.

Also assistant pastor Father Branimir Musa has left Medjugorje and undertaken the ministry of Guardian at the Franciscan monastery in Humac. In the name of all of you, who, moved by Father Branimir's inspired sermons, have discovered the love of God, we heartily thank him and recommend his ministry to your prayers.

The new pastor of the parish of Medjugorje is Father Ivan Sesar, a Franciscan of the Hercegovina Franciscan Province and a doctor of canon law. We hereby wish to express our sincere welcome to him and to the new assistant pastor Father Ljubo Kurtovic and promise them our cooperation and prayers.

JUBILEE 2000 AND MARY

In the letter Tertio Millennio Adveniente Holy Father John Paul II proclaimed that "The affirmation of the central place of Christ cannot therefore be separated from the recognition of the role played by his Most Holy Mother"(43). The calendar of Jubilee celebrations commemorates in a special way the feast days of Mary linked with the mystery of Incarnation. On September 8th the commemoration of Mary's birth is celebrated in conjunction with the nativity of Christ.

At the shrine of "Our Lady of Divine Love" in Rome the 20th International Mariological Marian Congress is being celebrated in conjunction with the Jubilee of Marian Shrines. At midnight on Saturday September 23rd the pilgrimage on foot starts from Saint John

Lateran to the shrine of "Divine Love". On Sunday September 24th the Holy Father will close the Marian Congress and the Jubilee of Marian Shrines with a solemn mass in Saint Peter's Square.

On the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, Saturday October 7th, the original Fatima image of the Mother of God will arrive at Saint Peter's Square where devotees of Mary from the whole world will keep vigil together in prayer in preparation for the act of consecrating the third millennium to the protection of Mary on the occasion of the Jubilee of Bishops. All the Marian groups of the world are invited to participate in the preparation and in this act of consecration.

SEMINAR FOR GUIDES

Because of the interest of many who wish to work as guides at the shrine of the Queen of Peace in Medjugorje, the Association of Pilgrim Guides in the parish of Medjugorje organized a seminar from August 21 - 25th. After the seminar an examination was given. All those who finish this seminar successfully gain the possibility of membership in the Association of Guides, and by that fact also acquire the possibility of working with pilgrim groups. This means that all those who wish to work as guides in the shrine must have learned and acquired sufficient knowledge to be able to provide reliable information to the pilgrims with whom they will be working in the future.

The young people heard lectures in five areas: Scriptural messages (Father Miljenko Stojic), Christian messages (Father Milan Loncar), History of the Church among the Croatian people (Father Ivan Maric), Our Lady's Messages (Father Slavko Barbaric), and Tourism and pilgrimage in the Medjugorje events (Maria Dugandzic).

We take this opportunity to request all those who lead groups to Medjugorje to hire a local guide who can greatly help them during their stay in Medjugorje and, most importantly, they are the persons who are prepared and trained for providing reliable information, and who do their work in cooperation with the Information Office at the shrine of the Queen of Peace in Medjugorje.

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WHAT IS BEING FORGOTTEN?

The world in which we live is always getting smaller. The development and achieved level of modern communication in various fields have assisted people to get more personally acquainted. Better acquaintance creates a more desirable climate for the cooperation and understanding of diverse traditions and of diversity in general. All this has been created by the conditions for the process of globalization that is underway, the outcome of which at this moment we cannot attain to. The process here and there meets with approval. But then, the fears and concerns that are more and more expressed cannot be suppressed. The place and the role of little people are very much in question and the little people feel that. Associations based purely on the level of economy and profit will sooner or later turn into a time bomb. Both recent and more distant history is a sufficient proof of that. One historical content is lost by the marginalization of the religious and the spiritual.

More than that, there is lost a connective tissue which was authentic and was abused, but upon its fundamental elements the greatest attainments of modern man and society blossomed and developed.

Father Ivan Landeka

FEASTS OF MARY'S NATIVITY AND EXALTATION OF THE CROSS

The feast day of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary September 8th was solemnly celebrated. The evening Holy Mass was presided over by the new Medjugorje pastor, Father Ivan Sesar along with 70 concelebrants. A great number of pilgrims had already gathered in Medjugorje for this feast day and many of them stayed in Medjugorje for the celebration of the Exaltation of the Cross.

