



The PILGRIM

Vol. 12, No. 5 Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC)

May 2001

MESSAGE of 4/25/2000

Dear Children! Also today, I call you to prayer. Little children, prayer works miracles. When you are tired and sick and you do not know the meaning of your life, take the Rosary and pray; pray until prayer becomes for you a joyful meeting with your Savior. I am with you, little children, and I intercede and pray for you. Thank you for having responded to my call.

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

A PRAYER



***Lord Jesus, I place my head upon
Your heart. I place my doubts
within the chambers of Your heart.
I place my trust within Your
hands. I place my fears within Your Mercy.***

***I place my needs on Your Eucharistic table. In
temptation Lord, keep always before me. For
you are the comfort of all human frailty and of
all within human hearts. In every word and
deed bless us O Lord. AMEN.***

(Kathleen prays from the heart for each issue.)

DAY of RETREAT with FATHER JAY BOWDEN – MAY 17, 2001

Father Jay Bowden, Pastor of Epiphany Parish, Brick, NJ, will hold another day of SILENT RETREAT at the PFMC. It will begin at 10 AM and will end about 4 PM on Thursday, May 17, 2001.



Father has done days of retreat for us and has been active in the PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCES, as well as been a Spiritual Advisor since our first pilgrimage. Father loves Our Lady, and will be leading a pilgrimage to Fatima for us in April.

This day of Silent Retreat and Prayer will give you a

***“The PILGRIM” for May 2001 is dedicated to
“Mary, Mother of God and Our Mother.” See
page 3 for Table of Contents/”IN THIS ISSUE . . .”***

chance to step back and enter into silence and reflection during May. Father will offer the Sacrament of Penance / Reconciliation / Confession.

Please join us. The suggested donation or “Love Offering” for the day is \$10. A soup, bread and beverage lunch will be available. You may bring your own brown bag lunch if you prefer.

Call us at 856-768-9228 to make a reservation, send a reservation note by mail, or fax your reservation to 856-768-9428.

TO ALL READERS - PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU WANT TO CONTINUE RECEIVING “The PILGRIM”

We are trying to maintain our mailing addresses current. If you have been receiving “The PILGRIM” for over a year, and you have not sent us a note or a donation slip with a mark at “YES, Continue Sending,” please do so **immediately**.

All who have a request printed on the mailing label of their plastic bag **will be taken off our mailing for June if we do not hear from you**. There is a date of our last record of contact on the mailing label. If you are not sure, then send in the slip anyway. We must hear from you at least once a year to keep “The PILGRIM” coming to you. We have been explaining why in the block, normally on page 9, requesting to hear from you annually.

We have conveniently enclosed an envelope and donation/information slip in each month’s issue of

“The PILGRIM.” Just insert an annotated donation slip into the envelope provided and mail it today. It is very important that we update our files and send “The PILGRIM” only to those who want to receive it. We send to priests and nuns with no expectation of support and have over 500 religious on the mailing list. There are many good articles for homily and prayer ideas on vocations, the church, and family life.

Each issue costs us about \$1.50 for printing and postage. It is prepared, packaged, and labeled by volunteers. If you can send us a little donation (the cost of a bag of potato chips or a snack meal) to defray the monthly or yearly cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, we would never have to fear about having the resource to pay our bills. We appreciate your help greatly. **WHAT YOU GIVE WILL BE GIVEN BACK TO YOU SEVEN FOLD.**

If you have names of someone with whom you have shared “The PILGRIM” and they would like to receive it, please have them send their name and address and phone number to us. They will receive the next issue after we process their authorization to receive “The PILGRIM” in Bulk Mail.

(Kathleen and Keith Werner, Co-Directors)

2002 RETREAT CONFERENCE RESERVATIONS

You may now and are encourage to make your hotel reservations for the PFMC 2002 RETREAT CONFERENCE (2002 RC). We have moved the 2002 RC to larger facilities at the Hilton Hotel, New Jersey (NJ) Route 70 and Cuthbert Boulevard, Cherry Hill, NJ.

Hotel and speaker commitments forced us to also move the dates to Friday through Sunday, March 8th, 9th, and 10th, 2002, with the 3-Day Extension (3DX) to Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, March 11th, 12th, and 13th, 2002. This is the Fourth Weekend in Lent. The Sunday Responsorial Psalm is taken from Psalm 22 “The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.” The Gospel is from John 9: 1-41 on the healing of the blind man.

The 2000 RC theme is “I HAVE LOVED YOU WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE” (Jeremiah 31:3).

Father John Hampsch, C.M.F. and Father Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J. so enjoyed working together with us that they have already agreed to work together to give us a dynamic 2002 RC. They will speak on “Healing and Suffering in our Faith.”

The featured speaker on Saturday night will be Michael H. Brown; author of “Final Hour” “Trumpet of Gabriel” and many other exceptionally well researched books on the signs of the times.

Father Michael Semana, founder of the World of Hope Foundation, will return for a concert Saturday evening as well as his very generous work with the youth and young adults in the Youth Track (YT).

Father Robert DeGrandis and his sister Dorothea DeGrandis Sudol will share the seminars and workshops of the 3DX on “Healing of Memories -

The Hilton Hotel has blocked 300 rooms of their 408 guest rooms for the PFMC group on Saturday night. Over 75% of their rooms are NON-SMOKING including 2 entire floors of the 12-floor facility. If you wish to be far away from SMOKING, please reserve your room early and specify this in your reservation booking. The rate is \$89 per room per night. This rate applies regardless of the number of persons in the room unless a roll-away bed is required. The rooms come with either a King Size bed or two Double beds. Rooms may be booked at the \$89 rate for both the 2002 RC and 3DX as well as up to 7 days before or after the events. This rate and availability of additional rooms expires on 2/8/2002. The regular room rate is currently \$119 per room per night and will probably go up by March of 2002. **For Hotel reservations please call NOW: 1-800-HILTONS or locally 856-665-6666.**

Using the Hilton will give us more hotel rooms so ALL can stay self contained right in one hotel, larger ballroom facilities (up to 1200), more PFMC and vendor display space, and better food availability in the hotel for all meals. The YT will have three separate areas for meetings and can be divided into three age groups if the registrations so indicate. Last

The volunteer Board of Directors and Staff of the PFMC recognize and accept that the final authority regarding the alleged Marian apparitions, locutions and related messages at, and to the recipients from, Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as all other private revelations, rests with the Holy See, to whose judgment we willingly submit. We give total allegiance to our One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and its Magisterium, particularly Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II.

While those presenters who work with the PFMC are selected for their personal qualifications and commitment to the Church, their comments and presentations are those of individual Catholics and no endorsement by ecclesiastical authority is to be presumed.

year there was a recommendation that the YT be broken into elementary, middle and high school age groups. If there are volunteers, we might consider some sort of pre-school or nursery school program. Use the YT registration form to indicate your desires.

For the 2001 RC, we had a complete sell out of all available hotel rooms and turned away over 100 people for Saturday with a maximum capacity of 750 people in the Assembly Ballroom. We regret that this had to happen. **We hope that this experience will encourage everyone to make Hilton Hotel and 2002 RC reservations early.** We have worked very hard to set everything up with contracts now, to enable early signup.

Please refer to the enclosed flyer for making all reservations. Remember that the 2000 RC and 3DX reservations must be made directly with the PFMC, and your hotel reservations must be made directly with the Hilton Hotel: **1-800-HILTONS** or locally **856-665-6666**.

Fill out **2002 RC, 3DX or YT reservation form(s)** for the **PFMC** and send them to **61 Cooper road, Voorhees, NJ 008043** with your payment. If attending both the **2000 RC** and the **3DX**, only one reservation form needs to be completed. A form for the **3DX** has been made available since registering for attendance at only the **3DX** seemed to be confusing in years past. Payments may be made by either check or credit card. We accept **VISA, MASTER CARD, or DISCOVER**. We do **NOT** take **American Express**.

Please note that the new reservation forms have been set up for multiple names at the same address. This is for couples and families with the same last name. If two or more persons from the same address have different last names, please submit separate forms for each person or persons with the same last name.

If you would like to join us for the **luncheon with the speakers** on **Saturday**, a very popular luncheon for **\$22 per person**, please check the box on the reservation form. We are still working on meal plans and will put out additional information as we finalize it. We are looking at a **buffet dinner** for **\$22 per person** on **Saturday evening** prior to the concert as well as sit-down hot meals at least for **lunch** on **Sunday, Monday, Tuesday** and **Wednesday**. The lovely **Terrace Room** in the **Hilton Hotel** will accommodate **250 persons (triple the room we had this last year)**. We promise you a very delicious meal for each of these programs made available.

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Thank you for your early reservations. We hope that we will not have to turn anyone away this year. **PLEASE SIGN UP FOR YOUR ROOM BY CALLING THE HILTON HOTEL NOW: 1-800-HILTONS or locally 856-665-6666 AND FILL OUT THE PFMC RESERVATION FORM(S) FOR YOUR 2002 RC, 3DX and/or YT RESERVATION.**

We ask for your prayers to start right now for the success of this 2002 RETREAT-CONFERENCE.

The letters and notes coming in from our experiences this year are such a great witness to all of us who work so hard over the year to put the retreat-conferences together. We thank you for your many notes. We love to hear about your experiences of healing. If you can write about them in one or more paragraphs and give us permission to reprint them, we

PILGRIM". We will not use your name unless you say it is ok.

If you would like to participate in planning for the 2002 RETREAT-CONFERENCE, contact Kathleen.

2001 PILGRIMAGES



Have you ever wanted to go on a pilgrimage, and never treated yourself to a beautiful faith filled experience? This year is your year to spiritually grow through traveling with the Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center. All of our pilgrimages are so blessed with a priest spiritual director, and a PFMC coordinator, who allows the priest to fully be priest while traveling, and yet gives assurance and security to the pilgrims themselves.

Don't deny yourself any more. Call us. We will help you in every way. And once you have said "yes" to travel with us, the joy of anticipation and preparation will surprise you.

All of our pilgrimages this year are very reasonably priced. We have worked very hard to assure you the very most in each itinerary for your money. Remember, we are not a travel agent...All of our work with pilgrimages is ministry for us.

All pilgrim groups will leave from Philadelphia or Newark if at all possible.

Pilgrimage travel insurance is available for all PFMC coordinated pilgrimages. We always recommend that pilgrims carry travel insurance.

An English-speaking guide will support every pilgrimage. Land transportation is in comfortable air-conditioned motor coaches. Unless otherwise noted, breakfast and supper is included so pilgrims do not have to worry about finding reasonably priced and nutritious meals.

We hope that you will review the following destinations, dates, brief itineraries, and, especially, our very competitive prices.

We will be using regularly scheduled airlines. The only catch is that you are asked to sign up no later than 45 days ahead. Airlines try to recoup their seats at 60 days. They become very aggressive at 45 days. Seats without names generally have to be returned. Reservations after 45 days will be taken with full payment and attempts will be made to find seats with the pilgrimage group.

It is very important that pilgrims sign up as soon as the spark of your prayer leads you to go on a specific pilgrimage. Travel or pilgrimage insurance will greatly assist in recovering costs if there is a problem that arises after initial sign-up.

