



The PILGRIM

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February 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

O Jesus, have mercy upon us. The world lies in such confusion, such darkness of sin and Satans' decit. Your children suffer in the torments of sorrow and illness. Temptation wages war in hearts and souls. Decisions are made in the world of materilasim and the flesh.



Strengthen us with Your Eucharistic presence. Show us how to overcome the effects of sinful decisions. In accepting responsibility for ones actions, bring out the strengths of our life. Instil in each of us the virtues to bring us closer to Your most Sacred Heart. Teach us to imitate You, and see You in others.

Grant each life peace and joy, sincerity, kindness, and a gentle spirit. You are always with us, guiding us, and speaking to our hearts. Let each of our actions reflect your caring touch.

AMEN

COMBINED MARCH-APRIL ISSUE of "The PILGRIM"

For a variety of reasons, the **March** issue of "The **PILGRIM**" will be combined with the **April** edition published early **April 2006**.

LAST CHANCE to PRE-REGISTER for 2006 RETREAT CONFERENCE

There is plenty of room for you, your family, and friends but please give us the opportunity to serve

you through an advance registration. The last chance to pre-register at the **PFMC** is **NOON** on **Thursday, 2/16/06**. Walk-in registrations are welcome starting about **4:30 PM** on **Friday, 2/17/06**.

See article on page 3 and review the **green** information packet enclosed. Fill out the adult and / or youth registration form(s) and send it(them) to us with your registration donation as soon as possible.

You may register by FAX to **(856) 768-9428** using a credit card for the registration donation.

Please tell your friends, relatives, fellow workers, parishioners, etc. about this excellent opportunity to step aside from the busy world and receive some excellent teachings on subject important to our faith walk with Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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

An opportunity of a lifetime is coming up soon, and we ask you to join us on this pilgrimage to the **Holy Lands of Israel, Jordan, (and Egypt)**. Parents would find it a perfect gift, anniversary, birthday, Confirmation, etc., for husband, wife, daughter, son, family, parents, or even yourself.

After 5 years of waiting to put this pilgrimage together, we have now been informed that numerous successful pilgrimages have now 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

"**The PILGRIM**" for **February 2006** is dedicated to "**Our Lady of the Flight into Egypt**." See page 3 for "**IN THIS ISSUE . . .**" or Table of Contents.

The **January MESSAGE**, from **GOSPA, Our Lady, Queen of Peace**, to an alleged visionary from **Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina**, is presented beginning on page 16 (centerfold page) with **REFLECTIONs** and **PRESS BULLETIN**.

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 full payment donation.

Please sign up now to join **Father Tino, Keith and Kathleen** and currently more than 25 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**. If you saw the **Public Broadcasting System (PBS)** "Walking through the Bible" you saw the **Sinai Desert** and, in part 3 of 3, received a very detailed view of the inside of the **Monastery of Saint Catherine**.

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 full payment donation.

Please, look over the planned itinerary in the blue colored information packet enclosed, and do send in your full payment donation NOW. We now need full payment donations to pay for your name on an airline seat and to reserve rooms in the hotels.

If you have any questions, please call the **PFMC** using, **(856) 768-9228** or **(800) 788-6279[MARY]**.

Upon receipt of your registration form and 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.

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

See Conference Corner on page 31 as well as Bulletin Notices on pages 30 and 31. 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 articles on pages 1, 3 and 4.

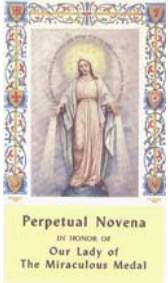
April 2006

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 page 5.

PERPETUAL MIRACULOUS MEDAL NOVENA



Beginning the *first Monday* of *February 2006* the full and traditional **Miraculous Medal Novena Devotions** will be celebrated each week at **Mary, Mother of the Church Parish Worship Center, 20 Braisington Avenue, Bellmawr, NJ 08031-1204**. This will include the **Holy Rosary, Opening Hymn, Novena Prayers, Reading of Favors Received, Sermon, Hymns, Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament with Latin Hymns, Closing Hymn and Individual Blessing** with the first class relic of *Saint Catherine Laboure*. **Rosary: 7:05 PM, Novena: 7:30 PM**. **Father Hartman** is looking forward to this wonderful evening each *Monday* in his new parish and prays that **Our Lady and Her Divine Son** will continue to bless you and your families.

(beemom531@comcast.net for Father Glenn Hartman)

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 we may cease having these events.

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

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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:

Jim Shelly, January 2006

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 SILENCE of SAINT JOSEPH in a WORLD FULL of NOISE

VATICAN CITY, DEC 18, 2005 (VIS) - At midday today, in remarks to the faithful prior to praying the Angelus, Benedict XVI considered the figure of Saint Joseph. Addressing thousands of pilgrims gathered in Saint Peter’s Square, the Pope recalled how the evangelist Matthew presents the saint as the model “of the ‘just’ man who, in perfect harmony with his wife, welcomes the Son of God-made-man, and watches over His human development.”

He added: “For this reason, in the days prior to Christmas, it is more important than ever to establish a kind of spiritual dialogue with Saint Joseph, because he helps us to experience fully this great mystery of the faith.”

