



The **PILGRIM**

Vol. 11 No. 3 *Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC)*

March 2000

Our Lady's MESSAGE of 2/25/2000 via Marija Pavlovic Lunetti and the *Franciscans* at Medjugorje

Dear Children! Wake up from the sleep of unbelief and sin, because this is a time of grace which God gives you. Use this time and seek the grace of healing of your heart from God, so that you may see God and man with the heart. Pray in a special way for those who have not come to know God's love, and witness with your life so that they also can come to know God and His immeasurable love. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Father Slavko Barbaric's REFLECTION begins on page 24

A PRAYER

Dearest Lord, As Holy Thursday approaches, my heart experiences a time of Hope, and draws me into the hiddenness of the empty tomb.

Lord, I press my lips to the wounds of the Cross. My grief overwhelms me. My sins convict me. The silence is my defeat. My eyes are cast down. The 30 pieces of silver lay before me. My sins are entwined in their senseless value. I wait in solitude. I watch as they accuse you because of my sins. Before you I wait, and I watch in the garden. Oh Lord, you have never left me an orphan. Let me not lose courage to walk the way of the Cross with you. AMEN!

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

CONSECRATION and DEDICATION of the ADDITION to EPIPHANY HOUSE

The ***Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC)*** is blessed to invite each of our readers to the Blessing and Dedication of the new addition to **Epiphany House** at **61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ**. We ask that you join in this celebration with the entire volunteer staff including **Keith** and **Kathleen Werner**, the owners of the property, **Epiphany House** and its new addition.

The Blessing and Dedication services will start at **12 NOON** on **Saturday, March 25th 2000**, the Feast of the **Annunciation to Our Lady**. Open House will follow and will go until about **5 PM**. We hope that you will come and see the new facility and enjoy the refreshments.

The headquarters for the **PFMC** will be located in the ground floor of the 5000 square foot two floor addition to **Epiphany House**. Since 1989 the ministry which is now

"The *PILGRIM*" for March 2000 is dedicated to "Our Lady, Spouse of the Holy Spirit and Saint Joseph." The Table of Contents or "IN THIS ISSUE . . ." block is on page 3.

the **PFMC** has operated from the **Werner** home at **129 Deerfield Avenue in Marlton, NJ**, with most of the activities from the converted 2 car garage.

The offices and technical equipment for production of **"The *PILGRIM*"** periodical as well as volunteer staff support for organizing pilgrimages, retreats, conferences, etc. will be moved to the first floor spaces made available for them. Offices for **Keith, Kathleen** and other volunteers with computer installations will be set up there. Books and religious articles will be available from there, as well as a mail service for sending them out to anyone who orders.

The upstairs contains a large family great room with TV and audio systems as well as wall-to-wall bookshelves for religious reference books (library) and reading areas. The **PFMC** and **Werner** family prayer area will be set up at the opposite end from the TV area. The second floor also has a sun room for prayer and reconciliation.

The **Epiphany House** is so named for the star leading the Magi and us to Christ. It will house guests such as priests, nuns, speakers, volunteer staff and friends.

Parking will be available at **61 Cooper Road** but will be limited to about a dozen spaces. Overflow parking will be available at the **RED** house next door (**57 Cooper Road**) or in the huge parking lot at **Marshall's** on **Route 73** and **Cooper Road**. This is a long block walk from **Route 73** to the new **PFMC**. You are encouraged to stop by **61 Cooper** and arrange for a ride from the shopping center if you have difficulty walking a long block in the street.

If you can **R.S.V.P.** to **856-768-9228** or fax to **856-768-9428** or e-mail to PFMCkmw@aol.com it would be greatly appreciated. We will be having the refreshments catered so the volunteers can join in the enjoyment. We want to make sure that there is enough without having waste.

Hope to see you there. Please take note of and copy directions on pages 14 and 15. Thank you and God Bless you for all your prayers and your support.

(Keith and Kathleen Werner, Co-directors)

BIBLE STUDY at the NEW **PFMC**

We will be hosting a **Bible Study Group** in the **Great Room** of the **PFMC** starting **Monday, March 27th**. The classes will run every 2nd and 4th **Monday** of the month and will start at **7:30 PM**. Classes will last for approximately *1 ½ hour* and will be hosted by **Peter J. Dawson**.

All priests and nuns are welcome to attend. There is no fee for this program, but donations will be accepted for electricity, heating and maintenance of the new building.

We are honored that **Mr. Dawson** has approached us to teach in the **PFMC**.

Peter J. Dawson is a lector and **Bible** study moderator in his parish, **Saint Gregory in Magnolia, NJ**. He has written a manual on an aspect of **Bible** study called “**typology**”, which focuses in on the symbols in the **Bible**. It is a core to good Bible study. He has written for **Catholic Answer** magazine as well as **Biblical Archaeology Review**.

He has long been a member of an amateur archaeology association known as **The Epigraphic Society**, a world-wide organization dedicated to the study of ancient inscriptions and ruins comprising evidence of contacts across the oceans in ancient times.

Peter goes out of his way in his **Bible** study ministry to confirm the legitimacy of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The teachings will be interactive and very objective. **Peter** would like to share with you teachings that will bring the **Bible** the Church alive.

YOUTH GROUP

The **PFMC** Youth Group instructors, coordinated by **JoAnn Niece**, will soon become certified in the **Diocese of Camden** under the direction of **Father Mazzarella**.

They hope to begin Youth Group meetings. If you are interested in enrolling your child, please call **JoAnn Niece** on *Wednesday or Thursdays 10:30 AM-5 PM*.

PETITIONS and SUPPORT for the **PFMC**

All slips received with intentions on them are placed in a basket in our prayer room where they are prayed for daily. **THEY ARE THEN TAKEN TO THE SHRINES WITH US WHEN WE GO ON PILGRIMAGE**. This year they will be taken to Rome and left for our Holy Father to pray for. So you are remembered in your needs by the many prayers of all who volunteer at the **PFMC** as well as those who pilgrimage with us

The **PFMC** is a **LAY CATHOLIC MINISTRY** that is **totally** dependent upon financial donations to keep it going.

Every person working in the **PFMC** is a **volunteer** for Our Lady’s work of converting souls to her Son, Jesus.

We hate to beg, but the work for so many souls is important. A **monthly** effort to support issues of “**The PILGRIM**,” the addition to **Epiphany House** for the headquarters of the **PFMC** and our work in the **PFMC** is greatly appreciated.

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**.

Thank you and God bless you,

Kathleen and Staff

STRONG ARMS and BACKS / MOVERS NEEDED

We need strong arms and backs to help us move into the new building – we’d like to get about 20 people for 1 - 2 days. We hope we can schedule this for the second and third weekends in **March, 2000**. Ladies, please ask your spouse, male friends, etc. if they will sign up to help us move.

LANDSCAPE / GARDEN WORKERS NEEDED

We have a beautiful donated statue of **Our Lady** of **Lourdes** waiting to be erected in a Marian Grotto we plan to erect. If you are a helper of **Saint Francis**, and could help us plan, garden and landscape the new **PFMC** yard for **Our Lady**, she would be quite happy, and so would we. We need to complete the heavy equipment work and reset the major pieces of landscaping before laying the irrigation pipes.

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

NEEDED –POWER WASH and PRESERVE

Is there someone who could reinforce the front porch deck, power wash it and protectively preserve it?

AIRLINE DEADLINES for PILGRIMAGES

PLEASE DO NOT WAIT TO MAKE UP YOUR MIND ON A PILGRIMAGE. If you want to go, send in your registration and deposit at least 60 days before the pilgrimage departs

All of the airlines have become **very strict** with their deadlines for names when holding group accommodations. The requirement of 60 days notice for holding a seat with a name is absolutely required. If we do not have sufficient registrations and deposits we must make the financial commitment or our seat availability is adjusted. It is at that time that we are often left with not enough seats or having to cancel.

If there is an emergency, everything will be done to obtain as much of a refund as possible. Don't miss a pilgrimage opportunity just because you are unsure. Call us and send in your reservation form with deposit as soon as you can.

PILGRIMAGE to the SHRINES of ITALY with FATHER JIM SAUCHELLI – JOIN US!

We will depart from **Philadelphia** on *May 1, 2000*, with **Father Jim Sauchelli** as our **Spiritual Director**. **Father Jim** has traveled with us many times, and we have had wonderful spiritual experiences under his watchful eye.

The total requested donation including all air, transfers by a lovely motor coach, escort and guides, all entrance fees in appropriate places, hotels, portage of 1 bag, and all of your breakfasts and suppers is **\$2699 plus \$60 taxes**.

This 14 day pilgrimage to the **East of Italy Shrines** is a lifetime experience. With a convenient departure from **Philadelphia via London**, we land in **Venice, Italy** (a change from previous scheduled Verona, Italy). Our hotels are 3 and 4 star hotels, all with private baths, and convenient locations to all of our places of travel.

Our schedule is as follows:

May 1-2, 2000 Monday-Tuesday: Departing at 6:20 PM from **PHILADELPHIA, PA** on **British Airways** via **LONDON Heathrow** into **VENICE, ITALY**

May 2-4, Tuesday-Thursday: Bus to **Hotel Ritz** in **ABANO TERME**, a very quaint town full of shops, fountains and parks. On the first afternoon, rest and become accustomed to the time change. On **Wednesday** enjoy a full day excursion to **VENICE**, which is visited by water taxi and then on foot through cobblestone streets and over canals. See the magnificent **Piazza San Marco**, celebrate Holy Mass in **Saint Mark's** and visit the **Doge's Palace**. Spend free time on a gondola ride, visiting the island churches or shopping in the lovely **VENETIAN** lace or glass stores.

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May 4, Thursday-Friday: Bus to **PADUA** for a tour of the **Basilica of Saint Anthony** and the **Scrovegni Chapel**, where **Giotto** painted 38 scenes of the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Free time in **PADUA**. Bus to **Hotel Biondi** in **MONTECATINI**.

May 5-8, Friday-Monday: Bus to **ASSISI** and walk to the **Hotel Dei Priori** inside the old walled city on the main piazza, a short walk from the Basilica of **Saint Clare**. Walking tour of the city and the **Basilica of Saint Francis**. A day trip to **TODI**, a quaint medieval town and visit **CASCIA** home of **Saint Rita's** incorrupt body and a Eucharistic Miracle. Visit the **Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels** with an opportunity to receive the **Portiuncula Indulgence** and **Jubilee Blessing**.

May 8-9, Monday-Tuesday: Bus to see the Eucharistic Miracle in **LANCIANO** and the **Cave of Saint Michael the Archangel** in **MONTE SAN ANGELO** (entrance fee not included). Bus to **Hotel Manfredonia**, a 4 star hotel on

the **Gulf of MANFREDONIA** off the **Adriatic Sea** (with private beach and pool).

May 9-14, Tuesday: Bus to **SAN GIOVANI ROTUNDO** for morning on the **GARGANO**. Visit the church and rectory where *Blessed Padre Pio* lived and received the stigmata with Holy Mass at the tomb of *Blessed Padre Pio*. Free time to pray or go to Confession. Bus to *Hotel Contilia* in **ROME** for 5 nights until **Sunday** morning.

May 10-14, Wednesday - Saturday: Papal Audience (dependent upon health and availability of **His Holiness, Pope John Paul II**). Christian tour of **ROME** including **Vatican Museum** and **Sistine Chapel**; tour of the **Vatican** and *Saint Peter's Basilica*, the **Pieta**, with an opportunity to receive the **Jubilee Blessing** and **Indulgence** by passing through the doors of the **four Major Basilicas**; the **Holy Steps**; ½ day excursion to one of the sites of **Catacombs** outside the walls of ancient **ROME**.

May 13, Saturday –Morning tour by bus to **NETTUNO** on the ocean near **ANZIO**. Visit the **Basilica of Saint Maria Goretti**, her home and where she died. Enroute back to **ROME**, stop for a visit to **CASTEL GONDOLFO**, the summer home of the popes.

May 14, Sunday: Flight leaves **ROME** airport at **11:15 AM** to **LONDON**, depart **LONDON** at **4 PM** scheduled to arrive **PHILADELPHIA, PA** at **6:55 PM**.

Return home physically exhausted but spiritually refreshed and invigorated with experiences within the **Body of Christ** and memories that will be moments of special graces.

Seat and hotel reservations without names and deposits will be lost beginning **60 days** prior to this **PSI**.

PLEASE MAKE RESERVATIONS EARLY!

WE ARE IN NEED of YOUR NAME and DEPOSIT for the 19th ANNIVERSARY in MEDJUGORJE, JUBILEE BLESSING for the FOUR DOORS in ROME and PORTIUNCULA JUBILEE BLESSING near ASSISI

The airline is asking for names for the above pilgrimage. Because of the large numbers of people leaving for Europe for the Jubilee Year, hotels and airlines are booked solid. We will need to release unnamed airline seats, and rooms.

Please if you are thinking of a pilgrimage this year, and a renewal of your commitment to Our Lady and Our Lord with special Jubilee Blessings look over the following two pilgrimages and call us immediately.

We have 30 seats booked, and **Father Michael Culkin** will be our Spiritual Director. **Terry Bright, OCDS (Disalced Carmelite)** will be the Coordinator.

This pilgrimage to **Medjugorje, Rome** and **Assisi** is exceptionally well priced at **\$2499**. It is important for you to know that **we have written confirmation of the air**

seats and the housing. Many other advertised pilgrimages are booking for the Anniversary and the Jubilee, but do not yet have confirmed seats. **Please** if you are looking at another pilgrimage, protect yourself and ask for written confirmation.

This beautiful pilgrimage departs from **Newark, NJ**, on **June 20, 2000** and returns on **June 30, 2000**. We have confirmed air seats to and from the **USA** and to **Croatia**. We have housing near *Saint James Church* in **Medjugorje** and in a lovely Catholic religious house in **Rome**.

Flying **Alitalia**, you will arrive in **Rome** on the morning of **June 21, 2000**. Later in the day you will fly on to **Split, Croatia** and then have a 3 hour motor coach ride to **Medjugorje** where you will be housed in the homes of the villagers. You will attend **English** and **Croatian** Holy Masses and fully participate in the events of the **19th Anniversary** since the first apparition. An **English** speaking guide will take you to **Apparition Hill, Cross Mountain**, to visit the visionaries and to help provide you a full and rich time in **Medjugorje**.

On **June 26th** you will depart from **Split** on **Croatian Air** to **Rome** where you will be housed at a Catholic Religious House called "**Mondo Migliore**". You will have a fully escorted 4 days in **Rome** and 1 day in **Assisi**. There is a ½ day guided tour of the **Vatican Museum including** entrance fee; a Papal Audience (subject to his holiness availability); ½ day tour of **Christian Rome** with an opportunity for the Jubilee Blessing by passing through the special doors of the four major Basilicas; **and** a visit to the **Catacombs including** the entrance fee.