LOURDES, PARIS and NEVERS

JULY 13 (Friday) to JULY 20 (Friday)



Fly with PFMC Pilgrimage Coordinators Vince and Livia Nocella and Spiritual Directors, Father Jim McDonald from Bishop Eustice High School, Pennsauken, NJ, and Father Laserian Nwoga from Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Berlin, NJ, on Air France to Paris

and then to Pau, stay for three nights in Lourdes and then three nights in Paris. In Lourdes, visit the Miraculous Baths with Holy Mass at the Grotto where our Blessed Mother appeared to Bernadette in 1858.



Tour Paris and visit the Shrine of the Miraculous Medal on Rue du bac. This is where Saint Catherine Laboure lies incorrupt and where she received the Miraculous Medal. Visit the Eiffel Tower, Sacre Coeur (Basilica of the Sacred Heart), Notre Dame, and much more. There will be a day trip from Paris to the Convent of Saint Gildard in Nevers, France, where Saint Bernadette lies incorrupt.

COST: \$1899 (Double Occupancy) plus \$70 taxes. Single Supplement \$299.

7 NIGHTS MEDJUGORJE, 2 NIGHTS on the ADRIATIC SEA, 1 NIGHT in ROME

AUGUST 8 (Wednesday) to AUGUST 18 (Saturday)



Join PFMC Pilgrimage Coordinator Mike McColgan and Spiritual Director Father Jack Connors from Saint John Parish, Collingswood, NJ, on this wonderful Summer pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady, Queen of Peace. We will fly with Swiss Air into Split, Croatia, and return via Dubrovnik, Croatia.

This pilgrimage is ideal for teachers and families with children in school.

Stay in a very clean and comfortable private home very close to the Church of Saint James. After visiting

Cross Mountain, Apparition Hill, and the visionaries, participating in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Oasis of Peace, and full rich 7 nights in Medjugorje, you will travel by bus to the sea town of Neum. Spend two relaxing nights on this hidden Riviera of Europe. Swim all day in the Adriatic Sea.

Free time in Dubrovnik before departure for Rome. Visit the Basilica of Saint Blaise and climb the ancient walls of the City. Shop in specialty shops or sit and enjoy a cup of coffee where sailboats visit.

1 night overnight in Rome – evening free

COST: \$2299 (Double Occupancy) including taxes. Single supplement \$299.

MEDJUGORJE with a NIGHT in ROME **NOVEMBER 9 to NOVEMBER 18**



Kathleen is the Pilgrimage Coordinator for this pilgrimage. Father Joseph Romanoski, Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in South Amboy, NJ is the Spiritual Director. This is a pilgrimage for those who want the ultimate in spending quiet time just in Medjugorje. The family home and pilgrim house is one block from Saint James Church. You will have an English speaking guide,

private transfer bus, and a full spiritual experience. Your 7 days will be spent visiting the visionaries, daily Holy Mass, Confessions, climbing Apparition Hill, and climbing Cross Mountain. Because this is the more quiet time of the year in Medjugorje, you will find plenty of time to spend in quiet meditation, and enjoy the presence of Our Lady.

Fly on Alitalia to and from Rome, Italy, and Croatia Air to and from Split, Croatia. Transfer to Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina is by guided motor coach. On November 17 we will spend the night in Rome. Supper will be in a local restaurant near the hotel. Free time in the evening will allow you to see Rome by night, and in the early morning.

COST: \$1499 (Double Occupancy) **INCLUSIVE.** All taxes, both Croatian and Italian, are included.

Please see the information sheets and reservation forms enclosed in this and past issues of "The PILGRIM." Call 856 768-9228 for additional information sheets and reservations forms.

Kathleen Werner and Pilgrimage Volunteer Staff

SUMMER PILGRIMAGES

PLEASE sign up for our summer pilgrimages **NOW.** It is extremely difficult to keep pilgrimages open with seats available at group rates, when the airlines want names and deposits 60 – 90 days from departure dates.

We still have room on our pilgrimage to Lourdes and Paris in July, and we have 40 seats available for Medjugorje in August. We **MUST** have final payments for the Lourdes trip. We must have deposits for the August Medjugorje pilgrimage. Also, Keith and Kathleen will be leading a pilgrimage to Medjugorje in November. Deposits are due to hold these seats. Thank you.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SEMINARS **on the DEVELOPMENT and** **HISTORY of CHRIST'S CHURCH**

Dean Pulcini is leading Wednesday night seminars on "DEFENDING YOUR FAITH" in the Great Room of Epiphany House from 7 PM to 9 PM.

He offers a basic understanding of his Catholic faith in comparison to and contrasted with Protestantism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

These interactive seminars help students to grasp clearly what the Church authentically teaches and aid in dispelling misinformation, misunderstanding, and

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Williams, Father John McFadden, Father Bill McCarthy, MSsA,

Father Robert DeGrandis, SSJ, Father Glenn Hartman, Father

Joseph Szolack, as well as many of *Mary's* other beloved priests from

the Philadelphia and Newark Archdioceses as well as the Camden,

Harrisburg, Metuchen, Norwich, Pittsburgh, Scranton, Trenton and

Wilmington Dioceses. Father Hartman is reviewing every issue.

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OFFICE HELP, ASSEMBLY, LABELS and MAILING: Too many wonderful pilgrims and volunteers to mention them all by name.

myths. Persons of other faiths interested in learning about Catholicism are invited to attend as well.

With a Master's degree in Sacred Theology from Holy Apostles College and Seminary, Cromwell, CT. Dean has plenty of background in Scripture, Morality, and Liturgy for these seminars. On line, Dean hosts a chat room founded to address questions about the Catholic faith.

These seminars run from 7 PM to 9 PM on Wednesday nights. Free will offering baskets are out. Suggested offering is \$5 per night. The PFMC display room and library will be open. If you plan to attend, please call (856) 768-9228. These seminars look at ethics, morality and the obligation of fidelity to Jesus Christ.

THURSDAY PRAYER GROUP MEETING at EPIPHANY HOUSE



A prayer group meets in the Epiphany House Great Room from 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM on Thursdays. This prayer group focuses on Marian Prayer. It is Charismatic, and prays for Healing. All are most welcome.

THURSDAY 2:15 PM to 2:45 PM “Put on the Armor of God” RADIO PROGRAM on WTMR, AM-800

Kathleen and Keith will host this program weekly in conjunction with In His Sign Ministries and the In His Sign Radio Network. Dominic Lettieri has arranged to have this half-hour sponsored by the PFMC. There will be prayer, scripture, discussion of the Ephesians 6:11 and following, announcements, call-in time, discussion with callers, healing prayer and summary. The call-in number is 856 962-8178.

SUPPORT ETERNAL WORD TELEVISION NETWORK (EWTN)

If you enjoy the programming on EWTN, please send in regular and sacrificial contributions. For whatever reason, Mother Angelica has had to make special appeals for support. We need to have a healthy and communicating EWTN.

SALVATION and PEACE through REPARATION – WHY MAKE the 5 FIRST FRIDAYS

When Sister Lucy was situated at Tuy, her confessor, Father Goncalves gave her in writing a series of questions. One of the questions was: “Why five Saturdays and not nine or seven, in honor of the Sorrows of Our Lady?”

That same evening, the seer implored Our Lord to inspire her with the answer. A few days later, she transmitted to her confessor the answer:

“As I was in the chapel with Our Lord part of the night of May 29-30, 1930 (we know that the seer makes a holy hour from eleven o'clock to midnight, especially on Thursday evenings, according to the requests of the Sacred Heart at Paray-le-Monial), and speaking to Our Lord I suddenly found myself more intimately possessed by the Divine Presence. This is what was revealed to me:

“My daughter, the reason is simple. There are five kinds of offenses and blasphemies uttered against the Immaculate Heart of Mary:

1. Blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception.
2. Blasphemies against Her perpetual virginity.
3. Blasphemies against Her divine Maternity, while refusing at the same time to recognize Her as Mother of men.
4. Blasphemies of those who publicly seek to place in the hearts of children indifference or scorn, or even hatred towards this Immaculate Mother.
5. The offenses of those who outrage Her directly in Her Holy Images.
6. There, My daughter, is the reason why the Immaculate Heart of Mary inspired Me to request this small act of reparation and in consideration of it, to move My mercy to forgive souls who have had the misfortune to offend Her. As for you, seek unceasingly, through your prayers and sacrifices, to move My mercy with regard to these poor souls.”

(sent by John Naughton – from “Sister
Exhortations to Practice the Reparatory Devotion of the
First Saturdays”)

THE TROUBLE TREE

I hired a plumber to help me restore an old farmhouse, and after he had just finished a rough first day on the job: (a flat tire made him lose an hour of work and his electric drill quit) his ancient one ton truck refused to start.

While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands.

When opening the door he underwent an amazing transformation. His tanned face was wreathed in a smile and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss.

Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

"Oh, that's my trouble tree," he replied. "I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, those troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children. So I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home and ask God to take care of them."

"Then in the morning I pick them up again."

"Funny thing is," he smiled, "when I come out in the morning to pick 'em up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before."

(Bernadette-internet)

POPE EXTOLS SACRAMENT of PENANCE - URGES PRIESTS WORLDWIDE to PROMOTE IT

Given man's "new and urgent need for spirituality" and his "deeply felt need for interpersonal contact," John Paul II proposes the rediscovery of the sacrament of confession as a crucial part of the new evangelization. The Pontiff focused on this proposal in his yearly letter to the 404,560 priests worldwide, for Holy Thursday.

At the beginning of his letter, the Pope stresses that the rediscovery of the sacrament of reconciliation was, perhaps, one of the most important fruits of the Holy Year. The Pope recalls how the confessionals in the Vatican and other Basilicas were "stormed" by pilgrims, "who often had to wait patiently in long

queues for their turn."

The sacrament reached its zenith in Rome last August, when thousands of confessors were available in the Circus Maximus to the hundreds of thousands of youths who attended World Youth Day.

Following the profound crisis of this sacrament in recent decades, the Bishop of Rome acknowledges that it "would be naive to think that the mere intensifying of the practice of the sacrament of forgiveness during the Jubilee Year is proof of a definitive turnabout. Nevertheless, it was an encouraging sign." "Despite many incongruities, a new and urgent need for spirituality is becoming widespread in society," he writes. "There is also a deeply felt need for interpersonal contact, which is increasingly experienced as a reaction to the anonymous mass society, which often leaves people interiorly isolated, even when it involves them in a flurry of purely functional relationships." He adds: "Obviously, sacramental confession is not to be confused with a support system or with psychotherapy. However, neither should we underestimate the fact that the sacrament of reconciliation, when correctly celebrated, also has a humanizing effect, which is in perfect harmony with its primary purpose of reconciling the individual with God and the Church."

The Pope urges priests to "declare with firmness and conviction that the sacrament of penance is the ordinary means of obtaining pardon and the remission of grave sins committed after baptism." John Paul II notes, "Unfortunately, there exists a ministerial tendency, which prevents the sacrament from producing all the benefits that we might hope for. Many of the faithful have an idea of sin that is not based on the Gospel but on common convention, on what is socially 'acceptable.' This makes them feel not particularly responsible for things that 'everybody does,' and all the more so if these things are permitted by civil law."

"Evangelization in the Third Millennium must come to grips with the urgent need for a representation of the Gospel message that is dynamic, complete and demanding. The Christian life to be aimed at, cannot be a mediocre commitment to 'goodness' as society defines it; it must be a true quest for holiness," the Pope stresses.

The Holy Father asks that priests themselves must regularly go to the sacrament of confession with other priests. "Only those who have known the Father's

tender embrace, as the Gospel describes it in the parable of the prodigal son, only they can pass on to others the same warmth, when after receiving pardon themselves, they administer it to others,” the Pope concludes.