John Paul II was greatly devoted to Saint Joseph, said the Holy Father, and left us a meditation dedicated to him in the Apostolic Exhortation “Redemptoris Custos” (Guardian of the Redeemer), in which the late Pope “particularly stressed the silence of Saint Joseph; a silence permeated by contemplation of the mystery of God, in an attitude of complete openness to the divine will. In other words, Saint Joseph’s silence was not an expression of interior emptiness, but on the contrary, of the fullness of faith that he carried in his heart, and that guided his every thought and deed.

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CAMDEN DIOCESE LIAISON: Father E. Joseph Byerley

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE: Father John Tino, Father Ronan

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.

“A silence through which Joseph, together with Mary, safeguarded the Word of God ... and continually compared it with the events of Jesus’ life; a silence interwoven with constant prayer ... and with unreserved trust in Divine providence. It is no exaggeration to say that from His ‘father’ Joseph, Jesus learnt - at a human level - the vigorous interior life that is a premise of true justice, the ‘superior justice’ that one day He would teach His disciples.”

Benedict XVI concluded: “Let us allow ourselves to be ‘infected’ by Saint Joseph’s silence! We need it greatly, in a world that is often too noisy, that does not favor meditation or listening to the voice of God. During this period of preparation for Christmas, let us cultivate interior meditation, in order to welcome and safeguard Jesus in our lives.”

(ANG/ST. JOSEPH/...VIS 051219 (360))

THIRTY DAYS PRAYER to SAINT JOSEPH

(Note: This prayer, taken from a leaflet provided by the Josephites, and may be said during any 30 days of the year.)

Ever blessed and glorious Joseph, kind and loving father, and helpful friend of all in sorrow! You are the good father and protector of orphans, the defender of the defenseless, the patron of those in need and sorrow.

Listen, then, I beg you, with fatherly concern, to my earnest prayers, and obtain for me the favors I ask.

I ask it by the infinite mercy of the eternal Son of God, which moved Him to take our nature and to be born into this world of sorrow.

I ask it by the weariness and suffering you endured when you found no shelter at the inn of Bethlehem for the Holy Virgin, nor a house where the Son of God could be born. Then, being everywhere refused, you had to allow the Queen of Heaven to give birth to the world’s Redeemer in a cave.

I ask it by the loveliness and power of that sacred Name, Jesus, which you conferred on the adorable Infant.

I ask it by the painful torture you felt at the prophecy of holy Simeon, which declared the Child Jesus and His holy Mother future victims of our sins and of their great love for us.

I ask it through your sorrow and pain of soul when the angel declared to you that the life of the Child Jesus was sought by His enemies. From their evil plan, you had to flee with Him and His Blessed Mother to

Egypt. I ask it by all the suffering, weariness, and labors of that long and dangerous journey.

I ask it by all your care to protect the Sacred Child and His Immaculate Mother during your second journey, when you were ordered to return to your own country. I ask it by your peaceful life in Nazareth where you met with so many joys and sorrows.

I ask it by your great distress when the adorable Child was lost to you and His mother for three days. I ask it by your joy at finding Him in the temple, and by the comfort you found at Nazareth, while living in the company of the Child Jesus. I ask it by the wonderful submission He showed in His obedience to you.

I ask it by the perfect love and conformity you showed in accepting the Divine order to depart from this life, and from the company of Jesus and Mary. I ask it by the joy which filled your soul, when the Redeemer of the world, triumphant over death and hell, entered into the possession of His kingdom and led you into it with special honors.

I ask it through Mary’s glorious Assumption, and through that endless happiness you have with her in the presence of God.

O good father! I beg you, by all your sufferings, sorrows, and joys, to hear me and obtain for me what I ask. (Here name your petitions or think of them.)



Obtain for all those who have asked my prayers everything that is useful to them in the plan of God. Finally, my dear patron and father, be with me and all who are dear to me in our last moments, that we may eternally sing the praises of:

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

**“A blameless life, Saint Joseph, may we
lead, by your kind patronage from
danger freed.”**

http://www.stjosephsite.com/SJS_Thirtydays.htm

PRAYING with the HEART

Dear Friends, I would like to share a story by **Father Jozo Zovko** which I first posted to the prayer group back in **June 1999** when we were a much smaller group. The following story takes place during the early days of the apparitions in **Medjugorje** and tells how the village of **Medjugorje** was able to pray with the heart by forgiving each other:

In the first days of the apparitions, we really competed with each other, seeing who could pray more rosaries each day. That was unhealthy

competition. Although Our Lady was exhorting us to pray not that way, but with our hearts, we did not understand what it meant to pray with the heart. That night she said to us, "This evening, before you start praying, you should all forgive one another." We thought, "That's something simple, we do that in every Holy Mass!" But by no means was it easy; it was quite an effort. It meant that everyone who had built up hostilities within his heart had to give them to God immediately with love and joy. I explained what Our Lady's request meant and asked all the faithful if they understood. Everyone said yes, but no one did anything. We felt as if we were in a desert, and we were even a little afraid. Moreover, Our Lady would not allow us to pray until we had personally reconciled with each other - until we had forgiven each other from our hearts. A silence came over us; it seemed to last forever. We suffered a desert-like anguish, and it grew later and later.