Included in the **\$2499** requested donation is air from **Newark** to **Split** via **Rome** and return, taxes, **Medjugorje housing** for 5 nights and 4 nights **Religious House in Rome**, full day escorted excursion to **Assisi**, English speaking tour escort in **Medjugorje** and **Rome**, motor coach transfers to and from the airport, **all breakfasts and suppers throughout**.

A **deposit of \$350** is required **now** (**\$250 is non refundable**). Please see itinerary on pink application form. **Mail your application to Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center, 61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043-4693** Call **Terry Bright for information at 717-569-6330** or **Kathleen at 856-768-9228**.

PILGRIMAGE or "GOING UP to the LORD"-
We are repeating parts of this article in helping you to make a pilgrimage decision

"Come ye blessed of my Father! Take possession of that kingdom that was prepared for you from the foundation of the world! (Matt 25:34) In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!"

When we will hear those words, our pilgrimage on earth will have been a success! Jesus tells us that He Himself, the King, will welcome us “into the holy city, the new Jerusalem come down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And a loud voice from the throne of God will cry out, “Behold, the dwelling of God is with men! He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them.” He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away. It is done! **“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end... He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son” (cf. Rev 21: 2-7).**

This is God’s plan for us, for all mankind. This is the true human destiny of every man, woman and child. This is how our pilgrimage is supposed to end--to enter in as one of **“those blessed who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb...to rejoice and exult and give Him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His Bride has made herself ready” (cf Rev 19:7-9)**

From the earliest pages of the bible, God continuously taught His people that He is holy and therefore His people have to be holy. **“Say to all the congregation of the people of Israel, You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy.”(Lev 19:2).** Sin had to be repented and repaired by sacrifices. The prophets of old continuously reminded Israel, **“And you shall be my people, and I will be your God” (Jer 30:22).** The Temple in Jerusalem was the place God chose for that. There were the altar, the sacrifices, and the priests who offered them for the sins of God’s people. There was the dwelling of God – **“the house of the LORD” (2 Ki 20:8).** There God wanted to embrace His people purified of sin. There God and Man would abide in mutual love and fidelity as a prefiguring of the eternal wedding of the Lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem. So it was to the temple in Jerusalem that the people had come with their sins, to be forgiven through repentance of heart through sacrifices.

Therefore, the God of Israel established three pilgrimage feasts that we come to know as Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. His command was that **“Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place which He will choose; at the feast of unleavened bread, at the feast of weeks and the feast of booths. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed” (Deut 16:16).** When the temple was destroyed in 586 BC Ezra and Nehemiah were the prophetic voices calling for a new period of restoration, conversion and reconstruction. **“Whoever is among you of all His people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah,**

and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel--he is the God who is in Jerusalem... Then rose up the heads of the fathers’ houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:3-5).

Thus Jesus, Mary and Joseph as good Jews were all pilgrims according to the Mosaic law Jesus was presented in the Temple and found in the Temple. He attended the pilgrimage feasts there, the most decisive being the last Passover at which He died and rose for our salvation. But now He himself is our Temple. **“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up...”** But He spoke of the temple of His Body. When therefore He was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that He had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken: **(John 2: 19, 21-22).** By our union with Him, as the person-place in whom we encounter and abide with God the Father behind the veil of His Flesh, we will be able to see, know and return to the Father that He came to show us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The temple of Jerusalem was again destroyed by the Romans in 72 AD, but this Jewish law of pilgrimage teaches us that **the essence and real meaning of pilgrimage goes on.** This truth remains forever valid. No one can escape it. It is the human destiny and purpose of our existence. Each one of us must still “appear before the Lord.”

Although our Catholic faith never teaches us that we must make a physical journey to Jerusalem or any other place on earth, **the dynamic reality of our pilgrim existence on earth inexorably moves us forward to that awesome encounter with the LORD God Father of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.** It is why the Church teaches us to pray to Our Lady in the Hail

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Holy Queen, "and after this our exile, show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. Oh clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary." In Hebrews, we read this of Abraham, our father in faith and all the other great pilgrim fathers with him: **"These all died in faith, not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth."** People who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a holy city (**Heb 11: 13-16**).

EVERY PILGRIMAGE, THEREFORE, IS AN EXPRESSION OF THIS LONGING FOR OUR HEAVENLY HOME. EACH PILGRIMAGE IS ESSENTIALLY ORIENTED TOWARD IT, WHETHER THE TRAVEL IS TO A HOLY PLACE TO OBTAIN SOME SPIRITUAL BENEFIT, TO VENERATE A SACRED OBJECT OR RELIGIOUS RELIC, TO BE IN THE PRESENCE OF A HOLY PERSON, TO DO PENANCE, OR TO OFFER THANKSGIVING IN RETURN FOR GRACES AND FAVORS RECEIVED.

The approaching third millennium is a very special time of pilgrimage. Our Holy Father wrote his special apostolic letter The Jubilee of the Year 2000 (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*) in 1994 to set out the plan of preparation for the whole church. He designated these last three years of 1997, 1998, 1999 as specially dedicated to Our Lord Jesus Christ, The Holy Spirit and finally God the Father, because with Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Pilgrim People of God will return to the Father.

Millions of Christians will be going to Rome and to the Holy Land from now through the year 2000 and beyond. A special plenary indulgence is granted to those who go to Jerusalem and Rome. Pope John Paul II has even designated to Jerusalem ahead of Rome. He himself wants to carry out a unique and historic Papal pilgrimage from Iraq through the Holy Land on to Mount Sinai.

May your every past and future pilgrimage blend together as one great merciful grace to lead you to the heavenly Jerusalem and the marriage of the Lamb. It is a transforming union with the eternal and triune God that will never end. As pilgrim people we are all called to live our lives in the spirit of the final words of the bible, "The spirit and the bride say, 'Come...Come, Lord Jesus!'"

Amen!

("MARY'S MANTLE", Summer Issue, 1997)

GIFTS of the SPIRIT to SAINT JOSEPH

There is a general rule concerning all special graces granted

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to any human being. Whenever the divine favor chooses someone to receive a special grace, or to accept a lofty vocation, God adorns the person chosen with all the gifts of the Spirit needed to fulfill the task at hand.

This general rule is especially verified in the case of Saint Joseph, the foster-father of our Lord, and the husband of the Queen of our world, enthroned above the angels. He was chosen by the eternal Father as the trustworthy guardian and protector of his greatest treasures, namely, his divine Son and Mary, Joseph's wife. He carried out this vocation with complete fidelity until at last God called him, saying "Good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord."

Remember us, Saint Joseph, and plead for us to your foster child. Ask your most holy bride, the Virgin Mary, to look kindly upon us, since she is the mother of him who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns eternally. Amen.

(from a sermon by Saint Bernardine of Siena)

<http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/saintj01.htm>

FAITH of SAINT JOSEPH

What emanates from the figure of Saint Joseph is faith...Joseph of Nazareth is a "just man" because he totally "lives by faith." He is holy because his faith is truly heroic.

Sacred Scripture says little of him. It does not record even one word spoken by Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth. And yet, even without words, he shows the depth of his faith, his greatness.

Saint Joseph is a man of great spirit. He is great in faith, not because he speaks his own words, but above all because he listens to the words of the Living God. He listens in silence. And his heart ceaselessly perseveres in the readiness to accept the Truth contained in the word of the Living God.

We see how the word of the Living God penetrates deeply into the soul of that man, that just man. And we, do we know how to listen to the word of God? Do we know how to absorb it into the depths of our human personalities? Do we open our conscience in the presence of this word?

Pope John Paul II from Daily Meditations

<http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/saintj01.htm>

SAINT JOSEPH PRAYER after the ROSARY

Glorious Saint Joseph, spouse of the Immaculate Virgin, obtain for me and all the members of my family and loved ones a confident, sinless, generous, and patient heart, and perfect resignation to the Divine Will. Be our guide, father, and model throughout life, that we may merit a death like yours, in the arms of Jesus and Mary.

Help us, Saint Joseph, in our earthly strife, to fulfill

our responsibilities and ever to lead a pure and blameless life.

Heavenly Father, please ask the Holy Spirit, Who resides in the innermost recesses of my soul, to help me to call to mind all of my sins and faults. Help me to detach myself from these faults and sins so that I can be a useful instrument in the hands of the Most Holy Family to achieve Your distinctive plan for my life. Let me now pause for a few moments to think of my sins, faults, and omissions.

(An act of contrition may follow a moment of silence).

(Imprimatur Rev. Msgr. Raymond Boland, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. 1986)

SAINT JOSEPH

Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and foster-father of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

LIFE

Sources. The chief sources of information on the life of Saint Joseph are the first chapters of our first and third Gospels; they are practically also the only reliable sources, for, whilst, on the holy patriarch's life, as on many other points connected with the Saviour's history which are left untouched by the canonical writings, the apocryphal literature is full of details, the non-admittance of these works into the Canon of the Sacred Books casts a strong suspicion upon their contents; and, even granted that some of the facts recorded by them may be founded on trustworthy traditions, it is in most instances next to impossible to discern and sift these particles of true history from the fancies with which they are associated. Among these apocryphal productions dealing more or less extensively with some episodes of Saint Joseph's life may be noted the so-called "Gospel of James", the "Pseudo-Matthew", the "Gospel of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary", the "Story of Joseph the Carpenter", and the "Life of the Virgin and Death of Joseph".

Genealogy. Saint Matthew (1:16) calls Saint Joseph the son of Jacob; according to Saint Luke (3:23), Heli was his father. This is not the place to recite the many and most various endeavours to solve the vexing questions arising from the divergences between both genealogies; nor is it necessary to point out the explanation which meets best all the requirements of the problem (see GENEALOGY OF CHRIST); suffice it to remind the reader that, contrary to what was once advocated, most modern writers readily admit that in both documents we possess the genealogy of Joseph, and that it is quite possible to reconcile their data.

Residence. At any rate, Bethlehem, the city of David and his descendants, appears to have been the birth-place of Joseph. When, however, the Gospel history opens, namely, a few months before the Annunciation, Joseph was settled at Nazareth. Why and when he forsook his home-place to

betake himself to Galilee is not ascertained; some suppose - and the supposition is by no means improbable -- that the then moderate circumstances of the family and the necessity of earning a living may have brought about the change. Saint Joseph, indeed, was a tekton, as we learn from Matthew 13:55, and Mark 6:3. The word means both mechanic in general and carpenter in particular; Saint Justin vouches for the latter sense (Dial. cum Tryph., lxxxviii, in P.G., VI, 688), and tradition has accepted this interpretation, which is followed in the English Bible.

Marriage. It is probably at Nazareth that Joseph betrothed and married her who was to become the Mother of God. When the marriage took place, whether before or after the Incarnation, is no easy matter to settle, and on this point the masters of exegesis have at all times been at variance. Most modern commentators, following the footsteps of Saint Thomas, understand that, at the epoch of the Annunciation, the Blessed Virgin was only affianced to Joseph; as Saint Thomas notices, this interpretation suits better all the evangelical data.

It will not be without interest to recall here, unreliable though they are, the lengthy stories concerning Saint Joseph's marriage contained in the apocryphal writings. When forty years of age, Joseph married a woman called Melcha or Escha by some, Salome by others; they lived forty-nine years together and had six children, two daughters and four sons, the youngest of whom was James (the Less, "the Lord's brother"). A year after his wife's death, as the priests announced through Judea that they wished to find in the tribe of Juda a respectable man to espouse Mary, then twelve to fourteen years of age, Joseph, who was at the time ninety years old, went up to Jerusalem among the candidates; a miracle manifested the choice God had made of Joseph, and two years later the Annunciation took place. These dreams, as Saint Jerome styles them, from which many a Christian artist has drawn his inspiration (see, for instance, Raphael's "Espousals of the Virgin"), are void of authority; they nevertheless acquired in the course of ages some popularity; in them some ecclesiastical writers sought the answer to the well-known difficulty arising from the mention in the Gospel of "the Lord's brothers"; from them also popular credulity has, contrary to all probability, as well as to the tradition witnessed by old works of art, retained the belief that Saint Joseph was an old man at the time of marriage with the Mother of God.

The Incarnation. This marriage, true and complete, was, in the intention of the spouses, to be virgin marriage (cf. Saint Aug., "De cons. Evang.", II, i in P.L. XXXIV, 1071-72;

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"Cont. Julian.", V, xii, 45 in P.L.. XLIV, 810; Saint Thomas, III:28; III:29:2). But soon was, the faith of Joseph in his spouse to be sorely tried: she was with child. However painful the discovery must have been for him, unaware as he was of the mystery of the Incarnation, his delicate feelings forbade him to defame his affianced, and he resolved "to put her away privately; but while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. . . And Joseph, rising from his sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took unto him his wife" (Matthew 1:19, 20, 24).

The Nativity and the Flight to Egypt. A few months later, the time came for Joseph and Mary to go to Bethlehem, to be enrolled, according to the decree issued by Caesar Augustus: a new source of anxiety for Joseph, for "her days were accomplished, that she should be delivered", and "there was no room for them in the inn (Luke 2:1-7). What must have been the thoughts of the holy man at the birth of the Saviour, the coming of the shepherds and of the wise men, and at the events which occurred at the time of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, we can merely guess; Saint Luke tells only that he was "wondering at those things which were spoken concerning him" (2:33). New trials were soon to follow. The news that a king of the Jews was born could not but kindle in the wicked heart of the old and bloody tyrant, Herod, the fire of jealousy. Again "an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee" (Matthew 2:13).

Return to Nazareth. The summons to go back to Palestine came only after a few years, and the Holy Family settled again at Nazareth. Saint Joseph's was henceforth the simple and uneventful life of an humble Jew, supporting himself and his family by his work, and faithful to the religious practices commanded by the Law or observed by pious Israelites. The only noteworthy incident recorded by the Gospel is the loss of, and anxious quest for, Jesus, then twelve years of old, when He had strayed during the yearly pilgrimage to the Holy City (Luke 2:42-51).

Death. This is the last we hear of Saint Joseph in the sacred writings, and we may well suppose that Jesus's foster-father died before the beginning of Savior's public life. In several circumstances, indeed, the Gospels speak of the latter's mother and brothers (Matthew 12:46; Mark 3:31; Luke 8:19; John 7:3), but never do they speak of His father in connection with the rest of the family; they tell us only that Our Lord, during His public life was referred to as the son of Joseph (John 1:45; 6:42; Luke 4:22) the carpenter (Matthew 13:55). Would Jesus, moreover, when about die on the Cross, have entrusted His mother to John's care, had Saint Joseph been still alive? According to the apocryphal "Story of Joseph the Carpenter", the holy man reached his hundred and eleventh year when he died, on 20 July (A. D.

