



The **PILGRIM**

Vol. 17, No. 1

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January 2006

The PILGRIM is a periodical from **Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC)**. The **PFMC** is a ministry of lay Catholic evangelization and healing through the intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

A PRAYER

My Most Sweet Jesus, You came that we may have Life and Peace. We thank You. We bring our simple selves to the manger.



You come to us daily in Holy Eucharist, always opening Your Heart to take our sinfulness unto Yourself and replace it with Your Light of Grace.

May we resolve this year of our lives to honor You and follow You, even in difficult pathways. Help us to find courage to say NO to temptation and YES to being in Your Eucharistic Presence.

AMEN

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We hope all our readers had a very **Blessed Christmas** and a good start on a **Joy-filled** and **Peaceful New Year** for 2006.

Please consider joining us with the whole family for the **RETREAT CONFERENCE, 17-19 February 2006**, and, if the children or grandchildren are between 7 and 17, register them for the **Youth Track**.

Pray for all those who have already signed up for the **Pilgrimage to the HOLY LANDS of ISRAEL and JORDAN, 17-30 April 2006**, or with the **Extension for an Excursion to Mount Sinai in Egypt** returning home **1 May 2006**. Consider joining this great group of pilgrims. There is still room. Final donations are due with registrations after **17 January 2006**.

If you can make a weekday retreat, come to the **Bride of Christ Community Retreat, 9-11 May 2006**.

See the enclosed colored information sheets or packets. Cut out the registration coupons, fill them out, and send them in to us.

The **December MESSAGE**, from **GOSPA, Our Lady, Queen of Peace**, to an alleged visionary from **Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina**, is presented beginning on page **10** (centerfold page) with **REFLECTIONs** and **PRESS BULLETIN**.

FRIENDS or RELATIVES NOT RECEIVING "**The PILGRIM**"

We have received several notes from people concerned about why they have stopped getting regular bulk mailings of "**The PILGRIM**."

Please tell all your friends and relatives who wish to receive "**The PILGRIM**" to review the information in the blocks on **pages 3 and 7, 9 or 11** for "PLEASE RESPOND to THIS NOTICE and STAY ON the BULK MAILING" in their past issues.

We do need to hear from someone at each address **in writing at least once a year** in order to keep them on our bulk mailing list. Bulk Mail is not required to be returned if the delivery name or address is incorrect.

There is no "subscription" fee. However, we do ask for free will donations monthly, quarterly, semi-annually or annually to support "**The PILGRIM**" and the other activities and operations of the **PFMC**.

With increasing costs for production and mailing as well as declining numbers and levels of donations we have been forced to watch the bulk mailing list very closely and remove those names and addresses where there has been **no written contact in the last year**.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW for a PILGRIMAGE to the HOLY LANDS of ISRAEL and JORDAN, 17-30 APRIL 2006

This pilgrimage of a lifetime to the **Holy Lands of Israel, Jordan, (and Egypt)** would be a perfect gift, anniversary, birthday, Confirmation, etc., for husband, wife, daughter, son, family, parents, or even yourself. Numerous successful pilgrimages have now

"The PILGRIM" for January 2006 is dedicated to "**Our Lady, Mother of the Church**." See page 3 for "**IN THIS ISSUE . . .**" or Table of Contents.

been completed with stories of joy to be able to go back to these **Holy Lands** after years of travel restrictions. Bans on travel have been lifted, and we want to take advantage of this time while we can. **Keith** and **Kathleen** have taken several pilgrim groups to **Israel**. This pilgrimage allows time to see many holy places, to pray, and to spend quality time learning of the **Footsteps of Jesus and Moses**.

All you need to do is fill out and send us the registration page from the **blue** colored information sheet enclosed with this issue of **"The PILGRIM"** or the page printed from the Internet online at: www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2006/06HLP04.pdf with your deposit or full payment donation.

Please sign up now to join **Father Tino, Keith** and **Kathleen** and currently more than **20** pilgrims on this pilgrimage opportunity for a lifetime of memories. The **2006 Package Donation** of **\$2499** covers nearly everything a pilgrim might need including taxes as well as morning and evening meals.

We have completed the planning and arrangements for an extension to the standard pilgrimage package to allow a day for an excursion to **Mount Sinai** in **Egypt** and a visit to the **Monastery of Saint Catherine**. The **Burning Bush** where **Moses** received the **Ten Commandments** (twice) is memorialized here. The donation for this excursion is **\$350**. It was not included in the pilgrimage package in order to get those who have to work back on **Sunday** for work on **Monday**. Those making this extension and excursion will return on **Monday, May 1, 2006** with an extra night in **Eilat**.

We plan to stay in 3 to 4 star hotels and will have the best of all we can see shown to us. Our guide will be both **English** and **Spanish** speaking.

Our daily walk will be a very prayerful with **Father John Tino** as our **Spiritual Director**. Father has led several of our pilgrimages, and has been ministering in **Healing Prayer** with **Keith** and **Kathleen**. He is fluent in **English, Italian, and Spanish**.

Our daily prayers will include the **Angelus, Holy Mass, Rosary, and The Divine Mercy Chalet** as well as **The Divine Mercy Novena** through **Divine Mercy Sunday**. Consider starting this excellent novena on **Good Friday**. There will be times of prayer at each site visited. You will experience one of the greatest gifts of a lifetime on this pilgrimage.

Scripture will dance before your eyes.

We have worked very hard to keep expenses down, and still offer you air fare, taxes, baggage handling, motor coach transfers, hotels, admissions to controlled sites, where required, all breakfasts and suppers, and the services of an excellent guide. All you need to do is fill out and send us the registration page from the **blue** colored information packet enclosed with this issue of **"The PILGRIM"** or the registration page printed from the Internet online at: www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2006/06HLP04.pdf with your deposit or full payment donation.

Please, look over the planned itinerary in the **blue** colored information packet enclosed, and do send in your deposit or full payment donation NOW. We need deposits to lock in your name on an airline seat.

If you have any questions, please call **Kathleen, (856) 768-9228**.

Upon receipt of your registration form and deposit or full payment donation, we will send you an excellent travel insurance policy to look over. We do ask that you take out cancellation / medical / travel insurance and know that should anything come up that would endanger anyone, this pilgrimage and its planned itinerary would be subject to cancellation or change.

NEW *JesusMosaic* of OUR LADY



Frank Bear of *JesusMosaics* has worked since the **2005 RETREAT CONFERENCE** on producing a new computer generated picture and *JesusMosaic* of **Our Lady** based on the face of the **Immaculate Conception** statue in **Saint Elijah Church, Tihaljina, Bosnia-Herzegovina**. He wanted to do this as a fund raising effort for both *JesusMosaics* and the **PFMC**. He is offering both the beautiful computer generated picture and the *JesusMosaic*. Order from either the **PFMC** at **(856) 768-9228** or our web site: <http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith>.

See the color information sheet sent out in the **November 2005** issue of **"The PILGRIM"** or at: <http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/ImmaculateConceptionJM.pdf> and consider ordering this beautiful

The volunteer Board of Directors and Staff of the **PFMC** recognize and accept that the final authority regarding the alleged 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 Benedict XVI**.

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.

JesusMosaic or picture of **Our Lady** to include with your **Christmas** presents.

PLEASE MARK YOUR 2006 CALENDARS for **PFMC** EVENTS

See **Conference Corner** on *page 19* as well as **Bulletin Notices** on *pages 18*. Most **PFMC** area events will be preceded by their own information sheets with reservation forms.

February 2006

Friday, 17 February 2006, 4 PM, through Sunday, 19 February 2006, 6 PM: RETREAT CONFERENCE and YOUTH TRACK at **CLARION HOTEL**, Cherry Hill, NJ. See **green** information packet enclosed and the article on *pages 3 and 4*.

April 2006

Easter Monday, 17 April 2006, through Sunday, 30 April 2006, or Monday, 1 May 2006: Pilgrimage to the **Holy Lands of Israel and Jordan** with an extension to travel into the **Egyptian Sinai Desert** to visit **Saint Catherine Monastery** and **Mount Sinai**. See **blue** information packet enclosed and the article on *pages 1 and 2*.

May 2006

Tuesday, 9 May 2006, thru Thursday, 11 May 2006: Bride of Christ Community Retreat in the **Upper Room** at **Epiphany House**. Lodging in nearby hotels is available. **Retreat Master** will be **Father Marty Jones**, Pastor of **Saint Francis of Assisi Parish**, **Middletown, CT**. A **lilac** information sheet has been prepared and inserted for the first time this month. This retreat is open to non-members of the community. See article on *pages 4 and 5*.

LAST OPPORTUNITIES to SIGN UP for OUR 2006 RETREAT CONFERENCE / YOUTH TRACK

Please complete the appropriate registration forms from the **green** information packet enclosed and send them in as soon as possible. The dates this year are **Friday, 17 February 2006 through Sunday, 19 February 2006**. The location is the **Clarion Hotel** on **Old Marlton Pike (New Jersey Route 70)** near **Interstate 295** in **Cherry Hill, NJ**. As of our publication date we have not received enough reservation forms to cover our costs. If this pattern continues in future years we may have to cease having these events.

The PILGRIM, Volume 17, Number 1 – January 2006

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

A PRAYER, HAPPY NEW YEAR!, FRIENDS or RELATIVES NOT RECEIVING “ The PILGRIM ”, MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW for a PILGRIMAGE to the HOLY LANDS of ISRAEL and JORDAN, 17-30 APRIL 2006	1
NEW <i>JesusMosaic</i> of OUR LADY.....	2
PLEASE MARK YOUR 2006 CALENDARS for PFMC EVENTS, LAST OPPORTUNITIES to SIGN UP for OUR 2006 RETREAT CONFERENCE / YOUTH TRACK.....	3
THE COMING of the BRIDE of CHRIST COMMUNITY to US for RETREAT, MAY 9 – 11, 2006, IN MEMORIAM	
THE GREATEST GIFT.....	5
THE LORD IS TRANSCENDENT, BUT HE REMAINS NEAR US. TO YOUNG PEOPLE: WE FIND HAPPINESS ONLY in GOD	6
SPIRITUAL BOND with JOHN PAUL II HAS NOT BEEN BROKEN, TRUE MEANING of LIFE LIES in FOLLOWING JESUS	7
NEW YEAR’S WISH, MESSAGE for WORLD PEACE DAY: IN TRUTH, PEACE.....	8
PLEASE RESPOND to THIS NOTICE and STAY ON the BULK MAILING.....	9
CARDINAL MARTINO PRESENTS WORLD PEACE DAY MESSAGE.....	10
AFTER THE RAINBOW, PFMC DISPLAYS and / or PRESENTATIONS, ENCLOSED ITEMS	11
MESSAGE of 12/25/2005 via Maria Pavlovic Lunetti, REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of 12/25/2005, ANOTHER NOVEMBER REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of 12/25/2005.....	12
PRESS BULLETIN 217, 12/26/2005,	
MONTHLY APPARITION to MIRIANA SOLDI, 12/2/05.....	13
ANNUAL APPARITION to JAKOV on DECEMBER 25 TH 2005, VOCATIONS DEPARTMENT, PRIESTS MUST LIVE A MARTYR’S LIFE.....	14
HOLY MASS TIMES	15
ADMISSION to the PRIESTHOOD and HOMOSEXUALITY	17
REFLECTIONS on the ROLE of the LAITY in the CHURCH	19
CHURCH ONLY SEEKS OPPORTUNITY to CARRY OUT HER MISSION, MESSAGE to BARTHOLOMEW I for the FEAST of SAINT ANDREW	20
HOLY FATHER’S MESSAGE for WORLD DAY of the SICK, BECAUSE THERE IS A GOD, PILGRIMS of FAITH MARIAN CENTER (PFMC)	21
PRAY for KATHLEEN WERNER	22
BULLETIN NOTICES for PFMC AREA EVENTS, CONFERENCE CORNER	23
CALENDARS:, AROUND the PFMC AREA, POPE BENEDICT XVI PRAYER INTENTIONS for JANUARY 2006.....	24

Room reservations are critical to the overall costs of an event like the annual **PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE**. If we do not make our room block quota we must pay for the use of the public space.