Everyone felt very depressed. A fight was raging within us. Finally I suggested, "Let's pray the rosary, that we may become able to forgive." So we began praying what we call "the Psalter," all three groups of the mysteries of the rosary. After about half an hour, a voice announced in the church, "Lord, I have forgiven. Please forgive me!" Everyone began crying and sobbing loudly. This prayer touched our hearts, and floodgates of tears were opened. We all had the desire to say, "We have forgiven. Please forgive us, too!" And everyone looked for a hand, any hand, to hold. With relieved hearts, we continued our prayer. After the prayer there was a true celebration of reconciliation throughout the whole village.

The morning that followed will go down in the history of Medjugorje. Overnight the people had torn down all the walls in their hearts, walls which had been separating them from one another. The next morning, everywhere in the village, people went to houses in which they had never set foot before because of one incident or another; many had even stopped greeting one another. Farmers can be petty, too. Hate and estrangement often had developed. But now, in their neighbor, they recognized their brother. In their neighbor they recognized Jesus. It occurred to them sadly why, for such a long time before, they had been unable to have such joy and beauty. And so I no longer have to ask anymore, "Do you want to forgive? Do you believe in God the Father?" We now carry out our baptismal promises day by day, everyone making an effort, even if only mentally: "I reject Satan... I believe in God..."

It was then that people saw the Croatian word "MIR", meaning "PEACE", in capital letters in the sky. I, too, witnessed this event. The letters moved as if

animated, streaming towards us like a car's headlights. It felt like we were experiencing the end of the world. I cannot imagine anyone ever forgetting such a thing - not the letters, but the interior experience, I mean. It is engraved within our hearts, into our lives, and into our entire being, the meaning of "Medjugorje" - engraved within the new man, within children of God who love and forgive.

JANUARY 25, 1996 Dear Children! Today I invite you to decide for peace. Pray that God give you the true peace. Live peace in your hearts and you will understand, dear children, that peace is the gift of God. Dear children, without love you cannot live peace. The fruit of peace is love and the fruit of love is forgiveness. I am with you and I invite all of you, little children, that before all else forgive in the family and then you will be able to forgive others. Thank you for having responded to my call.

(Father Jozo Zovko "PRAYING WITH THE HEART"
from: mikesezal@webtv.net 1/15/06)

ABANDONING ONESELF to GOD DOES NOT MEAN LOSS of FREEDOM

VATICAN CITY, DEC 8, 2005 (VIS) - At the start of his homily, the Pope recalled how Blessed John XXIII inaugurated the Council on October 11, 1962, which at the time was the Feast of the Divine Maternity of Mary, and how Paul VI closed in on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1965.

The moment in which Paul VI proclaimed Mary as the Mother of the Church "remains etched in my memory" said Pope Benedict. "The Council Fathers rose spontaneously from their chairs and applauded, paying homage to the Mother of God, to our Mother, to the Mother of the Church."

The Holy Father affirmed that Mary "not only has a special relationship with Christ, the Son of God Who, as man, chose to become her Son; but being totally united to Christ, she also belongs completely to us."

With reference to the designation "Immaculate," Benedict XVI pointed out how "today's liturgy clarifies the meaning of this word using two great images:" the announcement to Mary of the coming of the Messiah, and the struggle between man and the serpent, in other words, "between man and the powers of evil and death. It is, however, foretold that the

‘descendant’ of woman will one day triumph crushing the serpent’s head, underfoot.”

It emerges however that “man does not trust God,” the Pope continued. “He harbors the suspicion that, in the end, God takes something from his life; that God is a competitor limiting our freedom, and that we will only be fully human when we have definitively put Him aside; that only in this way can we fully realize our freedom.”

Man, he went on, “wants to draw from the tree of knowledge the power to create the world, to make himself a god at the same level as Him, and to triumph over darkness and death. He does not want to rely on love, which he sees as undependable, and so he relies solely on his own knowledge as giving him power. Rather than on love, he counts on power with which he seeks to control his own life autonomously,” but in doing so “he trusts lies more than truth.”

After highlighting the fact that love “is not dependency, but a gift that allows us to live,” the Pope said: “Only if we live with one another and for one another can freedom develop. ... If we live contrary to love and contrary to truth - contrary to God - we destroy one another and we destroy the world.”

Benedict XVI pointed out that “within each of us is a drop of poison,” which we call original sin. “It is precisely on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception that the suspicion arises in us that a person who does not sin at all is, in the end, a little boring, that something is lacking in his or her life: the dramatic dimension of being autonomous.”

Yet, he went on, “evil always poisons, it does not raise man but lowers and humiliates him, it does not make him greater, purer and richer, but damages him and makes him smaller. This, rather, is what we should learn on the day of the Immaculate Conception: that the man who abandons himself completely in the hands of God, does not become a puppet of God, ... he does not lose his freedom,” but finds it.

“The closer man is to God, the closer he is to rest of mankind,” said the Holy Father. “We see this in Mary. The fact that she is completely with God is the reason she is also so close to human beings. It is for this reason that she is able to be the mother of all consolation and all help.”

The Virgin, he concluded, addresses us all saying “do not be afraid of Him! ... Commit yourself to God, and you will see that precisely because of this your life will become more extensive and illuminated, not boring, but full of infinite surprises, because God’s infinite goodness never runs dry!”

PRAYER HELPS in FORGIVENESS and CONVERSION

Dear Friends, I would like to share three true stories which are examples of how through prayer we are given the ability to more easily forgive, even that which seems almost humanly impossible. I shared these stories before, but since we have so many new members in our prayer group, I thought I would post them again.