18 or 19). Saint Epiphanius gives him ninety years of age at the time of his demise; and if we are to believe the Venerable Bede, he was buried in the Valley of Josaphat. In truth we do not know when Saint Joseph died; it is most unlikely that he attained the ripe old age spoken of by the "Story of Joseph" and Saint Epiphanius. The probability is that he died and was buried at Nazareth.

DEVOTION TO SAINT JOSEPH

Joseph was "a just man". This praise bestowed by the Holy Ghost, and the privilege of having been chosen by God to be the foster-father of Jesus and the Spouse of the Virgin Mother, are the foundations of the honour paid to Saint Joseph by the Church. So well-grounded are these foundations that it is not a little surprising that the cult of Saint Joseph was so slow in winning recognition. Foremost among the causes of this is the fact that "during the first centuries of the Church's existence, it was only the martyrs who enjoyed veneration" (Kellner). Far from being ignored or passed over in silence during the early Christian ages, Saint Joseph's prerogatives were occasionally descanted upon by the Fathers; even such eulogies as cannot be attributed to the writers among whose works they found admittance bear witness that the ideas and devotion therein expressed were familiar, not only to the theologians and preachers, and must have been readily welcomed by the people. The earliest traces of public recognition of the sanctity of Saint Joseph are to be found in the East. His feast, if we may trust the assertions of Papebroch, was kept by the Copts as early as the beginning of the fourth century. Nicephorus Callistus tells likewise -- on what authority we do not know -- that in the great basilica erected at Bethlehem by Saint Helena, there was a gorgeous oratory dedicated to the honour of our saint. Certain it is, at all events, that the feast of "Joseph the Carpenter" is entered, on 20 July, in one of the old Coptic Calendars in our possession, as also in a Synazarium of the eighth and ninth century published by Cardinal Mai (Script. Vet. Nova Coll., IV, 15 sqq.). Greek menologies of a later date at least mention Saint Joseph on 25 or 26 December, and a twofold commemoration of him along with other saints was made on the two Sundays next before and after Christmas.

In the West the name of the foster-father of Our Lord (Nutritor Domini) appears in local martyrologies of the ninth and tenth centuries, and we find in 1129, for the first time, a church dedicated to his honour at Bologna. The devotion, then merely private, as it seems, gained a great impetus owing to the influence and zeal of such saintly persons as Saint Bernard, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Saint Gertrude (d. 1310), and Saint Bridget of Sweden (d. 1373). According to Benedict XIV (De Serv. Dei beatif., I, iv, n. 11; xx, n. 17), "the general opinion of the learned is that the Fathers of Carmel were the first to import from the East into the West the laudable practice of giving the fullest cultus to Saint Joseph". His feast, introduced towards the end shortly afterwards, into the Dominican Calendar,

gradually gained a foothold in various dioceses of Western Europe. Among the most zealous promoters of the devotion at epoch, Saint Vincent Ferrari (d. 1419), Peter d'Ailly (d. 1420), Saint Bernadine of Siena (d. 1444), and Jehan Charlier Gerson (d. 1429) deserve an especial mention. Gerson, who had, in 1400, composed an Office of the Espousals of Joseph particularly at the Council of Constance (1414), in promoting the public recognition of the cult of Saint Joseph. Only under the pontificate of Sixtus IV (1471-84), were the efforts of these holy men rewarded by Roman Calendar (19 March). From that time the devotion acquired greater and greater popularity, the dignity of the feast keeping pace with this steady growth. At first only a festum simplex, it was soon elevated to a double rite by Innocent VIII (1484-92), declared by Gregory XV, in 1621, a festival of obligation, at the instance of the Emperors Ferdinand III and Leopold I and of King Charles II of Spain, and raised to the rank of a double of the second class by Clement XI (1700-21). Further, Benedict XIII, in 1726, inserted the name into the Litany of the Saints.

One festival in the year, however, was not deemed enough to satisfy the piety of the people. The feast of the Espousals of the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph, so strenuously advocated by Gerson, and permitted first by Paul III to the Franciscans, then to other religious orders and individual dioceses, was, in 1725, granted to all countries that solicited it, a proper Office, compiled by the Dominican Pierto Aurato, being assigned, and the day appointed being 23 January. Nor was this all, for the reformed Order of Carmelites, into which Saint Teresa had infused her great devotion to the foster-father of Jesus, chose him, in 1621, for their patron, and in 1689, were allowed to celebrate the feast of his Patronage on the third Sunday after Easter. This feast, soon, adopted throughout the Spanish Kingdom, was later on extended to all states and dioceses which asked for the privilege. No devotion, perhaps, has grown so universal, none seems to have appealed so forcibly to the heart of the Christian people, and particularly of the labouring classes, during the nineteenth century, as that of Saint Joseph.

This wonderful and unprecedented increase of popularity called for a new lustre to be added to the cult of the saint. Accordingly, one of the first acts of the pontificate of Pius IX, himself singularly devoted to Saint Joseph, was to extend to the whole Church the feast of the Patronage (1847), and in December, 1870, according to the wishes of the bishops and of all the faithful, he solemnly declared the Holy Patriarch Joseph, patron of the Catholic Church, and enjoined that his feast (19 March) should henceforth be celebrated as a double of the first class (but without octave, on account of Lent). Following the footsteps of their predecessor, Leo XIII and Pius X have shown an equal desire to add their own jewel to the crown of Saint Joseph: the former, by permitting on certain days the reading of the votive Office of the saint; and the latter by approving, on 18 March, 1909, a litany in honour of him whose name he

had received in baptism.

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INDULGENCES for DEVOTIONS to SAINT JOSEPH

An indulgence is the remission of the temporal punishment due to sin. Indulgences are both partial and plenary. A partial indulgence is the remission of part of the temporal punishment due to sin; a plenary indulgence is the remission of all the temporal punishment due to sin. Temporal punishment is due to venial sins and to mortal sins already forgiven. To gain a plenary indulgence the usual conditions are: Confession, Communion, a visit to some church or public chapel, and prayers for the intention of the Holy Father.

The devotion to Saint Joseph is enriched with many indulgences both partial and plenary. To any public novena in honor of Saint Joseph, not only in preparation for his feasts, but at any time as well, a plenary indulgence is attached; private novenas are enriched with partial indulgences. Certain prayers in honor of Saint Joseph, especially when said daily for a month, are enriched with a plenary indulgence; for certain other prayers a partial indulgence is granted. Any prayers in honor of Saint Joseph may be used for a Novena.

The indulgences mentioned in this work are according to the Official List as contained in the Latin book, Preces et Pia Opera – 1938.

(“THE MARYFAITHFUL” May-June 1989)

MEMORARE to SAINT JOSEPH

Remember, most pure spouse of Mary ever Virgin, my loving protector Saint Joseph, that never has it been heard that anyone invoked your protection or besought your aid without being consoled. In this confidence I come before you; I fervently recommend myself to you. Despise not my prayer, foster father of the Redeemer, but graciously deign to hear it. Amen.

<http://www.st-joseph-foundation.org/>

JOSEPH’S PERPETUAL CHASTITY

Wisdom of a just man by union and closeness to Mary.
United with Her secure spirit to speak in sacred silence of their souls.

Guardian of the Spouse of the Son of God.
Protects and defends them from the snares of man and

demon.

New Eve companion of His life and living Ark of God.

Must return Her to God as pure as He received Her.

Dressed in linen to abolish His faculty of sensation that leads men back to Grace.

May die if enters the sanctuary that conceals the Ark on which the spirit of God hovers.

Jesus' father purity, faithfulness and perfect love.

Offers himself and will offer a lamb for a sacrifice for sin.

Magnificent reader of the sealed Book chosen to protect the salvation of the World.

Believed without seeing the miracles of the Messiah.

(By Irene L. Wells, 4/99)

RELICS of SAINT JOSEPH

Nowhere on earth are any portions of Saint Joseph's body to be found. * With regard to things connected with his person and sanctified by contact with his body, certain claims have been made.

(1) The church of Saint Anastasia in Rome is said to possess a relic of the staff which Saint Joseph carried during the flight into Egypt and of the cloak in Saint Joseph's arms (see Chandlery's Saint Joseph, par. 31, p.60, and par. 39, p. 78; and his Pilgrim Walks in Rome, p.274).

(2) In the year 1254 Sire de Joinville, one of the Crusaders, brought Saint Joseph's "girdle" from the East to France, where he erected a chapel to Saint Joseph to house the treasure and was buried there in 1319. This chapel was much visited by French pilgrims, among them King Louis XIV and Cardinal Richelieu. The relic was somehow destroyed in 1668 (see Filas, The Man Nearest to Christ, p. 138).

(3) The ring which Mary is said to have received from Joseph's hand on the occasion of the Espousals was venerated at Chiusi in Italy as early as the year 1000. After a long and bitter contest for the possession of this ring, Pope Innocent VIII awarded it to Perugia in 1468 (see Filas, The Man Nearest to Christ, p. 139).

(4) The swaddling clothes venerated in Aix-la-Chapelle were thought to be Joseph's foot coverings (ibidem).

(5) The Holy House of Loreto, in which Joseph lived with Jesus and Mary at Nazareth, may be looked upon as a relic of Saint Joseph, and worthy of veneration.

*Some use this fact as a proof of Saint Joseph's resurrection and assumption.

(**"THE MARYFAITHFUL" May/June 1989 with permission**)

THE HEART of SAINT JOSEPH

The thought that God appointed Saint Joseph to educate the Word Incarnate is truly staggering! The Divine Child was to emulate Joseph, his earthly "Father", "as he was thought

to be by onlookers. He would even take on some of Joseph's mannerisms! Never before or after in history would a saint or even an angel take on such a responsibility.

Among the Jews, it was customary for the male child to be under his mother's care until the age of five. After this time the father began the training of the child. He was responsible for teaching him the Law of God and the precepts given by Moses.

What a joy was Saint Joseph's, in seeing Jesus "advancing in wisdom and age and grace before God and men"! (Saint Luke 2:52). All was under his tutelage. The father, as head of the family, had the Divine right to supervise the home, and in him was vested authority. He was respected in that he took the place of God. "All authority is from above, says Sacred Scripture.

The Fathers of the Church constantly compare the presence of this virginal Father near Jesus to "The Shadow of God the Father." Father Olier says: "He was like the sacrament of the Eternal Father, beneath whose Shadow God engendered His Word, Incarnate in Mary."

In his noteworthy tribute to Saint Joseph, Joseph the Silent Father, Michael Gasnier, O.P., conveys thoughts on Joseph's astounding mission in this vein, "And because the true Father of Jesus, He Who begot Him from all eternity according to His Divine Nature, entrusted to Joseph the task of being in some manner His vicar, He endowed him in some way with the infinite love He Himself bore His son, Joseph, then, loved Jesus as his Son and adored Him as his God."

Father Faber goes on at length on the prerogatives of Saint Joseph in his book, Bethlehem. He asserts: "There has been more work in the soul of Joseph than went into the creation of the world."

Picture the stature of this saint! But first a warning: for Saint Thomas Aquinas tell us that whenever God selects an individual for a specific mission, He equips that person with the graces necessary for carrying it out. And in abundance!

A Gospel account, though sparing in words, backs Saint Thomas Aquinas in his statement. Herein Saint Joseph is depicted as "a just man." Saint Peter Chrysologus says it means "perfect man-one who has all the virtues," Surely Mary, the dispenser of all graces, would have seen to it that Joseph had a full share of them.

Returning to Father Faber: "Joseph ..the most hidden of all God's saints in the very clouds and shadows surrounding the unbegotten Fountain of the Godhead. His soul is the abyss of many graces.

"We can give no name to the character of his sanctity. We cannot compare him with any other saint of God. As his office was unshared, so was his grace."

All this is as it should be, for Joseph taught, as do all parents and teachers, first of all by his example. The first

actions Jesus noted and observed were those of His Mother and Father.

(These first teachers of the child make an impression second to none. Every child has an innate need for models. He or she must see in those of his immediate family circle what is expected of him or her. Actions always speak louder than words.)

Jesus listened with intent to the words of the one thought to be His father on earth. Let us not contend that he was but a guardian or foster parent, in the present day sense. Though there is much discussion on this point, we know for certain that while remaining a virgin, Joseph is credited several times in the Gospel with being the Father of the Child, even by Mary herself when she exclaims, upon finding Jesus in the Temple: “Thy father and I have sought thee, sorrowing.” (Saint Luke’s 2:48)

Mary, being a woman, could never, according to Jewish custom, lead the family in prayer. (In fact, it was the Father who taught the child his prayers!) Each morning and evening, Joseph would lead the chant, a profession of faith which all faithful Israelites prayed without fail.

The “just man” taught Jesus all the things the father of a family should teach his son. He did it so well that in the Gospel is found a remark truly indicative of his role of father: “Is not this the carpenter’s son?” And again, “Are not Mary His Mother and His father, Joseph?”

[The role of the father of a family should instruct his children on the concept of God and His Divine Providence. The love and concern of the father for his offspring deepens the child’s concept of God.]

The secret of Joseph’s sanctity was his deep and constant devotion to God the Father. Fathers today might well turn to Saint Joseph as a ready and helpful advocate. Modeling their fatherhood on this stalwart patron could supply the needed strength to maintain the stability of the family in a time of crisis. That fortitude will be of a spiritual nature. Saint Teresa of Avila emphasizes in her autobiography.

“Of all the people I have known with a true devotion and particular veneration for Saint Joseph, not one has failed to advance in virtue.” She sums it up, saying: “Prayer person in particular should love him like a father.”

Saint Joseph, the foster father of Our Lord, was not accorded public veneration until comparatively late times. The first traces of him are discernible in the West in the ninth century. Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484) included the feast of Saint Joseph in the Breviary as a “simple feast.” Pope Gregory XV raised it to a day of obligation. Pope Pius IX, on September 10, 1847, instituted the pastoral feast of Saint Joseph, and after the taking of Rome by the Piedmontese in 1870, proclaimed him the protector of the Universal Church. Pope Benedict XV prescribed a special preface in his honor.

The high dignity of Saint Joseph is expressed in the title “foster father of Jesus.” Holy Scripture says little about him, merely that he was a just man. With that it indicates that he faithfully complied with his eminent position as head of the Holy Family. In sacred history he meekly steps into the background. Nor is there, in the Scriptures, any mention of his death. But there are indications that he died before the public ministry of Our Savior had begun. He had perhaps the most consoling death a man can have: dying in the arms of Jesus and Mary. Humble and unknown he went through life, and humble he remained for centuries in the history of the church. It took a long time before he was commemorated in the Liturgy.

Prophetically, a learned writer and preacher of the sixteenth century, Isidore of L’Isle, lifted his voice in praise.