This year also the feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross was solemnly observed on the first Sunday after the Nativity of Mary - September 10th on Cross Mountain. In the presence of tens of thousands of the faithful holy mass was presided by Father Mijo Dzolan, the Provincial of the Bosnia Franciscan province along with 30 priests. As happens every year a stream of pilgrims flowed into Medjugorje already during the night. Many of them came hundreds and hundreds of kilometers by foot, and some were barefooted.

Here are a few lines from the history of Cross Mountain [Krizevac] and the cross erected on it. About one kilometer from the church of Medjugorje, as the crow flies, Cross Mountain rises up as a continuation of Crnica Hill, forming an angle with it. On its peak (520 meters above sea level) the pastor and people of Medjugorje at that time in 1934 erected an 8.56 meter high reinforced concrete cross in commemoration of the 1900th anniversary of the Passion of Jesus. In it they engraved the words, "To Jesus Christ, Redeemer of the human race, as a sign of their faith, love and hope, the pastor Bernadine Smoljan and the parish of Medjugorje erected [this cross]. From every evil deliver us, O Jesus." On the back side of the cross in memory of the 1900th anniversary of redemption are inscribed the dates "33 - 1933". Relics received from Rome for the occasion are embedded in the cross bar itself. They are a piece of the cross venerated by Christians as the one on which Jesus Christ was crucified, the largest part of which is preserved in the Church of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem in Rome. The cross was completed on March 15, 1934. Later on the custom was established of celebrating Holy Mass at the base of the cross on the first Sunday after Our Lady's birthday in commemoration of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The Cross Mountain does not so much attract pilgrims for its natural beauty nor because of the importance of the cross erected on it, but only because, after the Medjugorje apparitions began, a great number of people claim that they saw various luminous and other "signs" on that cross. Everyone connected them with the apparitions of Our Lady themselves, with the message of the Medjugorje apparitions - peace between God and man and between men. They understood that the way to that peace leads unavoidably through the cross. They included the veneration of the cross in their pilgrimage devotions and practices. Climbing up that difficult, near impossible path to the Cross on the mountain, pilgrims pray the devotion of the Way of the Cross. That is why, along the path on Cross Mountain, fifteen bronze reliefs are placed and the image of Our Lady is in each one of them. Our Lady accompanies both Jesus and us on the way of the cross in our life.

TIME CHANGE of the EVENING PROGRAM

Since September 11th the daily evening program in the church begins at 5 PM and lasts till 8 PM (5 PM rosary, 6 PM Holy Mass, blessings and the third part of the rosary).

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is on Wednesday and Saturday from 9 to 10 PM, and Thursday immediately after the evening mass. Adoration and prayer before the Cross is every Friday in church after the evening mass. Every Sunday at 3 PM the Peace Rosary is prayed on the Hill of Apparition, and every Friday at the same time the Way of the Cross on Cross Mountain (after the change of time this devotion will take place at 2 PM). Opportunity for confessions is provided every evening during the prayer program. After the time change the prayer program in church will not change.

All announcements concerning the prayer program at the shrine of the Queen of Peace in Medjugorje, as well as other announcements, may be obtained from the Information Office by telephone at 00-387-36-651-988 from 9 AM till 5 PM. We request all organizers of pilgrim groups to give notice of their arrival in Medjugorje and to inform their pilgrims about the possibility of obtaining necessary information at the Information Office, which is located right in front of the parish house, and not at the parish office.

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REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of AUGUST 25, 2000

Dear Children! I desire to share my joy with you. In my Immaculate Heart I feel that there are many who have drawn closer to me and are in a special way carrying the victory of my Immaculate Heart in their hearts by praying and converting. I desire to thank you and to inspire you to work even more for God and His Kingdom with love and the power of the Holy Spirit. I am with you and I bless you with my maternal blessing. Thank you for having responded to my call.

(A copy of a message claimed to be given by the Blessed Virgin Mary to Marija Pavlovic Lunetti on August 25, 2000. The PFMC upholds the final decision of the Catholic Church as to the authenticity of this Medjugorje message.)

Through Marija Pavlovic-Lunetti, Mary again gave us a message on August 25. This message is really a bit different than most in that, as we will see, she speaks of her joy and then also tells us the reason for this joy.