These stories are told by **Father Petar Ljubicic**, who is the **Franciscan** priest chosen by the **Medjugorje** visionary **Mirjana** to reveal the ten secrets to the world. I have numbered the stories to make them easier to follow. They are from **Father Petar’s** book titled, “**The Call of the Queen of Peace.**”

1. One young **Medjugorje** pilgrim tells a story of how many difficult problems she had at her work place. She was working as a medical nurse. Many of her co-workers did not like her because she was a true believer. They were envious of her because she was so conscientious. They tried to provoke her, and some even hated her... She complained about it to God in prayer and was seeking an answer. She tried to resolve this through her own power the way she imagined it should be done. She said she had a temptation to return with the same measure and to hate them back. All this brought much unrest into her heart... She could no longer sleep in peace. “I can’t go on like this any more,” she said to herself, “this will not get me anywhere.” She found enough sense and took the Holy Scripture and began to read... She opened her heart to God, she surrendered her life to Him. She also handed to Him all of those with whom she worked. “You, God, know my hardships. I am helpless. You are the Almighty. I beg You to resolve my problem.” She confessed, “I had a feeling that God was waiting for me to say this. A peace and an indescribable joy encompassed my heart. I had a powerful feeling that first of all, I had to forgive those people. I had to get to like them and pray for them and to give thanks to God for them... All of a sudden, everything changed around me. I went to confession and revealed all this to the priest. I even received some useful advice. From that moment on, there were no more enemies for me, nor were there people who hated me.” So, the solution is here: Prayer changes enemies into friends! At her work place, the situation changed completely. Everyone recognized in her a special power that comes from faith. Here, then, is a solution for those hard and heavy life situations...

2. A few years ago, something unusual happened in France. A woman was killed in her apartment while her husband and her children attended Mass in a nearby church. How awful it must have been for her husband when he saw her dead body upon returning from church. He gathered enough strength to say, "God you know everything - why this had to happen. If this is Your will, help me to bear with this as a Christian. Give me strength to forgive the murderer and to pray for his conversion...!"

A few days after the crime, the police were able to track down the murderer and to apprehend him. The reporters hurriedly came to interview the husband. But they were all surprised when he said to them: "Please proclaim that I have forgiven the murderer and that I am praying for his conversion." In the headlines on the front page, the newspaper printed the unusual wish of this religious man. Encouraged by the article, many Christians prayed that God would have mercy on the murderer. God heard and answered the desires and prayers of the many people and softened the heart of the hardened criminal. He recognized his sin, confessed it and humbly made a contrition for all of his sins. He then recognized Jesus as Savior. The prison priest confirmed the conversion of this criminal - with a happy heart.

What to say to all of this? It would be better to leave this without comment. But let us allow only this much: Did this murderer deserve such mercy from God? Some might say that it would have been better for God to spare the life of an innocent woman rather than give mercy to this criminal. If we think in this way, then we should also understand that we, too, are guilty... the Holy Scripture is telling us that all people have sinned and have lost the grace of God... this example is helping us to look up to this great man who looked up to the Savior, Jesus Christ; He prayed for His enemies on the cross: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!" The love of God is expressed in that He sent His only Son to death for unworthy and lost sinners.

3. One young man tells us how once he received a letter from a woman who showered him with insults, humiliations and blasphemies. She called him all kind of names. The letter was full of offenses. He said how in the beginning he read the letter fast, and then he read it again slowly. "At the end, I was so bitter," he exclaimed, "that I told my friend 'I will write her a letter back, and I will tell her what she deserves!' My friend told me: 'I advise you first to pray.' Pray now when I am so angry? Can this be done? Yes, it can, and it must!"

What kind of letter would it had been if I had written it in anger, when I was full of bitterness? As soon as I

came to my room, I threw myself to my knees. I could not pray right away. When I was able to quiet down, I prayed first of all for myself, because I had allowed myself to be provoked. Then I prayed for the woman that God forgive her for all those insults, and then again, I prayed for myself, because something must have moved this woman to write in this way. What this "something" was, I never found out, but I prayed to God to forgive me for this. Only then was I able to answer this letter. I wrote a peaceful letter and also sent a small package. Soon another letter came from the same woman. I opened it up with anticipation. It was short but clear. She asked for forgiveness and to forget the first letter. She said: "I know that you have forgiven me, otherwise you would not have sent me that gift after all those insults."

If I had sent the letter back immediately, in the state of mind I was, it would have been like pouring oil on the fire and Satan would have been happy about it. This way, thank God, all ended well.

(Father Petar Ljubicic "The Call of the Queen of Peace." from: mikesepal@webtv.net 1/15/06)

CHRIST GIVES US FULLNESS of LIFE

VATICAN CITY, JAN 15, 2006 (VIS) - In reflections before praying the Angelus with thousands of pilgrims gathered in Saint Peter's Square, Benedict XVI recalled the beginning of the liturgical year, which "invites us to live our ordinary lives as a path to holiness, that is to say, of faith and of friendship with Jesus, ... Teacher and Lord, the Way, the Truth and the Life of the human person."

The Pope referred to the Gospel of Saint John that recounts the first encounter of Jesus with those who were to become His apostles. Two of the disciples of Saint John the Baptist, according to the Gospel text, followed Christ after His Baptism. Jesus asked them: "What do you seek?" and invited them to accompany Him. One of them, Andrew, later explained to Simon that they had found the Messiah.