“God raised up and glorified Saint Joseph for the honor of His own Name, establishing him as head and patron of the Church Militant. His glory is far from being at its height. As, before the Last Judgement, all nations must know the name of, and venerate and adore, the only true God, so also must all admire the long-hidden, yet inestimable gifts whereof Saint Joseph was the recipient. Yes, all gifts shall be granted unto him .. In that favored time. The Lord will give a more subtle intelligence to the minds and hearts of His elect; they shall scrutinize the heart of Saint Joseph, to admire therein the loving marvels of grace, and they shall find an admirable treasure, such as the Patriarchs of the Old Law never either discovered or suspected. That magnificent outpouring of light and glory shall be the special work of the Holy Angels. Thus shall he, who is first amongst the saints of Heaven, take on earth that first rank which is his due!”

Among other instances showing the protection of Saint Joseph, are the following:

1. “Give me a hand,” said the truck driver. “I have a load of more than one hundred nine pounds of meat.” After her

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great surprise, the Sister asked him who had sent it. He answered that he did not know, but urged her to sign the paper he proffered. Upon examining the paper, the Sister observed that the sender's name was missing, only the place of origin was evident. None of the Sisters knew anyone from that place. As the Sisters rejoiced, some even in tears, they realized this had been Saint Joseph's manner of answering their novena in his honor. They had received nearly half of a large ox.

2. A rather humorous story is related of a significant response in one of the Brooklyn homes operated by the Little Sisters of the Poor. The elderly men living there had had no beer to drink for some time, so they placed some empty beer bottles in front of Saint Joseph's statue, to remind him of their need.

A priest acquainted with them was riding the subway, when he suppressed a chuckle. A stranger sitting opposite him moved to the space next to him, and asked him to share the joke. The priest told him the story and the stranger promised that, as vice president of a large brewing company, he would see to it that the men in the house would never want for beer again, as long as he lived. A few days passed, and a large delivery of beer was sent to the men's home of the Little Sisters of the Poor, with the compliments of the stranger. Saint Joseph is the patron and protector of all homes of the Little Sisters of the Poor, where God's aged and poor are tenderly guarded and served.

3. The story of the Miraculous Staircase attributed to Saint Joseph's workmanship has often been repeated. This marvelous piece of craftsmanship has been inspected by architects from all parts of the United States. Not a nail was used in its construction. Instead, the hardwood has been spliced together at seven places on the inside and nine on the outside. The whole forms a double helix, or spiral.

The Sisters of Loreto, of Santa Fe, New Mexico, were unable to provide a staircase to the choir loft of their chapel in the course of its construction (1873-1878). Thus their chapel – Our Lady of Light Chapel – remained incomplete for several years, until an unknown carpenter came to the convent door seeking employment.

The Sisters confided their problem of being unable to provide a staircase to their choir loft, due to the limited space available. This proved no problem to the stranger, he was certain he could accomplish the task. The superior and her assistant being forced to leave on an urgent mission, he proceeded with the task. The wooden spiral staircase he constructed may be viewed today by visitors. As noted, each section is perfectly fitted into a groove on the adjacent section.

At the completion of the work and upon her return, the superior of the convent looked to pay the artisan for his service; but he was nowhere to be found. The Sisters

believed him to have been Saint Joseph; for they had offered their Holy Communion each Wednesday; in Saint Joseph's honor, that he might assist them in their plight concerning the staircase. (Ed. note: It is also related that a deaf mute girl was working for the Sisters; she and one Sister were left behind, when the superior departed on her mission. Upon her return, the superior inquired as to the identity of the carpenter. The mute girl uttered the first word she had ever spoken: "Jose." That is Spanish for "Joseph.")

For over eighty-five years the staircase was in daily use, both by the Sisters and by the students they taught in Loreto Academy. Visitors also were permitted to climb them, and in doing so experienced a vertical movement with each step, as if walking on a large coiled spring.

Now, over one hundred years later, the stairs are used only occasionally, in order to preserve this precious gift from Saint Joseph. One still meets elderly Sisters of Loreto, who take great pride in telling the story of the Miraculous Staircase. There are, of course, those who roll their eyes heavenward, wondering how anyone could be so gullible.

Masses are still celebrated in the Chapel of Our Lady of Light on special occasions, and the Sisters continue to burn a light in the Sanctuary for those visitors who come to pay their respects to what they believe to be the miraculous staircase built by Saint Joseph.

("THE MARYFAITHFUL" May/June 1989 with permission)

LORETTO CHAPEL, SANTA FE, NM - "MIRACULOUS STAIRCASE"

Two mysteries surround the spiral staircase in the Loretto chapel; the identity of its builder and physics of the staircase construction.

When the Loretto Chapel was completed, there was no way to access the choir loft, 22 feet above. Carpenters were called in to address the problem but they all concluded access to the loft would have to be via ladder as a staircase would interfere with the interior space of the small chapel.

To find a solution to the problem, the Sisters of the chapel made a novena to Saint Joseph, the patron saint of carpenters. Legend says on the ninth and final day of prayer, a man showed up at the chapel with a donkey and a toolbox looking for work. Months later the elegant circular staircase was completed and the carpenter disappeared without pay or thanks. After searching for the man (an ad even ran in the local newspaper) and finding no trace of him, some concluded that he was Saint Joseph himself.

The stairway's carpenter, whoever he was, built a magnificent structure. The design was innovative for the time and some of the design considerations still perplex experts today.

The staircase has two 360 degree turns and has no visible means of support. Also, it is said that the staircase was built without nails -- only wooden pegs. Questions also surround the number of stair risers compared to the height of the choir loft and about the types of wood and other materials used in the stairway's construction.

Over the years many have flocked to the Loretto Chapel to see the Miraculous Staircase. In May, 1998 millions more people got to find out about the Chapel when a television drama called, "The Staircase."

<http://www.lorettochapel.com/html/stair.html>

OUR DAUGHTERS PILLAGED

Nobody wants to talk about this but somebody has to do it. To avoid offending sensitive ears, including my own, I will use code words throughout. When I was young my dream was to marry a beautiful maiden who thought just like me, have children with her, a nice house, and live happily every after. I used to tell my friends about this dream. Some 16 years ago, a practical Jewish friend told me, "Ed if you're waiting to find a maiden, you'll never get married." You know he was right. But I can't complain because perhaps the reason God did not allow this cushy dream to become reality was to save my soul. A certain passion and zeal is ignited in the single layman who does not wish to remain in that state, as the decades start rolling by. I daresay there is some of that passion and zeal in everything I write.

But on to the subject matter. This is war, and correct me if I'm wrong, but for the most part (and there are certainly exceptions) there is scarce little difference between the daughters of Traditionalist Catholics and the daughters of the world in terms of percentage that are maidens prior to marriage, especially if beautiful. Whose fault is it? Why us men, of course! Whether it be father, brother, or potential suitor, we have not done our job. In biblical times the brother looked after the welfare of his sisters in these matters. He would cast a suspicious eye at any ne'er-do-well attempting to make contact with his sister(s), and take appropriate action. The father, with an iron fist, would not allow the least bit of activity to occur that potentially could lead to no good, whether place, time, or people. Any potential suitor, having a great faith in God, knowing the Commandments, and wishing to do unto others as it would be done to him, would not dare take liberties with a maiden, not even so far as to cast a seemingly harmless flirtation. Extended families lived together, and looked out for one another. This doesn't happen today. After Mass I see the teens take off in their Jeeps and sport utility vehicles to God knows where.

We are not men! The women complain about it, and they are right! If we were men, there would be no chastity problem; our daughters would not be pillaged. The extreme, the devilish solution taken by strict Muslims in strict

Muslim countries is to kill their sister or daughter who dishonors herself and her family. I know; a Muslim friend told me this and you can read it in the news lately. It may be effective, but it is most certainly despicable. Then, what Catholic solutions are there? Padre Pio tells us that in his day, Catholic teens knew nothing about sex. I thought to myself how this might be possible. For one thing they had no sex education. Another is that there were no sexual advertisements in any form. A third is that corrupted and corrupting teens (and adults) were few, and they were shunned. And they had no cars or other transportation to reach evil places where they could find such corrupting influences. No longer, in many Catholic households and parishes. Oh there is likely the rare exception; one person mentioned to me that the Catholic community of Saint Mary's, Kansas (SSPX) is one such place. Shouldn't there be more, and isn't it the job of us men to make it so? In part, as oft' the case in this world, the issue is money. This is why I come back a lot to the issue of tithing, to improve the situation, or at least, to directly put our money toward building such communities.

The other major problem is the attitude of men. One young woman wrote to me "If Adam is trustworthy, Eve will follow". We are not trustworthy! We laymen talk Catholicism, go to Mass, receive the Sacraments, and then have an indifferent or at most, feeble attitude toward the preservation of chastity. We are not real men! To our shame, I would guess that many of the Catholic communities in Asia, in the Philippines for instance, have a much more rigorous, Godly, and vigorous attitude in this very important matter. And for fear of angering the dogmatically correct, I will not even speak of the great virtue of women of false religions such as Hindu, Muslim, and Mormon. That virtue did not happen by accident. It is the Hindu, Muslim, and Mormon men that set up the conditions which made the virtue of the women so. We Catholic girly men are not doing that, to our shame, and we will not be real men until we do! Shall we say when we come before God, "Well, yeah, we did Mass every week, but we wimped out on the maiden thing."? We look on chastity with indifference. If instead we looked on Catholic maidens with great honor, respect, and as highly desirable potential marriage partners, they would remain so for their future spouse. Eve would follow.

Munera tibi, Domine, nostrae devotionis, offerimus,

(by Edward Ciaccio, ciaccio@columbia.edu)

BURLINGTON COUNTY RIGHT TO LIFE

A billboard has been erected on **U.S. Highway 130** South in the **Edgewater Park** area. Look for it.

DIRECTIONS to the *PFMC* LOCATIONS

DIRECTIONS from the NORTH or NORTHWEST

Get on **NEW JERSEY (NJ) Highway 73 SOUTH** towards **Marlton** and **Berlin**. From the **NJ TURNPIKE** use **EXIT 4** then stay to left from toll booth to **NJ Highway 73 SOUTH** towards **Marlton** and **Berlin**.

Follow **Highway 73 SOUTH** for several miles until you see **KOHL'S** on your **RIGHT** in a shopping center. You are approaching the intersection of **NJ Highway 73** and **NJ Highway 70**, the **Marlton Circle**. **NJ Highway 73** traffic passes through the center of the **Marlton Circle** with **NJ Highway 70** traffic passing around the circle. Take note of when you pass the **NJ Highway 70** intersection (**OLGA'S DINER** is on far right corner) and **START COUNTING TRAFFIC SIGNALS** for **NJ Highway 73 SOUTH** after you leave the **Marlton Circle**.

If going to **129 Deerfield Avenue**,

By the **THIRD TRAFFIC SIGNAL** be in the right lane, cross the intersection and use the **JUG-HANDLE** around **Bradley Funeral Home** for a **LEFT TURN** on to **MARLTON PARKWAY**, **Burlington County Highway (BCH) 544 EAST** (Gold letters on a Blue Pentagon Sign).

Follow to end of **BCH 544 EAST** (about 3 miles) at a traffic signal just beyond several small strip malls one of which contains a **CUMBERLAND FARMS** store. Beyond this signal, the road crosses a culvert and turns to the right. Make note of your odometer reading. Follow the road to the **RIGHT**, it is marked **HOPEWELL ROAD**.

On **Hopewell Road** you will travel in wooded areas with some houses. Watch for **LITTLE MILL COUNTRY CLUB** at about 2 miles down where a drive thru for the carts has been made under the road. Continue down **Hopewell Road** to the second road on your right (about 1.1 miles from **LITTLE MILL COUNTRY CLUB**) which is **DEERFIELD AVENUE**. It is marked with a right junction sign. **TURN RIGHT** on to **DEERFIELD AVENUE** into "LITTLE MILL ACRES." If you miss the turn, there is a **Fire Station** in the next block where you can turn around and come back.

Turn **RIGHT** again at first right turn which is the intersection of **DEERFIELD** and **DEERFIELD**. The **Werner** place in the woods is the 2nd house on the right (blue siding with white trim.) Turn in the driveway just beyond the black mail box which is near a light pole, park in the back by the pool building and come in the back door of the house. The majority of **PFMC** activity was in the two-car garage of the **Werner** home.

If going to **61 Cooper Road**,

After the **SEVENTH TRAFFIC SIGNAL**, get in the **LEFT** lane for a **LEFT TURN** at the **EIGHTH TRAFFIC SIGNAL** with **NIAGARA POOLS** to the

LEFT. Turn **LEFT** onto **COOPER ROAD**, **CAMDEN COUNTY HIGHWAY (CCH) 575**, and proceed .3 of a mile to **61** which is the second house on the right after the **Bell Atlantic** complex. Turn into the driveway and park as far back on the property as possible. Enter the blue addition by the closest door and proceed into the offices which are located in the center of the first floor.

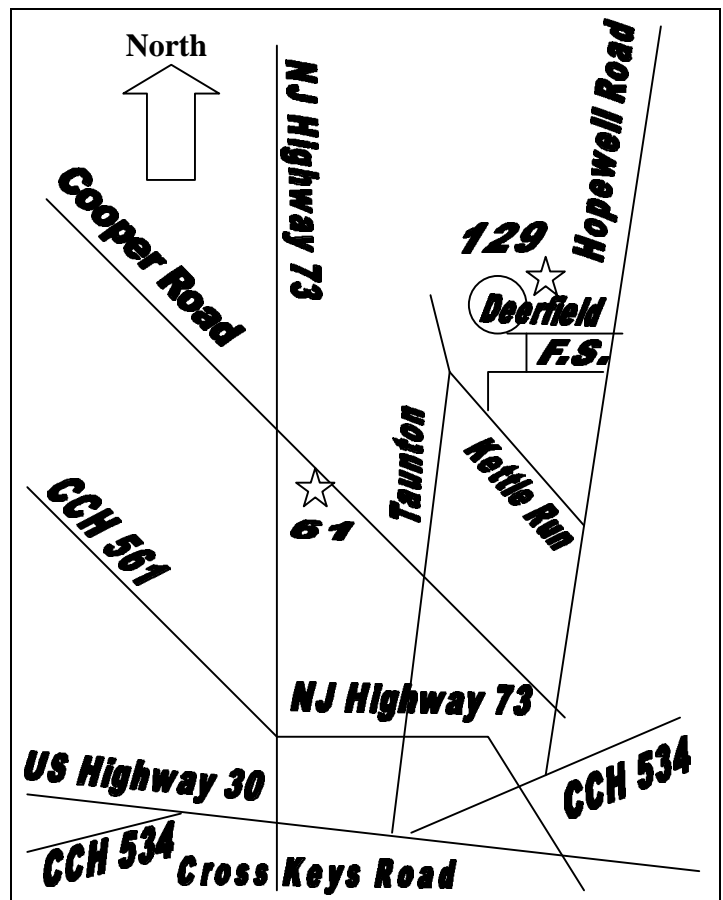
DIRECTIONS from the SOUTHWEST

If using the **NJ TURNPIKE**, it is easiest to go to **EXIT 4** and follow the directions from the **NORTH** or **NORTHWEST**.