The registration rates for **PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE** have been lowered **\$50** per person and **\$95** for a married couple.

You must register for the **PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE or YOUTH TRACK** with the **PFMC** using a **PFMC** registration form from the **green** information packet mentioned earlier or by calling **(856) 768-9228**. You may donate by credit card. Early registration is recommended. Walk-in registration is limited to room available at the time of walk-in. The **Clarion Hotel Windsor Ballroom** can accommodate up to 800 people.

Those of you who have been attending the **PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE** events over the years may remember the *Clarion Hotel* location as the **Sheraton Poste** or **Four Points**. We held many events there in the past.

The **PFMC** room block is now available for reservations and we hope to book all **188** rooms in the hotel. Room rates are **\$92 per night** for **two queen beds** or **one king bed**. Each room may have **one roll-away bed** at **\$10 per night**. In each room there is a **microwave** and a **refrigerator** as well as **normal amenities** for **hot drinks**. All rooms are newly remodeled, and very comfortable. We ask you to make your room reservations as soon as possible. Call the *Clarion Hotel* at **(856) 428-2300** and ask for the **"PILGRIMS"** room block. The rates apply from **Thursday, 16 February 2006** through **Sunday, 19 February 2006**. Get away from the hustle of the secular world and join us for the entire weekend.

You may use facsimile (FAX) to send room reservations to the *Clarion Hotel* at **(856) 354-7662** or **PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE** or **YOUTH TRACK** registrations to the **PFMC** at **(856) 768-9428**. A **green** color information packet with registration forms for both the **RETREAT CONFERENCE** and **YOUTH TRACK** is enclosed. A color print on white version is available online at: www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2006/06RET2.pdf.

The use of FAX is recommended after **2/3/06** when mail might not make it to the Registration Team before they move to the *Clarion Hotel* on **2/16/06**.

Order your food plan through the **PFMC** to purchase hot meals for **Saturday noon** and **evening** as well as **Sunday noon** meals. On the premises of the *Clarion Hotel* is a restaurant, the **Elephant and Castle**, which will accommodate anyone who just wants to order from the menu. They will also be providing a breakfast buffet on both **Saturday** and **Sunday** with an option for just coffee and a bakery item. Lists of local eating establishments will be provided.

The theme for **2006** is **"Let us pray and beg Our Lord to have mercy on us and to grant us deliverance."** (Tobit 8:4 NAB).

Speakers will be: **Father Bill Halbing** on **Friday night** and **Saturday**; **Father Edgardo "Bing" Arellano**, seen on *Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN)* and founder of *The Alliance of the Two Hearts*, on **Saturday**; **Father Michael Semana** on **Saturday** and **Sunday**.

Father John Tino will be the main celebrant for the **Friday Holy Mass**. We have invited **Bishop Joseph Galante** of the **Camden Diocese** to celebrate the

Sunday Holy Mass. **Father Michael Semana** will sing the **Saturday Holy Mass** and provide an evening concert on **Saturday night** along with our regular healing service. There will be **daily Rosary, Angelus, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Confessions** and much more.

Music will be by **"REFUGE"** with selections by **Al Barbarino** and **Father Michael Semana**.

Al Barbarino has agreed to be our **Master of Ceremonies** as well as provide his music ministry witness on **Sunday**.

The **PFMC** will have a display of our inventory of books, statues, and religious articles in the **Regency Ballroom**. *The Alliance of the Two Hearts*, **Father Michael Semana**, **REFUGE**, **Father Bill Halbing** and **Al Barbarino** will also have displays available.

WE WILL HAVE A YOUTH / YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM run by the brothers, sisters, and priests from *The Alliance of the Two Hearts* in **Dover Delaware**. The charge for each youth / young adult is **\$20** for the weekend and will include a lunch on **Saturday** and **Sunday**. All youth / young adult participants **MUST** be **PRE-REGISTERED**. **NO WALK-INS WILL BE ABLE TO ATTEND**. This will not be a program to watch children and parents / guardians / chaperones must attend the adult program. Youth / young adult participants are expected to be at all sessions and take an active part in the program. Parents should make arrangements to leave little children or those who do not wish to participate in the Youth / Young Adult program at home or in the care of relatives. Please do not bring little children into the adult sessions.

We will **NOT** have a three day extension of the **RETREAT CONFERENCE** this year.

Please support this **PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE** and **YOUTH / YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM** with your reservations / registrations now. Call the *Clarion Hotel* at **(856) 428-2300** and ask for the **"PILGRIMS"** room reservation block. Call the **PFMC** at **(856) 768-9228** for early registration. We accept **Discover, MasterCard, and Visa** credit cards but ask for assistance with the **3%** cost to us for credit card usage.

THE COMING of the BRIDE of CHRIST COMMUNITY to US for RETREAT, MAY 9 – 11, 2006

Father Marty Jones, Pastor of *Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Middletown, CT*, will be at the

Epiphany House of the **PFMC** to give the first **Bride of Christ Community Retreat** or “bridal party” in this area. See the **lilac** colored information sheet enclosed in this issue of “**The PILGRIM.**”

The **Bride of Christ Community** is an ecclesial movement of nuptial spirituality for intimate communion with our Beloved Bridegroom, Jesus in the Eucharist, open to His Spirit like Mary, our model and mother, and the other saints of every culture and time, and faithful to the teachings of the **Holy Father**. This movement toward community through prayer (liturgia), fellowship (koinionia) and service (diakonia) to the parish and the diocese has its special mission to prepare each person, and thus the universal Church, as the **Bride of Christ** in joy for the wedding of the Lamb.

The “wedding of the Lamb” has two closely related dimensions: Eucharistic and eschatological: in every Eucharist we are invited to partake in the wedding feast of the Lamb of God which hastens and realizes the eschatological fulfillment when our Bridegroom comes in glory to wed His Bride, the Church.

The **Bride of Christ Community** was conceived in **Rome** on **March 25, 1984**, during the celebration of the **Annunciation of the Lord** and the **Consecration** of the world to the **Immaculate Heart of Mary** by **Pope John Paul II** and all the bishops in communion with him. Since our first retreat at the **Carmelite Monastery** in **Williamstown, MA**, for the Solemnity of the Annunciation, **March 23-25, 1987**, members of the Community have prayed the Divine Office together daily as well as sponsored pilgrimages, conferences and retreats in **Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Jersey**.

Through baptism one becomes a member of the Church, the **Bride of Christ**, and for those who are called to share in the special mission of the Community, there is available a self-paced program of spiritual formation through reading, spiritual direction, devotional practices and retreats which depends on the prior development of the person. However, everyone is encouraged to join the “Bridal Lace” communication network to keep informed of upcoming events of the Community.

To join this network or a local “bridal party”, contact **Blanche Williams** at **My Father's House, 39 North Moodus Rd, Moodus, CT 06469-0022, 860-873-1581, <http://www.myfathershouse.com>**.

Contact the **PFMC** at (856) 768-9228 for the **3-day** retreat or “bridal party” **9-11 May 2006** or complete and mail in the reservation form from the **lilac** colored information sheet enclosed in this issue of “**The PILGRIM.**” This information sheet is available in

color and black on white for local printing from: <http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2006/06BCR05.pdf>.

(from Father Marty Jones)

IN MEMORIAM

Please pray for the repose of the souls of:

Britt DeAngelis, 9/5/05,

Olena Terelya, wife of Josyp,

Mary Vance, mother of Linda Kelley,

**Margaret “Peggy” Gaskill, 12/6/05, Secretary at
Mater Ecclesiae Church, Berlin, NJ,**

Please send us death notices, prayer cards, etc. so we can pray for the deceased. We are considering having a special Holy Mass for all the deceased friends of the **PFMC**. We need those death notices or prayer cards.

THE GREATEST GIFT

How simple yet how wonderful
That one day long ago
A Child was born on Christmas morn
Beneath a star's bright glow,
The gentle cattle and the sheep
Stood close beside His bed
While shepherds came to praise His name,
For here the star had led.

The One of whom the angels sang

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Murphy, Father John McFadden, Father Bill McCarthy, MSsA,

Father John Hampsch, CMF, Father Brendan Williams, as well as

many of Mary's other beloved priests from the Philadelphia and

Newark and New York Archdioceses as well as the Allentown,

Brooklyn, Camden, Harrisburg, Metuchen, Norwich, Pittsburgh,

Rockville Center, Scranton, Trenton and Wilmington Dioceses.

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

Now lay within a stall
On lowly straw, yet shepherds saw
The greatest gift of all.

May we, like those who came to kneel
And worship at His feet,
Find love to keep, know peace so deep
It makes our lives complete.

(Jean Conder Soule <http://jmadvent.blogspot.com/>)

THE LORD IS TRANSCENDENT, BUT HE REMAINS NEAR US

VATICAN CITY, NOV 16, 2005 (VIS) - In the general audience, held this morning in Saint Peter's Square, the Holy Father spoke on the second part of Psalm 135, "thanksgiving for God's salvation."

The Pope told the 22,000 pilgrims gathered in the square that, if the first part of the psalm proclaims "faith in God the Creator, Who reveals Himself through His works of creation," this second half leads us to "the presence of God ... in the history of salvation." This presence is made manifest in the exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the journey through the desert. "Desert and sea," said the Pope, "represent the passage through evil and oppression to receive the gift of freedom and of the Promised Land."

"During the time of 'humiliation' - the later trials and oppression - Israel would always encounter the saving hand of the God of freedom and love."

Benedict XVI highlighted the fact that in Psalm 135 "two modalities of the one divine revelation are intertwined: the cosmic and the historical. The Lord is transcendent as the Creator and Arbiter of existence, but He is also near to His creatures, entering into space and time. Indeed, His presence among us reaches its pinnacle in the Incarnation of Christ."

This is testified by the Church Fathers, said Benedict XVI, "they see the apex of the history of salvation, and the supreme sign of the Father's merciful love, in the gift of the Son as Savior and Redeemer of humanity."