(VATICAN CITY, APRIL 2, 2001)

LUNCH WITH GOD

A little boy wanted to meet GOD. He knew it was a long trip to where GOD lived, so he packed his suitcase with Twinkies and a six-pack of root beer, and he started his journey. When he had gone about three blocks, he met an old woman. She was sitting in the park just staring at some pigeons.

The boy sat down next to her and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink from his root beer when he noticed that the old lady looked hungry, so he offered her a Twinkie. She gratefully accepted it and smiled at him. Her smile was so pretty that the boy wanted to see it again, so he offered her a root beer. Again, she smiled at him. The boy was delighted! They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling, but they never said a word.

As it grew, the boy realized how tired he was and he got up to leave, but before he had gone more than a few steps, he turned around ran back to the old woman, and gave her a hug. She gave him her biggest smile ever. When the boy opened the door to his own house a short time later; his mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face.

She asked him, What did you do today that made you so happy?

He replied, “I had lunch with GOD. “

But before his mother could respond, he added, “You know what? It's the most beautiful smile I've ever seen!”

Meanwhile, the old woman, also radiant with joy, returned to her home. Her son was stunned by the look of peace on her face and he asked, “Mother, what did you do today that made you so happy?”

She replied, “I ate Twinkies in the park with GOD. “

However, before her son responded, she added, “You know, he's much younger than I expected”

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which

have the potential to turn a life around. Remember, we don't know what God will look like. People come into our lives for a reason, a season, or a lifetime. Embrace all equally! Send this to people who have touched your life in a special way. Let them know how important they are. Have lunch with GOD.

(Internet – Irene)

FLOWERS of the MADONNA

Flowers associated with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, are deeply intertwined with ancient lore that can be traced back beyond the Christian era. In heathen mythology almost every common plant was the emblem of a god; every tree was the abode of a nymph. The laurel was sacred to Apollo in memory of Daphne who was changed into a laurel while escaping his advances. The anemone, poppy and violet were dedicated to Venus, the narcissus and maidenhair fern to Prosperpine, the willow to Ceres, the pink to Jove and the lily, crocus and asphodel to Juno. The lily was also sacred to Buddha and Brahma, the basil to Vishnu and the henna plant to Mahomet.

When Christianity spread from land to land and from nation to nation, its early missionaries soon discovered that it was far easier not to attempt to eliminate entirely all the customs and rites of the pagan religions which they were attempting to supplant, but rather to take over and adopt such of these as were not incompatible with their own faith. This happened many times with flowers and plants. Ivy was a plant dedicated to Bacchus; the holly and the Yule log were associated with early Druid rites, yet all three soon were used in Christian festivals in England. Plants that had hitherto been sacred to or dedicated to Venus, or to her Scandinavian counterpart, Freya, or to some other great female divinity, now became associated with Mary, mother of Jesus, as were those formerly associated with Juno, Diana and the Teutonic Hulda and Bertha.

The plant known in old Iceland as “Freyje's Heir” became Our Lady's Hair, and “Maria's fern” in England now is known as maidenhair. Its scientific name, *Adiantum capillus-veneris*, indicates that in more ancient times it was dedicated to Venus.

A rose which is said to have been the favorite flower of Hulda now is called “Frau Rose” in Germany and “Mother rose” in England. This tendency is exemplified in other fields of natural history as well.

In parts of Europe, the strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*) is considered sacred to the Virgin Mary, who is said to accompany children when they go strawberry-picking on Saint John's Day. On that day no mother who has lost a child will eat a strawberry, lest her little one get none in Paradise. Actually, this tradition goes back to old German mythology, wherein the goddess Frigga, who presided over marriages, was supposed to go strawberry picking.

One of the plants now called mayweed (*Matricaria inodora*) was sacred to Athena during the Age of Pericles, but in the Christian era became dedicated to Mary Magdalene and was called Saint Mary's herb.

The laurel (*Daphne mezereum*) connected in Greek mythology with Apollo's innamorata, Daphne, was called Our Lady's laurel. The plants referred to as Our Lady's smock and Our Lady's slippers all had a pre-Christian sanctity.

So many plants have been used in the celebration of the month especially dedicated to Mary that is, the month of May, that some writers have claimed that all flowers are dedicated to her, especially all such as blossom anywhere during that month. The Flemish painters made wreaths of all kinds and colors of flowers to encircle their paintings of the Mother and Child. Lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*) and many other spring flowers are widely used to decorate churches and especially Lady chapels.

But there are certain plants which, above all others, are associated in legend and folklore with the virgin Mary, and whose popular names still indicate this connection. As she reclines in her bedchamber of Virgin's bower (*Clematis vitalba*), she is provided with shoes, the familiar Columbine (*Aquilegia vulgaris*). For slippers she has such choices as birds-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), our annual garden balsam, (*Impatiens balsamina* or *capensis*) and ladyslippers or moccasin flowers (*Cypripedium* sp.). Her garters were ribbon grass (*Phalaris arundinacea picta*) with which to keep her hose in place, and laces for her corset and shoes (*Phalaris arundinacea* and *Cuscuta*). She is provided with thimbles, the hair bell (*Campanula rotundifolia*) and the foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) and a needle, Roman wormwood (*Artemisia pontica*) with which to sew. Ladies smock (*Cardamine pratensis*) as well as her mantle (*Alchemilla pratensis*, and *A. vulgaris*) were part of her garb.

Among the plants for her cushion were thrift or sea pinks (*Armeria vulgaris*, *A. maritima*), knapweed

(*Centaurea nigra*) and a rockfoil (*Saxifraga hypnoides*) on which to recline. She also has a comb (*Scandix pecten-venctis*) with whose slender, tapering seedpod-beaks, set together like teeth, she may comb her tresses and a looking-glass (*Specularia speculum.veneris*) to assist her in this process. The lovely orchid genus, *Spiranthus*, provides Our Lady's tresses, and there is also Our Lady's hair (*Briza media*). She has as a nightcap, one of the bindweeds (*Convolvulus sepium*), the European wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) or the canterbury bell (*Campanula medium*), with which to keep her curls in place. Her ruffles are dropwort (*Filipendula hexapetala*), her ribands, ribbon grass (*Phalaris arundinacea picta*) and her needlework (*Aucalis anthriscus*).

The candles which give her light are the common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*). Virgin oil is provided by the common olive (*Olea europaea*). When she writes letters to her friends she has a seal or signet, the false solomons seal (*Smilacina racemosa*) and the black bryony (*Tamus communis*). The first of these, called Seal of the Blessed Virgin by the old herbalists, now is known in England as Lady's seal (or signet). it became associated with a signet because of the curious seal-like marks left on the rhizome when a stem is shed. The second, now called black bryony, has pretty fruits which also resemble such seals, and old writers say that it can be employed to seal up scars and wounds.

At the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin, a festival that dates to 695 A.D.- the black bryony is her emblem. Our Lady's fingers are provided by *Anthyllis vulneraria*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Digitalis purpurea* and

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Lathyrus pratensis, and her navel by the kidneywort (*Cotyledon umbilicus*), originally called Venus' navel. Some species of north European orchids, with handshaped underground parts, originally sacred to old Norse goddesses, were called Our Lady's hand and Mary's hand by the early Christians there. Her gloves are *Digitalis purpurea*, called "gant de Notre Dame" in French, "Frauen Handschuh" in German and Our Lady's glove in England, and her eardrops are *Impatiens capensis* and *Fuchsia* sp.

In her pocket (*Impatiens capensis*) she carries a purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*). She has boots (*Lotus corniculatus*) and a belt (*Filipendula ulmaria*), and her tears are *Convallaria majalis*. Her dresses are adorned with Marygold or marigold (*Calendula officinalis*), and this flower is used at the Feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin (March 25).

To dress her wounds she has Our Lady's balsam or "Frauenbalsam" (*Chrysanthemum balsamita*) and Our Lady's lint (*Alsine holostea*). Several plants whose leaves are white-spotted are said in popular legends to have derived their spots from drops or the Virgin's milk which fell on them. Among these are Our Lady's thistle, virgin's thistle, lady's milk or holy thistle (*Silybum marianum*). The Bethlehem sage or lungwort (*Pulmonaria saccharata*) received its common name in this way. In fact, in Cheshire it is called lady's milk sile ("sile" being a provincialism there for a soil or stain). In Germany it is referred to as Our Lady's milkwort. In France the common polypody fern (*Polypodium vulgare*) is called "Marie bregne" and is said to have sprung from the Virgin's milk. *Pulmonaria officinalis* is often called Virgin Mary's milkdrops in England.

The cuckoopint (*Cardamine pratensis*) is called lady's smock because its silver-white blossoms are said to resemble little smocks hung out to dry, and it flowers in Europe at Ladytide (March 25). It is often called Our Lady's flower. The costmary (*Chrysanthemum balsamita*) and periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) are both called "Virgin-Flower" and are sacred to her. The snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*), often in full bloom at Candlemas (February 2), is also consecrated to her.

On the day following the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, held on Candlemas in memory of her presentation of the infant Jesus in the temple, her images are removed from altars and are replaced by scattered snowdrops, emblematic of purity and virgin chastity and of Our Lady. Charm Against Bad Weather At the Feast of the Conception (December 8) the arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*) is dedicated to her.

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The "bleeding nun" (*Cyclamen europaeum*), often used as a charm against bad weather, is consecrated to her. *Primula elatior* in England is called Our Lady's candlestick and *Galega lutea* is Our Lady's cowslip, but *Pulmonaria officinalis* is also called Virgin Mary's cowslips.

In France the spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) is dedicated to the Virgin and is called "menthe de Notre Dame". In her garden she also has lady sorrel (*Oxalis corniculata* and *O. stricta*), lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), lady clover (*Oxalis acetoscela*) and even lady tobacco (*Anaphalis margaritacea*). She has the Virgin Mary's honeysuckle (*Pulmonaria officinalis*), the Virgin pink (*Dianthus plumarius*) and the Virgin stock (*Malcomia maritima*). The Molucca-bean (*Cesalpinia bonduc*) is often referred to as Virgin Mary's nut. It is of interest to note that after the Reformation many of the plants which had previously been dedicated to the Virgin had their popular names changed again and in such a way as to refer to any girl or woman, rather than to a specific one.

The two flowers beyond all others that are emblematic of the Blessed Virgin are the rose in the East and the lily in the West. At the Feast of the Visitation (July 2), instituted by Pope Urban VI to commemorate the visit of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth. The madonna lily (*Lilium candidum*) is emblematic of Mary's virginity and almost every painting purporting to depict this visit has a vase of these lilies, usually with three blossoms, included.

The pure white sepals are symbolic of her spotless body and the six golden anthers of her soul sparkling with divine light. The rose is also used. At the Feast of the Assumption, or miraculous ascent of Mary into heaven, the white virgin's bower is widely used.

In depicting the Annunciation, early painters represented the angel Gabriel carrying either a sceptre or a spray of olive. Later the church instructed artists always to depict him with a spray of Madonna lilies in his hand, and this edict was followed scrupulously in the later period of Italian church art. Usually the spray consisted of three blossoms, suggesting the Trinity.

The lily was symbolic of innocence, purity and virginity, and often, when it was depicted or used on an altar, it had the stamens removed lest they "defile" the virgin chastity of the blossom.