"Here are two words of particular significance," observed the Pope, "'to seek' and 'to find.' These two verbs contain a fundamental indication for the new year, in which we seek to renew our spiritual journey with Jesus, with the joy of constantly seeking Him and finding Him."

"The most authentic joy is in the relationship with Him: found, followed, known and loved, thanks to a continual exertion of the mind and heart. ... Friendship with the Teacher assures the soul profound

peace and serenity in dark moments and during the most difficult trials. When faith encounters dark nights in which the presence of God is no longer 'felt' or 'seen,' the friendship of Jesus is a guarantee that in reality nothing can ever separate us from His love. To seek and to find Christ, the inexhaustible source of truth and life: the Word of God invites us to begin again, at the start of a new year, this never-ending journey of faith."

"For the believer," concluded the Holy Father "this means incessant searching and new discovery, for Christ is the same yesterday, today and always, but we, the world and history are never the same, and He comes toward us to give us His communion and fullness of life."

ANG/LITURGICAL YEAR/... VIS 060116 (360)

CHRIST in the EUCHARIST - PRESENCE and REALITY

A Talk given by Father John Hardon, S.J. prior to his death on 12/30/2000

I would like to address myself to another aspect of the priesthood, namely, the priest's faith in the Eucharist, directing our attention to the specific aspect of the subject by reflecting prayerfully on "Christ in the Eucharist-Presence and Reality". It is perhaps remarkable that we should consider what must seem like a strange title, because most Catholics, including priests, are not accustomed to separate the two words "presence" and "reality" when they speak of the Blessed Sacrament.

We commonly and correctly say that we believe in the Real Presence and seldom give the matter a second thought. But today is not even yesterday, and it is certainly not 1965 when Pope Paul VI published his now historical encyclical "Mysterium Fidei" on the Real Presence. The Pope reminded the people and especially priests that there is a crisis of faith regarding the Eucharist, and that Catholics had better awaken to the fact; otherwise they are likely to be swept off their feet by subtle theology, and their faith, including the faith of priests, in the Eucharist will be weakened if not destroyed by the current assaults on this cardinal mystery of our faith.

Somewhere near the center of the theological controversy about which the Pope warned us is precisely the question that no Catholic should raise, namely, "Is the Holy Eucharist presence or reality? Or is it, as the Church teaches, presence and reality?"



There is more at stake here than meets the eye-I mean the eye of the mind.

My purpose will be to defend the following statement: The Holy Eucharist is Jesus Christ, who is in the Blessed Sacrament both as reality and presence. He is in the Eucharist as reality because the Eucharist is Jesus. He is in the Eucharist as presence because through the Eucharist He affects us and we are in contact with Him-always depending on our faith and devotion to the Savior living really in our midst.

The Eucharist as Reality - The First Crisis of Eucharistic Faith

The Eucharist as reality. There have been, before modern times, two major crises of faith in the Real Presence in Catholic history. The first crisis occurred in the early middle ages when theological speculators (it's always theological speculators) mainly in France, raised doubt about the reality of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. This first crisis reached a peak in the person of Berengarius of Tours, who died in 1088.

Berengarius denied the possibility of substantial change in the elements of bread and wine, refusing to admit that the body of Christ exists corporeally on the altar. His argument was that Christ could not be brought down from Heaven before the Last Judgment. He held that Christ's body, existing as he said "only in Heaven", is effective for humanity through its sacramental counterpart or type and that Christ, therefore, is not really in the Eucharist except 'ideally or symbolically'.

Pope Gregory VII ordered Berengarius to subscribe to a profession of faith that has become the cornerstone of Catholic Eucharistic piety. I recommend memorizing this profession of faith. It was the Church's first definitive statement of what had always been believed, but not always clearly understood. It is a declaration of faith in the Eucharist as unquestionable, objective and unqualified reality.

I believe in my heart and openly profess that the bread and wine placed upon the altar are, by the mystery of the sacred prayer and the words of the Redeemer, substantially changed into the true and life-giving flesh and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, and that after the consecration, there is present the true body of Christ which was born of the Virgin and, offered up for the salvation of the world, hung on the cross and now sits at the right hand of the Father, and that there is present the true blood of Christ which flowed from His side. They are present not only by means of a sign and of the efficacy of the sacrament, but also in the very reality and truth of their nature and substance.

Words could not be clearer. If reality means actuality, and if actuality means objectivity, then the Catholic Faith believes that the Christ who is in the Eucharist is the Christ of history: the one who was conceived at Nazareth, born at Bethlehem, died, and rose from the dead at Jerusalem, and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. The Eucharist is the same Christ who will call us when we pass out of time into eternity. It is the Christ who will appear at the end of the world to judge the living and the dead; it is the Christ who is the Omega of the universe and the goal of human destiny. That was the first crisis.

The Eucharist as Reality - The Second Crisis of Eucharistic Faith

Five centuries after Berengarius, the second great crisis of faith in the Eucharist arose, at the time of the Protestant Reformation. Again, many of the same objections were raised and theories disseminated as in the Berengarius controversy a half millennium before. Once again the Church countered, this time through the Council of Trent, to revindicate the reality of Christ who is in the Blessed Sacrament.