Concluding his prepared text, the Pope recalled Saint Cyprian who, in his tractate on "Works of Charity and Alms-giving," contemplates "the great deeds God has accomplished for His people in Christ." In off-the-cuff remarks, the Holy Father then added: "With these words, the holy doctor of the Church adds something to what the psalmist said: that the true gift of the Son of God is the gift of the Incarnation, in which He gave Himself to us, and which remains with us in the

Eucharist, in His Word, every day until the end of history."

"We often run the risk of our memory of the evil we have suffered being stronger than our memory of good. The psalm awakens our recollection of goodness, of all the good the Lord has done and continues to do, that we may finally know what the psalmist so joyfully says: the truth that God's mercy is eternal, it is present day after day."

Among his greetings at the end of the audience, Benedict XVI addressed delegates from the Italian Movement for Life, whom he thanked "for your thirty years of service in promoting and defending the right to life and the dignity of each human person, from conception to natural death. Committing yourselves to preventing voluntary abortions, with attentive activities in support of women and families, you help to write pages of hope for the future of humanity, giving concrete proclamation to the 'Gospel of Life'."

(AG/PSALM 135/... VIS 051116)

TO YOUNG PEOPLE: WE FIND HAPPINESS ONLY in GOD

VATICAN CITY, NOV 28, 2005 (VIS) - After pointing out that many of the young people present at the first National Day of Catholic Youth, celebrated in Nieuwegein, Netherlands, on November 27, 2005 also participated in World Youth Day, held in August in Cologne, Germany, Benedict XVI writes: "Dear friends, Jesus is your true friend and Lord, enter into a relationship of true friendship with Him. He awaits you, and only in Him will you find happiness. How easy it is to content oneself with superficial pleasures, ... to live only for oneself in the apparent enjoyment of life. But sooner or later one becomes aware that this is not true happiness, because true happiness is much deeper and is only to be found in Jesus."

"For this reason, I invite you to seek the Lord every day, He wants nothing other than your true happiness." On this subject, the Pope invites young people to dedicate moments of the day "to being exclusively in the company of the Lord. ... Recitation of the Rosary may help you to learn the art of praying with the simplicity and depth of Mary. It is important that participation in the Eucharist should be the center of your life. ... Adore God in church and remain kneeling before the tabernacle."

In his Message to the young people the Holy Father writes that it is in the Sacrament of Penance that Jesus "awaits to forgive your sins and reconcile yourselves with His love. ... What a great opportunity the Lord

has given us with this Sacrament for interior renewal and for progress in our Christian lives. I recommend that you make good and constant use of it.”

“If you follow Jesus, you never feel alone because you are part of the Church, which is a great family in which you can grow in true friendship with so many brothers and sisters in the faith, scattered in every corner of the world. Jesus needs you to ‘renew’ modern society. Concern yourselves with increasing your knowledge of the faith, so as to be authentic witnesses thereof. Dedicate yourselves to an ever better understanding of Catholic doctrine,” in which “the satisfying response to your deepest questions” is to be found.

The Pope concludes his Message with assurances of his prayers for the young people meeting in Nieuwegein, in the hope that they “generously welcome the call of the Lord. ... Only by responding positively to His call, however demanding it may seem, is it possible to find happiness and peace of heart.”

(MESS/HAPPINESS/DUTCH YOUTH VIS 051128)

SPIRITUAL BOND with JOHN PAUL II HAS NOT BEEN BROKEN

VATICAN CITY, NOV 18, 2005 (VIS) - Yesterday evening in the Vatican’s Paul VI Hall, in the presence of the Holy Father, a screening was held of the film “Pope John Paul II.” The film was produced by the Lux Vide Company, and by RAI (Italian State Television) in collaboration with other European television networks and the American broadcaster, CBS.

After the screening, Benedict XVI expressed his thanks to Ettore Bernabei, president of Lux Vide, and to others who collaborated in making the film, which opens with the attempt on John Paul II’s life in Saint Peter’s Square on May 13, 1981.

“Watching this film,” said the Holy Father, “has renewed in me and, I think, in everyone who had the gift of knowing (John Paul II), a sense of profound gratitude to God for having given the Church and the world a Pope of such an exalted human and spiritual stature.

Benedict XVI went on: “Over and above any specific evaluation, I feel the film constitutes further proof ... of the love people hold for Pope John Paul, and of their great desire to remember him, to see him again, to feel him close. And beyond its superficial and emotive aspects, this phenomenon clearly has an intimate spiritual dimension, which we here in the

Vatican see every day watching the multitudes of pilgrims who come to pray, or just to pay rapid homage, at his tomb in the Vatican Grottoes.

“That affective and spiritual bond with John Paul II, which became even closer during the period of his final illness and death, was not interrupted. It has never been broken, because it is a bond between souls, between the great soul of the Pope and the souls of innumerable believers; between his fatherly heart and the hearts of countless men and women of good will who recognized in him a friend, and a defender of man, of truth, of justice, of freedom and of peace. All over the world, many people admired in him above all the coherent and generous witness to God.”

(AC/FILM/JOHN PAUL II VIS 051118)

TRUE MEANING of LIFE LIES in FOLLOWING JESUS

VATICAN CITY, DEC 19, 2005 (VIS) - “In the Child of Bethlehem,” the Pope Benedict XVI told a group of young people from Italian Catholic Action, “the ‘smallness’ of God-made-man reveals to us the greatness of man and the beauty of our dignity as children of God. Contemplating this Child, we see how great is the faith that God places in each of us, and how great is the chance given us to do good and great things in our daily lives, living with Jesus and like Jesus.”

Recalling that this year Italian Catholic Action has chosen the slogan “You are with us,” Benedict XVI called on the young people never to doubt Jesus’ presence. “Always seek the Lord Jesus, develop your friendship with Him, learn how to listen to and know His Word, and to recognize Him in the poor of your own communities.”

“Bear witness to everyone, beginning with your peers, to the joy of His strong and sweet presence. Tell them how wonderful it is to be friends with Jesus and that it is worthwhile following Him. Show your enthusiasm, ... only by following Jesus can the true meaning of life, and true and lasting joy, be found.”

(AC/CHRISTMAS/ITALIAN CATHOLIC ACTION VIS 051219 (230))

NEW YEAR’S WISH

Perhaps a bit wiser,
a bit kinder, too,
a little bit braver,
a heart that’s more true,

a touch of believing
I've not known before,
in joys I'm receiving
a little bit more.

A little more anxious
to reach out my hand,
despite hurt or problems
to still understand,
accepting the heartache
that life often brings,
a little more beauty
in life's simple things.

A prayer when I'm weary
as onward I trod,
a little more trusting,
believing in God,
'tis this I would wish for
within moments dear,
not a lot - just a little
this wondrous new year.

(Garnett Ann Schultz)

<http://www.rosebriar.uk.com/greetings/holiday/newyear/ny5.html>

MESSAGE for WORLD PEACE DAY: IN TRUTH, PEACE

VATICAN CITY, DEC 13, 2005 (VIS) - Made public today was Benedict XVI's first Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace. The Day is celebrated on January 1, 2006 and extracts from the Pope's Message are given below:

"Before all else, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my predecessors, the great Popes Paul VI and John Paul II, who were astute promoters of peace. ... As tireless heralds of the Gospel, they constantly invited everyone to make God the starting point of their efforts on behalf of concord and peace throughout the world. This, my first Message for the World Day of Peace, is meant to follow in the path of their noble teaching; with it, I wish to reiterate the steadfast resolve of the Holy See to continue serving the cause of peace.

"The very name Benedict, which I chose on the day of my election to the Chair of Peter, is a sign of my personal commitment to peace. In taking this name, I wanted to evoke both the patron saint of Europe, who inspired a civilization of peace on the whole continent, and Pope Benedict XV, who condemned the First World War as a 'useless slaughter' and worked for a universal acknowledgment of the lofty demands of peace.

"The theme chosen for this year's reflection - 'In truth, peace' - expresses the conviction that wherever and whenever men and women are enlightened by the splendor of truth, they naturally set out on the path of peace."

"Peace cannot be reduced to the simple absence of armed conflict, but needs to be understood as 'the fruit of an order which has been planted in human society by its divine Founder,' ... As the result of an order planned and willed by the love of God, peace has an intrinsic and invincible truth of its own, and corresponds 'to an irrepressible yearning and hope dwelling within us'."

"Whenever there is a loss of fidelity to the transcendent order, and a loss of respect for that 'grammar' of dialogue which is the universal moral law written on human hearts, whenever the integral development of the person and the protection of his fundamental rights are hindered or denied, whenever countless people are forced to endure intolerable injustices and inequalities, how can we hope that the good of peace will be realized? The essential elements which make up the truth of that good are missing"

"Who and what, then, can prevent the coming of peace? Sacred Scripture, in its very first book, Genesis, points to the lie told at the very beginning of history" by the serpent, the devil. "Lying is linked to the tragedy of sin and its perverse consequences, which have had, and continue to have, devastating effects on the lives of individuals and nations. We need but think of the events of the past century, when aberrant ideological and political systems willfully twisted the truth and brought about the exploitation and murder of an appalling number of men and women, wiping out entire families and communities. After experiences like these, how can we fail to be seriously concerned about lies in our own time, lies which are the framework for menacing scenarios of death in many parts of the world. Any authentic search for peace must begin with the realization that the problem of truth and untruth is the concern of every man and woman; it is decisive for the peaceful future of our planet."

"We need to regain an awareness that we share a common destiny which is ultimately transcendent, so as to maximize our historical and cultural differences, not in opposition to, but in cooperation with, people belonging to other cultures. These simple truths are what make peace possible."

"The truth of peace calls upon everyone to cultivate productive and sincere relationships; it encourages them to seek out and follow the paths of forgiveness

and reconciliation, to be transparent in their dealings with others, and to be faithful to their word.”

“As a means of limiting the devastating consequences of war as much as possible, especially for civilians, the international community has created an international humanitarian law. In a variety of situations and in different settings, the Holy See has expressed its support for this humanitarian law, and has called for it to be respected and promptly implemented, out of the conviction that the truth of peace exists even in the midst of war.

“International humanitarian law ought to be considered as one of the finest and most effective expressions of the intrinsic demands of the truth of peace. Precisely for this reason, respect for that law must be considered binding on all peoples. Its value must be appreciated and its correct application ensured; it must also be brought up to date by precise norms applicable to the changing scenarios of today’s armed conflicts and the use of ever newer and more sophisticated weapons.”

“Nowadays, the truth of peace continues to be dramatically compromised and rejected by terrorism, whose criminal threats and attacks leave the world in a state of fear and insecurity.”

“Not only nihilism, but also religious fanaticism, today often labeled fundamentalism, can inspire and encourage terrorist thinking and activity. From the beginning, Pope John Paul II was aware of the explosive danger represented by fanatical fundamentalism, and he condemned it unsparingly, while warning against attempts to impose, rather than to propose for others freely to accept, one’s own convictions about the truth.”

Nihilism and fundamentalism “both show a dangerous contempt for human beings and human life, and ultimately for God Himself. ... In analyzing the causes of the contemporary phenomenon of terrorism, consideration should be given, not only to its political and social causes, but also to its deeper cultural, religious and ideological motivations.

“In view of the risks which humanity is facing in our time, all Catholics in every part of the world have a duty to proclaim and embody ever more fully the ‘Gospel of Peace,’ and to show that acknowledgment of the full truth of God is the first, indispensable condition for consolidating the truth of peace.”