At the Feast of the Annunciation today, white irises, flowering almonds and white narcissi are also used. According to a well-known legend, Saint Thomas, not believing the reports about the resurrection of the

Virgin, had her tomb opened. Inside, instead of her body, he found the tomb to be filled with lilies and roses. The rose is used in Italy all through the month of May. Everyone, who can secure roses, places them in his oratory or on a table. Both red and white roses have been emblematic of the Virgin since very early times, and were dedicated to Venus before that.

When Saint Dominick instituted the devotion of the Rosary, he recognized this symbolism and indicated the separate prayers as tiny roses. May the Month of May or Madonna's Month was originally sacred to Flora, Roman goddess of flowers and of spring.

(Harold N. Moldenke, Co-author of *Plants of the Bible Horticulture*, December, 1953)

A MARY GARDEN PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, As our hearts are raised to you in love and thanksgiving through the light, grace, fragrance and signatures of these pure, blest, transfigured flowers of Our Lady - your direct creations, showing forth and sharing with us your divine goodness, beauty and truth - we commune with you in awe and rapture and pray that we and all our brothers and sisters may be opened to the fullness of the divine love of God and Neighbor, through which we are to transform the fallen world into the culminating earthly

Peaceable Kingdom and Paradise, that all may be lifted up resplendent in the eternal New Heaven and New Earth of our Crucified and Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in grateful return glorified to the Father in the union of the Holy Spirit of Love for all eternity.

We beseech this through the redemption and mercy of **The Heavenly, Eucharistic Lamb that was slain**, and through the intercession of:

Saint Francis, apostle of the love of God in every creature,

Saint Paul, teacher of the place of all Creation in the Divine Plan of Redemption,

Saint Patrick, sanctifier of nature everywhere as wellspring of God's power,

Saint Coloman, ever alert to find God in the woods and fields,

Saint Fiacre, opener of the world to the outpouring of Divine healing love through garden herbs and flowers,

Saint Rose of Lima, to whom the boy Jesus and his Mother were present in the garden,

Saint Isidore, assisted by Mary's angels in plowing the soil to feed the hungry,

Saint Phocas, digger of earth in the hope of the Resurrection,

Dorothy, bestower on earth of heavenly flowers and fruits,

Saint Bernard, searcher of flowers for likenesses of Jesus and Mary,

Saint Anselm, theologian of Our Lady's Queenship of redeemed nature,

Saint Francis de Sales, quickener of spiritual life and growth through the discernment of their mirroring in nature's unfolding,

Saint John of the Cross, poet of the spiritual countryside of the soul's mystical journey of love,

Saint Louis de Montfort, nurtured in the spiritual paradise of Mary,

Saint Theresa, showerer on earth of roses of heavenly love and grace,

Saint Dominic, missionary of the power of the Rosary,

Saint John Eudes, drawn by union with the light Christ into the Heaven of the Trinity,

Saint John Chrysostom, beholder of resplendent earth as the radiance of God's face,

Saint Athanasius, dweller in heaven on earth,

Saint Bonaventure, proclaimer of the fullness of Mary's blessed and immaculate magnification of God's creating, saving and renewing power.

Saint Joseph, patron of all who labor for the building of God's Kingdom, **Saint John**, prophet of the descent of the Heavenly Jerusalem, and of

Blessed and Glorious Mary, Ever Virgin, our Mother Mystical Rose, Mediatrix of all Grace, and Queen of Heaven and Earth, in the union of her Immaculate, Sorrowful and Glorified Heart with the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

(www.catholic.pages.com)

GARDENS GIVE MARY GLORY

These are the loveliest of her litanies,
These are gardens where the glad abounding earth
Still gush the Holy Spirit's primal mirth
In endlessly renewed diversities

These from the faithful and fecund soil
Are generations that have called her blest,
They magnify her always without rest
While man's sad cyclic ages still uncoil.

They beat the perfumed air with noiseless sound,
They ring out her renown, freshly repeat
Her names taught them by men whose pulses beat
With God's great rhythm of the Seasons' round.

Each garden gives her glory, chants her praise
Even in harsh and hostile places where
Men have forgotten gentleness and prayer,
And what still canticles waft through their days.

Who plants a garden builds a carillon
To peal her praises with the pulse of time,
And laud her with the earth's loveliest, lasting chime
In bright, unalterable antiphon.

(by Liam Brophy)

PRAYER to OUR LADY

O Mary, bright dawn of the new world,
Mother of the living,
To you do we entrust the cause of life:
Look down, O Mother, upon the vast numbers of
babies not allowed to be born,
Of the poor whose lives are made difficult,
Of men and women who are victims of brutal violence,
Of the elderly and the sick killed by
Indifference or out of misguided mercy.
Grant that all who believe in your Son
May proclaim the Gospel of life with
Honesty and love to the people of our time.
Obtain for them the grace to accept
That Gospel as a gift ever new,
The joy of celebrating it with gratitude
Throughout their lives and the courage
To bear witness to it resolutely, in order to build,
Together with all people of good will,
The civilization of truth and love,
To the praise and glory of God,
The Creator and lover of life.

(Pope John Paul II, *EVANGELIUM VITAE*, given on
the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord)

THINK SPRING!!!

"I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on

Spring is just around the corner. Here are some ideas
for your garden

FOR THE GARDEN OF YOUR DAILY LIVING PLANT THREE ROWS OF PEAS:

1. Peace of mind
2. Peace of heart
3. Peace of soul

PLANT FOUR ROWS OF SQUASH:

1. Squash gossip
2. Squash indifference
3. Squash grumbling
4. Squash selfishness

PLANT FOUR ROWS OF LETTUCE:

1. Lettuce be faithful
2. Lettuce be kind
3. Lettuce be patient
4. Lettuce really love one another

NO GARDEN WITHOUT TURNIPS:

1. Turnip for meetings
2. Turnip for service
3. Turnip to help one another

TO CONCLUDE OUR GARDEN WE MUST HAVE THYME:

1. Thyme for each other
2. Thyme for family
3. Thyme for friends

**WATER FREELY WITH PATIENCE AND
CULTIVATE WITH LOVE THERE IS MUCH
FRUIT IN YOUR GARDEN BECAUSE YOU
REAP WHAT YOU SOW**

(from Caroline – Florida)

THE HOLY NAME of MARY

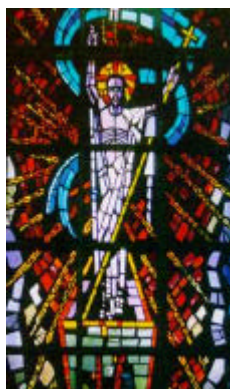
The Name that's ne'er invoked in vain;
The Name that brings relief from pain;
The Name that sings a sweet refrain--
The Holy Name of Mary!
The Name blest by Divinity;
The Name loved by the Trinity;
The Name that means so much to me--

The Holy Name of Mary!
 The Name that is a fervent prayer;
 The Name that eases earthly care;
 The Name of Heaven's Queen so fair--
 The Holy Name of Mary!
 Each day I pray when death is nigh
 I will say "Jesus," as I die,
 And add this to my final cry:
 The Holy Name of Mary!

(From Maria C.)

VOCATION DEPARTMENT

NAZARETH HOUSE



A place of discernment and formation for men aspiring to priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church, Nazareth House is located on the campus of Camden Catholic High School in Cherry Hill. The Diocese of Camden has begun a new formation program to help young men investigate whether God is calling them to priestly formation.

The mission of Nazareth House is to assist young men between the ages of 18-35 in the discernment and development of the seeds of a priestly vocation. The staff will provide them with the foundation for seminary theologate formation, through a shared community life of prayer and worship; human, spiritual and intellectual development; and pastoral service.

FOR MORE INFORMATION or APPLICATION MATERIALS, CONTACT:

Father Joseph Szolack, szolack@camdendiocese.org
 Director of Vocations, Diocese of Camden
 631 Market Street, Camden, NJ 08102
 (856) 756-7900 ext. 5266.
 or visit: <http://www.beapriest.org>

VOCATIONS ANONYMOUS TEST

Simply check all statements that apply to you.

☐ Do you find your weekly ministry more life-giving and energizing than your 40-hour work week?

☐ Do you hide vocation literature under your bed or away in your closet?

☐ Do you feel called to give more or be more?

☐ Does the idea of becoming a brother, sister, or priest keeping coming back time and time again?

☐ Does your relationship with God sustain you, enliven you, invigorate you in such a way that you want to share the Good News with others?

☐ Do you long for "MORE"?

☐ Do you have a sneaking suspicion that you are on the brink of a major life decision?

☐ Are you afraid to tell friends and family that you are thinking about a Church vocation?

☐ Do you feel a recurring tug in your heart to serve others more?

If you checked three or more of the statements above, then you may have a vocation to the priesthood or religious life!

www.catholic.pages.com

PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Keep them I pray Thee Dearest Lord,
 Keep them for they are Thine,
 Thy priests whose lives burn out,
 Before Thy Consecrated Shrine.

Keep them, for they are in the world,
 Though from the world apart;
 When earthly pleasures tempt, allure,

HOLY MASS TIMES

If you ever think you will miss Holy Mass because you don't know the times of Holy Mass in the area that you are located, call 1-800-MASS-TIMES or 1-800-627-7846.

If you have access to the Internet and don't already have it book marked, type in the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) www.masstimes.org in the white box near the top of your browser.

Shelter them in Thy Heart.

Keep them and comfort them,
In hours of loneliness and pain,
When all their life of sacrifice,
For souls, seems but in vain.

Keep them but oh remember Lord,
They have no one but Thee;
Yet they have only human hearts
With human frailty.

Keep them as spotless as the Host,
That daily they caress;
Their every thought and word and deed,
Deign dearest Lord to bless.

Our priests are our spiritual leaders on this earth.

We really need to remember them every day in our prayers.

God bless you all for holding up our priests in your prayers and sacrifices!

[\(joneses@prodigy.net\)](mailto:joneses@prodigy.net)

HOLY FATHER on ULTIMATE REALITIES

The Pope dedicated various general audiences on the Ultimate Realities, as though to stress the need to speak of these in the Church. He began with Heaven, which is the “participation in complete intimacy with the Father after the course of our earthly life; it is the fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness.” (21-7-99)

On Hell he said: “It is the state of those who definitely reject the Father’s mercy, even at the last moment of their life, thus separating themselves for ever from joyful communion with Him... Eternal damnation is not attributed to God’s initiative because in his merciful love he can only desire the salvation of the beings he created. In reality, it is the creature who closes himself to his love.” (28 July 1999)

On Purgatory he said: “For those who find themselves in a condition of being open to God, but still imperfectly, the journey towards full beatitude requires a purification, which the faith of the Church illustrates in the doctrine of ‘Purgatory’ a term which does not indicate a place, but a condition of existence.” “Just as in their earthly life believers are united in the one Mystical Body, so after death those who live in a state of purification experience the same ecclesial solidarity

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which works through prayer, prayers for suffrage and love for their other brothers and sisters in the faith.” (4 August 1999)

We noticed that the Holy Father did not refer to 2 Maccabees (12:38) to prove the existence of Purgatory (in which Judas sent a collection to Jerusalem to offer up as a sacrifice for the soldiers who died in a state of sin) out of respect for various Protestant confessions which do not recognize the two books of Maccabees as being divinely inspired.