The Tridentine profession of faith is not unlike that Pope Gregory VII required of Berengarius. "The Holy Council teaches," declared Trent, "and openly and straightforwardly professes that in the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is truly, really and substantially contained under the perceptible species of bread and wine."

But then Trent added, with characteristic vigor, that this is the plain meaning of Christ's words when at the Last Supper He said, "This is my body; this is the chalice of my blood." Consequently, the faithful were told, "It is an infamy that contentious evil men should distort these words into fanciful imaginary, figures of speech that deny the truth about the Body and Blood of Christ contrary to the universal understanding of the Church."

The reality of Christ in the Eucharist is no figure of speech; it is no fanciful rhetoric. It is, in the clearest words that can be expressed, it is Jesus Christ. It is the Incarnation extended into space and time, literally the Emmanuel made flesh, the God-man who is, we assert, here and now living in our midst. Therefore, it is not that Christ lived only then, 1900 years ago, and there, in Palestine-He is here now.

The Eucharist as Reality - The Crisis of Eucharistic Faith in Modern Times

Four centuries after the Council of Trent, the Church is now in another crisis of Eucharistic faith, and we

had better realize it. This is the real crisis in the Catholic priesthood today; all others are secondary to this one, as I well know; this is my twenty-fifth year of teaching priests.

Palpable evidence of such a crisis is seen in the practical disappearance in so many dioceses of the Forty Hours Devotion and the corresponding disappearance of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. How often I have planned for Benediction but could find no monstrance! It is seen in the complete revision of Constitutions of once flourishing contemplative religious institutes that had specialized in worship of the Blessed Sacrament on their altars. It is seen in widespread neglect of showing any of the customary signs of reverence to Christ's Real Presence in the tabernacle and in the removal of the tabernacle in churches to some obscure and unobtrusive place where the Real Presence is isolated from even possible devotion by the faithful.

There is the mounting literature in still nominally Catholic circles that seldom touches on the Real Presence, or that explains it in a way congenial to those who do not believe in Christ's corporeal presence in the Eucharist. This is totally incompatible with the historic faith of Catholicism. There is the dissemination of religious education textbooks, teachers' manuals and study guides that may make an apologetic mention of this physical presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, but that leave the distinct impression that this presence is peripheral to Catholic faith and practice and is certainly not the fundamental mystery of the Church founded by Christ.

Though seldom averted to, part of this same crisis about the Real Presence is the contemporary desacramentalization of the Catholic priesthood. Priests are said to be essentially preachers of the

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Word or ministers of the Gospel, organizers of Christian communities or social leaders, spokesmen for the poor or defenders of the oppressed or political catalysts, academic scholars or theological appraisers of the faith of believers. So they are, depending on their talents and the circumstances in which they find themselves. But is that all? And is that the primary purpose of the Catholic priesthood? No.

The primary meaning of the priesthood is its relationship to the Eucharist as reality, as sacrament, and as sacrifice; and among these three primarily as reality, because obviously, unless Christ is really there, we cannot speak about the Blessed Sacrament or the sacrifice of the Mass. It is to make Christ present on earth, really, that Christ instituted His priesthood.

Once again, as in previous ages, the Church's magisterium has reaffirmed the real existence of Christ on earth in the Eucharist, but in accents and nuances that were not called for in previous times. Pope Paul VI, in "Mysterium Fidei" was concerned about those who in spoken and written word "spread abroad opinions that disturb the faithful and fill their minds with no little confusion about matters of faith."

Among these opinions was and is the theory that so redefines the meaning of Christ's real existence in the Eucharist as to obscure, if not deny, the reality. Mark this sentence, because it is the transition of part one to part two of our conference: it is as though someone said, "I believe in the Eucharist as presence but not as reality, or as reality that is only presence and not objective actuality." So far then about the Eucharist as reality.

The Eucharist as Presence

Now about the Eucharist as presence. The moment we hear the word "presence" we naturally tend to think of a personal relationship between two or more people. We are present to someone, or someone is present to us, when we are aware of them or they of us; when we have them on our minds and in our hearts, or they think of us and sense a kinship and affection for us. We are not exactly present to stones or trees, nor they to us, no matter how real they may be. Presence always implies rational beings. Something happens between people to make them present to one another.

Presence as such also transcends space and time. Saint Paul or Saint Augustine may be present to us, although they are long since dead and although they are not physically where we are physically. They can be present to us mentally or volitionally or spiritually. She can be in New York and he in San Francisco. Yet as soon and as often as he thinks of her with love, she is present to him. Whenever she does the same, he is

present to her, reaching over the distance of miles and irrespective of the fact that neither is where the other is in body. No matter, they are with each other in spirit. That is what spirit is all about: it is independent of space.

Presence, therefore, does not deny physical reality, because two people can be both near to each other in body and intimately united in spirit. But, neither does presence require nearness in body. It rather stresses intimacy of mind and heart. Herein rests both the dignity and the danger of some current theories about the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, some that have infected the lives of not a few priests.

There are those who laudably emphasize the subjective aspect of Christ's presence, but at the expense of the objective reality. Let me not be misunderstood. There is great need, even crucial need, to talk about and act upon the awareness of Christ in the Eucharist, and to raise our sentiments of love towards Him; but this cannot be at the expense of ignoring the prior fact that Christ is actually in the Eucharist, that in the words of the Church's solemn teaching, "He is contained under the perceptible species of bread and wine." What was bread and wine, after the words of consecration are no longer bread and wine but the living, physical, bodily presence-in a word, the real Jesus Christ. To believe in the Real Presence means to believe in the real absence of bread and wine after the consecration.