I DESIRE TO SHARE MY JOY WITH YOU

Of course we know that there is no sorrow in Heaven, nor any suffering and not even a shadow of any suffering. There only eternal peace, eternal love and certainly also eternal joy exist. Mary has this joy in her heart and she tells us that she wishes to share it with us. Joy is also a very common subject in the Bible, in the Old as well as in the New Testament, and how often do we read in the Psalmists and in other Prophets "I rejoice in the Lord", "my heart rejoices" and similar expressions? Jesus rejoices and speaks about a joy which of course has qualities other than only those of earthly joy. Jesus speaks of a joy that is also possible during suffering and persecution because our names have already been written in Heaven, and it is this that will give us a true joy. And joy in itself is something that one must always wish to share with others and which also ought to be shared. If someone hides their joy in their hearts, then he has already lost it. If someone behaves egotistically with his joy, then that is certainly not a true joy at all. So Mary wishes to share her joy with us and that is why we must be open toward this joy and also ask God that the type of joy that Mary has in her heart may also enter ours.

IN MY IMMACULATE HEART I FEEL THAT THERE ARE MANY WHO HAVE DRAWN CLOSER TO ME AND ARE IN A SPECIAL WAY CARRYING THE VICTORY OF MY IMMACULATE HEART IN THEIR HEARTS BY PRAYING AND CONVERTING

This is the reason for Mary's joy. When Mary mentions her Immaculate Heart, then we should also remember that she was never touched by Original Sin, and that she had therein gotten an immeasurably great grace from God in that she was not wounded by any sin. That is why the angel at the Annunciation was able to greet her with "Hail Mary, full of grace" and then she also went through life without any personal sin. Because of this she is pure grace. We are unable to follow Mary in this regard because all of us have been born in sin and are therefore wounded by sin.

Through Baptism we are freed of this sin, but the fruits of sin have always remained in us. We are unable to be similar to her. But, then there are many other qualities of hers, which we are able to enact and thus behave as she would. She says, "Father, Thy will be done. I am Your servant." We can be this way, and it is this behavior that she wishes of us. She wants us to decide for God's will and to also do it, and when that is the case it is really the beginning of the victory of

her Immaculate Heart. Everyone, who like Mary, decides for God and also stays loyal to Him, in placing Jesus in the first place in their lives, has already created the correct conditions for the victory that she always did and still does carry in her Immaculate Heart. If we ask ourselves how this victory of the Immaculate Heart comes about, then the answer is very simple and clear. The one who decides for God and who in so doing accepts Jesus as the Way, the Truth, the Light and Life and then acts out of love, does his work out of love, prays out of love and also constantly is fighting against all sin and against Satan, already has this victory. And also all those who untiringly fight against all negativity and who decide for all that is good will also carry this victory further. The triumph of the Immaculate Heart starts in our hearts and is therefore at first invisible, but all those who carry this victory in their hearts will also be able to help those in their families, in their communities and parishes and all others whom they encounter in their lives, to experience and to live this victory. In this Jubilee Year we should really believe, hope and pray that this victory, about which Mary speaks, may become visible so that all evil and Satan may really be conquered so that God's Kingdom may come into the world through us.

***I DESIRE TO THANK YOU AND TO
INSPIRE YOU TO WORK EVEN MORE FOR
GOD AND HIS KINGDOM WITH LOVE
AND THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT***

We are already accustomed to Mary thanking us, because nearly every message ends with the expression, "Thank you for having responded to my call". When we ask ourselves who and what she is thanking for, then we must realize that she does not wait until we have done everything in order to thank us, but rather once she sees the decision in our hearts to live for what is good and to fight against what is not, that she will already then say "thank you". This, when seen as a pedagogic method, is also the best rule for all teaching, because those who thank us are also those who see the good in us and also the good that we have done even when it is still very small. Moreover, we will also open our hearts toward those who see what is good in us and then remain open to accept new impulses and, if need be, new requests. All of us, and especially parents and teachers, should learn to see all that is good in those for whom we are responsible and to thank them for it, because only then will our attempts to teach succeed because those in whom we recognize what is good will also be ready to