The whole of the Christian life is like a great pilgrimage to the house of the Father. A Christian life requires that we keep our gaze on the goal, the ultimate realities, but at the same time, that we strive for the ‘penultimate’ (earthly) realities...It is a matter of purifying every human activity and every earthly task.” (11 Aug.) The journey of conversion does not avoid the works of Satan. “Jesus,” however, “defeated him definitely...the battle against evil, though, continues to demand vigilance.”

(Echo of Mary Queen of Peace --- September-October 1999 (147))

THE LORD'S BASEBALL TEAM

Bob and the Lord stood by to observe a baseball game. The Lord's team was playing Satan's team. The Lord's team was at bat, the score was tied zero to zero, and it was the bottom of the 9th inning with two outs. They continued to watch as a batter, whose name was Love, stepped up to the plate.

Love swung at the first pitch and hit a single, because Love never fails.

The next batter was named Faith, who also got a single because Faith works with Love.

The next batter up was named Godly Wisdom. Satan wound up and threw the first pitch. Godly Wisdom looked it over and let it pass: Ball one.

Three more pitches and Godly Wisdom walked, because Godly wisdom never swings at what Satan throws.

The bases were loaded. The Lord then turned to Bob and told him He was now going to bring in His star player.

Up to the plate stepped Grace.

Bob said, “He sure doesn't look like much!”

Satan's whole team relaxed when they saw Grace.

Thinking he had won the game, Satan wound up and fired his first pitch. To the shock of everyone, Grace hit the ball harder than anyone had ever seen. But Satan was not worried; his center fielder let very few get by. He went up for the ball, but it went right through his glove, hit him on the head and sent him crashing on the ground; then it continued over the fence for a home run!

The Lord's team won.

The Lord then asked Bob if he knew why Love, Faith, and Godly Wisdom could get on base but could not win the game. Bob answered that he did not know why.

The Lord explained, "If your love, faith and wisdom had won the game you would think you had done it by yourself.

Love, faith and wisdom will get you on base, but only My Grace can get you home. "

(Internet from Irene)

THE FIGURE of MARY

In a world where the believer may feel the weight of lack misunderstanding, or even the violence of persecution, John Paul II presented the comfort of a powerful force: the figure of Mary.

Addressing pilgrims who filled Paul VI Hall for the midweek general audience today, the Pope said: "For the Church, which often feels the weight of history and the siege of evil, the Mother of Christ is the luminous emblem of humanity redeemed and enveloped in saving grace."

The Bishop of Rome addressed a topic characterized by mystical overtones. The book he quoted most often was the Apocalypse. He described the struggle between good and evil, represented by the woman who gives birth to a son, and the raging dragon bent on destroying them.

Both against the Church, and the Mother, of which she is a figure, "is unleashed the monstrous devastating energy of violence, falsehood and injustice," the Pontiff said.

In the great battle, John Paul II added, "Mary, her Son and the Church represent the apparent weakness and littleness of love, truth and justice." Nevertheless, "the final verdict is entrusted to the salvation, strength, the Kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ."

However, like the woman of Apocalypse, John Paul II said that one must keep in mind that "in the time of history the Church might be obliged to seek refuge in the desert, as ancient Israel did on the way to the promised land."

Yet, "the woman remains in this shelter ... only for a limited period," he said. The sacred book itself states, he noted, that the "time of anguish, of persecution, of trial is not, therefore, indefinite: In the end there will be deliverance and it will be the hour of glory."

Thus, the Holy Father was able to affirm that, "Mary, next to her Son, is the most perfect icon of the liberty and deliverance of humanity and the cosmos."

He added: "Let us fix our gaze, then, on Mary, icon of the pilgrim Church in the desert of history, but outstretched to the glorious end of the heavenly Jerusalem where she will shine as the Bride of the Lamb, Christ the Lord."

(MAR. 14, 2001 (Zenit.org))

A MOTHER'S LOVE

While pregnant with her son
Beneath her heart within,
She'd often feel his hands
Moving inside her skin.
He'd stretch his arm and hand
and push out on her side
she'd lovingly push it back with a smile so sweet and
wide.
She could hardly wait for his upcoming birth
to touch his tiny hands
and welcome him to earth.
Then it finally came,
The night that he was born.
With joy she couldn't contain,
She held him until morn.
She explored his tiny fingers.
She counted all his toes.
She wanted to get to know him,
His ears, his cheeks, His nose.
The wonder of it all,
At this new baby boy!
She could not hold back.
She wept with tears of joy.
She touched his tiny hand,
a miniature of her own.
He squeezed tight on her finger.

Such joy she'd never known!
 The time passed and he grew.
 As a toddler, it was grand to walk along and hold on
 to His fleshy little hand.
 She taught him many things.
 Together they spent hours.
 She'd take his little hand and touch it to a flower.
 When she would hold him close,
 He soon developed the knack of hugging her 'round
 the neck,
 His tiny hand patting her back.
 As her son grew older,
 His young hands also grew.
 He learned many ways to use them.
 Each day brought something new.
 She helped him learn to read.
 She helped him learn to write.
 Then, as the day was ending,
 She'd pray with him at night.
 He learned to use a hammer with which to drive a nail.
 He'd sometimes strike his finger and let out quite a
 wail!
 Her son continued growing, and soon became a man.
 She loved him just as much as when his life began.
 His hands were now full grown,
 So strong, yet tender, when He, with deep
 compassion, comforted a friend.
 She was extremely grateful when his hands would
 fold;
 And bowing his head in prayer,
 To his Father in Heaven he'd hold.
 As the years flew swiftly by, She watched her son with
 pride,
 His strong but gentle arms and hands there at his side.
 She then thought her life was over.
 She suffered unspeakable loss when her son's beloved
 hands
 were nailed to a wooden cross.
 But that was just the beginning.
 For he died and rose again.
 Her sorrow then was ended, and joy replaced her pain.
 For, you see, her son was Jesus, God coming to earth
 as man,
 To save us from our sins
 according to His plan.
 We cannot save ourselves.
 Our sins would lead to death.
 God put our sins on Jesus, The perfect and the best.
 With this came our forgiveness if we believe in Him
 And ask Him into our hearts, He'll take away our sin.

As He was resurrected,
 Eternal Life He'll bring to all who have faith and
 believe
 And to His hand will cling.

(from Marie Corbett)

MARY of NAZARETH - JESUS' MOTHER, OUR MOTHER - Read this and know Mary better!

We've heard it before. And it's true, References to Mary in the Scriptures are not very abundant. And yet these passages give us not only a rich sense of the mother of Jesus but also of her important role as mother of the Church.

How can this be? As we shall see in this newsletter, key scriptural passages about Mary of Nazareth are laden with meaning, and, if we unravel them carefully, we can draw from them a wealth of insight.

For example, when Jesus said to his mother on Calvary, "Woman, behold your son" and to the disciple, "Behold, your mother" (John 19:26-27), more is packed into these lines than meets the eye. Jesus is doing more than entrusting his mother to John and John to her. He is making her mother of all the faithful. The beloved disciple here is seen as a symbol of all the disciples, indeed a symbol of the whole Church. Mary is given a special role in the birth and development of all the redeemed.

Jesus' brief statement to his mother from the cross was like the reading of a will, for in an oral culture the last testament is spoken before a person dies and in the presence of witnesses. In doing this Jesus acted the dutiful son. But he was also the savior and wished to involve his mother actively in the process of salvation. That is why he said to her, "Woman, behold your son" (John 19:26).

Mary's role at Cana

Hearing herself addressed as "woman," Mary must have remembered the wedding at Cana where Jesus also called her by that rather startling title. When she told Jesus there was no wine, he replied, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come" (John 2:3-4), Mary, in turn, demonstrates her ability to influence the life and ministry of her son. Her faith moved her to ask Jesus to begin manifesting his saving presence and public ministry of love. His

heavenly Father had initiated him for ministry at the Jordan baptism. His earthly mother interceded with him at Cana to begin that ministry by performing a sign. She wanted his messianic work to be revealed. Jesus perfectly understood what she meant. Their communion as mother and son assured that kind of understanding.

Christ's reply at Cana—that his hour had not yet come—indicated that he had not decided what was the proper time to start. The word "hour" did not mean clock time. It meant the "right time," the suitable moment. Had Jesus concluded that Mary was only interested in a practical solution to the couple's wine shortage, he would not have responded with messianic language about the "hour".

Nor would he have called her "woman. " If he had addressed her as "mother," he would only have referred to her physical parentage. By speaking to her as "woman. " he elevated her to a maternal role in the history of salvation. His use of the word "woman" guides our minds back to the Book of Genesis and the creation of Eve who is "called 'woman' " (2:23). Jesus wants his mother to be a new Eve who is to help bring forth the new creation that we know as the Church. As Eve was the woman-mother of all the living (3:20), Mary would be the woman-mother of all believers. He spoke to her spiritual motherhood that made her solicitous for the needs of all people, especially for their salvation.

Mary invited her son to begin his saving work. He affirmed her faith as woman, mother and intercessor in the plan of salvation. Mary dispelled any hesitation about the "hour," She told the servers, "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5b). Jesus performed the wine miracle and manifested his glory for the first time.

When Mary again heard her son call her "woman" at the cross, she recalled that formal beginning of the salvation process at Cana. She now knew the hour of salvation's realization had come. The two settings—Cana and Calvary, the wedding and the deathbed—are like an altarpiece, twin art works that belong together and have a unified message. Cana invites us to think of Mary as an intercessor. Calvary moves us to invoke her as our mother.

Mary in the Upper Room

The second time we see Mary at intercessory prayer is in the Upper Room with the 120 disciples of Jesus during the nine-day "novena" before Pentecost. For these few days Mary is a public figure. All the

disciples can behold her prayer witness. She leads them for she is more experienced in faith than all of them put together. More practiced in prayer, she is like a new Ark of the Covenant bearing the radiance of Christ's presence.

As the apostles and other men and women prepared for their mission, Mary stood with them and prayed. They gazed on the mother of Jesus and felt the special presence of a woman who was a unique witness to the mystery of Jesus from the moment of his conception.

Just as Mary was present at the conception and birth of Jesus, so she was present at the birth of the Church. As she bore Jesus in her womb and nurtured him, so she is to help bear the Church into life and holiness. The prayer group in the Upper Room experienced the unbreakable bond of Jesus and Mary. As the Church came to birth, its members stood next to Mary, the first believer in Jesus. They prayed with a woman who already had a faith pilgrimage of more than 30 years behind her.

Mary believed long before anyone else: at Nazareth, at Bethlehem, at the temple, during Jesus' public ministry and at the cross, where, like Abraham, she hoped against hope. Her faith did not fail at the cross. As Abraham became the father of faith for the people of the first covenant, Mary became the mother of faith for the members of the Christian covenant. At Easter the promise of Nazareth rang like cathedral bells in her heart, for all she had believed came true.

At Pentecost Mary stood with those who would be the seed of the new Church, witnessing to them that her own long pilgrimage of faith was a model for what lay ahead. Mary had been present at all the key events in the process of salvation from Nazareth to Pentecost. There was an essential bond between Mary and the Church from the very beginning. That is why the Church never ceases to sing of her, fulfilling her own canticle, "Behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me" (Luke 1:48b-49a).

Mary of Ephesus

Tradition maintains that John the Beloved brought Mary with him to Ephesus when he moved there. The "House of Mary" is now a place of pilgrimage in Panya Kapulu in modern Turkey. It rests on a hillside overlooking the ancient city of

Ephesus. Her home is a small fieldstone chapel visited by pilgrims, including Moslems who venerate Mary.