“History has amply demonstrated that declaring war on God in order to eradicate Him from human hearts only leads a fearful and impoverished humanity toward decisions which are ultimately futile. This realization must impel believers in Christ to ... place themselves at the service of peace in broad

cooperation with other Christians, the followers of other religions and with all men and women of good will.

“Looking at the present world situation, we can note with satisfaction certain signs of hope in the work of building peace. I think, for example, of the decrease in the number of armed conflicts. ... These are reassuring signs which need to be confirmed and consolidated by tireless cooperation and activity, above all on the part of the international community and its agencies charged with preventing conflicts and providing a peaceful solution to those in course.

“All this must not, however, lead to a naive optimism. It must not be forgotten that, tragically, violent fratricidal conflicts and devastating wars still continue to sow tears and death in vast parts of the world.”

“Those authorities who, rather than making every effort to promote peace, incite their citizens to hostility towards other nations, bear a heavy burden of responsibility.”

“What can be said, too, about those governments which count on nuclear arms as a means of ensuring the security of their countries? Along with countless persons of good will, one can state that this point of view is not only baneful but also completely fallacious. In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims. The truth of peace requires that all - whether those governments which openly or secretly possess nuclear arms, or those planning to acquire them - agree to change their course by clear and firm decisions, and strive for a progressive and concerted nuclear disarmament. The resources which would be saved could then be employed in projects of development capable of benefiting all their people, especially the poor.

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If you know someone who would enjoy the **“The PILGRIM,”** please ask them to contact us at the address printed in the box on page 5 or near the mailing label on the last page.

“In this regard, one can only note with dismay the evidence of a continuing growth in military expenditure and the flourishing arms trade, while the political and juridical process established by the international community for promoting disarmament is bogged down in general indifference.”

“It can only be hoped that the international community will find the wisdom and courage to take up once more, jointly and with renewed conviction, the process of disarmament, and thus concretely ensure the right to peace enjoyed by every individual and every people.”

“The first to benefit from a decisive choice for disarmament will be the poor countries, which rightly demand, after having heard so many promises, the concrete implementation of their right to development.”

“The Catholic Church, while confirming her confidence in [the U.N.], calls for the institutional and operative renewal which would enable it to respond to the changed needs of the present time, characterized by the vast phenomenon of globalization. The United Nations Organization must become a more efficient instrument for promoting the values of justice, solidarity and peace in the world.”

“Every community should undertake an extensive process of education and witness aimed at making everyone more aware of the need for a fuller appreciation of the truth of peace. At the same time I ask for an increase of prayers, since peace is above all a gift of God, a gift to be implored incessantly.”

(MESS/WORLD PEACE DAY 2006/..VIS 051213)

CARDINAL MARTINO PRESENTS WORLD PEACE DAY MESSAGE

VATICAN CITY, DEC 13, 2005 (VIS) - Cardinal Renato Martino, prefect of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, presented Benedict XVI's Message for the World Day of Peace 2006.

Cardinal Martino began by indicating how the Holy Father has chosen “‘the truth’ as the theme for reflection, linking its many dimensions to the various questions concerning peace in the modern world,” and drawing inspiration from the Vatican Council II Pastoral Constitution “*Gaudium et spes*.”

“The theme of truth is, without doubt, very dear to Benedict XVI, and constantly recurs in his teaching even to the point of characterizing his papal ministry, like a background motif on the basis of which other themes are developed in keeping with the musical art of ‘variations on a theme’.”

The cardinal pointed out how the Pope's Message is divided into four parts: “The first part, which is of a spiritual and theological nature, highlights the meaning and value of the bond between peace, truth and lies.” The second part considers peace in the context of real situations of war. “In the third part, the truth of peace is considered in close relation ... to terrorism.” The fourth part considers the truth of peace from the point of view of the need to relaunch the political process of disarmament.

In the first part of his Message, the cardinal went on, “the Holy Father insists that the themes of truth and lies must not be considered as irrelevant pastimes or useless pseudo-intellectual pursuits, but ... as decisive historical events upon which the joy or misery of men and women depend.”

The Pope then affirms that peace “is the fruit of an order which has been planted in human society by its divine Founder,” said Cardinal Martino, adding that “in order for the cause of peace to progress, humanity today must cherish universal moral law. ... At this point, ... the Holy Father introduces his reflections on lies as a sin with devastating consequences on the lives of individuals and nations.” From a historical point of view, the Holy Father then “formulates a very severe judgment of last century” and concludes the first part of his Message by highlighting the “need for peace” which is intrinsic to human beings and is “the shared birthright of all men and women of the one human family.”

In the second part of the Message, said the prefect of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, “the Holy Father considers the truth of peace in cases where war has actually broken out. In such cases, there must be full respect and complete observance of international humanitarian law, which ... must remain a point of reference for the international community.”

The cardinal went on to outline the third part of the Pope's Message, saying that “after having confirmed his customary condemnation of terrorism, ... Benedict XVI offers an innovative and thus far unexplored interpretation of the phenomenon of terrorism.” According to this interpretation, the inspiration of terrorism lies in nihilism and in fanatical fundamentalism, which “have an entirely erroneous approach both to truth and to the truth of peace.”

The Pope does not overlook the fact that the number of armed conflicts has decreased, said the cardinal, but he does refer to the many situations where conflict is latent and specifically mentions “authorities who ... use their power to incite their citizens to hostility towards other nations,” and “the programs of certain governments who use nuclear energy to create arms,

... in the false conviction that this guarantees the security of their people.”

In closing, Cardinal Martino indicated numerous points in the Pope’s Message “that trace out a path of spirituality in peace” in its Christological, missionary and ecclesial dimensions. He also stressed how the text concludes with “an invitation to pray for and bear witness to peace through the exercise of charity.”

(OP/PRESENTATION PEACE
MESSAGE/MARTINO VIS 051213)

AFTER THE RAINBOW

Lives have been touched, hearts have been changed,
faith that was lost, renewed.
Friendships were formed as hands joined in prayer,
God’s peace and joy ensued.

Empowered by Grace, enriched by His Love,
the message brought forth was so true...
All of God’s children know pain in this life;
the difference is in “attitude.”

God gives us the choice to reside in despair,
or regroup and move on with His plan...
In all things give thanks, for good times and bad,
even things we don’t understand.

Let tomorrow be better, than days that have past,
move on from the river of tears...
Let all of your days be filled with God’s Love,
and peace will be yours through the years.

(by Jill Lemming, Henry Gibson)

<http://www.absolutelypoetry.com/author/jill-lemming/after-the-rainbow.html>

PFMC DISPLAYS and / or PRESENTATIONS



Kathleen and Keith are available to participate in parish or 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 and her Son in this time of manifestation of Our Lord’s mercy and graces are shared at 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. Recipients are asked to donate at or above the suggested value posted on each article on display. Displays may be set up without a presentation.

We are willing and have offered to set up displays in parishes for all the weekend Holy Masses. We’ll come on Saturday afternoon in time (about 2 hours) to set up before the first vigil Holy Mass and stay through Sunday afternoon or evening until after the last Sunday Holy Mass (Volunteer staff pending).

Displays in parishes are particularly beneficial when good Catholic religious goods or book stores are not convenient to the parishioners.

Ask your pastor if he would allow the **PFMC** to set up a display in the basement, school cafeteria, or gymnasium, or wherever we could have about 20 large tables with display material on them.

ENCLOSED ITEMS

In this *December* issue of “**The PILGRIM**” are the following:

A **green** information packet for the **2006 RETREAT CONFERENCE and Youth Track, 17-19 February 2006** as mentioned on pages 3 and 4.

A **blue** information packet for the **Pilgrimage to the Holy Lands of Israel and Jordan, 17-30 April 2006** with extension to **1 May 2006** for an excursion to **Mount Sinai in Egypt** to tour **Saint Catherine’s Monastery** as mentioned on pages 4 and 5.

A **lilac** information sheet for the **Bride of Christ Community Retreat** in the **Upper Room** at **Epiphany House, Tuesday, 9 May 2006, thru Thursday, 11 May 2006**. Lodging in nearby hotels is available. **Retreat Master** will be **Father Marty Jones, Pastor of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Middletown, CT**. This retreat is open to non-members of the community. This retreat is discussed on pages 5 and 6.

The usual **PFMC** envelope and the new donation coupon explained in the **July 2004 [special financial support appeal letter](#)** for the **PFMC**. Please respond if you are able. We need to hear from readers that their addresses are still correct and would love to receive a donation from each reader on a regular basis.

NOTE: If “**The PILGRIM**” publication process is not supported by the readers we will have to cease its monthly production.

Please send in a donation on as regular a basis as your finances permit. We are subsidizing the publication of “**The PILGRIM**” from other donations.

MESSAGE of 12/25/2005 via Maria Pavlovic Lunetti

Dear children! Also today, in my arms I bring you little Jesus, the King of Peace, to bless you with His peace. Little children, in a special way today I call you to be my carriers of peace in this peaceless world. God will bless you. Little children, do not forget that I am your mother. I bless you all with a special blessing, with little Jesus in my arms. Thank you for having responded to my call.

(The **PFMC** upholds the final decision of the **Magisterium** of the **Roman Catholic Church** led by the **Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI**, as to the authenticity of messages to alleged visionaries from **Medjugorje**.)

REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of 12/25/2005

IN MY ARMS, I BRING YOU LITTLE JESUS, THE KING OF PEACE

Today also, in her arms and in her heart, the Blessed Virgin Mary brings and gives Jesus, the King of Peace. She is doing this throughout the history, since Jesus was conceived in her womb. Saint Elisabeth was the first who had the privilege to meet Mary, full of grace, who carries and gives Jesus. Mary wants to lead us all to Jesus; she wants to give Jesus to us all. She does not keep Him for herself, because she knows that He is a gift offered to her, too. Mary knows that Jesus is a gift of God not only for her, but for all humanity. The meaning of life is to give, not only things, but life. This is why she is teaching: "Dear children, your life does not belong to you, but is a gift with which you must bring joy to others." (Message of 25.12.1992)

Only human being is able to recognize and receive God. Human being alone can receive the fullness of the love of God, and love in a manner worthy of God. Jesus has descended from heaven for our salvation. Love, only love motivated Him to come down from heaven because of us. God is love and all that He does, He does it out of love.

The Virgin Mary appears and she calls us, her children, for so many years now, only because she loves us. Our response to her calls and her messages should be only love. With the help of Mary, we can also grow in holiness and be those who will be able to carry Jesus to others. Jesus that we receive in the Holy Communion is the same Jesus that Mary received, the One that she is giving us.

Mary fully believed in the accomplishment of all that was told to her on behalf of the Lord. Today, she believes that God wants and can perform in our lives his works of peace and of love. In her life, she made the experience of the absolute power of the love of

God who governs and who leads the history of humanity, and each heart, which opens to Him. Mary is the person who knows Jesus best, because He grew in her most pure womb, under her heart, and because she followed Him by her tender love until the Calvary. This is why we are sure that we will arrive to Jesus if we listen to Mary and follow her maternal words, which do not compel, but which attract by love. She came here to us. We did not call her, she came to call us. She went by herself towards her cousin Elisabeth when she felt invaded by the grace, full with Jesus. Today also, she is full with Jesus and she brings Him to us, she gives Him to us. Mary receives everything from Jesus, King of Peace, and she gives us all that is from Jesus.