continue to work upon what is good. Being blind or deaf toward what is good in the others really means that we have built walls between each other and are therefore no longer able to see and hear one another, and this then is a peaceless and dissatisfying situation. So we should really like to accept Mary's words "I thank you" for at least that for which we have decided to do and let ourselves be inspired to do even more with love and the power of the Holy Spirit for God and His Kingdom. Here we of course also think of Jesus' words when He says, "seek and wish the Kingdom of Heaven and all else will be given to you". The love and the strength of the Holy Spirit will be given to us when we really pray every day and then also remain loyal to doing so. So as soon as we decide for what is good, meaning that we begin to work for God and for his Kingdom, and as soon as this work has begun in our hearts and in our lives, we will also be able to help the others, in our families as well as everywhere else. This is also our assignment. Doing so, in other words, is our testimony. These day's testimonies of being Christian are often missing because we have so often started measuring ourselves according to the world and then think and act as though we never knew Jesus. The Kingdom of Heaven is the Kingdom of Peace, Love, Justice, Mercy, Goodness, Respect and Activity for Life. During this Jubilee Year we should really come to decide for God and His Kingdom so that we may begin this new millenium as people who are full of God and who have decided to dedicate themselves entirely to His Kingdom. This after all is the only reason for Mary's presence, apparitions and messages here.

***I AM WITH YOU AND I BLESS YOU WITH
MY MATERNAL BLESSING***

The only new message in Medjugorje is Our Lady's daily presence here without which no one is able to understand, much less explain, Medjugorje. This is why we should thank Mary for each day and for each apparition with which she is showing us her presence, and should be happy to open ourselves for her motherly blessing. It is really wonderful to know that Mary is blessing us with her motherly blessing because here it does not only concern a formula or a word but rather her being here for us with all of her being. When she blesses us then it means that she is praying for us, protecting us, leading us, teaching us, interceding for us, and that she is with us, because all this is always contained in any motherly blessing. A mother does so much more than merely speak, because her entire being and all her activities happen only for her child's well-being. And when we know

that we are blessed by Mary in such a way, then we certainly are strengthened with renewed security and renewed courage on our path with her to Jesus and then also into the Eternal Glory. And now that we have quickly reflected on this month's message, I again invite us all to now pray together...

God, our Father, God of Life, God of Peace, God of Love and God of Joy, in the name of Your Son, Jesus, along with Mary, we ask You, free us of all sorrow that has come by way of sin and the wounds of sin, and fill our hearts with Your joy. Give us deep humility and the readiness to accept and to live Your will so that the Victory that Mary experienced in her Immaculate Heart may also be realized in our hearts. Give us all, O Father, the strength to become people of peace, of love, of justice, of mercy and thereby witnesses to Your Victory in this world. In the name of Your Son, Jesus, we denounce all sin, Satan and all his works, and wish to form our lives here on earth with Mary, Your Most Humble Servant. We ask You, O Father, for all those who still have their hearts closed to You due to sorrow, fear, negative feelings, hate, jealousy, envy, dependencies, or are wounded and are thus hindered from Mary's path to You. We ask You, bless all people whom we meet so that we may help them on the path to the victory about which Mary has spoken to us in this message. Give us the love and the strength to be able to do everything out of love for You and for Your Kingdom.

Make us capable of becoming Your witnesses in our families, our parishes, the Church and the world so that we are ready to witness Your love as Your own children. Mary, we thank you for the joy that you share with us. We thank you for the victory that your Immaculate Heart gained for us and help us, through your intercession and your motherly blessing, to really become your children and thereby also good students in this school of love, so that we may all become a blessing for all the world. With You, Mary, we ask Jesus to help us and all the world. Help us become free of all sin and of all evil, so that we, like You, Mary, may all decide entirely for God. May it be this way.

Amen.

**Father Slavko Barbaric
Medjugorje; 26 August 2000**

REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of SEPTEMBER 25, 2000

Again I greet all those who wish to follow Mary's messages and here I really wish for us all to learn everything that Mary wants of us – this meaning that we understand it and then accept it.

TODAY I CALL YOU TO OPEN YOURSELVES TO PRAYER. MAY PRAYER BECOME JOY FOR YOU

We are already accustomed to such calls when it concerns prayer because they are made so often. Here one must say only once more that prayer can only under one condition become a joy, and that is that we have true love for God in our hearts. That is why it is so very important that we do not forget to pray with Mary on the 2nd of every month and also every day for the experience of God's love. This is because we know that when we meet someone who loves us and whom we also love, our heart opens itself and this brings us joy. This is also the case when we are suffering, because when a person whom we love visits us there is joy in our heart. And so it must be this way, and even more so, when it here concerns God. God loves us immeasurably and untiringly, and so when He visits us there is true joy in our hearts, and it is really sad when we are not experiencing this joy. God loves us immeasurably and untiringly, and therefore every prayer should also become a joy. It is true that many Christians have not experienced this joy and that is why they are not praying or only a very little and very quickly. And such a prayer can of course never bring us joy because for every true encounter one needs time. At the same time we ought not wait for this joy in order to start praying, but rather we should immediately decide for prayer, and then soon the love for God will be there and through that also the joy.