Arriving with John at Ephesus, Mary would have seen the fourth largest city of the Roman Empire. Soaring above the city was the temple of Diana, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The temple building covered an area larger than a football field. Its 100 columns rose to the height of a five-story building. Sculptures, paintings and gold plate adorned its walls.

The temple housed a statue of Diana (they called her Artemis), the fertility goddess of Asia Minor. Mary could not have missed the many small gold and silver replicas of Diana displayed for sale throughout the city (see Acts 19:23-40). The statues represented Diana as a many-breasted figure, wearing a high crown decorated with the signs of the seasons. A purchaser would place the little statue in the temple and provide an endowment to keep it polished. On Diana's birthday, these statues were paraded through the city to the theater (still there and seating over 25,000 people).

The historical context cannot be lost on us: Mary, the fruitful spiritual mother of Christians, moving to a home overlooking a city that worshipped a pagan fertility goddess.

Of Mary's sunset years, spent on a mountain overlooking the blue waters of the Aegean and the white marbled city of Ephesus, there is no record. We know of no confidences she exchanged with John or anyone else.

Whatever faith sharing took place just stayed right there.

Buried even more deeply is the silence of Mary's contemplative prayer and her heartfelt intercessions for the needs of the infant Christian community. The intercessory habit of her heart that became evident at Cana would endure forever, even after her glorious assumption into heaven. Her deep prayer was the music that accompanied the scriptural writings of John and the evangelization ministry that brought Paul to Ephesus for two years.

Mary's prayer would be the source of blessings for the living Church, surely linked to the Spirit's gift to Paul when he wrote his majestic epistle to the Ephesians, celebrating the truth that Christ's love makes possible the unity of all people regardless of their gender or ethnic origins.

Theotokos (God bearer)

If Mary had been given the gift of looking into the future—say, 400 years ahead—she would have seen,

as she gazed into that future era, a church building that had been an Ephesian conference center for scholars in the own lifetime. She would have heard that they renamed this center the Mary Church, the first known church edifice to bear her name. She would have observed a bustling assembly of over 200 bishops gathered there to discuss her maternal relationship to her son.

In June 431 an ecumenical council was held there. Bishop Cyril came from Alexandria and Bishop John from Antioch. Pope Celestine in Rome sent two representatives (called legates), Augustine planned to come but died before the Council began. This large body of bishops journeyed to Ephesus to celebrate their faith in Mary as "Mother of God." Traditional Christian prayers addressed Mary with this title, but Nestorius the archbishop-patriarch of Constantinople challenged this usage.

At Ephesus the council fathers met this challenge. At stake was the central Christian truth that the man, Jesus, son of Mary, is also truly the Son of God. The council affirmed that Mary may rightly be called the Mother of God (the *Theotokos* or God bearer). The son of Mary is one person, the Son of God, the Emmanuel. Bishop Cyril spoke the faith of the Church when he said:

"If we are to confess that Emmanuel is truly God, we must also confess that the holy virgin is the Mother of God, the *Theotokos*, for she bore according to the flesh, the Word made flesh. Nor was he born of the virgin as an ordinary man, in such a way that the Word only *afterwards* descended upon him. Rather he was united with the flesh in the womb itself. Thus he is said to have undergone birth according to the flesh, inasmuch as he makes his own the birth of his own flesh. For this reason the Fathers have boldly proclaimed the holy virgin, *Theotokos*."

Pope John XXIII chose the feast of Mary the Mother of God as the day to open Vatican II. (At that time the feast was on October 11. Today it is January 1.) On the vigil of the feast 300,000 people crowded the square of Saint Peter's. They carried lighted candles to brighten the evening, recalling a similar celebration in Ephesus 15 centuries before.

They came to pray with Mary for blessings on Vatican II. Once again, Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church, was invoked at a turning point in the Church's history. The smiling Pope John, standing on the balcony of Saint Peter's, surveyed the grand throng and echoed the words of Jesus, "Woman,

behold, your sons and daughters. “

The spirit of Ephesus spanned the centuries and rested upon that huge community who came to “open the Council,” as Pope John said that evening. Grace and history transformed Saint Peter’s Square into a new Upper Room. The successors of Saint Peter and the apostles were there. Three hundred thousand disciples were there. And Mary was there, as always, leading them in prayer.

Mary: Model of Love

Jesus gave us Mary to be our spiritual mother. We have seen that she is a witness to faith and prayer for us. She is also a teacher of love – not because she speaks a lot of words about loving, but because she made in her life an interior space where love could grow and overflow into action.

Mary decided to love. We have been told often enough that love is a decision, not just an emotion. If love depended only on feeling, there would not be much loving, because feelings come and go and negative feelings would drive us away from a needy person who is unattractive to us. Real love does not bother with reasons for loving others, but puts a lot of effort into finding ways to love people. The best love is a decision rooted in faith in God.

Mary faced the mystery of conceiving a child without having a husband. Simply and honestly she asked the angel how this could happen. She was not closed-minded or paralyzed because of the mystery. Humanly speaking, she just wanted to know. God gave her a supernatural answer. The Holy Spirit would make it happen. That was enough for her. She made a love decision and accepted God’s word. She bore a child not as a result of a human love act, but a divine love deed.

It has been said that rewards do not go to the timid. Neither are they distributed to the indecisive. Religious faith is the hidden heart of love decisions, because it gives us the courage to become what God has planted within us from our birth.

A love that ‘lets go’

Mary practiced “letting-go” love. Human development expert Erik Erikson says that growth involves a crisis in which one experiences both identity loss and identity gain. Each time we gain in love, there is some kind of loss. At Cana, Mary had to do what every mother must face; i.e. let her son go off to

his chosen career. Mary not only let him go she encouraged him to do so. She faced the letting go that true love requires. She called him to embark on his messianic mission. He rewarded her by revealing to her a new way of loving. She would become a spiritual mother of all Christians.

The cross-challenged her to let go in a way she would not have anticipated. No mother wants to let her son die. When the knife of the Roman soldier pierced the side of Jesus, Mary felt it plunging into her own as well. When Jesus committed her to John’s care, she heard him saying, “It is time for you to release me, to let me go into death. “

Whatever interior struggle she experienced then remains private. The communion between herself and her son rests in impenetrable silence. We may correctly conclude, however, that she surrendered him then. She let him go. Love can do no other.

Jesus then replied with the word that confirmed the love challenge of Cana where he called her “woman” for the first time. She will now be mother of both the Redeemer and the redeemed.

(Catholic Update, October 2000)

IN MARY'S IMMACULATE HEART

Mary wishes to share her joy with us. Her joy comes from the fact that many have drawn close to her and this has allowed for the triumph of her Immaculate Heart in theirs. It is an invitation for us all to rejoice, to share in the joy of our Mother. It truly is reason for great joy for us all to know that Mary's Immaculate Heart triumphs in the hearts of men. Knowing this lends wings to our hope. Christ's sacrifice was not in vain; the world is saved in Him through Mary.

Mary comes to lead us on the journey of prayer and conversion which is characteristic of God's children. Mary is not just saying what we should do; this wouldn't be sufficient. She leads the way for us; it is one of total and trusting surrender, of unconditional faith, and it prepares for the victory of Her Immaculate Heart in our hearts so that her Fiat may become ours, in all truth and humbleness.

All can follow this way. You don't need to be particularly intelligent or learned. All it takes is personal will correctly oriented, sincere determination and a good dose of humility. And, just as Mary has

often said, we must decide for God; i.e. put God before all else in our lives, so that all revolves around Him. Easy to say but not so easy to realize. We no doubt proclaim our faith in Him, but we also found our choices on belief in human power; we say He is Lord of the world, but we close Him up in our schemes and convictions, we subject Him to our tastes and interests, and we use Him to affirm our own ideas and principles. We do this every time we put ourselves in His place to judge another person, or to label our own ideas and convictions as His own.

Every day, every moment of the day, whatever our role in society is, our will is put to the test: do I tend to serve God or to enslave Him? We continually experience how difficult it is to be unconditionally open to God: our humanity tends to occupy all the spaces, filling times and places which should be set-aside for Him. The difficulty is peculiar to man; we need to realize this without underrating it, but without overrating it, so that we can draw from the Holy Spirit the strength and love required by us to work more for God and His Kingdom, as Mary urges us to do.

So let's share in Mary's joy; let's learn to rejoice in Mary's joy, to be in harmony with her, and we will discover that the joys of the world are insipid when compared to the joy the Blessed Virgin is offering us. This joy has a name: it is Jesus.

Mary's Immaculate Heart is ready to take us so her victory will be ours, that the Light may triumph in the world. The night is almost over, it will be daylight soon (Rom 13:12). Do not we see the dawn of the day which will not die, the eternal Day of Christ? The signs are many by now, and it is obligatory to be hopeful, or rather, joyful. Mary truly is leading the world to God: it was through Mary that the salvation of the world was begun, and it is through Mary that it must be consummated (Saint Louis De Montfort, True Devotion to Mary no. 49). Let us allow her to prepare us for the new day. Mary is always with us, and through her motherly blessing she will clothe us in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 13:14).

**(ECHO of MARY, Queen of Peace, 153 September-October 2000 - Yr. 16 #5, Echo on the NET:
<http://www.webexpo.it/medjugorje>)**

ARTICLES on the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

AUTHORITY of SAINT PETER the APOSTLE and the PAPACY

Although Saint Peter never called himself "Pope" in Scripture, he did indeed have a special apostolic primacy and jurisdiction. The Scriptural evidence for this is substantial and explicit.

Of the Twelve Apostles, Saint Peter is by far the one mentioned most often in Scripture. He appears 195 times. Saint John is next at 29 times. Saint James the Greater is mentioned 19 times, Saint Philip 15, and the numbers dwindle rapidly for the others.

When the Twelve Apostles are listed by name (Matt. 10:2-5; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-17; and Acts 1:13), Saint Peter's name is always first, and Judas Iscariot is always listed last. Also the New Testament also refers to simply "Peter and the Twelve".

He is the only one who receives a name change from Christ; From Simon, to "Rock" (Matt. 16:18).

He is also singled out by Christ to receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven and is promised, "Whatever you (singular) bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you (singular) bind on earth will be bound in heaven" (Matt. 16:19).

Saint Peter alone is the Apostle Christ calls out of the boat to walk on water (Matt. 1:28-29).

At the tomb of Christ, Saint John waits to allow Saint Peter to enter ahead of him (John 20:6). It is to him among the Apostles that God first reveals the Resurrection (Mark 16:7). The risen Christ appears to him first, before the other Apostles (Luke 24:34).

Christ preaches the gospel to the crowds from Saint Peter's fishing boat (Luke 5:3).

Saint Peter is told by Christ, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed that your (singular) faith may not fail. And once you (singular) have turned back, you (singular) must strengthen your brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

After the Resurrection, Christ makes Saint Peter the shepherd of His Church: "Feed my sheep." (John 21:15-17).

In Acts 1:13-26, Saint Peter leads the other Apostles

in choosing Matthias as successor to Judas, and he leads the Apostles in preaching on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14).

Saint Peter performs the first Pentecost miracle (Acts 3).

Saint Peter speaks in the name of all the Apostles and for the whole Church when the Twelve are brought before the Sanhedrin for trial (Acts 4.)

Saint Peter alone receives God's revelation that Gentiles are to be allowed in the Church (Acts 10) and he is the first Apostle to welcome them into the Church (Acts 11.)