In many messages, Mary invites us to pray for peace. The world languishes for peace, but it is unable to set up the conditions necessary for peace. Human happiness is unimaginable without the peace of the heart. Peace generates a deep security. Peace is the major desire of the human heart, but cannot be realised without God. To wait until the world, human forces and powers give us peace, this means to advance on the way of the lie and disappointment.

Mary never misled nor disappointed anybody. It was never heard that she abandoned someone who sought her help and her protection. Let us pray to Mary, and let us open ourselves to her heart, so that we can make a deep experience of peace and carry peace to all around us.

Father Ljubo Kurtovic, Medjugorje, 26.12.2005,
(<http://medjugorje.hr.nt4.ims.hr>)

ANOTHER NOVEMBER REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of 12/25/2005

"Dear children! Also today, in my arms I bring you little Jesus, the King of Peace, to bless you with His peace." As one reads this first sentence of Our

Lady's message of December 25, 2005, one can understand through faith that Jesus and Our Lady are truly with us. As our Lady comes to us with **"little Jesus"** in Her arms, we are called to become like **"little Jesus."** Our dear Lord treasured the motherly love of Mary. He came into this world as the Son of God, but He also chose to come as a little child who wished to depend upon His mother's love to survive.

During these days of the Christmas season, may we truly reflect upon these thoughts regarding Jesus' birth. As people of faith, we should be positively affected by the humility of Jesus. He wants us to embrace the love of His dear Mother. If we give Our Lady the chance, She can teach to us the ways of God, but first we must reject those feelings of blind independence, indifference, and selfishness that often lead to sin. May we take up the challenge to become one with Our Lady by accepting Her motherly love, and bringing that love to others. Let us believe in the fullest sense that Jesus is the **"King of Peace."** May His peace reign in our hearts.

"Little children, in a special way today I call you to be my carriers of peace in this peace less world. God will bless you." In this next sentence of Her message of December 25, 2005, Our Lady asks us to undertake a very important request. Also, we are told that, **"God will bless you,"** as we embark upon this process of bringing peace to others.

This call to bring peace to others can be more than a significant challenge. Again, to accomplish this task, we must become like Jesus. Let us contemplate upon the unconditional love of Jesus. His mercy, compassion and a willingness to sacrifice Himself for the salvation of humanity should encourage us to accept that spirit of conversion, which can help us to change. The time is now, not next month or next year. We can never be satisfied with who we are. We can always be better.

When we attend Mass, let us listen very closely to the gospel readings. Accept the teachings of Jesus while learning significant lessons from His parables, and His interactions with people. May we understand that we have been challenged to make sacrifices for others. In these monthly messages of Our Lady, we have been encouraged to be devoted to prayer and worship. Prayer, worship, sacrifice, and love will bring us to Jesus. Then, we can begin to be successful **"carriers of peace,"** and most importantly, **"God will bless you,"** in this work of bringing His peace to the world.

"Little children, do not forget that I am your mother. I bless you all with a special blessing with little Jesus in my arms." As we read these words of Our Lady, may we be filled with joy and gratefulness

The PILGRIM, Volume 17, Number 1 – January 2006

to God. We are very blessed to have Our Lady interceding for us while encouraging us to give our total being to Jesus. May we be filled with love believing that the Holy Spirit is working very closely with Our Lady to bring us to Jesus. Let us pray to the Holy Spirit, understanding that through His sanctifying love, we can be strong and overcome the inclination to sin. As we begin a new year, may we become more conscious of preparing our souls for Jesus. The Holy Spirit and Our dear Blessed Mother continue to help us to be successful in this endeavor. Let us do our part, and be forever grateful to God the Father for all of His gracious gifts. Let us truly serve the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit with much joy, peace, and a committed love.

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas. May God's peace fill your lives. Give my best to your families. Stay well and always be that devoted and faithful servant that God has called you to be. May Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit come upon you and remain with you forever and ever.

Amen.

God's love and prayers always,

Father Ed

(HEdwardChalmers@aol.com, 28 December, 2005)

PRESS BULLETIN 217, 12/26/2005

English not available at press time. **Croatian, German, Polish, and Spanish** all posted by 1/3/06.

(Published by: Information Center MIR - Shrine of the Queen of Peace, 88266 Medjugorje.
<http://www.medjugorje.hr/ulazakenstipe.htm>)

MONTHLY APPARITION to MIRJANA SOLDIĆ, 12/2/05

Children of Medjugorje reports that Our Lady gave this message:

Dear Children, in this holy time, allow the love and the grace of my Son to descend upon you. Only pure and merciful hearts, filled with prayer, may feel the love of my Son. Pray for those who do not have the grace of feeling the love of my Son. My children, help me! Thank you."

(The Network News, January 2006, Vol. 16.1, The Newsletter of the Medjugorje in America National Parish Network)

ANNUAL APPARITION to JAKOV on DECEMBER 25TH 2005

At the last daily apparition to **Jakov Colo** on **September 12th, 1998**, **Our Lady** told him that henceforth he would have one apparition a year, every **December 25th**, on **Christmas Day**. This is also how it was this year. The apparition began at **2:45 PM** and lasted **7 minutes**.

Our Lady gave the following message:

Dear children! Today, with Jesus in my arms, in a special way I call you to conversion. Children, through all this time which God permitted me to be with you, I continuously called you to conversion. Many of your hearts remained closed. Little children, Jesus is peace, love and joy; therefore now decide for Jesus. Start to pray. Pray to Him for the gift of conversion. Little children, only with Jesus can you have peace, joy and a heart filled with love. Little children, I love you. I am your mother and give you my motherly blessing.

(from Ana Shawl, anabonana@comcast.net, Sunday,
December 25, 2005)

VOCATIONS DEPARTMENT

If you need vocation information and you do not find it in your local parish or diocese, please call **(856) 768-9228**.

PRIESTS MUST LIVE A MARTYR'S LIFE

Transcription of a conference by Father John A. Hardon, S.J. who passed away December 30, 2000.

The Catholic priest in the modern world can he be martyred for his faith in the priesthood?

No words of mine, nothing I could say, if I spoke for fifty years, would be too clear, that we are living in the age of martyrs. Only one mistake we can make is to think this is exaggeration or some kind of pious fancy. I wish to concentrate, for the reasons we already have said, on the priesthood - it is a living martyrdom today - and on the fact that we have lost so many thousands of priests. The Vatican, as I have said before, may not reveal the exact figures. It's close to one hundred thousand priests who have left

the priesthood throughout the world in the past half-century. Nothing, nothing like it ever before!

What are some of the forces at work? And now, the two buttons as we call them. The rampant secularism seeing our bodily life as ending with bodily death. Doctor Kervorkian - you know, the doctor of death. Richard Thompson, whom I received into the Church, prosecuted Kervorkian. When Thompson asked Kervorkian what happens when men die, his answer was, "They stink." On these terms there is no need for the priesthood whose function it is to prepare people for a heavenly destiny. If there is no life after death then the priesthood is worse than a sham. Then again the preoccupation with material possessions in what we call developed countries, like the United States which is three trillion dollars in debt. And the whole preoccupation is with material prosperity. Consequently, in a society like ours which becomes secularized and preoccupied, there will be a corresponding lack of interest in the priesthood. In the United States, vocations to the priesthood have dropped ninety percent since Vatican II.

And how well I know, our media is not, not only unfriendly, but is positively hostile to the priesthood. In two dioceses Santa Fe in New Mexico and Dallas in Texas are both bankrupt because of lawsuits against priests. Of course, there have been and there are unfaithful priests, but nothing, nothing like this against the ministry of a, let's say, Presbyterian or Lutheran or Methodist minister.

Our government, beginning with the president, is out to destroy the priesthood, period! I hope I'm being taped. And in the United States, hear it: in 1930 there were some six hundred declarations of nullity. Six hundred in 1930, but in 1997 there were sixty thousand.

For a priest to still talk about a lifetime commitment in marriage, he is well, out of tune with the times. However, in my judgment, the main grounds for claiming that a Catholic priest must expect to live a martyr's life in the modern world, the main reason, is the spread of strange ideas in, not only Catholic circles, as to what exactly is a priest. My Vatican superiors have more than once told me, (I'm sure I've said this before) most of your priests in America who have been ordained since Vatican II need to be reeducated!

Articles have been in popular magazines, studies in scholarly journals, lectures and seminars, whole volumes are being published disclaiming that Christ instituted the sacrament of Holy Orders. I'll never forget, and I know Father Richard McBrien, then head of the department of theology at Notre Dame University. He has written many books. He spoke for

one hour to one hundred priests and Protestant ministers. In his whole one hour lecture he was saying that Jesus never instituted the priesthood. "The Catholic priesthood came into existence about 300 A.D." (according to McBrien). That's what our priests (shall I still call them priests?) that's what they are being taught in the seminaries. Let me quote at length from a standard book on the subject by a priest.

"Ordination as a rite and ceremony that confers power or office does not exist in the New Testament. Ministry does not need to be empowered by a mandate or delegation or superior possessing power. The forms of 'ordination' are subject to the dispositions of the churches in a given period of history. Priesthood, as a specific type of ministry, does not exist in the New Testament. 'Ministry', or *diakonia*, is a nonsacral word. The early church leaned heavily on this secular term to describe its main ministering activity. Ministry in the New Testament is primarily functional. It is concerned with doing, like teaching, preaching, governing. The historical Jesus was not a priest."

Once you deny that Christ himself was a priest, you have to provide for some one person who is to "preside" at the liturgy of the Eucharist. Let's see, where did I speak most recently? O yes were you there? There were no kneelers. No, no kneelers, Saint Edmunds in Detroit. And by now, how clever the devil is! All kinds of reasons have been given except the real reason, the denial of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. There are those who deny that Christ ever ordained the Apostles as bishops or priests.

Bishops who are also priests and can ordain other men to the priesthood. Here is his, (McBrien's) following explanation of what happened in the early church. Underlying this explanation you have got to give the idea of the distinction between the laity and the clergy. In other words the claim is that there should not be any real distinction between the laity and the clergy. It is so, as it is claimed again, to be a later invention and not found in the New Testament.

And would you believe it, one whole page is devoted to this?

In the early Church there existed a plurality of church organizations. Some churches were ruled by a committee or council of lay elders, others were ruled by prophets and teachers. Still other, were ruled by a committee or council of lay elders, others were ruled by prophets and teachers. Still others were ruled by traveling apostles, depending on who was ruling a given church, so we are told. Different persons would be "Eucharistic Presiders."

Is that ever going on now!