RENEW PRAYER IN YOUR FAMILIES

This first of all again means that every single person ought to pray, and even when no one else decides for prayer each one of us can still pray by himself. This is the beginning of all prayer. We may simply not wait for the others and only then become active ourselves. In Mary's school everyone decides for himself and when this becomes the ruling logic then the next step to community prayer can be made. And, in the same way, the first prayer group is the one that happens in the family. This means that the parents will pray with the children and the children with the parents. When we hear this September message we will also automatically come to think of October which is

Mary's month as well as the month of the Rosary, but here in Medjugorje every day is Mary's day and every month is also Mary's month, and it has now been this way for 19 years and 3 months because we have been praying all 3 Rosaries in the church and so that all our time becomes Mary's time. But it is also important that this prayer comes into the families and I really hope that all pilgrims will now again begin to organize prayer in their families at home. The prayers for peace, love and reconciliation inside the families is absolutely necessary. If the family is really meant to be a Christian family, then it will pray the Rosary together and also read Holy Scripture together. And how beautiful it is when the family together experiences God's love for them and also comes to understand God's words! Without prayer in the family the children will never be able to grow up in their faith, and here lies the parents' great responsibility in that they are able to find the right place in their families for prayer. We all know how difficult it can become to create this time, and we all know all those excuses all too well. The parents' work, the constant hecticness and even more so the TV, and those many other excuses, none of which are valid reasons for not taking the time for prayer. Finally there exists only one reason that one does not pray in the families, and that is the lacking love in the hearts for God and for our faith. We are very grateful to God for all the families that have again started to pray together because of Mary's presence and her messages here in Medjugorje. Prayer must be a part of all families which wish to be Christian families. If only Sunday Mass is what is considered as family prayer, then this is of course good but at the same time very, very far from sufficient. Many Christians go the Holy Mass on Sundays but still do not pray there, and that is why visiting Mass remains a simple habit that is of course not bad because it is good, but at the same time it will never carry any true fruits because one can and must only prepare oneself for Mass in prayer. Therefore let us all pray that the families may be filled with the love for God so that they all may return to praying inside their families. The families with small children can still pray even when the small cannot yet sit still long enough for a whole Rosary, but they still can for some time. One can expect some quiet time from them but then later also let them play with something, but where they still remain conscious of the fact that one is praying or reading Holy Scripture. This experience is very important for the small children and one may simply never say that small children do not understand, because they understand very, very well what it concerns when their parents and older siblings are

together in peace and are praying. And so again, one must simply start praying and then the rest of the family will eventually also open itself to prayer. Mary's call continues...

AND FORM PRAYER GROUPS

Our first prayer group, which we today call Ivan's group and in which the other visionaries participated occasionally, was formed on July 4, 1982. Then there is Jelena's group which Mary called for and led through Jelena's inner voice. Ivan's group meets twice a month on the mountains, but then also sometimes in their houses where Mary has taught them how to pray. Jelena's group also occasionally met inside the Parish Office, and these days it still continues every Tuesday evening and certainly these two groups gave the idea to many pilgrims to do the same at home. They in this way came to understand what this call of Mary's meant and we today know that this example has been followed all over the world because it was most often Medjugorje pilgrims who started such groups. It is most important that one simply begins because we know of many groups that simply started with the Rosary while today many of them have also come to organize hours of Adoration, and in some cases they have even entered other parishes where they got others to also start Adoration again where over the years, for some unknown reasons, they had stopped doing so. And from these groups many fruits have also become evident, such as callings for the Priesthood and also other charisms. It is in fact very easy to form a prayer group, and the core of this is that only one person decides for prayer and then seeks just one other person to join him. I always repeat that we should never say that the others do not wish to pray, but rather that when we have decided to form a prayer group, then we should just ask around to see whether others wish to join us in this decision. If it turns out that the healthy among us do not wish to join, then what we do next is to go to the old or the ill and ask them whether we might be permitted to visit them perhaps once a week in order to pray a Rosary with them. I can very well imagine that the old or the ill would be very happy to have such a visit and might then even request of us to come to do this with them every day. Jesus says that "wherever two or three meet in My name, there I will be among them". And today so many prayer groups that are based upon the Medjugorje messages are reaching around the whole world much like a chain, and with Mary we pray that the programs that God has entrusted her with are today coming to be reality, and most especially that peace may come into all those hearts and that through

them peace will finally come to the whole world. Because without prayer this will never be the case. Then Mary says...