If using **INTERSTATE (I) - 295**, take exit for **CCH 561** (Gold letters on a Blue Pentagon Sign), which is called **HADDONFIELD - BERLIN ROAD**. Go **EAST** towards **Berlin** (There is a **Melita Coffee** operation to the right of the exit ramp which is just beyond the ramps going to and coming from the **Woodcrest Rail Station**.) Follow **CCH 561 EAST** until it intersects with **NJ Highway 73** at the **BERLIN CIRCLE** (**Palace Diner**, **McDonalds** and **Exxon Gas Station** counter-clockwise on three of the four corners). This is about six miles from **I-295**.

If going to **129 Deerfield Avenue**,

Go 180 degrees around the **Berlin Circle** and go out onto **NJ Highway 73 SOUTH**. Follow **NJ Highway 73 SOUTH** to the next traffic signal (**WAWA** to **LEFT**) and turn **LEFT** onto **TAUNTON AVENUE**.



Follow **Taunton Avenue** past the four way STOP SIGNS at **Cooper Road** to the STOP SIGN at **Kettle Run Road**. (The road became **Sycamore** in **Burlington County, Evesham Township**)

Turn **RIGHT** onto **Kettle Run Road** after the STOP SIGN and go one block. Make a **LEFT** turn onto **CHESTNUT ROAD** off **Kettle Run Road**.

Follow **CHESTNUT ROAD** until you can make a **LEFT** turn onto **LONG LANE**. Follow **LONG LANE** until it ends at **DEERFIELD AVENUE**. Turn **LEFT** onto **DEERFIELD AVENUE**.

Turn **RIGHT** at first right turn which is the intersection of **DEERFIELD** and **DEERFIELD**. The **Werner** place in the woods is the 2nd house on the right (blue siding with white trim.) Turn in the driveway just beyond the black mail box which is near a light pole, park in the back by the pool building and come in the back door of the house. The majority of **PFMC** activity was in the two-car garage of the **Werner** home.

If going to **61 Cooper Road**,

Go 270 degrees around the **Berlin Circle** and go out onto **NJ Highway 73 NORTH**. Follow **NJ Highway 73 NORTH** to the third traffic signal (**GOODS FURNITURE** on the LEFT) and turn **RIGHT** onto **COOPER ROAD, CCH 575**.

Proceed to **61 Cooper Road**, which is the second house on the right after the **Bell Atlantic** complex. Turn into the driveway and park as far back on the property as possible. Enter the blue addition by the closest door and proceed into the offices which are located in the center of the first floor.

DIRECTIONS from the SOUTHEAST

From **NJ HIGHWAY 73 NORTH** or any other route that brings you to the **NJ HIGHWAY 73** and **US HIGHWAY 30 INTERSECTION** between **Berlin** and **Atco**:

Follow **NJ HIGHWAY 73 NORTH** over **US HIGHWAY 30** and under the **RAILROAD OVERPASS** to turn **RIGHT** on **CCH 534** (Gold letters on a Blue Pentagon Sign) which is labeled **JACKSON ROAD**.

Follow **CCH 534 EAST** one block to the first traffic signal and turn **LEFT** onto **TAUNTON ROAD** just before the **TOWN TAVERN**.

If going to **129 Deerfield Avenue**,

Follow **TAUNTON ROAD NORTH** until it becomes **HOPEWELL ROAD** and continue 2.1 miles from **CCH 534 EAST** until you pass a **FIRE STATION**.

One block beyond the **FIRE STATION** turn **LEFT** onto **DEERFIELD AVENUE**. (The community is identified by a large wood carved entry sign with "**LITTLE MILL ACRES**" on it.

Follow the **DEERFIELD AVENUE** directions listed in the

DIRECTIONS from the NORTH or NORTHWEST.

If going to **61 Cooper Road**,

Follow **TAUNTON ROAD NORTH** about three blocks to the first major **LEFT** turn markings and turn **LEFT** onto **COOPER ROAD, CCH 575**. Follow **COOPER ROAD, CCH 575**, about 3 miles, past the four way STOP SIGNS at **TAUNTON ROAD** to **61** on the **LEFT** just before **NJ HIGHWAY 73**.

DIRECTIONS from the NORTH or NORTHEAST

From **NJ HIGHWAY 70 WEST** or any other route that brings you to **Medford Village** and the intersection of **NJ HIGHWAY 70** and **BCH 541** (Gold letters on a Blue Pentagon Sign). Follow **BCH 541 SOUTH** through **Medford Village** until it crosses a concrete bridge with parkland on either side. Turn **RIGHT** onto **BCH 623, Mill Street**, and follow until it ends at the junction with **BCH 544 EAST** (Gold letters on a Blue Pentagon Sign).

NOTE: The above will require a **RIGHT** turn when **Mill Street** ends and a bear to the **LEFT** at the next traffic signal with **HARTFORD ROAD**. Those who use **Hartford Road** will join these directions at this point.

At the junction with **BCH 544 EAST** (about 3 miles from **Hartford Road**, through the traffic signal at **Tuckerton Road, BCH 620**) there is a traffic signal with trees ahead where a shopping center is planned. Take note of your odometer reading because you will need to know when you have traveled about 3 miles. Turn **LEFT** and then bear **RIGHT** onto **HOPEWELL ROAD**. From here, follow the DIRECTIONS from the NORTH or NORTHWEST if going to **129 Deerfield Avenue**.

If going to **61 Cooper Road**,

Follow **HOPEWELL ROAD** to the **FIRE STATION**, turn **RIGHT** onto **CHESTNUT ROAD**. At the end of **Chestnut Road** turn **RIGHT** onto **KETTLE RUN ROAD**. Go one block on **Kettle Run Road** and turn **LEFT** onto **SYCAMORE ROAD** which changes to **TAUNTON AVENUE** in **Camden County**. Turn **RIGHT** at the four way STOP SIGNS at **COOPER ROAD** and go to **61** on the **LEFT** as you approach the traffic signals on **NJ HIGHWAY 73**.

This is also the way to get from **129 Deerfield Avenue** to **61 Cooper Road**.

“RETURN TO PRIMITIVE FERVOUR” OUR LADY’S TEACHINGS ON CONFESSION

On the second day of the apparitions, 26 June 1981, Mary revealed to Ivanka the essential reason for her appearance on the earth. “...I wish to stay with you to convert you and to reconcile the entire world.” That same day, on her way down from Podbrdo, Marija saw the Blessed Virgin in tears. She was repeatedly saying: “Peace, peace, peace.”

Be reconciled. Reconcile yourselves with God and with each other. For this you must believe, pray, fast and confess!”

The **call to conversion** is the core of Mary’s message in Medjugorje. The surest way to remain on the way of conversion – to continue the “metanoia” (change of thinking is the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Mary repeatedly insists on the importance of a frequent and systematic practice of this sacrament: “*You must invite Christians to confess once a month, above all on the first Saturday of the month*” (6 Aug. 1982). That same day, the Feast of the Transfiguration, Mary pointed out its healing effect on spiritual ailments of which the Western Church suffers: “**Monthly confession will be the remedy for the Western Church. Tell the Western world!**”

In December 1983, Mary added: “*Entire portions of the Church will be healed of the faithful confess once a month.*”

On the eve of the Feast of the Annunciation 1985, with all her motherly concern, Mary called for confession prior to all the important liturgical feasts: “*Today I am requesting you all to go to Confession, even if you went only a few days ago, I want you to live my Holy Day deep within you; but you cannot unless you surrender yourselves entirely to God. So I am asking you all to become reconciled with God!*” This message seems also to indicate the importance of a continued purification of heart to allow one to live in full communion with God.

The last day of 1983, in a message to Jelena, Our Lady renewed her call to confession to be able to accept the fruits of the new extraordinary holy year proclaimed by the Church. “*For you I desire that this new year be truly holy. On this day then, go to confession and purify yourselves for this new year*” (31.12.83).

Besides the importance of frequent confession, Our Lady also stresses the importance of a suitable inner disposition: “*Do not confess out of habit, just to remain the same. No, that is not good. Confession must give new zeal to your faith; it must be a stimulation for it and bring you closer to Jesus. If confession does not mean anything to you, then in truth, you will convert with difficulty*” (to Jelena 7.12.83).

This last message, grave as it is, serves as a warning to all those who treat confession lightly.

The spiritual practice of confession, when accurate and frequent, surely represents an element of fundamental importance in the realization of an authentic conversion. The contents of Mary’s impassioned message can be found also in the Pope’s Encyclical “*Reconciliatio e paenitentia*” which for unknown reasons seems to have been widely ignored by vast numbers of faithful, lay people and even priests.

Instead, in her motherly concern for the joy and peace of her “dear children,” Our Lady exhorts all to return to the practice of general confession which today has fallen into disuse and even receives disapproval by some confessors. “*Dear Children, I urge you, give to the Lord all your past, all the evil which has built up in your hearts. I desire that each of you be happy; but, with sin, no one can be:*” (25.02.87).

The same call, accompanied by moving spiritual tenderness, is contained in a beautiful message on preparation for Christmas. “*Dear Children, also today I invite you to prepare your hearts for these days in which the Lord particularly desires to cleanse you of all your past sins. You cannot do it on your own, my Children, so I am here to help you. Pray, my Children. Only this way will you be able to see all the evil that is in you, and offer it to the Lord so He can purify your hearts completely*” (4.12.86).

It should also be noted that Mary indicates confession as a necessary means to fully accept the gifts of peace, truth and joy which Jesus wants to pour out onto the world through those chosen by Mary. “*Jesus desires to fill your hearts with peace and joy. You cannot have peace if you are not at peace with Jesus; that is why I invite you to confession, that Jesus may be your truth and your peace*” (25.1.95).

Confession is surely the most effective spiritual means to radically disarm the enemy who – it is understandable – does all he can to discredit and hamper Confession. Thus, in these times of the decisive and final confrontation between the children of the Light and the children of the darkness confession is both a privileged instrument of light in the hands of the woman dressed in the sun, and a precious fruit of the spiritual battle that she herself untiringly wages against the “father of lies.”

It should not be forgotten, either, that the Queen of Peace has indicated that victory is had through her Immaculate Heart. “*Pray then, my Children, so that you will have the strength to put into practice everything I tell you. I am with you and I love you*” (25.1.95).

B.F.

IN HER LAP

You have probably heard the story of the fellow who was willing to go up in an airplane, but not without fear and trepidation. When the pilot asked him just how high he wanted him to fly the plane, the man’s answer was: “You can go up as high as you want just as long as I can keep one foot on the ground!”

This story reminds me of some people who want to practice Holy Slavery and still remain attached to earthly things. They want to soar at heights of sanctity and still remain groundlings. They want to be spiritual eagles, all the while living the life of a groundhog.

Sorry to say it, but that is one thing that cannot be done

with Holy Slavery. And the reason is obvious: Holy Slavery means a total gift of self to Jesus through Mary. It is all or nothing. There is no room for half-hearted, niggardly, calculating souls. It calls for total surrender—and when we say “total,” we mean just that! Yes, it takes in even our interior and spiritual goods—the value of all our prayers and good actions. (Ed. note: *Is this not simple justice? Did Our Saviour not pour out every drop of His Precious Blood to save us? Is there any way He—or His Blessed Mother, Mary—could ever do more for us? Then do They not deserve that we hold NOTHING back from Them?*)

The first time I heard this I almost threw a fit “What! Do we have to give Our Lady even the satisfactory value of our good actions?”

“That’s correct,” said the priest who was giving me the elements of Holy Slavery.

“That means I’ll have to suffer longer in Purgatory,” I said in desperation.

The priest smiled understandingly. Taking me by my shoulders and looking me straight in the eyes, he said, “My son, I’m afraid your ideas about Our Lady are very narrow and puny. Can you picture a mother letting her child starve to death before her very eyes, because that child has given all his own food to his brother: Can you imagine Mary, my Spiritual Mother, letting me suffer longer in Purgatory because I have generously given her all the satisfactory value of my actions to apply them, as she deems fit, for the greater glory of God and the good of my neighbor?”

“What’s more,” the priest went on, “remember that when you put everything in Mary’s hands, you are putting them in safe hands. You are confiding them to God’s own treasures, who knows how God’s gifts are to be used. In a word, Mary knows how the satisfactory and prayer value of our prayers and good deeds are to be applied, to render greater glory to God and greater good to our neighbor.”

“What a prayer value of my actions, Father?” I asked. “Does that mean I can no longer pray for specific intentions of my own? For my family, friends, neighbors, etc.?”

“Not at all. You may and you should still have your own specific intentions in prayer. But now, after your consecration, you will remember that everything depends on Mary’s good pleasure...which, of course, is God’s will. Once again, can a man in his sane mind picture Mary abandoning all his friends and relatives, because he has given her the value of all his prayers? Just how puny can our human intellects get?!”

“I should think it would be just the other way around, Father,” I said almost unconsciously.

“Right you are?” he plied with obvious satisfaction. “That is exactly what Saint Louis de Montfort says: “This practice does not hinder us from praying for others, whether

living or dead...On the contrary, it is this very thing which will lead us to pray with more confidence!”

How thoroughly right Father was, my own experience in Holy Slavery was soon to prove. I sincerely believe that anyone who has made this consecration and has been faithful to it will vouch likewise.

Not long ago, Father Gene, a priest friend of mine, had a difficult case on his hands—the conversion of an anti-Catholic who hated him personally with every fibre of his being. As a slave of Mary, Father Gene knew this was not *his* case, but Mary’s. By his total consecration he had given everything over to her. And she had taken him—for better or for worse—with all his duties and obligations. So, like a good slave of love, he simply threw the case into her lap. (How Mary loves to have us throw our problems into her lap!) Then he prayed and worked on the case as if everything depended on him, remembering all the while that it was Mary’s case; that, through her powerful mediation, it was hers to solve in God’s own good time.

Within a matter of weeks, without even saying twenty words to the man, he found the man in tears, literally at his feet, begging his and god’s forgiveness and requesting to enter the Catholic Church!

Saint Louis de Montfort once wrote: “...Wonderful things will happen in these lowly places, when the Holy Ghost finding His dear spouse, as it were reproduced in souls, shall come in abundance and fill them to overflowing with His gifts, and particularly with the gift of wisdom, to work miracles of grace!”