Once the leader of the early community presides over the community, and also presides over the Eucharist, one would assume that the person presiding over the community has arrived at his leadership position, called by leadership qualities discerned by the community. The said "Eucharistic Presider" would be ordained to pull together the community, also to continue building community and then to celebrate it. This Presider would be the public embodiment, the living symbol of the community's goals and values. As such, the Presider would be a sacrament of God's presence in the community. "At the same time", I am quoting, "he or she would be a unifying symbol to reconcile the members of the community to God and to each other." He or she would bring order and harmony in the community so that all its ministries would build up the Church. In the immediate future this "Eucharistic Presider" will probably be a diocesan or religious priest, already ordained. However, as these priests die the future Presiders will have to come from the communities. Leaders, male and female, married or single presiding over the Eucharist, will always remain one among many shared ministries to the community.

And that is widely, widely taught! These books, I repeat, are used in seminaries. I would like to say a little more before we go on to our conclusion.

It would be serious enough if this kind of thinking was only among, say, certain theologians and especially feminist theologians. This thinking is among bishops. Without identifying the bishop, I faxed a list of twenty bishops requested by a bishop friend of mine. "Can you send me the names of twenty bishops in the United States whom you are sure believe in the priesthood?" Do you hear me?

As I celebrate my 51st (now 53rd) year of ordination to the priesthood, please pray and sacrifice for the bishops and priests in one so-called developed

HOLY MASS TIMES

If you ever think you will miss Holy Mass because you don't know the times of Holy Mass or the locations of churches in the area that you are currently located, please call **1-410-676-6000**.

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.

You can find maps to the churches in addition to the times of Holy Mass celebrations.

country after another.

Now you hear these statements widely circulated by priests. You say to yourself, "Am I dreaming or is it real?" It is real. That is why I have said what I have said so far. We Catholics must be ready to live a martyr's life for our faith in the priesthood. We priests must live a martyr's life for our faith in our own priesthood and the religious and the laity for faith in the priesthood. What is this faith? It is the Faith professed now for twenty centuries except for the apostates. What do we believe when we believe in the priesthood? We believe that Jesus Christ did institute the sacrament of Holy Orders on Holy Thursday night when he ordained the Apostles bishops with full power of the priesthood.

And even the English translation of the consecration, "Do this in memory of Me" (at the raising of the chalice) "When supper was ended, He took the cup". In English it is "He took the cup" in Latin it is chalice. We don't say take grape juice or water in a chalice. A chalice is sacred, not for profane use. However I especially want to note, the words in the consecration of the chalice "Do this in memory of Me." It is not memory, the word is "commemoration." And that is why, (and I am sure) I have said this at some time. Pope Paul VI published a formal document for the whole Church. For the meaning of the word in the Liturgy, is never that of the vernacular. Never! It is always that of the original Latin. This Sacramentary has been deeply tampered with. We believe as Catholics that bishops are ordained and ordain other bishops. We believe that from the very dawn of Christianity it was only given to the priests.

What was given the priesthood? Only priests could offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

I was giving a lecture to a group of people. After the lecture about five seminarians came to me and asked if I could help one of their seminarians, who had just been dismissed from the seminary just before ordination. So I asked what happened. What happened was that one of the priest professors told about a half dozen seminarians to attend a special Mass he was saying, co-celebrating with a woman. They were told never to tell anyone. He could not keep it to himself, it was too serious. So he told the rector, the rector told the bishop, and the seminarian was evicted from the seminary. So they asked me to help him get back into the seminary. I asked the seminarian to come see me in New York. We talked. He was genuine. So I called up the bishop president of Saint Joseph's Seminary of the New York Archdiocese. He was accepted and ordained. I have never seen anyone so grateful!

And consequently, only priests from the beginning could offer the Sacrifice of the Mass. Only priests could change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. Only priests could absolve sins in the sacrament of Confession and reconcile people with an offended God. Only priests could administer the sacrament of Anointing,

Once you believe this, you have no choice as a priest, you can not deny your faith. All the learned jargon about the lay ministry is just that, jargon, it's a lie.

However those priests who believe that they have been empowered by Christ to do what no one else can do like change bread and wine into the living Body and Blood of Christ and reconcile sinners with God - such priests will have to pay dearly for their faith convictions.

And, as in the literal transcription of my talk.

I know! I know!

And I can say this on the fifty-first, now (fifty- third) anniversary of my ordination, I've paid dearly. And I am still paying and the miracle is I'm still alive and I'm sane.

And now the closing two sentences or maybe three - the Church is going through the worst crisis in her Catholic history. She will not only survive she will thrive only on one condition that we priests be not only willing to live but are willing to die for faith in the priesthood given to us by Jesus Christ on the night before He died.

And it is great to live like this. I work with priests, exiled priests, priests removed from their diocese, priests removed from their communities because they believed what the Catholic Church has taught for two thousand years.

(I am speaking to all women religious and Marian Catechists).

Women have a very great influence over men, a very great influence. I think I should spend a little time explaining what I have learned in these (fifty-one) now fifty-three years in the priesthood. Women have very deep influence first of all over men.

In giving retreats I think I have said this before to men. I ask who has the stronger will, and I ask men or women? Some women are not so sure and some men are not so sure, but no husband I have ever talked to has any doubt they find out in six days after marriage. This applies not just, nor does it apply mainly, to say wives. It applies to all women, to all women. I cannot tell you how much priests need to be supported by dedicated believing and shall I say it out-spoken women.

Over the years dealing with so many priests I can't tell you how many saintly women have helped priests to be faithful to their priesthood. Let me tell you, there are women - I think I should say this - whose profession is to seduce priests. They are specialists. And priests like numb skulls, don't realize what this woman is after.

And this is really what is behind the plague of wanting women to be ordained priests. In other words the priesthood as instituted by Christ provides the priest with power and authority and influence, and this is being envied, envied by many women

The breakdown of religious communities of women in the United States (I don't think I have ever said this publicly) - the breakdown of communities of religious women in our country is religious women envying priests. They will not take orders through priests including the Bishop of Rome. I know, how well I know!

Our focus is however, on the priesthood instituted by Jesus Christ.

Do you Sisters have a custom in your community of praying for the priest? Is there any single prayer for the priest?

This is good.

God, we recommend to your fatherly care of the Pope, Cardinals, Bishops and all priests and all religious for all those who have asked for prayers and for whom we should pray.

What I would like to propose before we end this conference is the need for prayers and sacrifice for priests. The need is gigantic.

Never before in the history of the Church has the priesthood been so opposed as it is now. And sadly, from the inside, from apostate bishops and apostate priests. But the need for prayer and sacrifice for priests and bishops, I believe this should be an apostolate.

In one diocese after another in the United States, (it's worse still in Canada) there are parishes without priests. Do you know that? We need priests so that those who are priests remain faithful and I must say they pay a heavy, very heavy price!

And I think I told you, for twenty-five years I have been teaching the Handmaids of the Precious Blood. They are in the diocese of Santa Fe. The diocese in Santa Fe is bankrupt, completely bankrupt. Millions, millions have been given out because of lawsuits involving unfaithful priests and priests who have been calumniated and were innocent. So now you know and they have first of all their own community but they also have associations. The first association is for

the priesthood. Some sixteen thousand are praying for priests. The Holy Father is deeply, and I mean deeply, concerned about the future of the priesthood in countries like our own and in South America. There is another problem, as you know.

The United States and South America are controlled by the Freemasons.

In one country after another and as a result, in our country, so many dioceses are, if not priestless, at least parishes with thirty or forty thousand people which can extend two or three thousand miles,

What ever you can do especially with your prayers there must be an apostolate for priests.

Father Hardon gave countless talks and lectures on the Catholic Faith at churches, schools, universities, retreat houses, conference halls, apostolic organizations, religious orders, special events and for radio and television in addition to the numerous homilies he gave at Mass. He also wrote for literally hundreds of publications and published countless books. If you have any of Father Hardon's works, we ask you to please send them to us at gcs@therealpresence.org so that the Catholic Faith he so loved and so eloquently spoke about may be shared with everyone.

http://www.therealpresence.org/archives/Priesthood/Priesthood_007.htm.)

ADMISSION to the PRIESTHOOD and HOMOSEXUALITY

VATICAN CITY, NOV 29, 2005 (VIS) - Made public today was the document: "Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in view of their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders." The document is dated November 4, 2005. On August 31, 2005, Benedict XVI approved the Instruction and ordered its publication.

Given below are some extracts from the document.

INTRODUCTION

"In continuity with the teaching of Vatican Council II and, in particular, with the Decree 'Optatam Totius' on priestly formation, the Congregation for Catholic Education has published various documents with the aim or promoting a suitable, integral formation of future priests, by offering guidelines and precise norms regarding its diverse aspects. In the meantime, the 1990 Synod of Bishops also reflected on the

formation of priests in the circumstances of the present day. ... Following this Synod, John Paul II published the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation 'Pastores Dabo Vobis'."

"The present Instruction does not intend to dwell on all questions in the area of affectivity and sexuality that require an attentive discernment during the entire period of formation. Rather, it contains norms concerning a specific question, made more urgent by the current situation, and that is: whether to admit to the seminary and to holy orders candidates who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies."

AFFECTIVE MATURITY and SPIRITUAL FATHERHOOD

"According to the constant Tradition of the Church, only a baptized person of the male sex validly receives sacred ordination. By means of the Sacrament of Orders, ... the priest, in fact, sacramentally represents Christ, the head, shepherd and spouse of the Church. Because of this configuration to Christ, the entire life of the sacred minister must be animated by the gift of his whole person to the Church and by an authentic pastoral charity.

"The candidate to the ordained ministry, therefore, must reach affective maturity. Such maturity will allow him to relate correctly to both men and women, developing in him a true sense of spiritual fatherhood towards the Church community that will be entrusted to him."

HOMOSEXUALITY and the ORDAINED MINISTRY

"The Catechism of the Catholic Church distinguishes between homosexual acts and homosexual tendencies. Regarding acts, it teaches that Sacred Scripture presents them as grave sins. The Tradition has constantly considered them as intrinsically immoral and contrary to the natural law. Consequently, under no circumstances can they be approved.

"Deep-seated homosexual tendencies, which are found in a number of men and women, are also objectively disordered and, for those same people, often constitute a trial. Such persons must be accepted with respect and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided."

"In the light of such teaching, this dicastery, in accord with the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, believes it necessary to state clearly that the Church, while profoundly respecting the persons in question, cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practice

homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies, or support the so-called 'gay culture'."

"One must in no way overlook the negative consequences that can derive from the ordination of persons with deep-seated homosexual tendencies.

"Different, however, would be the case in which one were dealing with homosexual tendencies that were only the expression of a transitory problem - for example, that of an adolescence not yet superseded. Nevertheless, such tendencies must be clearly overcome at least three years before ordination to the diaconate."

DISCERNMENT of the CHURCH CONCERNING the SUITABILITY of CANDIDATES

"The desire alone to become a priest is not sufficient, and there does not exist a right to receive sacred ordination. It belongs to the Church - in her responsibility to define the necessary requirements for receiving the Sacraments instituted by Christ - to discern the suitability of him who desires to enter the seminary, to accompany him during his years of formation, and to call him to holy orders if he is judged to possess the necessary qualities.

"The formation of the future priest must distinctly articulate, in an essentially complementary manner, the four dimensions of formation: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. In this context, it is necessary to highlight the particular importance of human formation, as the necessary foundation of all formation."