IN THIS WAY, YOU WILL EXPERIENCE JOY IN PRAYER AND TOGETHERNESS

Of course, prayer, among much else, is primarily a language and as is the case in any other language, one can only learn it when one practices it with others. Therefore it is important not only to pray the Rosary and to read Holy Scripture in the prayer group, but also to talk openly about our experiences with God in our prayers, and here also to speak about the difficulties that we might be having. And when this trust has been built up, when what is happening in our hearts can be spoken about freely, then the joy and the togetherness will also be realized. And in such atmospheres the charisms will have an opportunity to grow. Prayer groups are necessary so that we come to learn how to pray, but also as an insurance that we will remain on a good path. It is also very important that a Priest be there or at the very least hears occasionally what is going on there so that the individuals as well as the whole group also have the needed protection from a Church authority so that everything there remains on a correct path. That is why Mary says that...

ALL THOSE WHO PRAY AND ARE MEMBERS OF PRAYER GROUPS ARE OPEN TO GOD'S WILL IN THEIR HEARTS AND JOYFULLY WITNESS GOD'S LOVE

It is exactly from this exchange of experiences that we will come to understand how the others are opening themselves to God's will and in such a way they will also come to understand themselves more easily what the will of God is for them. It is interesting that all of us can see and understand more easily what God's will is for the others, than it is for ourselves; but they then can help us by way of their own experiences. And in this way our faith can grow as well as our trust in God, in His will, and also in the others, because it is often the case that people who are fearful or distrusting of God's will for them also knowingly or unknowingly make God responsible for all their problems or failures, or when they are suffering say that it must be God's will. We must at all times remain very clear about the fact that God only wants us to be happy and to be in peace, and that everything will eventually turn out for the good. And to speak about this with others means that we become more secure and then one opens oneself more easily to God's will.

And once when we have been touched in such a way by God's love for us, then we will also very soon witness joyfully for God's love for us. This witness, that Jesus expects from all Christians when for instance Jesus says that we are the salt and the light for the world, can only be given when we first have received this salt and light from Him. We will only become the salt of the world when we first receive this love from Jesus. Once we are carrying God's love for us in our hearts, then nothing and no-one will be able to hinder us from witnessing God's love to the others with joy, and most especially in the world as it is today in which so many people have lost themselves, are living in sadness, are living in turmoil because they are so far from having experienced God's love for them. Medjugorje has helped so many people in real ways to become joyful witnesses of God's love, and for this we must all be extremely grateful. More and more people are coming here all the time, simply because once people have felt that finally something real is happening somewhere, they will very easily turn into pilgrims – pilgrims being the people who seek God in other people who have special charisms or in towns where God has shown Himself in special ways. Only the love of God which finds space in people will finally save this world, and this love which, as Saint Paul says, is also courageous and creative will also show the people who carry it with them how they will be able to help this world and its people who have yet to experience God's love. This is of course Mary's intention, and this is the only real purpose of her apparitions here in Medjugorje. Mary again says...

I AM WITH YOU, I CARRY ALL OF YOU IN MY HEART

...and we have already spoken about this, but only to repeat it here quickly once again, one cannot sensibly explain Medjugorje without accepting Mary's being present here, and we have also spoken already about...

AND I BLESS YOU WITH MY MOTHERLY BLESSING

Everything that Mary does, all her activities as our mother and as our teacher are a blessing for us. So it is she in all her aspects that is the real blessing for us and where it does not merely mean that she is repeating an expression to us. But from her speaking it we should again learn and through our conversion and our new ways of behaving we ourselves should become a real blessing for all those around us. Because it is after all truly a blessing for us when we meet a real Christian and therefore clear and honest person. Just as it is a

joy for parents when they know that their own children meet with other good Christian children and are therefore also helping each other on their mutual paths. When Mary tells us that she is carrying all of us in her heart, this then is a special expression of her love for and her acceptance of us. When on a human level we say that someone is in our heart or is enclosed in our heart, and as a song says, I have lost the key to it, then all this means the same thing, that you will stay there forever in my heart. About this there is really not so much one can say except to accept it, to be happy about it and to simply believe that Mary is carrying all of us in her heart and for us to also do everything we possibly can to also be able to remain there. Certainly Mary would also tell us that she has lost the key to her heart, that we will remain in her heart forever, because she as our mother will always love us even when we momentarily, for any one of many reasons, might be weak and proud, might be a bit distant from her, she will still be very close to us. So all of us must remain very grateful for all that she is for us, for all that she is telling us, for all that she does for us, and for all this we also wish to pray...