At the Council of Jerusalem, His dogmatic pronouncement is accepted, and causes all disputes to cease (Acts 15.)

After his conversion, Saint Paul visits Saint Peter to have his teachings confirmed by him (Gal. 1:18.)

16. "He who bears you hears me" (Luke 10:16.) He who accepts anyone I send accepts me" (John 13:20.)

(from "Pope Fiction" by Patrick Madrid in "Envoy Magazine," March/April, 1997-with permission)

POPE JOHN XXIII BODY LOOKS as though HE DIED YESTERDAY

A leading Cardinal present when the coffin of Pope John XXIII was opened after 38 years said Tuesday the Pontiff looked as if he had "died

"None of the body had decomposed," said Cardinal Virgilio Noe, the high priest of Saint Peter's Basilica who oversaw the opening of the coffin in order to prepare removal of the tomb to a new space more accessible to pilgrims.

Italian media reports at the weekend said only John's face was intact but Noe, who attended the exhumation with other Vatican officials on January 16, 2001 said the entire body was uncorrupted by time.

"It was as if he died yesterday," he told Reuters on the sidelines of a news conference to present a book on the papal tombs in Saint Peter's.

"He looked tranquil. His mouth was slightly open but he was certainly tranquil. The serenity he had in life, he took with him to his death and he still had it 38 years later," Noe said.

John XXIII, who reigned from 1958 to 1963, was

known as the "Good Pope" because of his benevolent and jovial nature.

He made ecclesiastical history by convening the Second Vatican Council, which brought the Catholic Church up to date with modern times.

When he died, his body was not embalmed but Italian media reports said it was treated with the preservative formalin before it lay in state.

The body was placed in a wooden casket inside a bronze outer coffin and both were sealed before being buried in a grave in the narrow ancient grottoes beneath Saint Peter's, where many other popes are laid.

Now it is to be relocated near the basilica's main altar to make access easier for the millions of pilgrims who come to pray at his tomb.

Nearly four decades after his death, the man born Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli remains one of history's most loved popes with a particularly devout following in Italy.

He has been credited with curing an Italian nun of a stomach tumor. She prayed to him and quickly recovered with no medical explanation.

Pope John Paul II beatified him last year, the penultimate step before sainthood.

A MIRACLE?

Vatican officials have been careful not to attribute the preservation of his body directly to a miracle.

Noe said the phenomenon was known to have happened in the past and declined to be drawn into questions about miracles.

Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Vatican's secretary of state, said in a television interview Monday that it could be the result of a miracle but it would be up to experts to decide.

"We were able to see once again the contours of a face that we all loved, the contours that not even death could erase, the same contours present in the death mask that was made," Noe said earlier during the news conference.

Noe added that the body was now being treated by experts and might be shown to the public before being placed in the new tomb in a few months' time.

(by Philip Pullella VATICAN CITY (Reuters))

ARTICLES on FAMILY LIFE

MY CHILD

You may not know me, but I know everything about you. Psalm 139:1

I know when you sit down and when you rise up. Psalm 139:2

I am familiar with all your ways. Psalm 139:3

Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. Matthew 10:29-31

For you were made in my image. Genesis 1:27

In me you live and move and have your being. Acts 17:28

For you are my offspring. Acts 17:28

I knew you even before you were conceived. Jeremiah 1:4-5

I chose you when I planned creation. Ephesians 1:11-12

You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. Psalm 139:15-16 I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. Acts 17:26

You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14

I knit you together in your mother's womb. Psalm 139:13

And brought you forth on the day you were born. Psalm 71:6

I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. John 8:41-44

I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. 1 John 4:16

And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. 1 John 3:1

Simply because you are my child and I am your father. 1 John 3:1

I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. Matthew 7:11

For I am the perfect father. Matthew 5:48

Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. James 1:17

For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. Matthew 6:31-33

My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

Because I love you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3

My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. Psalm 139:17-18

And I rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17

I will never stop doing good to you. Jeremiah 32:40

For you are my treasured possession. Exodus 19:5

I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. Jeremiah 32:41

And I want to show you great and marvelous things. Jeremiah 33:3

If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. Deuteronomy 4:29

Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4

For it is I who gave you those desires. Philippians 2:13

I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. Ephesians 3:20

For I am your greatest encourager. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you. Psalm 34:18

As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. Isaiah 40:11

One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. Revelation 21:3-4

And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. Revelation 21:3-4

I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. John 17:23

For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. John 17:26

He is the exact representation of my being. Hebrews 1:3

He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. Romans 8:31

And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. 1 John 4:10

I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. Romans 8:31-32

If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. 1 John 2:23

And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. Romans 8:38-39

Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. Luke 15:7

I have always been Father, and will always be Father. Ephesians 3:14-15

My question is. Will you be my child?. John 1:12-13

I am waiting for you. Luke 15:11-32

Love, Your Dad. Almighty God

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PILGRIMS of FAITH MARIAN CENTER (PFMC)

We are not a store. We operate like a church pamphlet or book rack where you make selections and offer a donation based on value posted or received. See the four-page order form enclosed in past issues or loaded on the Internet Web Site, <http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith>, for a partial listing of items that can be obtained from the PFMC through donations. If you wish to order, please fill out your order request, make out a check or complete the information for use of a credit card and mail to PFMC, 61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043-4896.

If you do not have an order form, call us at 856-768-9228 with a FAX number or mailing address and we will send you an order form. If you know what you want and we carry it, you can order over the telephone using your credit card. We take DISCOVER (NOVUS), MASTER CARD (Cirrus) or VISA (PLUS) Charge Cards.

We want to keep the PFMC open from 10 AM to 5 PM daily. In order to do this we need a list of volunteers we can count on to meet their scheduled times. We need regular daily and/or weekly help as

well as help once a month – whatever you can give. We will give you a good orientation, and make use of the gifts that God has given you.

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

Thank you and God bless you,

Kathleen and the Volunteer Staff

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

In every issue of "The PILGRIM" you will find a donation slip. Your donations help us with our electric bills, the printing of the newsletter, the postage, phone bills, insurance and repairs. It is only through donations that we are able to set up retreats and days of recollection. Won't you help us monthly? Place your envelope with your bills, and remember us as you can. Your monthly tithing helps so much.

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

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

PLEASE DON'T WRITE ORDERS ON DONATION SLIPS

When ordering books, tapes or oil, we kindly ask you to NOT place them on the donation slips, but rather use the order forms enclosed inside "The PILGRIM" or write us a separate note.

The donation slips are noted and are then placed in a prayer basket in the Upper Room at Epiphany House where we pray daily. They are then taken on pilgrimage with Kathleen or a volunteer coordinator, and are left in a religious place for further prayer. Those who pray over the slips do know if an order on the slip has been processed or not. The slips do not normally go to our order section. Your order on a donation slip may not get properly processed.

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



Please complete your address on any order forms or with any letter order. We need to see your address clearly printed with the ZIP+4 that is supposed to speed the mail delivery.

We appreciate the communication once a year so that we can correct our mailing labels.

Consider ORDERING and SPONSORING “The PILGRIM” for your favorite religious or priest.

Please be considerate of those you ask us to add to the mailing list and speak to them about your intentions.

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



The PFMC phone system at Epiphany House has been set up so that all previously used numbers ring through Epiphany House. When no one is at Epiphany House (856) 768-9228 and (856) 753-9252 ring over to new phone lines at 129 Deerfield Avenue. When the ring through is active because no one is picking up before 4 rings at Epiphany House, some extra rings will be heard before the answering machine picks up and allows you to leave a message.

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

BLESSED OIL

Bottles of oil blessed at Holy Mass in Saint James, Medjugorje and then carried to Vicka’s house to be present in the room during an alleged apparition are available from the PFMC. Oil from Medjugorje is a **sacramental** and should be handled as such. It is NOT the same as the oils blessed by the Bishop for official church ceremonies or during administration of the sacraments by a priest. People being blessed should not be misled into thinking that blessing by the laity in any way replaces blessing by a priest, whose Holy Hands are consecrated by the Bishop in the sacrament of Holy Orders.

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

BULLETIN NOTICES for PFMC AREA EVENTS

Would you be so kind as to copy or cut out one or more of following BULLETIN NOTICES and take them to your Pastor and / or Parish Bulletin Coordinator?

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

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

ETERNAL WORD TELEVISION NETWORK (EWTN) NEEDS SUPPORT

If you enjoy the programming on EWTN, please send in regular and sacrificial contributions.

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

Dean Pulcini is teaching a course called “DEFENDING YOUR FAITH” which offers a basic Orthodox understanding of the Catholic faith in comparison to and contrasted with Protestantism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

The Wednesday evening programs from 7 PM to 9 PM will be held in the Great Room at Epiphany House of the Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC), A Religious Association, Inc.

Call 856-768-9228 for information or directions.

PRAYER GROUP

Meets in the Great Room at Epiphany House of the Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) every Thursday from 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM. All are invited.

Call 856-768-9228 for information or directions.

THURSDAY 2:15 PM to 2:45 PM
“Put on the Armor of God” RADIO
PROGRAM on WTMR, AM-800

Kathleen and Keith will host this program weekly in conjunction with In His Sign Ministries and the In His Sign Radio Network.

Dominic Lettieri has arranged to have this half-hour sponsored by the Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC), A Religious Association, Inc.

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

There will be prayer, scripture, discussion of the Ephesians 6-11 and following, announcements, call-in time, discussion with callers, healing prayer and summary.

The call-in number is 856 962-8178.

LOURDES, PARIS and NEVERS
JULY 13 (Friday) to JULY 20 (Friday)

Fly with Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) Pilgrimage Coordinators Vince and Livia Nocella and Spiritual Directors, Father Jim McDonald from Bishop Eustice High School, Pennsauken, NJ, and Father Laserian Nwoga from Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Berlin, NJ, on Air France to Paris and then to Pau. Stay for three nights in Lourdes and then three nights in Paris. There will be a day trip from Paris to the Convent of Saint Gildard in Nevers, France, where Saint Bernadette lies incorrupt.

COST: \$1899 (Double Occupancy) plus \$70 taxes.
Single Supplement \$299.

Call 856-768-9228 for an information sheet with reservation forms.

7 NIGHTS MEDJUGORJE, 2 NIGHTS on
the ADRIATIC SEA, 1 NIGHT in ROME
AUGUST 8 (Wednesday) to AUGUST 18 (Saturday)

Join Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) Pilgrimage Coordinator Mike McColgan and Spiritual Director Father Jack Connors from Saint John Parish, Collingswood, NJ, on this wonderful Summer pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady, Queen of Peace. We will fly with Swiss Air into Split, Croatia, and return via Dubrovnik, Croatia. This pilgrimage is ideal for teachers and families with children in school.

Stay in a very clean and comfortable private home

very close to the Church of Saint James. After visiting Cross Mountain, Apparition Hill, and the visionaries, participating in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Oasis of Peace, and full rich 7 nights in Medjugorje, you will travel by bus to the sea town of Neum. Spend two relaxing nights on this hidden Riviera of Europe. Swim all day in the Adriatic Sea.

Free time in Dubrovnik before departure for Rome. Visit the Basilica of Saint Blaise and climb the ancient walls of the City. Shop in specialty shops or sit and enjoy a cup of coffee where sailboats visit.

1 night overnight in Rome – evening free

COST: \$2299 (Double Occupancy) including taxes.
Single supplement \$299

Call 856-768-9228 for an information sheet with reservation forms.