Like Father Gene, you, too, dear reader, can become an instrument of grace for others. Wonderful things will happen in your life and in your apostolate, too, once you heed *de Montfort’s* words and follow in his footsteps. Now, do not forget the one condition for all this, namely, that you give all to Mary. Like Father Gene, you throw yourself and all your problems in her lap!

And what could please Mary more than to hold us, her children, in her lap?

Christopher Lee, S.M.M-

WHAT IS HUMILITY?

Humility is perfect quietness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is never to be fretted, or vexed, or irritated, or sore, or disappointed.

Humility is to expect nothing, to wonder at nothing done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when I am blamed or despised. It is to have a blessed home in the Lord, where I can go in and shut the door, and kneel to my Father in secret, and be at peace as in a deep sea of calmness, though all around and above is troubled.

Andrew Murray

WHY IS THERE SUFFERING?

Troubled like all my brothers, I have often asked myself the reason for pain, whether it would not have been better to have a world without pain, without limping, without tears, without handicapped, without blood, without wheelchairs. The answer becomes increasingly clear as the years pass.

No! Without pain, without tears, without death, the world would certainly be uglier. Above all man would be more wicked, even diabolical. If man is already this bad under the heavy hand of He who lames him, without laming he would be unbearable.

God had infinite means for making a different world. He could have created a world without suffering, he could have created a world that was not subject to pain.

God has given man stupendous dawn, but has mixed them with nights of tragedy. He has given man health and strength, but left holes in his lungs or cells that have gone crazy on purpose to suffocate him just when he is least expecting it.

There is no point coming up with the excuse that it is not God who wants evil, that sin is the fault of man and destroyed ecology. No, no! I know that God can do anything and that, if He wished, could block the cancer that is destroying me. He does not do it.

You may discuss ad infinitum the reason for pain and why God allows pain on this earth. I prefer to say: "It is He". It is He who has destroyed my fields. It is He who has permitted my enemies to kill my children.

There are not two powers. There is only one: God! He can do anything. But He does not intervene and allows me to suffer, He lets war be declared, He says nothing when four Mafia bosses poison an entire province, He allows the soldier's or policeman's cruel hand to torture his brother in order to make him talk, etc.

This is part of the mystery of pain: God allows it, God wounds me, God destroys my harvest, God rages in the storm, God leads me to my death.

But it is precisely by wounding me that He draws out the best in me. If I had not been wounded, I would be unbearable with my diabolical self-confidence. Wounded I keep calm and learn to weep, weeping I learn to understand others, I put myself into perspective.

It is like this: if man did not suffer pain, if he did not reach the limits of suffering, it would be hard for him to take the path of salvation.

In Egypt if the people had been free, Moses would not have been able to persuade them to try the adventure of freedom. If they had found enchanted oases rather than serpents, hunger and thirst in the desert, they would never have reached the promised land.

There is no more effective stimulus than our suffering.

I was on a train and I was praying reading the Bible. Opposite me sat a woman wearing the typical black shawl of peasant women from the south of Italy. She was interested in me, I could tell. She looked hard at the Bible in my hands with evident curiosity.

Seeing that she wanted to talk at all costs, I broke the silence and immediately found her to be on the same wavelength because she had understood I was praying.

Without a doubt she was also in the habit of praying. She told me her story. "I'm from Calabria. I lived in a very poor village with my family. I too was very poor.

One day my son said to me: 'Mother, I'm going to Milan to get a job'. 'Go', I replied and he left. He easily found work and settled as well as he could in Milan.

A little while later, he wrote to his father, my husband: 'Father, come too. You're a bricklayer, you'll find work too'. And my husband also left. Less than a year later he wrote to my two daughters, saying: 'Why don't you come as well? I'll set up family here'.

What was I going to do alone in the village? 'I'll come with you too. I'll cook and keep house'. And that's what happened. I left too and we all became Milanese. Now..."

At this point, the woman burst into tears...

Drying her tears amid the sobs that still came, she said: "Now we are so sad! I had never seen so much money in my house, four wages! We're so sad. We became rich and we destroyed ourselves. I no longer know my husband.

My daughters...Heaven help me if I dare to say something, even though they come home at 3 am. My son?...He frightens me. He has fallen in with strange, bad company.

Yes, we're so sad. We no longer love each other. We're always angry, restless. We no longer know how to sing! When we were in the village, we were poor but happy and contented.. We knew how to enjoy ourselves at festivities. No it's one long festivity, but we cannot be content.

Money has ruined us. Cursed money! How much better it was before!"

This testimony is by a woman who sees things correctly. We are afraid to be poor, but we need to be poor. We are afraid of suffering, but is through suffering that we mature and find a balance to correct our sensuality and our letting ourselves go.

Suffering, however, remains incomprehensible to man. The majority take suffering as if it were a punishment for sinners. And as everyone sins, and abundantly, in our immaturity we say: "God has punished me". And so we pass from one punishment to another, from one suffering to another.

But this is not how things are. God punishes no one. And now that I know Him a little, I feel ashamed of the time when, immature, I thought of pain as a punishment from

God.

He allows us to suffer, but the suffering He offers us - and He offers it in extreme abundance - is not a punishment. **It is a school, a school of love. This is difficult to accept** because there are no limits to our superficiality and to our egoism.

A loving God can only give love and suffering helps us enter love. God has shown **imagination** here and has known how to transform the ugly reality we call punishment **into a real maturing process of man towards love. If He did not make us suffer we would go through life without understanding anything.** How would we understand rest without tiredness, joy without weeping, light without darkness, forgiveness without hatred, truth without error?

God touches us in the flesh to make us feel the needs of the world. Your Flesh becomes for God the book of His speech, the alphabet of His way of expressing Himself. He takes away your health to make you small and humble, He gives you darkness to make you cry out for light, **He leaves you alone so that you may seek Him.** And He is not afraid of seeing you weep because He knows the value of tears, even though you are under the impression that it is chance making you suffer and not His Love. He lets you weep and remains silent.

Do you think it was by mistake that you fell ill or that it was because of poor light that you fell down the stairs that evening? And yet this is not the case. If God is God, not a single cell is out of place and no tears come without cleansing the eye.

(Carlo Caretto: "Perche' Signore?" (Why Lord?) from MEDJUGORJE Torino, No. 17, Torino, Italy)

LENT, THE TIME of RECONCILIATION

"With the solemn ceremony of receiving ashes, today marks the beginning of the penitential Lenten itinerary" which, in the Year of the Father, "is an invitation to (receive) divine mercy," said Pope John Paul II in his regular general audience Feb. 17, Ash Wednesday.

The Pope recalled that in the parable of the prodigal son, which speaks of the "tender mercy of the Heavenly Father," there are three moments "with which each one of us, in a certain way, identifies when we give in to temptation and fall into sin."

The first moment is the "distancing of ourselves from God." This happens when we misuse the talents received from Him; the second is conversion, when people "become aware of what they have lost, take the decisive step to come to their senses," and third moment is the return to the Father's house, "the feast of forgiveness and joy."

"At the beginning of Lent," Pope John Paul continued, "it is important to prepare ourselves to receive the gift of divine mercy in abundance... The church indicates prayer,

penance, fasting and charitable acts as means by which we can enter into an atmosphere of true personal and community renewal."

"We can say that Lent is the special time of God's concern for the forgiveness of our sins; it is the time of reconciliation." Thus, he ended, "this is the most appropriate time to approach the Sacrament of Penance."

Vatican City (VIS)9999

AFTER 2000 YEARS PENANCE STILL RECONCILES SINNERS WITH GOD

As it has for 2,000 years, the Sacrament of Penance reconciles sinner with God. "Those who approach the Sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against Him, and are at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins."

The Sacrament is variously described as the Sacrament of Conversion, the Sacrament of Penance, the Sacrament of Confession, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of Forgiveness.

Under whatever name, it presents an opportunity for the penitent to acknowledge his sin, accept the need for a Redeemer. In our personal expression of sorrow and conversion, our speaking the truth of our sinfulness, we rejoin the ecclesiastical community that was wounded by our sin.

"Within the sacrifice, Christ personally addresses each sinner; he is the physician tending to each sick person who needs his healing touch, restoring that person once again to a full and healthy life in the community of faith," says Archbishop Harry J. Flynn.

A doctor cannot heal a patient who will not admit he is sick, equally we can be saved only when we confess our need to be saved, the Archbishop added.

Pope Paul VI reminded us of the importance of the Sacrament of Penance when he said that "Other works, for lack of time, may have to be postponed or even abandoned in our ministry, but not the confessional."

To make it more accessible, the Sacrament is now celebrated in three forms, each of which fosters an authentic expression of conversion and forgiveness.

The traditional and most familiar form involves a single individual penitent and the priest. It is personal with an opportunity for mutual exchange.

Form II is celebrated in a communal setting in which the faithful listen to the word of God, examine their lives, and help each other through prayer. Confession is still personal.

Form III is a communal celebration with general confession and general absolution. Penitents are reminded that they

must confess serious sins the next time they receive the sacrament individually.

In the words of absolution:

God the father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his son, has reconciled the world to himself. He sent the Holy Spirit among us for forgiveness of sins. Through the ministry of the Church, may God grant you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

These are powerful words, liberating words, spoken with the authority of the Church. They bring pardon and peace through God's forgiving presence. They belong in every Catholic's life.

(By John Harlan, *The Catholic Yearbook*)

THE PRAISES of MARY

According to **Jocelin's "Life of Saint Patrick,"** *Saint Loman* was the son of *Patrick's* sister, **Tigris**, and was one of those disciples who accompanied him to **Ireland**.

Chorus

O Mary, Loving Mary,
Our joy and our delight.

Joy of the Father,
Love of the Son,
Delight of the Most High God,
Thou who not man,
Mother of the Holy One,
Mother of Him Who was never made.
He drank life from thy breasts.
Before Adam He knew thee,
To Adam He told of thee.

Eve's weakness is thy strength.
Angels are enraptured before thee.
The Blessed bow down before thee.
Michael is thy captain.
Gabriel thy messenger.
Raphael thy healer.
Angels and saints feast on the beauty.
Delight of God.
Peerless Mary,
Thy face is heavenly beauty.

Straight lily without spot,
Beautiful flower of every perfume,
Heavenly rose, whose beauty draws all.
Choicest and rarest flower of the Father's Garden;
Tended by His angels.
Gentle Mary, loving Mary.
Heavenly wind, spring rain,
Blinding Light that overcasts the sun.
Mightier than the mountains.

The PILGRIM

Greater than the seas.
The sun is thy chariot,
The moon and stars thy playthings,
The clouds skip like lambs around thy feet.
The works of His hands are subject to thee;
For thou art His Beloved
Who rulest from the Trinity.
Beauty that captivates all hearts.
Light that dispels all darkness,
Mary, whiter than the snows.

Envy of the fallen prince.
Satan fears thee and awaits thy heel;
He alone fears thee, for he never knew thee.
Thy name is a scourge that sears him more than fire.
The lost one in the pit groans;
His throne rocked at thy coming.
The beauty of thy countenance fills him with terror.
He flies before thee; he fears the Light.
Mary, thou art terrible in battle.
Hell trembles at thy name.

Thunder and Lightning to the bottomless pit.
Destroyer of the Evil One's kingdom.
Angels waited on thy word.
The heavens were hushed.
At thy consent angels sang hymns of great joy.
The Father Eternal smiled on thee.
The Son became thy own.
The Divine Spirit took thee unto Himself.
Silent Mary, the Holy Spirit spoke through thee.
Elisabeth proclaimed thee.

All men claim thee.
All peoples bless thy name.
Broken-hearted Mary at the Cross.
You saw the rabble mock thy Son.
You saw the lance open His side.
You saw them cast dice for His garments.
You who care for all, could not give Him to drink when He cried,
I thirst.
He gave thee to us as our Mother.
You saw Him die.
You knew He was God.

Crimson rose of heavenly fragrance.
Our birthright; lost through Eve's disobedience was restored through thee.
From thy pure blood a stream has arisen that pours over the earth,
Cleansing and healing our sin-stained souls and paying our ransom.
From thy pure flesh was made Food for us who know thy Son.
Beautiful Mary, you raised woman to a new dignity.

Adam's Fall did not stain thee.
Thy body did not know corruption.
Peaceful sleep fell upon thee.
Thy feet rested on the wings of angels.

In their hands they carried thee.
The heavens opened to thee.
You reign with thy Son.
He placed the Sceptre in thy hands.
The world He made thy footstool,
Who rulest with love.
The thrones of the great shall fall before thee.
Woe to them that shall raise themselves against thee, to mock thee.
He Who made thee, and came from thee, shall meet them as the bear robbed of her young.
Woe to them in that day, when he comes: for He guards thee as the apple of His eye.

Thou, His creature; in thee He saw Perfection.
He glories in thee; the work of His hands.
As the Faithful Bridegroom, He is jealous if they hurt thee.
Spotless Maid of Nazareth, humble unknown;
The humble and the little ones know thee and bless thee.
The angels in choir sing thy praises at God's Throne.
We thy children, poor, weak and sinful, sing thy praises.
All men shall call thee blessed.
Peoples of many colors shall sing thy praises.
In strange tongues they shall call there: Light of Dawn.

For thy Son is at hand.
Strange men, who live not as men, shall know thee;
And find shelter beneath thy mantle.
Fierce warriors shall become as little children, and grasp thy girdle.
Their daughters shall cover their heads with thy veil,
And live by thy example.
From the high mountain and from valleys they shall follow thee, from the plains and from deserts.
You come, not as the triumphant warrior in terrible array,
But as the gentle Mother calling, calling thy children to thee.
He has filled thee with wisdom.

You speak in divers tongues.
All thy children know thy voice.
Love of God: Thy voice is sweeter than the thrush and them lark.
Angels stay their journey to hear thee.
Your words are sweeter than honey.
Your eyes are beautiful and gentle.
We have no fear of thee.
We love thee, Mary, we love thee, we love thee.
O Mary, beautiful, life-giving Mary.
Our Joy, our Hope in our sorrows.

Our eyes and hearts are lifted to thee.

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Hear us, thy children, who cry to thee.
You hear the cry of your children;
You, their Mother, will hasten to help.
You gladden the hearts that mourn.
You dry the eyes that weep.
Mother of the widow and orphan.
Safe home to the outcast.
The mighty and lowly find peace before thee.
Thy smile is peace.

Medicine and healing herbs to the sick.
Sweetness in the bitterness of life.
Light to those who travel by land and sea.
Virtue to the innocent.
Flame to kindle the clean of heart.
Faithful Shepherdess, who guards the sheep and lambs.
The Promised Land, overflowing with milk and honey.
Sweet spices and heavenly perfumes that purify.
Sweeter than the honeycomb.
Glory of women.