We might say, then, that the Eucharistic Presence of Christ is at once a reality and a relationship. It is a reality because Christ really is in the Eucharist, so that the Real Presence of Christ postulates on faith the real absence of bread and wine. He is now, where before the consecration were bread and wine; they are gone and He is here. What before was real bread and wine is only to external properties of bread and wine. He is here in the Eucharist truly present; they are no longer present but only their species or their appearance. Transubstantiation is a fact of faith. All the twisted but learned criticism of the Church's doctrine as being Hellenistic or Aristotelian is learned stupidity, which is the most dangerous.

For the soul that believes, transubstantiation is no Hellenistic or philosophical terminology; it is the expression of the truth. If we must use Greek, we can; the Greek tells us that the words of Institution institute a "metasubstansio", meaning that the "ousia" or the being, the "whatness" of bread and wine become the "ousia" or the being of what constitutes Jesus Christ-body, blood, soul and divinity. In a word, in the Eucharist there is present the "totus Christus" (the whole Christ) just as truly as He was present on earth in Palestine and as He is now in Heaven. It is the total

Christ in the fullness of what makes Christ Christ, with no real difference between who He was in the first century on earth and who He is now in the twentieth century on earth. Jesus Christ is in Jemez Springs as He is also everywhere where a duly ordained priest has changed bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Savior.

How this needs resaying in today's Catholic world. But we are not yet finished. As so often happens, error arises among men because they have been neglecting the truth. The hydra of Communism is partly God's visitation for the neglect by Christians of their practice of community love. So too with the Eucharist. Too many Catholics, including priests, have taken the Real Presence for granted. They complacently assume that Christ is in the Eucharist, and they proceed to leave Him there, in empty churches and empty chapels, with seldom a worshipper before the tabernacle and seldom a eucharistic thought among millions of believers, who would be offended if they were told that they ignored the greatest reality in the universe right in their midst.

What we need today in the present crisis regarding the Eucharist is another Saint Francis of Assisi, who was raised by God to remind the world of his day of what a priest is, and what his words of consecration produce in this valley of tears. The lack of such faith is the main reason for the most massive defection of men from the active priesthood in the last five hundred years. Francis was never himself ordained to the priesthood: strange as it sounds, he never considered himself worthy. But he had an extraordinary reverence for priests; because he saw them as the divinely enabled consecrators of the Holy Eucharist.

In his last will and testament Saint Francis wrote what we in our sophisticated age of agnosticism need to hear. "God inspires me," he said, "with such great faith in priests who live according to the laws of the holy Church of Rome, because of their dignity, that even if they persecuted me I should still be ready to listen to them. I do this because in this world I cannot see the Most High Son of God with my own eyes except for His most holy Body and Blood which priests alone administer to others."

Saint Francis concluded on a superlative tone which was not customary with him. "Above everything else, I want this most holy Sacrament to be honored, venerated and reserved in places which are richly ornamented." This is the simple poor man whose name have become synonymous with total poverty, even to destitution, in imitation of his poor Master. But it is also the mystic who saw more clearly than most of his contemporaries who it is that dwells

among us in the Blessed Sacrament. It is, in Francis' words, "the Most High Son of God" in human form, who is always here in reality; but He is not always present to us in spirit. We do not always honor and venerate Him reserved in the Eucharist in places which are richly ornamented, not so much in silver and gold as in acts of faith, hope, and love. That is why He is here, that we might also be where He is, united with Him in spirit as He has united Himself to us in body as a prelude to that union where the Eucharist will be unveiled and where vision will replace what our faith now tells us is true. Truth became incarnate to teach us how much God loves the sons and daughters of the human family.

(Father John A. Hardon, S.J. Mirifica Conference transcription from a retreat given to the Handmaids of the Precious Blood Mother of Sorrows Recordings, Inc. Handmaids of the Precious Blood Cor Jesu Monastery P.O. Box 90 Jemez Springs, NM 87025)

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HUMAN MATURITY AND ADHERENCE TO CHURCH'S MAGISTERIUM

VATICAN CITY, JAN 20, 2006 (VIS) - The Holy Father today received the rector and students of the diocesan seminary of Rome, the "Almo Collegio Capranica," on the eve of the feast day of their patroness, St Agnes. The "Almo Collegio" forms students to the priesthood for Rome, other Italian dioceses and the rest of the world.

The Pope called on the seminarians to use their

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formative years to take advantage “of every opportunity to bear effective witness to the Gospel among the men and women of our time.”

He continued: “In order to respond to the expectations of modern society, and to cooperate in the immense evangelical activity that involves all Christians, there is need for well-trained and courageous priests who, without ambition or fear but convinced of gospel truth, make the announcement of Christ their first concern and, in His name, are ready to reach out to human suffering, bringing the comfort of God’s love and the warmth of the ecclesial family to everyone, especially the poor and those undergoing difficulties.”

The Holy Father then highlighted how this requires, “together with human maturity and close adherence to revealed truth, which the Magisterium of the Church faithfully reflects, a serious commitment to personal sanctity and the exercise of virtue, especially humility and charity. It is also necessary to nurture communion with the various elements of the People of God, so that everyone may have a growing awareness of belonging to the one Body of Christ.”