"Bearing in mind the opinion of those to whom he has entrusted the responsibility of formation, the bishop or major superior, before admitting the candidate to ordination, must arrive at a morally certain judgment on his qualities. In the case of a serious doubt in this regard, he must not admit him to ordination.

"The discernment of a vocation and the maturity of the candidate is also a serious duty of the rector and of the other persons entrusted with the work of formation in the seminary. Before every ordination, the rector must express his own judgment on whether the qualities required by the Church are present in the candidate."

The spiritual director, though bound to secrecy, "represents the Church in the internal forum. In his discussions with the candidate, the spiritual director must especially point out the demands of the Church concerning priestly chastity and the affective maturity that is characteristic of the priest, as well as help him to discern whether he has the necessary qualities. The

spiritual director has the obligation to evaluate all the qualities of the candidate's personality and to make sure that he does not present disturbances of a sexual nature, which are incompatible with the priesthood. If a candidate practices homosexuality or presents deep-seated homosexual tendencies, his spiritual director, as well as his confessor, have the duty to dissuade him in conscience from proceeding towards ordination.

"It goes without saying that the candidate himself has the primary responsibility for his own formation. ... It would be gravely dishonest for a candidate to hide his own homosexuality in order to proceed, despite everything, towards ordination. Such a deceitful attitude does not correspond to the spirit of truth, loyalty and openness that must characterize the personality of him who believes he is called to serve Christ and His Church in the ministerial priesthood."

CONCLUSION

"This Congregation reaffirms the need for bishops, major superiors, and all relevant authorities to carry out an attentive discernment concerning the suitability of candidates for holy orders, from the time of admission to the seminary until ordination. This discernment must be done in light of a conception of the ministerial priesthood that is in accordance with the teaching of the Church.

"Let bishops, Episcopal conferences and major superiors look to see that the constant norms of this Instruction be faithfully observed for the good of the candidates themselves, and to guarantee that the Church always has suitable priests who are true shepherds according to the heart of Christ."

**(CIC/PRIESTHOOD HOMOSEXUALITY/...VIS
051129 (1180))**

REFLECTIONS on the ROLE of the LAITY in the CHURCH

VATICAN CITY, DEC 17, 2005 (VIS) - This morning, the Pope received the third group of prelates from the Conference of the Polish Episcopate, who have just completed their five-yearly "ad limina" visit. In remarks to them, he offered some reflections on the role of lay people in the Church.

After first highlighting how "the essential element in the structure of the Church is the parish," the Pope stated that "the first and most important requirement is that the parish should constitute an 'ecclesial community' and an 'ecclesial family'." Apart from the "indispensable role of priests, especially pastors,

... the active participation of the laity is also important in the formation of the community. ... Pastoral councils must collaborate with a spirit of common concern for the good of the faithful."

The Holy Father highlighted the need for pastors to maintain "active contact with the various communities dedicated to the apostolate within the parish," adding that such communities must "collaborate among themselves, never must there be any rivalry between them."

Pastors must do all in their power "to ensure that the people entrusted to their care are made aware of the gift (of the Eucharist), and that they participate in it as frequently as possible," both in Mass and communion, and in adoration. In this context, Benedict XVI called on priests to look after children and altar boys and to show special pastoral solicitude "for the girls who actively participate ... in the liturgy. This pastoral service can prove very fruitful in terms of priestly and religious vocations."

Turning to consider the subject of ecclesial movements, the Pope recalled the duty of diocesan bishops to maintain "active contact with them, encouraging them to operate in accordance with a charism recognized by the Church and, at the same time, to guard against closing themselves off from the reality surrounding them." Pointing out that many of these movements have established contacts with non-Catholic Churches, the Pope told the bishops "to take care to interpret ecumenism correctly," and to seek "the truth, not simplistic compromises that can bring Catholic movements to lose their own identity."

The Holy Father stressed that people who occupy important positions in society, or who dedicate themselves to political life, need the Church's help, and that a clear distinction must be made "between the tasks which Christians undertake, individually or as a group, on their own responsibility as citizens guided by the dictates of a Christian conscience, and the activities which, in union with their pastors, they carry out in the name of the Church."

He concluded with a reference to the theme of voluntary work, including care for the poor, the sick, people alone, and the physically and mentally handicapped. "I know that in Poland a form of voluntary work is being developed that has the aim of defending human life. ... All these people await the encouragement and the moral support of bishops, of priests and of the entire community of believers."

"Missions are another field of Church life in which volunteers are active. Ever greater numbers of lay people leave for mission lands to exercise their profession and their talents, and at the same time to

bring a testimony of Christian love to those living in the poorest regions of the world. Theirs is an activity worthy of admiration and recognition.”

(AL/.../POLAND VIS 051219 (570))

CHURCH ONLY SEEKS OPPORTUNITY to CARRY OUT HER MISSION

VATICAN CITY, NOV 18, 2005 (VIS) - The Holy Father affirmed that he had learned that the Church in the Czech Republic is “alive and well, and feels the call to be the leavening in a society that is secularized yet at the same time interested ... in the liberating but challenging message of the Gospel.”

Benedict XVI expressed the view that “the material and spiritual devastation of the earlier regime has left your fellow citizens, now that they have reacquired complete freedom, with a yearning to make up for lost time, pushing ahead without, perhaps, giving sufficient attention to the importance of spiritual values which give fortitude and consistency to civil and material progress.”

Your communities, he went on, “already provide a solid testimony that attracts no small number of people, also from the world of culture. This is a sign of hope for the formation of a mature laity, one that knows how to shoulder its ecclesial responsibilities.

After giving thanks to God because priests and religious are “active and hard-working, disciplined and united,” the Pope added that, although this “is a reason for consolation, it should not lead us to forget other aspects that give rise to understandable concern. In the first place, the lack of priests,” which “rightly induces you to dedicate special attention to vocational pastoral care. Also from this point of view, commitment to the formation of solid Christian families is particularly important for the life of the Church.”

The Holy Father laid emphasis on the importance of the laity’s participation “in parish activities, and their introduction to a rich and healthy liturgical life.” He continued: “The Christian community is a grouping of people with their own rules, a living body that, in Jesus, exists in the world to bear witness to the strength of the Gospel. It is, then, a group of brothers and sisters who have no goals of power or of selfish interest, but who joyfully live the charity of God, which is Love.

“In such a context,” he added, “the State should have no difficulty in recognizing in the Church a counterpart that in no way prejudices its own function

at the service of citizens. Indeed, the Church undertakes her activities in the religious sphere, enabling believers to express their faith, yet without invading the area of competence of the civil authorities. ... As is known, the Church does not seek privileges, but only the opportunity to carry out her mission. When this right is recognized, it is really the whole of society that benefits.”

Benedict XVI concluded by exhorting the Czech prelates to “continue ecumenical dialogue. I know such dialogue is intense, as is the dialogue with all citizens in the cultural field on the fundamental values upon which all civil coexistence is based.”

(AL/.../CZECH REPUBLIC VIS 051118 (510))

MESSAGE to BARTHOLOMEW I for the FEAST of SAINT ANDREW

VATICAN CITY, NOV 30, 2005 (VIS) - In his English-language message, the Pope affirms:

“This year we commemorate the fortieth anniversary of December 8, 1965, that day on which Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras, dissatisfied with what had occurred in 1054, decided together at Rome and Constantinople ‘to cancel from the Church’s memory the sentence of ex-communication which had been pronounced.’ That momentous event became the basis of a renewed relationship marked by reciprocal respect and reconciliation.”

“Indeed, this cancellation marked the beginning of a new season of ecclesial life, a season of dialogue, which has seen significant progress yet remains challenged to continue the rigorous pursuit of its much cherished goals.

“In this regard, it is a source of great satisfaction to me that after a pause of some years our theological dialogue begins once again. I pray that it will indeed be fruitful and am confident that no effort will be spared to make it so. He who puts his hand to the plough must not turn back. Rather, he must persevere and bring his work to completion, sowing the seed and awaiting the abundant harvest that God in His goodness will provide.”

Benedict XVI concludes his message with assurances to the Patriarch Bartholomew, the Holy Synod and all the Orthodox Churches that “the Catholic Church remains irrevocably committed to promoting all suitable and helpful initiatives to strengthen charity, solidarity and theological dialogue between us.”

(DELSS/FEAST ST.
ANDREW/KASPER:BARTHOLOMEW VIS 051130)

HOLY FATHER'S MESSAGE for WORLD DAY of the SICK

VATICAN CITY, DEC 16, 2005 (VIS) - Made public today was Benedict XVI's Message for the 14th World Day of the Sick, which is celebrated every year on February 11, Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. In 2006, the Day will be celebrated in Adelaide, Australia, culminating with a Eucharistic celebration in the Cathedral of Saint Francis Xavier.

In the text of his Message, which is dated December 8, the Pope highlights the fact that on the forthcoming Day of the Sick, the Church will have "particular solicitude for the suffering, recalling the attention of public opinion to problems associated with mental distress, which now strikes a fifth part of mankind and constitutes a true social and health care emergency."

The Holy Father goes on to recall that many countries still lack mental health policies and appropriate legislation. Moreover, "armed conflicts, ... natural catastrophes and the spread of terrorism, as well as causing large numbers of deaths, have given rise to psychological traumas in many survivors."

Speaking about developed countries, the Pope observes in his Message that, according to experts, "the negative influence of the crisis of moral values" lies at the origin of new forms of mental illness. "This increases the feeling of solitude, undermining and even destroying traditional forms of social cohesion, ... and marginalizing the sick, especially the mentally infirm, who are often considered a burden to families and to the community."

After thanking people who, "drawing inspiration from human and evangelical principles," care for the mentally ill, the Holy Father writes: "Unfortunately, in many parts of the world, services for these sick people are lacking or insufficient." And he continues: "The social context does not always accept mentally ill people with their limitations, and for this reason too it is difficult to find the necessary human and financial resources."

"There is a need for greater integration of two factors - appropriate therapy and a new sensitivity to illness - in order to enable those who operate in this sector to meet the needs of these sick people more effectively, as well as the needs of their families who are not able to care for them adequately alone."

Benedict XVI concludes his Message by addressing "those tried by sickness," inviting them to unite themselves to Christ in order to offer their sufferings "to the Father, in the certainty that all trials accepted

with a spirit of resignation are meritorious and attract divine benevolence on all of humanity."

Finally, the Pope exhorts those who care for the sick, especially doctors, nurses, chaplains, pastoral care leaders and volunteer associations, "to support with effective initiatives families who have to look after the mentally ill." He also expresses hopes for an increase "in acceptance and sharing, thanks also to appropriate laws and health care projects that are provided with sufficient resources for their implementation."

(MESS/WORLD DAY OF SICK/...VIS 051216 (490))

BECAUSE THERE IS A GOD

We'll always have another dawn
When morning ends the night.
We'll always know this world of ours
Will somehow turn out right.
A peace will strangely fill our hearts
When weary work is done,
And though the storm is long and rough,
A bright new day will come.