God, our Father, in the name of Your Son Jesus who prayed and who taught His Apostles to pray, we ask You along with Mary, Your most humble servant and our mightiest Intercessor, fill our hearts with love so that we may open our hearts to prayer and that prayer may become a joyful encounter with You. Father, we ask You in the name of Your Son and with Mary, teach us to pray, teach our parents to pray, teach our families to pray, teach the prayer groups to pray, so that we who pray may experience that we are Your children; so that we may in togetherness experience joy in our being brothers and sisters; so that we encounter You, our Father, in prayer; so that we may experience that You are our Father, and so that we may encounter all the others as our brothers and sisters and thereby may, in togetherness, experience the family that we all are. Reveal, O Father, through the Holy Spirit to all Your children, Your holy will, so that we may all become joyful witnesses to Your love in this world. We pray for all those who are baptized but who no longer pray and for those who are praying but who are not encountering You or the others, so that in their hearts they may all open themselves to Your love. We pray, O Father, free this world, free every single person, free every

family from all that is evil, and give the whole world Your peace. Mary, we thank You for Your presence here in Medjugorje, we thank You for Your motherly blessing, and most especially we thank You that you are carrying each of us as a mother in Your Immaculate Heart. Bless us, O Mary, every one of us, every family and prayer group, and the whole world, help us and teach us, so that we, with You, may remain on the right path until each of us meets Jesus; in this way prepare each of us to enter the Third Millenium with You and with Your son, Jesus, and to remain constantly with You in order to witness to the others God's love for us. We pray for all those who at this moment are suffering, who are without joy and who are alone, and who therefore closed themselves to God, to His love for them and to the love of the others. Open the hearts of all non-believers, O Mary, so that they too will experience the will of God, that they too may experience that they are in Your heart, so that they too can then remain on the right path with You to Jesus in eternity. So may it be.

Amen.

**Father Slavko Barbaric, OFM
Medjugorje; September 27, 2000**

MARIAN SHRINE or 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.

Kathleen will be speaking at Saint Veronica Parish in Howell, NJ, on Tuesday, December 12, 2000.

For details, call Saint Veronica Parish, 732-363-4200.

NOTICES for *PFMC* AREA EVENTS

Would you be so kind as to copy one or more of following BULLETIN NOTICES and then take them to your Pastor and / or Parish Bulletin Coordinator? Ask them to publish these notices to support the events for which you have an interest. It does wonders when a parishioner asks for a bulletin notice as compared to the thousands of requests that come in from outside the parish.

If you can work with us to promote devotion to Jesus through Mary in your parish, please contact us and we will assist you in any way we can. We are always looking for Parish representatives to join with the nationwide organization called Medjugorje in America, which exists on a network of regional, diocesan, area, and parish representatives.

Thanks for your assistance, we really need and appreciate it.

BIBLE STUDY - "TYPOLOGY" with PETER DAWSON, 1st and 3rd MONDAY'S at 7:30 PM

Bible study using "TYPOLOGY" as discussed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and lead by Peter Dawson will be held in the Great Room at Epiphany House of the Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) on the 1st and 3rd Mondays starting in October. Call 856-768-9228 for directions.

7 PM to 9 PM THURSDAY NIGHT SEMINARS on the HISTORY and DEVELOPMENT of CHRIST'S DIVINELY ESTABLISHED CHURCH

Dean Pulcini will be teaching a course called "CATHOLIC APOLOGETICS – DEFENDING YOUR FAITH" which will offer a basic understanding of the Catholic faith in comparison to and contrasted with Protestantism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

The Thursday evening programs from 7 PM to 9 PM will be held in the Great Room at Epiphany House of the Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC). Call 856-768-9228 for directions.

DAY of RECOLLECTION with Our Lady

Father Jay Bowden, Pastor of Epiphany Parish, Brick, NJ, will hold a day of recollection with Our Lady on Thursday, October 26, 2000 from 10 AM to 4 PM at the Epiphany House of the Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC). Please call 856-768-9228 to make a reservation for the day. Father has held several days of recollection for us, and has a true devotion to Our Lady. A free will offering will be accepted.