Healer of men.
Sight to the blind.
Hearing to the deaf.
Speech to the dumb.
Cool, life-giving waters to the thirsty.
Food and drink to the weary.
Whose breast feeds all men.
Thy children call to thee.
Heavenly Guide to the traveler,
O Mary, our Mother, lead us home.

O MARY, when our eyes close in our last sleep, and open to behold thy Son, the Just Judge, and the Angel opens the Book and the Enemy accuses us; in that terrible hour, come to our aid. Be with us. When death came to Joseph, you and your Son with him: Thy Son to judge; thou to console. O Happy Joseph! When death comes for us, be near us.

O Mary, when we are held captive in the place of atonement; plead for us, and visit us, that we may find consolation in thy presence. Stretch forth thy hand to help us; deliver us from our bondage. We are thy children: Thou art our Mother. As little children we come to thee; we know no fear.

O Mary, He changed water into wine for thee, even as He said: *My hour has not yet come.* Now He will not refuse thee, when you plead for us thy children.

(Written by Saint Loman "THE ANGELUS", August 1982)

PRESS BULLETIN 136, February 9, 2000.

CHRISTIAN UNITY

Every year a Week of Prayer for Christian unity marks the end of January. Painful divisions and dissensions during the history of the Church have forced Christians to start thinking about each other differently. And not only about

others, but also about ourselves. It would be wrong to think that only today's generation has come upon this idea. Every time divisions occurred or blood was spilt there was not a small number of those who suffered because of it and recalled Jesus' prayer and command - that all be one. Prayer for the unity of all who believe in Christ shows that divisions hurt us, that in the originating of divisions no one is without fault. In these times divisions hurt us even more strongly, especially there where Christians have become a minority. Great advances have been made: hostilities, habitual cursings, and anathematizings have been removed. The atmosphere is no longer poisoned. The task that remains for all to do, is to keep the Gospel. And the Gospel is best kept in the live human being that lives it.

Fr. Ivan Landeka

N E W S

NUMBER OF HOLY COMMUNIONS AND CONCELEBRANTS

During January in the shrine of the Queen of Peace in Medjugorje 38,000 Holy Communion were distributed and there were 722 concelebrations at holy mass by priests from home and abroad, that is 23 priests daily.

January is one of the months with the least number of visiting pilgrims. But in spite of that visiting groups came from Italy, Slovakia, France, Korea, USA, Central and South America, Australia, and, of course, Croatia.

SEMINARS AT 'DOMUS PACIS'

At the 'Domus Pacis' House of Prayer a seminar was held from January 21 - 23, 2000 for 40 young ladies. The Franciscan Sisters of the Hercegovina Franciscan Province organized and conducted the seminar.

From January 28 - 30 a seminar for married couples was also held there. It was conducted by Fr. Ivan Bradvica.

MISSIONARY TRAVEL OF FR. SLAVKO BARBARIC

At the invitation of Medjugorje pilgrims Fr. Slavko Barbaric visited in Germany from January 14 - 23, 2000. Upon his return, among other things, he also said this about his impressions:

"I held a series of prayer meetings in parish communities, the first of which was in the parish of Saints Peter and Paul in Freising near Munich. Despite the very cold weather the church was filled with the faithful. Ten priests also came together for the concelebration. There was a beautiful atmosphere of prayer. After the prayer program there followed a talk and discussion with those present.

On Saturday and Sunday, January 15 - 16, a meeting with about 300 young people in Schäbisch-Gmünd was held at Saint Bernard House which is directed by Father Hans Buob. We started the program already around 9:00. There was prayer, songs, talks, and an afternoon Medjugorje

prayer program with a talk and testimonies of the young people about their personal encounters with Medjugorje and their conversions. After supper a part of the young people went home and others came. The program with a talk for them only began at 9:00 P.M. They stayed to pray the whole night arranged in groups. Especially noticeable was the group that carried the name "Totus tuus". They are very active and they gathered many young people from all of Germany. We finished the program on Sunday around noon. It is also worth mentioning a play that the young people put on Saturday night. They showed a real example of a family that was on the brink of breaking up. Life had become impossible. The mother was bitter about the behavior of her husband and children. There was no prayer in the family. Television, radio, departures and late arrivals, misunderstanding and quarrels were all that still kept them connected. The mother happened to find the rosary on which her grandmother used to pray and began to pray. Meanwhile they found out about Medjugorje and came on pilgrimage and everything changes. It was touching to watch, and the whole play was based on a real happening, how after a pilgrimage they begin to pray, to get rid of the television, and in the place where the television had been, they put the statue of Our Lady's that they brought from Medjugorje. The family starts to live happily and in peace. God comes back into their lives.

From Sunday January 16th to Thursday January 20th I was in Hochalting at Saint Ulrich House. Father Hans Buob also directs this retreat house. About 70 participants gathered. The theme of the retreat was "The way with Mary to the Divine Heart." Talks, prayer, the Medjugorje evening program and adoration filled up the days. From every participant one could hear testimony about how pilgrimage to Medjugorje helped them to change their lives. Listening to their testimonies about the graced days in Medjugorje and everything that means for them, I wished that all the visionaries and parishioners could hear it, especially those who right in Medjugorje still do not understand the intervention of God's grace. We finished the retreat at noon on Thursday. While bidding farewell to the participants I constantly heard the same thing: 'Dovidjena u Medjugorju!' ('See you in Medjugorje!')

On Thursday, January 20th I went with Father Dietrich von Stockhausen to the parish community of Marksteinach near Schweinfurt. Before the evening prayer program we visited the family of Mr. Rudi Karg. With some of his friends he experienced a conversion in Medjugorje and because of that became very active in the collecting help during the war and after the war right up til today. Many faithful assembled in the modern church. Rudi is very musical and with this music group very beautifully accompanied the whole evening program, especially the adoration. After the program we stayed in pleasant company and then I found out more about the aid that he has organized with his

friends. The first action is called "Windows for Mostar", and the other "Families Help Families" in which Rudi undertakes helping families from Kosovo. The first decision to get involved and help out was born in his heart and the hearts of his friends, when he visited Mostar, Jesenica and Rodo. They brought over 50 semi-trailer trucks to Mostar and 10 to Kupres. For Christmas 1998 they delivered over 2000 family packages and that many bags of clothing to the Franciscans for Kosovo through Pristina in Jakovici. Rudi and his friends are continuing to help. They invite individuals, families and factories to help. The people respond.

On Friday January 21st Father Dietrich and I went to Heroldsbach, began a course in prayer with the evening program for about 250 faithful. The theme of the meeting was: "Man as a pilgrim in search of God and the fullness of life." We also continued the program on Saturday. The day was filled with prayer and talks, the evening program and all night adoration in the apparition chapel. I met a man who recently celebrated the 50th year since he began to pray the whole night from Saturday to Sunday. Our Lady according to the statements of the visionaries asked for nocturnal prayer. He answered that call and has remained faithful. He spoke with me about the wealth of his experiences in prayer and joyful moments in prayer. Before ending our conversation he took a picture of Cardinal Stepinac out of his pocket and said some words in Croatian that he learned while he was on the front in Solun and met Croats from whom he learned them. He knows that Cardinal Stepinac was on the same front and he therefore particularly respects him. We finished the program with a solemn mass at noon on Sunday.

While saying our farewells with the participants of the prayer meeting at this place of prayer, many said, 'Dovidjena u Medjugorju!' ('See you in Medjugorje!')

<http://www.tel.hr/medjugorje/enpb2000.html>

PRESS BULLETIN 137, February 23, 2000.

JUBILEE 2000 - A YEAR OF SOLIDARITY

Conversion, penance, making pilgrimage, and reconciliation are not acts that are only done inside the human person. The fruit of such a life becomes recognizable also in life and relationship toward others. Many years ago one heard about the idea of writing off the large debts of poor countries. The economic dependency of poor countries on highly developed and wealthy countries is becoming an ever greater social, community, and existential problem. Still, solidarity in an economic sense is only a part of the task that a Christian bears in today's world. The man of our times is living through many situations from which, if left only to himself, he can hardly get out of in the end. All the periods of life also have their own completely specific conditions. The Christian feeling of solidarity of the individual can really be

demonstrated, developed and realized here. In the feeling of solidarity of every Christian toward the nearest one in need the richest yield of the Holy Year comes to maturity.

Fr. Ivan Landeka

N E W S

VISIT OF BISHOP FROM THE CARIBBEAN

Msgr. Robert Rivas, bishop of Kingstown in the Caribbean Grenadine Islands came to Medjugorje for eight days in the first part of February. On February 13th Bishop Rivas preached to the assembled faithful at the evening mass. On that occasion he gave a testimony on his experience of faith and conversion that he experienced in meeting with a lady sick with leprosy.

In the next Bulletin we shall talk about the impressions of Bishop Rivas.

MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF GUIDES

On February 4th the annual meeting of the Association of Guides for pilgrims in the parish Medjugorje was held at the "Domus Pacis" House of Prayer. The meeting opened with a talk by Medjugorje pastor, Fr. Ivan Landeka. He informed the guides about the importance of the Jubilee Year, of spiritual growth and involvement in this Holy Year in their work with pilgrims. After meetings and discussions of groups and individuals the meeting ended with a Holy Mass presided by Fr. Ivan Landeka. This kind of all-day meeting is a chance for the guides in prayer and meditation to deepen their consciousness about the importance of their work and apostolate in the shrine of Medjugorje.

NOTIFYING THE ARRIVAL OF GROUPS

With the coming of warmer days in Medjugorje the number of pilgrims also increases. We kindly request all of you that organize pilgrimages to Medjugorje to notify the information office of your group's arrival at fax number 00387-88-651-444 or by e-mail: medjugorje-mir@medjugorje.hr That is very important to us for a more effective organization of pilgrimages.

<http://www.tel.hr/medjugorje/enpb2000.html>

REFLECTIONS on OUR LADY's MESSAGE of FEBRUARY 25, 2000

I greet all of you who are waiting for the message of Mary and who are trying to understand and live them. Before we reflect on this latest message, I would like us to recall the message of January 25th. In that message, Mary called us to prayer without ceasing. One can understand that and see that it is possible when we know that prayer is a meeting with God. We all know that it is not possible to pray the Rosary without ceasing. One can not be in church or read the Bible without ceasing. But, if we meet Jesus when we pray the Rosary, when we are at Mass, when we adore, when we go to confession - then this meeting can take place

everywhere: in nature, at any type of work - because God has given us the gifts and talents to be able to work - and whenever we work out of love for God and for other people, we meet with God. The meeting with God takes place especially when we meet other people. Jesus said that we did for or against Him what we did or did not do for others (Mt. 25:31). Our meeting with God in prayer is being tested and confirmed in our meeting with other people. And the meeting with others is the most important criteria for our prayer. We should, therefore, pray that we become capable of recognizing and loving Jesus in people and then thank God for the good meetings and ask for forgiveness for the bad and sinful ones. When we pray, Mary says, we will be closer to God and He will fill us with peace, because He gives the true peace. In this message, Mary makes us aware that everything we receive from God we should give to others and that, in this way, we will become witnesses of God's love. Hoping that we have tried to live this message, we decide for prayer without ceasing so that we may continually feel the closeness of God.

The daily apparitions continue for Vicka who is in Medjugorje, for Marija who lives in Italy and for Ivan who is still in the United States. Mirjana, Jakov and Ivanka are at home and lead normal family lives. Mirjana is preparing herself for her yearly apparition on March 18th. She will be given the exact time of the apparition at her prayer with Our Lady on March 2nd. As you know, Mirjana prays on every second of the month with Our Lady for the unbelievers.

Although the winter has been cold and long, there were always various groups of pilgrims here, those who had the courage to come. Now that the weather is slowly getting better, more and more pilgrims are coming from throughout the world. At this moment, there are different groups here from France, Austria, Italy, the United States, England and Korea. More and more Croatians are coming. At this time, Fr. Jozo is also holding seminars for various groups from Sunday evenings until Thursday mornings. I also have various groups for fasting seminars.

At this time, Msgr. Robert Rivas, the Bishop of Kingstown in the Caribbean Grenadine Islands came to Medjugorje. In the talk I had with him, he openly confirmed his belief in Medjugorje and promised to take part in this year's Youth Festival, because as a bishop he works much with the young.

I ask all prayer groups to pray especially for the Priest Retreat, which takes place the first week of July, and for the Youth Prayer Meeting.

In this message of February, Mary calls us to...

WAKE UP FROM THE SLEEP OF UNBELIEF AND SIN

We already know this call from the Bible. The call of the prophets was to wake up the people and have them not sleep. Jesus Himself spoke in many parables about staying awake and admonished us not to sleep. It is clear that this call is not meant to awaken us from a physical sleep, but

from a spiritual one. When someone sleeps, he sees nothing, hears nothing and is unconscious. The ancient Greeks had a proverb that says: "Sleep is similar to death". The same can be said about 'spiritual sleep', which is brought about by unbelief and sin. The unbeliever does not see and lives like a blind person. He does not see God, he does not recognize the fundamental truth of the existence of God, the Creator of the universe, he does not recognize the own human structure and because he does not recognize the Spirit, he puts himself and others on the level of animals and matter. So, an unbeliever sets wrong objectives for himself in life, most of which are humanly degrading, and chooses wrong means with which he endangers himself and others. An unbeliever takes roads which do not lead to the fulfillment of the human longing that God has sown in his heart, so he ends up disappointed in a blind alley. Sin in itself makes a person blind for the values of life and separates man from himself, from others and from God. In this separation which comes from sin, man remains alone and does not feel well. Sin wounds the human heart and, in a wounded heart, negative and destructive behavior is born. It must be clear to us that not only people who do not know God, but also those who say they know God, yet, do not live according to His word, are in a spiritual sleep. So we can say that many who are in theory, 'faithful people', the Christians, go on the same wrong paths as the unbelievers and end up in the blind alleys of destruction. And when we look at the situation in the world and in the Church today, then we see all the terrible results in the lives of individuals, families and generally of mankind which come about through unbelief and sin: wars, increasing violence, killing of unborn life, drug problems, loss of spiritual values, etc.

Mary continues ...

BECAUSE THIS IS A TIME OF GRACE WHICH GOD GIVES YOU.