Because there is a God, I'm sure
We'll always have a smile,
And somehow we will find a way
To make each day worthwhile.
A friend will bring us endless joy
And love will live through all.
We'll have a Winter wonderland
Where snowflakes softly fall.
I do not know why days are sad,
Why life must bring a care.
I only know that God above
Is ever watching there.
And sometimes though my heart can't smile
Though dark the road I trod,
I always find my way at last
Because there is a God.

Garnett Ann Schultz

<http://www.antrimfamilynewsletter.com/antrim3.htm>

PILGRIMS of FAITH MARIAN CENTER (PFMC)

The **PFMC** is not a church, store or travel agency but has aspects of all three. The **PFMC** operates as a non-profit, with 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, religious association and ministry whose volunteers are lay persons professing a belief in Jesus Christ,

Our Lord and Savior, as the Only Begotten Son of God the Father, Creator of the Universe.

Most **PFMC** volunteers profess that faith through the apostolic and universal teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Those volunteers who are practicing Roman Catholics profess allegiance to the Magisterium of the Church founded upon the Rock (Kephas / Cephas or Petros depending on original or translation) of Simon bar Jonah and led by his apostolic successor **Pope Benedict XVI**.

The **PFMC** was established in the home of **Keith and Kathleen Werner** based on pilgrimages to **Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina**, and other holy places or shrines worthy of pilgrimage. Books, pamphlets, and religious articles brought back from pilgrimages were placed on display for others to view and acquire for themselves based on donations. Our displays and inventory bins are quite extensive.

The **PFMC** is directed and operated by volunteers who monitor the donations made for all activities. These activities include coordination of pilgrimages to holy places and shrines, retreats in local retreat centers or hotels, and days of recollection at the **PFMC** as well as the displays, library, and inventory management described in this article.

Operating for many years on a cash only basis, the **PFMC** now accepts **DISCOVER/PRIVATE ISSUE (NOVUS), MASTER CARD (CIRRUS) and VISA (PLUS)** for all transactions requiring donations to the **PFMC**. This includes for books and religious articles, pilgrimages, retreats, conferences, seminars, "**The PILGRIM**," or any of the various funds. We ask that those who use credit cards assist us with the costs associated with their use, about 3%.

The **PFMC** is NOT a store and does not sell anything. We strongly support the use of Catholic stores wherever they are convenient to our readers. For books, pamphlets, and religious articles, the **PFMC** operates like a church pamphlet or book rack where selections are made and donations offered based on value posted or received. Most of the other outlets are operating on a for profit basis. Your gifts from the **PFMC** may be a tax break for you.

The **PFMC** has items from inventory on display at **Epiphany House**. The inventory management volunteers, currently **Vince and Livia Nocella**, are always happy to find something for you.

We need volunteers to help us get the entire inventory available for production of order forms. We eventually want to take pictures and load up a shopping cart program so that Internet users can see our Inventory on-line. If you have inventory or computer skills we would love to have your help.

If you wish to order, please determine what you want with as much description as possible. 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. If you have an order form, complete it, make out a check or complete the information for use of a credit card, i.e. card type, number, expiration date, and name on card, sign, and mail everything to the **PFMC** at the address shown on the last page.

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

PRAY for KATHLEEN WERNER

Please pray for **Kathleen**. She had back surgery on **Tuesday, 12/13/05**, to relieve nerve compression in the L3-L4 area. This was an area not worked last **New Year's Eve, 12/31/04**, when **Doctor Deutsch** did an emergency procedure to relieve nerve compression in L4-L5 and L5-S1. **Doctor Simeone** and his team of neuro-surgeons operating at **Pennsylvania Hospital** thought she would be walking normally without pain for the first time since **12/16/04**. She walked on **12/14/05** with pain under control and we praised God and thanked Him for this blessing.

She continued a great recovery until late on **Monday, 12/19/05** when she suffered severe sharp pains in her left leg and groin. These got so bad that we had to rush her to the **Emergency Room** in the early morning hours of **Tuesday, 12/20/05**. They made her comfortable but seem to be baffled as to the cause of this severe pain. After an **MRI** on **Tuesday, 12/20/05**, they still had no answers. They scheduled a **Mylogram** on **Wednesday, 12/21/05**, followed by a **CATSCAN** with the contrast from the **Mylogram** present. These tests showed a small herniation in the disc at L4-L5 which required a repeat entry into that area for correction.

Kathleen went back into surgery about **2 PM** on **Thursday, 12/22/05**, for "snipping" of the herniated area of the L4-L5 disc. While at that area, the team found a small pointed osteo chondral lesion (bone cartilage chip) that was most likely the cause of the

sharp pains. They removed this and felt certain that they had found the cause and relieved the sharp pains suffered since late **Monday, 12/19/05**.

Now **Kathleen** must recover from a second opening of her back with all the pain and suffering related to surgical recovery. She came home after lunch on **Christmas Eve**. We were able to arrange visits with our **New Jersey** relatives and even some of our **PFCM** family from as far away as **New York**.

Please pray for a great recovery with controllable pain so she can return to the ministry of healing others. This is her greatest desire and she offers up all of her pain for those we are working with in ministry.

BULLETIN NOTICES for **PFCM** AREA EVENTS

Would you be so kind as to copy or cut out the following BULLETIN NOTICES and take them to your Pastor or Parish Bulletin Coordinator? Ask them to publish any portion of the notices to support **PFCM** events for which you have an interest.

Please help get the word out on **PFCM** activities, events, and pilgrimages. Ask your pastor to allow information materials to be put out in church. Please do not put material in your church without obtaining permission from the pastor or his representative.

We are trying to network with other ministries in support of bringing people to Jesus either directly, through Mary, or through her spouse, the Holy Spirit.

Thanks in advance for acting on this special request for Bulletin Notice support.

2006 PFCM RETREAT CONFERENCE

17-19 February 2006 at the Clarion Hotel, Cherry Hill, NJ. Father Bill Halbing, Father Edgardo "Bing" Arellano, Father Michael Semana, Al Barbarino, REFUGE. Reserve rooms (\$92 per night) via (856) 428-2300. Register for weekend events (Adults: \$50 Single, \$95 Couple; Youth / Young Adult: \$20). Call (856) 768-9228 for an information packet with reservation / registration forms or print it from: www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2006/06RET2.pdf.

17-30 APRIL 2006 PILGRIMAGE to the HOLY LANDS of ISRAEL and JORDAN

The Double Occupancy Package Price is \$2499 and Single Supplement is \$500. Father John Tino, Saint

Joan of Arc, Jackson Heights, NY is Spiritual Director. Call (856) 768-9228 for an information brochure with registration form or print it from: www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2006/06HLP04.pdf.

9-11 MAY 2006 BRIDE of CHRIST COMMUNITY RETREAT

Father Marty Jones, Pastor of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Middletown, CT will conduct this retreat in the Upper Room at Epiphany House of the PFCM. Lodging is available in nearby hotels. This retreat is open to non-members of the community. Call (856) 768-9228 for an information sheet with registration form or print it from the PFCM web pages at: www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2006/06BCR05.pdf.

Thanks again for anything you can do to post notices in parish bulletins and with local prayer groups.

CONFERENCE CORNER

We need conference or meeting notices no later than the **25th of the month** before the event. The earlier the better so we can make space for it.

March 3 and 4, 2006 - Marian Conference, Saint Domitillas Hanley Hall, Hillside, Illinois. "Moving forward after the year of the Eucharist" Speakers: **Char Vance, Ferdinand Roccanti, Susan Tassone, Colleen Willard** and others to be announced. For more information call: **630-279-8424**.

May 26, 27, 28, 2006 - National Conference on Medjugorje, Joyce Center, Notre Dame, Indiana. Speakers: To be announced. For more information contact: **Frances Sain, Queen of Peace Ministries, P.O. Box 761, Notre Dame, IN 46556** Phone: **574-288-8777**; Fax: **574-288-8795**; e-mail: maryconference@sbcglobal.net. Web site: www.QueenofPeaceMinistries.com.

September 15-17, 2006 - Marian/Eucharistic Conference "Mary, Queen of the Angels." Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, 2233 Ventura St., Fresno CA 93721. Speakers: **Father Stan Fortuna, Father Donald Callaway, Father Andrew Apostoli and Rosalind Moss.** For More Information Contact: Ben or Christy Villas (559) 271-1246, Kathleen Lucas (559) 434-4378, Florisse Raypon (559) 432-8218, Alice Gustin (559) 227-2634, Inez Castro (559) 790-7476 or visit <http://medjugorje.org/medconf.htm>.

CALENDARS:

In *January*, the Church celebrates the Solemnities of *The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God* (1), *Epiphany of the Lord* (8), Feasts of *Baptism of the Lord* (9) and *Conversion of Saint Paul, Apostle* (25), and Memorials of *Saints Basil the Great* (2), *Gregory Nazianzen* (2), *Elizabeth Ann Seton* (4), *John Neumann* (5), *Anthony, Abbot* (17), *Agnes* (21), *Francis de Sales* (24), *Timothy* (26), *Titus* (26), *Thomas Aquinas* (28) and *John Bosco* (31) and Optional Memorials of *Saints Raymond of Penyafort* (7), *Hilary* (13), *Pope Fabian* (20), *Sebastian* (20), *Angela Merici* (27), and *The Most Holy Name of Jesus* (3) as well as *Blessed Andre Bessette* (6). Most Church calendars recognize **Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.** (16). Have a very Joyous New Year!

In *February*, the Church observes Feasts of **Presentation of the Lord** (2), and **Chair of Saint Peter, Apostle** (22), Memorials of *Saints Paul Miki and Companions* (6), *Scholastica* (10), *Cyril* (14) and *Methodius* (14), *Polycarp* (23), Optional Memorials of *Saints Blase* (3), *Ansgar* (3), *Jerome Emiliani* (8), *Josephine Balhita* (8), and *Peter Damian* (21) as well as *Our Lady of Lourdes* (11), and **Seven Founders of the Order of Servites** (17). Most Church calendars show **Presidents' Day** (20) and **Saint Valentine's Day** (14). Don't forget to register for and attend our **RETREAT CONFERENCE, 17-19 February 2006** at Clarion Hotel, Cherry Hill, NJ.

AROUND the *PFMC* AREA

Please review the announcements on *pages 1* through 5, and on *page 23* particularly in **Bulletin Notices** and **Conference Corner**. Thank you for your support in all we try to do for Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior, and His Blessed Virgin Mother, Mary. Visit our web pages for more information.

Please help get the word out on **PFMC** activities, events, and pilgrimages. Pray for us.

Ask your pastor to post bulletin notices and allow information sheets to be put out in church. Please do not put material in your church without obtaining permission from the pastor or his official and authorized representative.

POPE BENEDICT XVI PRAYER INTENTIONS for JANUARY 2006

Pope Benedict's general prayer intention for the month of *January* is: **"Unity of Christians.** That the effort to bring about the full communion of Christians may foster reconciliation and peace among all the peoples of the earth."

His mission intention is: **"Migrants.** That Christians may know how to welcome migrants with respect and charity, seeing in each person the image of God."

<http://www.apostlesofprayer.org/Catalog.htm>

Page 24

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

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

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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 recipient 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 generous donations of those who can afford to support us. **PRIESTS!** Please note that **HOMILY** ideas have come from priests reading articles in **"The *PILGRIM*!"**