VOTE on TUESDAY, 11/7/2000!

Educate yourself as best you can on candidate views and positions. Look at past voting records where available. Read diocesan newspapers where surveys of candidate's answers to pertinent questions are often printed. Vote for the candidate who most closely agrees with the moral and pro-life issues God teaches us in the Bible AND has a chance to win. In a closely contested race it is often best to pick the lesser of two evils rather than not to vote at all. Encourage all your friends and neighbors to vote in local, state and national elections.

PFMC 2001 RETREAT CONFERENCE

"If I but touch His clothes, I shall be cured" (Mk 5:28)

Reserve the weekend of February 23rd, 24th and 25th 2001 for the Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) 2001 RETREAT CONFERENCE at the Four Points Hotel in Cherry Hill, NJ 08034. The main speaker will be Father John Hampsch, C.M.F. Saturday night's Healing Service will be introduced by Doctor Junie and Mrs. Sarah Irizari who gave up their respective careers in the Philippines to evangelize their Roman Catholic Faith. The 3-day extension on the Healing Gifts of the Holy Spirit will feature Father Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J.

For an information sheet with registration form, call the PFMC at 856-768-9228 or visit the PFMC web site at: <http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith>

Please make ROOM RESERVATIONS on the list with the Four Points Hotel, 1-800-325-3535, NOW and plan to pre-register for the RETREAT CONFERENCE with the PFMC as soon as you receive an information sheet with registration form.

Kathleen as well as all the PFMC Volunteer Staff

CALENDARS:

In *October*, the Church celebrates the Feasts of *Saint Luke, Evangelist (18) and Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles (28)* and the Memorials of *Saints Francis of Assisi (4), Bruno (6), John Leonardi (9), Denis and Companions (9), Pope Callistus I (14), Hedwig (16), Margaret Mary Alacoque (16), Ignatius of Antioch (17), Isaac Jogues, John de Brébeuf and Companions (19), Paul of the Cross (20), John of Capistrano (23), Anthony Mary Claret (24)* as well as *The Guardian Angels (2), Blessed Marie-Rose Durocher (6) and Our Lady of the Rosary (7)*. Church calendars show **Columbus Day (9)**.

In *November*, the Church celebrates the Solemnities of *ALL SAINTS (1)*, of the *Dedication of Saint John Lateran (9)* and *Saint Andrew the Apostle (30)*, and Memorials of *Saints ALL SOULS (2), CHRIST the KING (22)*, the Feasts *Martin de Porres (3), Charles Borromeo (4), Leo the Great (10), Martin of Tours (11), Josaphat (12), Frances Xavier Cabrini (13), Albert the Great (15), Gertrude the Great (16), Margaret of Scotland (16), Elizabeth of Hungary (17), Rose Philippine Duchesne (18), Cecilia (22), 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 *Election Day (7), Veterans Day (11) and Thanksgiving Day (26)*.

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE on ELECTION DAY, TUESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2000. It is critical that every voter cast their vote for the candidate(s) who best represent(s) Christian moral and pro-life values.

AROUND the PFMC AREA

Try to participate in daily Holy Mass or make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament during your travels to and from work or on errands.

Reserve the weekend of February 23rd, 24th and 25th 2001 for the PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE at the Four Points Hotel in Cherry Hill, NJ 08034 with Father John Hampsch, C.M.F. The 3-day extension on the Healing Gifts of the Holy Spirit will feature Father Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J.

Please make your ROOM RESERVATIONS on the list with the Four Points Hotel, **1-800-325-3535**, NOW and plan to pre-register for the RETREAT CONFERENCE with the PFMC using the gold information sheet with registration form inserted in this issue of "The PILGRIM."

For more information, call the PFMC at 856-768-9228.

INTERNET

Surf for the PFMC presence on the Internet at:



<http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith>

If you wish to see pictures of the twins or related Werner family information, visit:

<http://www.geocities.com/keithwerner>

Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC), A Religious Association, Inc.

NON-PROFIT and IRS Code 501(c)(3) TAX EXEMPT

Keith and Kathleen Werner, Co-Directors

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If there is no time to read it all now, please put it with other reading material in a place where you can read at least an article per day until the next issue arrives. We operate on divine providence and the kind donations of those who can afford to support us. **PRIESTS!** Please note that **HOMILY** ideas have come from priests reading articles in "The PILGRIM!"