Although we all and the entire world suffer from the consequences of unbelief and sin, God does not want the death of the sinner, but He wants him to convert and to live. We can say that God has not turned His face away from us. He loves us as a good Father and, as the God of Life, He does not want us to remain in deadly sleep. He first sent the prophets that they awaken His people in His name from the sleep of sin and lead them into life. In the fullness of time, He sends His Son, in order to open the way of salvation for us. In this time, He sends Mary, the Queen of Peace. It is a sign of hope for us. We have no right to despair over the situation of the world and the Church, but this difficult situation should rather wake us up to not sleep spiritually anymore. We Christians must not waste our time lamenting and judging but rather be inspired by hope, remain awake and, as far as we can, awaken others. We must thank God consciously with all who, through Medjugorje, have been awakened in their faith and have been roused from the deadly sleep of sin through confession. Viewed from God's side, the time of grace is every moment of our life, but from our side, there are differences. We can fall asleep spiritually

when we are well but also when we are not well. The time of grace begins for us at that moment when we understand that we must change our life. When one listens to the accounts of the lives of those who have experienced conversion, one always hears similar statements, "Before, I did not see, I did not understand, I did not know; but now, I see my life differently and I live differently." When we, ourselves, scrutinize our way to see where we stand, then we should ask ourselves daily if we could recognize ourselves and others better on our way; if we could stand up more courageously for the good and fight without fear against evil. Where we let ourselves be intimidated by the mentality of the world, where we lose courage and hope, there is still something asleep and we must be awakened. When we believe a situation of sin to be normal, because everyone thinks the same and does the same, then we are like drunken or dazed men who do not see the reality in the light of God. Therefore, we must not forget that now is the time of grace, the time to wake up from the sleep and to take up a new road.

Mary encourages us ...

USE THIS TIME AND SEEK THE GRACE OF HEALING OF YOUR HEART FROM GOD, SO THAT YOU MAY SEE GOD AND MAN WITH THE HEART.

Every man is wounded. Most wounds develop because, by our nature, we long for the endless and unconditional love which we do not attain in this world. So the heart remains wounded. In the wounded heart, room opens for all negative things. This disappointed longing for love creates hate; the disappointed longing for peace calls the spirit of discord and violence; the disappointed trust causes insecurity, fear and aimlessness. So man becomes unable to live and to form his life in a dignified manner. Therefore, we all need the healing of the heart. When the wound does not heal, it leads to further wounds for oneself and others. And so the deathly chain of disaster comes into being which claims its victims from generation to generation. Only God can break this chain of sin and heal the heart. Through the healing of the heart, we understand the meaning of the word, "everything will turn to the good". This, we find often, especially in the lives of the Saints, who first experienced the depth of sin and then opened their hearts completely to God. Concretely, we must ask for the healing of the wounds which we are carrying since our childhood and then of all other wounds which we have accumulated throughout our life. It is important also to ask for the healing of the wounds which we have inflicted upon others and the healing of the wounds of the families. We must not forget that the wounds which have not been healed often make room for bad spirits, who take advantage of the situation and this leads to even greater disaster. One must recognize such cases and pray for liberation. The healing of the heart gives us a new dioptré. The sin and wound make us blind and we do not see correctly. Through the healing of the heart, we see God and men differently. Healing means inner liberation from any enslavement, it takes away the dark glasses and the

sight becomes clear. With a clear sight, we will see everything differently.

It is said that a master once asked his students, "When does the day begin?" The students gave different answers. One said, "When one can distinguish a tree from a tree", the master was not satisfied. Another said, "When one can distinguish a leaf from a leaf", the master was not satisfied. The third said, "The day begins when one can see the colors"; this answer also was not satisfactory. After a pause, the master said, "The day begins at that moment when one recognizes in the face of a person the face of his brother!"

The question which we should ask ourselves should be, "How do I see God and people?" And everyone has to answer. The author, Antoine de Saint Exupéry, once said that one can only see well with the heart. When our sight is born in a pure, loving, merciful and peaceful heart, we will see God and man differently and this will be the moment of a new beginning. We can also ask ourselves, what it is that makes us blind, so that we can ask with the blind man in the Gospel, "Master, heal my eyes so that I see" or "Heal my heart, so that I can see You and the others!"

Mary continues ...

PRAY IN A SPECIAL WAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT COME TO KNOW GOD'S LOVE AND WITNESS WITH YOUR LIFE SO THAT THEY ALSO CAN COME TO KNOW GOD AND HIS IMMEASURABLE LOVE.

This prayer intention we know very well. Mary prays with Mirjana on every second of the month for the unbelievers, so that they come to know God's love, as I already mentioned. She repeats this intention in this message. Many Christians belong in this category. We all know what we should do, but we often do not do it, either because of malice or because of weakness. Mary calls us not to judge, but to pray so that each heart opens itself to love, because only love can awaken us from the sleep of unbelief. Mary herself prays for the experience of the love of God and invites us to pray. Many people have taken this prayer intention seriously. Only in this way can one understand why so many people have begun a new relationship with God in Medjugorje. This does not happen because they heard something new but because they are being prayed for. No one in Medjugorje says that he did not know that he should pray, but many have said that they have begun to pray. In this very intention, we discover the deepest meaning of Medjugorje. It is our help on the way to God.

We are called upon not only to pray but, through our life, to help people to come to know God and His immeasurable love. Saint Paul writes in the Second Letter to the Corinthians 3:2-3, "... written on our hearts, known and read by all ..." This is also how Mary speaks. The most important book we can read and understand is our own life. When we live Mary's message and so become men of peace, then people will understand us and recognize the work of God in us, even if they do not speak our language. All

books which have been written about Medjugorje cannot be of as much help as the good example of a person who has accepted the message and lives it. In these times, on the whole, and also in the Church, there is too much paper, there are too many books, explanations, declarations which are not really useful, unless, and most important one witnesses with one's own life. We should consciously be thankful for all people who were able to witness with their life that they have started on a new way in Medjugorje. Each person who began to pray, each prayer group, each vocation, each humanitarian and charity effort, which has begun through Medjugorje, enriches the tree that is being recognized by its fruits. The official recognition of Medjugorje also depends on this. In an Apostolic Letter it is written, "The fruits shall be numerous and lasting". Each one of us is important, that is what Mary said in Her message.

Let us pray:

Lord our God, we thank You and we praise You, because You have sent us Your Son and because He has revealed You, the loving Father, to us. We ask You now, reveal Your love to us, so that we may believe in You with our whole heart. Awaken us through Your Spirit from the sleep of unbelief and sin. We bring to You, in the name of Your Son, as Mary calls us, all our wounds and ask You to say the Word to heal our heart. Take away from us everything that hinders us to believe in Your love, so that we can see You and all men with the heart. Forgive us when we allowed our sight to come from an unclean and sinful heart, darkened by sin. Heal us, so that our life will become for others a proof that You are our Father and that You love us all immeasurably.

(In silence, tell God your concrete wounds and the wounds of your family and those wounds that you have inflicted upon others through your behavior)

We beg you, Father, reveal Your love to all Your children, who have not yet come to know Your love, so that they also find strength in Your love and be awakened from their sleep of death. Bless, O Father, all those whom You have called, so that they show others the way towards You. Bless the Pope, the bishops, the priests, members of religious orders, catechists and missionaries, and all parents and educators so that they can proclaim to us through Your Spirit the strength of Your love. Free Your Church in this jubilee year from any sleep and sin, so that she may proclaim Your love to the world. Bless the visionaries, the parish of Medjugorje and all pilgrims, so that we can understand the message and live for the good of all and for Your honor. Amen.

fr. Slavko Barbaric

Medjugorje, February 28, 2000

<http://www.tel.hr/medjugorje/etumporu.html>

PILGRIMS of FAITH MARIAN CENTER (PFMC)

We are not a **store**. We operate like a **church pamphlet rack** where you **make selections** and **offer a donation** based on **value** posted or received.

The **PFMC** is now 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, books and religious articles.

Please patronize your local Catholic Book Store as well as the **PFMC**.

DONATIONS by CHARGE CARD ACCEPTED

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

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

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 and list. ORDER and SPONSOR "**The PILGRIM**" for your favorite religious or priest.

BLESSED OIL

Kathleen has bottles of blessed oil from **Medjugorje** blessed at Holy Mass in **Saint James** and then carried to **Vicka's** house to be present in the room during an apparition. Volunteers transfer the oil to small bottles for you or your prayer group to use as a sacramental.

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

Oil from Medjugorje 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.

2000 PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE TAPES

Bob Pladek of Catholic Focus Productions, Inc. did an excellent job of taping the speakers at the most recent and all of the past **PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE** events. An order form is enclosed for those who may not have made the event but wish to obtain the wonderful audio tapes. Note that the two talks by **Father William Ashley** were replaced with talks by **Father Bill McCarthy** and **Father Andrew John Winchek**. You may call 1 800-TAPES-123 if you do not find any order form enclosed. The entire set is **\$65** plus **\$4** shipping.

LETTERS / CARDS / e-MAIL

Dear friends:

Thanks for everything! I had a wonderful time and a great sense of belonging through the weekend.

I only recently heard about your work and mailed the registration form a couple of weeks ago. Yet, as I read the newsletters Kathleen sent and later your testimony posted in the Web, I knew I had to attend.

Although I had to come back quickly because my wife, who is 7 1/2 months pregnant, could not attend the time I spent there was very fruitful and I felt God's presence and felt His calling and heard the confirmation. I am still in awe but we certainly do serve a merciful God!

I would love to talk to you and hope to do so in future occasions. I know that you are still very busy as Father's workshop is going on. I would love to attend it but I consider myself blessed as I had a chance to speak to him. He is a good servant of God.

I hope Kathleen is doing much better. Love is a great healer and there was lots of that at the conference,

Love,

Jesus Rego

What a great retreat. Our whole family enjoyed it on many different levels. We pray for Kathleen's recovery. God bless you all.

Maureen & Bill Heil - Email: MaureenHeil@AOL.com

I just read my address label and it said "Send a note, it's been a year!" So, Kathleen and Keith I know that you are so very active and flourishing in working with Mary and Jesus. Update: my wife is recovering (emphasis added) from a soft tissue sarcoma that was surgically removed from her thigh last year. It's been an ordeal, however, I believe all the prayers, rosaries communions and offerings have not only healed her physically but all of us spiritually.

The redemptive work still goes on. Here's wishing that you both receive many grace-filled blessings in your apostolate. Will be attending Fr. John Corapi's Lenten retreat session in March @ Queen of the Universe. God bless both of you and all the pilgrims.

Ralph Pfannenstiel - Email: maprjp@quadnet.net

Kathleen is recovering but slowly. She has what is called Piriformis Syndrome due to an injury to the sciatic nerve during the fall she had on 2/14/2000 while delivering packages to a Post Office. She will be on bed rest for several more weeks.

Keith

NOTICES for PFMC AREA EVENTS

Would you be so kind as to take the following BULLETIN NOTICES to your **Pastor** and / or **Parish Bulletin Coordinator** and ask them to publish these notices to support events for which you have an interest. Thank you.

Pilgrimage to Italy and Its Shrines

Scheduled to depart *May 1, 2000*, enabling pilgrims to receive a **JUBILEE INDULGENCE** from the Holy Father by going through doors of all 4 major basilicas. **Father James Sauchelli** of the **Trenton Diocese** will be Spiritual Director. If you are interested, please call **Kathleen** at the **Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC), (856) 768-9228**.

Pilgrimage to Medjugorje and Rome and Assisi

Want to pilgrimage to **Medjugorje** and **Rome** and **Assisi** for *June 20 thru 30, 2000*? Want to visit **Rome** with an opportunity to obtain a **JUBILEE INDULGENCE** from the Holy Father by going through doors of all 4 major basilicas? If interested, call **Kathleen** at **Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC), (856) 768-9228**.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Want a wonderful, gentle paced pilgrimage to see where Jesus walked in the **Holy Land** with a requested donation as reasonable as possible to include all morning and evening meals, transportation, overnight accommodations and full spiritual program? Can you depart on *November 1, 2000* for *12-14 days*? We are planning to stay overnight in convents, monasteries or hotels that will provide an atmosphere for a year 2000 pilgrimage you will never forget. We are currently planning to have **40** seats available and transfer through **Rome** with an opportunity to obtain a **JUBILEE INDULGENCE** from the **Holy Father** by going through doors of all 4 major basilicas. If you are interested, please send your name and address to **Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC), 61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043-4963**.

CALENDARS:

In *March*, the Church celebrates the Solemnities of **ASH WEDNESDAY (8)**, **SAINTE JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF MARY (19)** and the **ANNUNCIATION of the LORD (25)**, the Memorials of *Saints Casimir (4)*, *Perpetua and Felicity (7)*, *Patrick (17)*, *Cyril of Jerusalem (18)* and *Toribio de Mogrovejo (23)* as well as *Blessed Katherine Drexel (3)*.

In *April*, the Church celebrates the Solemnities of **PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY (16)**, and **EASTER SUNDAY (23)**, the Feast of *Saint Mark, Evangelist (25)*, the Memorials of *Martin I, Pope (13)*, *Fidelis of Sigmaringen (24)*, *Peter Chanel (28)*, *Louis de Montfort (28)*, *Catherine of Siena (29)* and *Pius V, Pope (30)*. The **EASTER TRIDUUM** is **Holy Thursday (20)**, **Good Friday (21)** and **Holy Saturday (22)**.

The **FEAST of DIVINE MERCY**, not yet officially placed on the Church Calendar is celebrated by many churches as requested by Jesus in his Apparitions to *Blessed Faustina Kawalska* on the **SECOND SUNDAY of EASTER (30)**. The **DIVINE MERCY NOVENA** starts on **Good Friday**.

AROUND the PFMC AREA

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**. Please make your **ROOM RESERVATIONS** on the list with the **Four Points Hotel, 1-800-257-8262**, NOW and plan to pre-register for the **RETREAT CONFERENCE** with the **PFMC** as soon as the information sheet with registration form becomes available. For more information, call the **PFMC** at 856-768-9228.

The PILGRIM

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, 61 Cooper Road,
Voorhees, NJ 08043-4963
(856) 768-9228 FAX: (856) 768-9428



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**PRIORITY DATED
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PLEASE DO NOT THROW THIS AWAY!!

If you do not desire to read "**The PILGRIM**," please give it to a Marian prayer group or return it to sender. If address has changed, please send a change of address.

If there is no time to read it all right 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!**"



CATHOLIC TALK RADIO

If you live in the **Delaware Valley** or **Southern New Jersey**, listen to **In His Sign Ministries "Putting It On The Line,"** 5-6 PM, Monday-Friday on **WTMR-AM 800**.

Also listen to the extended **"HELP WAKE UP AMERICA"** from 2-2:45 PM, Monday-Friday on **WTMR-AM 800**.

Kathleen and **Keith** as well as others from the **PFMC** will be joining **Dom Lettieri** more frequently on **WTMR-AM 800** and hope to find a regular time for **"PUT ON THE ARMOR OF GOD"** sponsored by the **PFMC**.

INTERNET

Surf for the **PFMC** presence on the Internet at:

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

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

MARIAN PILGRIMAGE PRESENTATIONS

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

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