JUST MEDJUGORJE with OVERNIGHT
in ROME
NOVEMBER 9 to NOVEMBER 18

Kathleen is the Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) Pilgrimage Coordinator for this pilgrimage. Father Joseph Romanoski, Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in South Amboy, NJ is the Spiritual Director. This is a pilgrimage for those who want the ultimate in spending quiet time just in Medjugorje. The family home and pilgrim house is one block from Saint James Church. You will have an English speaking guide, private transfer bus, and a full spiritual experience. Your 7 days will be spent visiting the visionaries, daily Holy Mass, Confessions, climbing Apparition Hill, and climbing Cross Mountain. Because this is the more quiet time of the year in Medjugorje, you will find plenty of time to spend in quiet meditation, and enjoy the presence of Our Lady.

We will fly on Alitalia to and from Rome, Italy, and transfer to Croatian Air to and from Split, Croatia. Transfer to Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina is by guided motor coach. On return you will fly out of Split on November 17 and spend the night in Rome. Supper will be in a local restaurant near the hotel. Free time in the evening will allow you to see Rome by night, and in the early morning.

COST: \$1499 (Double Occupancy) INCLUSIVE.
All taxes, both Croatian and Italian, are included.

Call 856-768-9228 for an information sheet with reservation forms.

2002 RETREAT CONFERENCE

The Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) has moved its 2002 RETREAT CONFERENCE (2002 RC) to larger facilities at the Hilton Hotel, New Jersey (NJ) Route 70 and Cuthbert Boulevard, Cherry Hill, NJ.

The 2000 RC theme is "I HAVE LOVED YOU WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE" (Jeremiah 31:3).

Father John Hampsch, C.M.F. and Father Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J. so enjoyed working together with us that they have already agreed to work together to give us a dynamic 2002 RC. They will speak on "Healing and Suffering in our Faith."

The featured speaker on Saturday night will be Michael H. Brown; author of "Final Hour" "Trumpet of Gabriel" and many other exceptionally well researched books on the signs of the times.

Father Michael Semana, founder of the World of Hope Foundation, will return for a concert Saturday evening as well as his very generous work with the youth and young adults in the Youth Track (YT).

The dates are Friday through Sunday, March 8th, 9th, and 10th, 2002, with a 3-Day Extension (3DX) on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, March 11th, 12th, and 13th, 2002.

Father Robert DeGrandis and his sister Dorothea DeGrandis Sudol will share the seminars and workshops of the 3DX on "Healing of Memories -

Rooms may be booked at the \$89 rate for both the 2002 RC and 3DX as well as up to 7 days before or after the events. This rate and availability of additional rooms expires on 2/8/2002. The regular room rate is currently \$119 per room per night and will probably go up by March of 2002. **For Hotel reservations please call NOW: 1-800-HILTONS or locally 856-665-6666.**

Call 856-768-9228 for an information sheet with reservation forms.

Kathleen as well as all the PFMC Volunteer Staff

REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of 3/25/2001

Our Heavenly Mother, the Queen of Peace, speaks again today and gives us the recipe for life. At the

same time, this recipe seems both too simple and too hard. She wants to encourage us to dare to take the way that leads to God, in Whom is our life. Naturally, each one of us wants to find the meaning of life, in order to live a fulfilled and satisfied life. Very often, in this search we seek support in what seems attractive, easy, full of promise and gratifying. Often, after such choices, we are deceived and wounded, traumatized and feel mislead. We see that with our physical eyes we cannot pierce the heart of life. This means that we do not really know what life means. We have been called to existence by someone else other than ourselves: it is neither our parents, nor our friends, but we have been called by God. We have not given life to ourselves, but have received it as a gift from God. We have been given to ourselves. We have neither earned nor deserved our life. We are not masters of our own life, but only its' manager, and this is why we are responsible before God, Who is the only Master of our life.

Each one of us wants to preserve, to prolongate and to ameliorate his life in diverse ways and means. Life is most precious and dear. We have the instinct to defend and to preserve life; nevertheless, in our decisions and our actions we also can destroy life within ourselves. Our life finally depends on God, because He forgives us again and again. He takes care of us and saves our lives. Without our permission, and our complete 'Yes' to Him, God is powerless and cannot help us. This is why Our Lady, in Her motherly love, remains with us for such a long time. This is also why She is so determined. She wants us to open our eyes and not to cling to what attracts or pleases us or to what gives easy promises and finally then deceives us. This is what is confirmed by our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, in his message for the XVIth World Youth Day: "The omnipresent culture of ephemeral, which gives a value to what pleases and what seems nice, would like to make us believe that – for to be happy – we have to eliminate the Cross. What is presented as ideal is easy success, rapid career, sexuality separated from responsibility and, finally, an existence founded of the confirmation of self, often without respecting others. Open wide your eyes, dear young people: this is not a way that gives life, but a way that leads to death." Jesus said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14,6). Our Lady wants us to choose Her Son, Jesus as Master and Lord of our lives. Only with Him and in Him will we not be deceived. Jesus doesn't promise the fulfillment of all our desires, a rapid career or easy successfulness. He promises life in fullness. The Russian writer A. Solshenitzine, in his Roman writing, "In the First circle", said: "The happiness of a perpetual victory,

the happiness of the fulfillment of desires, the happiness of success and of total satiety – is a suffering. It is spiritual death, some kind of infinite moral pain. For there is a fulfilled and realized life in spite of many unfulfilled desires.”

The message of Our Lady of this month seems like a announcement and correction addressed to Her children, so that they may discover the foundations of their lives. It is as if She would like to say: My little children, open the eyes of your heart. The spirit gives life, and not the flesh, which cheats you and pulls you towards the earth. Raise your eyes towards heaven, towards life, towards the Spirit of God Who lives in you.

From my heart, I wish all of you and myself to become ‘tireless’ in discovering over and over again our God within us. Thank you, O Mary, for your words, your messages and your motherly assurance. Let us challenge ourselves to believe and walk on the path that leads to life!

Medjugorje, March 26, 2001
Fra Ljubo Kurtovi

REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of 4/25/2001

Our Lady, our Mother, is not tired of us. A true mother never ceases to love her child, no matter how disobedient, troublesome, ill or obstinate it may be. Our Lady is full of love, and – with the strength of that love which is in her, she speaks to us, she calls us, she invites us. The matter of Her words is almost the same since twenty years, but it is new and fresh, because she speaks to us now, today, at this moment. Let us not stop at words, but let us go towards the source of Her maternal Heart, where these words come from. Let us not stop at the sign, but let us go in the direction the sign indicates, where it orients us. Let us approach Her, Who is in the glory, which awaits us all. She desires us to go, to walk, and not to stand, waiting for a miracle, which should happen outside of us. The miracle can and has to happen within us. Our Lady wants to talk to us, even when we do not want to listen to Her, when we do not want to follow Her word. God is not somewhere in an inaccessible light but He dwells – so alive – within us: we only have to break through to Him. We have to overcome so many resistances within us and around us. We are chained by our anguish, our fears, our worries about tomorrow, we are afraid of what the others will think or say about us, and we do not ask ourselves what God thinks about us, what He wants and desires from

us. The words of Our Lady are not sensational, but motherly simple, just as God is simple, and we are so complicated and closed. Let us not allow anything to be in front of God, not even our own life. When God is at the first place, all the rest takes naturally its right place.

It can happen in our lives that everything becomes void, meaningless, that we do not find any pleasure in anything, that we do not really rejoice in anything anymore. This is a sign that we do not know and do not see the meaning of our life. These are signs that our soul has been neglected, that it is hungry and thirsty for God and His love. This is the sign that we have lost or forgotten our roots and the source of our life.

We live only once on this earth. One day we will have to leave it, maybe without knowing why we have lived. We’ll have to go on the journey, part from our friends, disappear from here without knowing where we go and what is waiting for us there. This is why we need Holy Mass, confession and prayer to which Our Lady calls us. All these are means and not the goal. Prayer is not the goal, but the way towards the goal. The goal, as Our Lady said, is the joyful meeting with the Saviour. We know how easily we neglect prayer, with how much difficulty we choose prayer, how easily thousands of obligations, duties, meetings, things apparently more important, replace prayer; but when we do pray, we always have the same experience: how good we feel when we are with God, and that time spent with God is the only time really well used in our life. I believe that, at the end of our life, we shall regret all the lost time, and only the time spent in prayer will be the treasure we shall take with us. This treasure, we gain it here, on the earth; it is here that the decision about our life and our eternity is made. After death, nothing essential will happen; here on earth we pronounce our Yes or No to God, our Yes to life or to death.

Our Mother calls us to the road of life. This road is not attractive or wide or easy. Our conversion has a price, our faith is not cheap, it demands the investment of our physical and mental forces, but we know that it leads to life – already on this earth, and not only in eternity.

Let us allow Our Lady to lead us to the source of life. Let us follow Her words.

Fra Ljubo Kurtovic
Medjugorje, April 26th 2001

CALENDARS:

In *May*, the Church celebrates the Solemnities of **ASCENSION of the LORD (24)**, and the Feasts of **Saints Philip and James (3)**, **Matthias, Apostle (14)**, and the **VISITATION (31)**, and the Memorials of **Saints Joseph the Worker (1)**, **Athanasius (2)**, **Nereus (12)**, **Achilleus (12)**, **Pancras (12)**, **Isidore the Farmer (15)**, **Pope John I (18)**, **Bede the Venerable (25)**, **Pope Gregory VII (25)**, **Mary Magdalene de Pazzi (25)**, and **Philip Neri (26)**. The Church calendar recognizes **Mother's Day (13)** and **Memorial Day (observed) (28)**.

In *June* the Church celebrates the Solemnities of **PENTECOST (3)**, **HOLY TRINITY (10)**, **CORPUS CHRISTI (17)**, **SACRED HEART (22)**, **BIRTH of SAINT JOHN the BAPTIST (24)**, and **SAINTS PETER and PAUL (29)**, and the Memorials of **Saints Justin (1)**, **Marcellinus and Peter (2)**, **Charles Lwanga and Companions (3)**, **Boniface (5)**, **Norbert (6)**, **Ephrem of Syria (9)**, **Barnabas, Apostle (11)**, **Anthony of Padua (13)**, **Romuald (19)**, **Aloysius Gonzaga (21)**, **Cyril of Alexandria (27)**), and **Irenaeus (28)**, and of **The First Martyrs of Rome (30)** and **The Immaculate Heart of Mary (23)**. The Church calendar recognizes **Fathers Day (17)**.

AROUND the PFMC AREA

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

The PILGRIM

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

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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 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!"



Please review the articles on upcoming PFMC coordinated events on pages 1 through 5 of this issue. Also, please review the Bulletin Notices on pages 24 through 26 and assist us with getting them into your Parish Bulletin. For additional information, call the PFMC at (856) 768-9228. You may FAX your questions to (856)-768-9428.

PFMC PRESENTATIONS

Kathleen and Keith desire to participate in Altar Rosary Society, Legion of Mary, or other parish prayer group meetings with witness, and/or videotape or slide presentations, followed by a question and answer session. The experiences and continuation of the PFMC ministries for Our Lady in this time of manifestation of Our Lord's mercy and graces are shared at is no cost. Free will offerings are accepted. This is especially true for books, tapes, and religious articles, when they are made available in displays at the presentation sites just like they are at the PFMC which operates like a church book rack. Recipients are asked to donate at or above the suggested value on each article. Call the PFMC at (856) 768-9228.

INTERNET

Surf for the PFMC presence on the Internet at:

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