“That all this may happen, I invite you to keep your gaze fixed on Christ. ... The more you remain in communion with Him, the more able you will be faithfully to follow His footsteps so that, ‘love which binds every thing together in perfect harmony,’ brings your love for the Lord to maturity under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”

Benedict XVI concluded by calling on those present to follow the example of committed priests, former seminarians of the “Almo Collegio,” who “have produced abundant fruits of knowledge and goodness in the Lord’s vineyard.”

AC/.../ALMO COLLEGIO CAPRANICA VIS 060120
(350)

TO CONSECRATED PEOPLE: FACE MODERN LIFE with COURAGE

VATICAN CITY, DEC 10, 2005 (VIS) - Today in the Paul VI Hall, Benedict XVI received 8,000 religious and members of secular institutes and societies of apostolic life from the diocese of Rome.

The Pope, greeting participants in the audience, said: “My special thoughts go out to those living in monasteries of contemplative life, who are spiritually united with us” and “consecrated people from Africa, Latin America and Asia currently studying in Rome.”

“As always,” he continued, “consecrated people constitute a valuable presence in the life of the Church of Rome, because they offer a unique witness to the unity and universality of the People of God. ... The complex social and cultural context of our city ... demands from you a constant attention to local concerns, as well as a courageous faith in the charism that distinguishes you. From its origins, consecrated life has been characterized by a thirst for God. ... Do not be afraid of visibly showing yourselves as consecrated people and ... demonstrating the fact that you belong to Christ.”

The Holy Father then recalled how consecrated people are “deeply involved in diocesan programs” and collaborate in pastoral work, thanks also to the activities of groups that represent them such as: the Italian Confederation of Superiors Major, the Union of Italian Female Superiors Major, the Group of Secular Institutes and the Ordo Virginum. Benedict XVI called on consecrated people to continue this work with intensified loyalty to their commitments, the charisms of their institutes and the guidelines of the local Church.

“The Church has need of your witness, of a consecrated life that faces the challenges of today with courage and creativity. Faced with the advance of hedonism, I ask of you the brave witness of chastity. Faced with the thirst for money, your sober life and your service to those in need reminds us that God is the authentic source of wealth that never perishes. Faced with individualism and relativism, ... your fraternal life of obedience confirms that your fulfillment comes through God.”

The Pope concluded by recalling the 40th anniversary of the promulgation of the conciliar Decree “*Perfectae caritatis*,” dedicated to consecrated life and affirmed that: “Those living a consecrated life live in the world, but their hearts are directed beyond time; and to modern man, who is often absorbed by the things of the world, they bear witness that true destiny lies in God Himself.”

(AC/CONSECRATED PEOPLE/ROME VIS 051212
(420))

PRAY for KATHLEEN WERNER

Please pray for **Kathleen**. She is in recovery from the multiple back surgery events in December 2004 and December 2005. We have the highest hope that the 2006 recovery is better than that in 2005.

She has been cleared for physical therapy including the swimming therapy that was the best success in 2005. There is still dull pain and numbness in her

back and left leg but she is able to walk and support all her needs except stair climbing. Thank GOD!!!

With continued therapy we have hope that the pain will subside and the ability to do all the things she needs to do particularly stair climbing will return.

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

Also pray for our son, Kurt, and his girl friend, Merissa, and especially for her grandmother, Nellie McCartney. There are a lot of issues in this extended part of our family and we pray for their resolution.

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**.

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

***The PILGRIM*, Volume 17, Number 2 – February 2006**

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 *February* 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 **1, 2, 3, 4, 15, and 31**.

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 **1, 2, 15, and 31**.

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 **2, 4, 5, 15, and 21**.

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.

MESSAGE of 1/25/2006 via Maria Pavlovic Lunetti

Dear children! Also today I call you to be carriers of the Gospel in your families. Do not forget, little children, to read Sacred Scripture. Put it in a visible place and witness with your life that you believe and live the Word of God. I am close to you with my love and intercede before my Son for each of you. 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 1/25/2006

BE CARRIERS of the GOSPEL

Mary, Mother of God and our mother, begins her every message with these words: "Dear children!" She knows to whom she is coming and speaking. She is coming to us who are her beloved children. Many a time she said: "Dear children, I am telling you this with love; I am calling you with my maternal love; I am close to you in my love." She speaks to us with love, as Jesus spoke to that rich youth in the Gospel: Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said, "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." (Mark 10:21). Jesus did not have success with the rich youth despite the love with which he spoke to him. Jesus' call did not reach the youth's heart. The Blessed Virgin Mary knows that not everybody will embrace her motherly word. Despite that, she has faith, she hopes and loves her children. She loves us even when we, as children, are indifferent, weak and sinful. She remains perseverant and patient even when we do not have faith in her and accept her superficially. Her love does not change because it comes from God's heart, since she herself is all in God's heart. She calls upon us with this message to be carriers of the Gospel in our families. Being a carrier of the Gospel means to be a carrier of joy since the Gospel is a good, joyful news. The Gospel is Jesus Christ. As our mother, Our Lady constantly bestows us with this ideal of the Gospel attained by the saints during their life. This is why St. Paul can say: "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). We need prayer in order to achieve this ideal and to identify ourselves with Jesus Christ. In her message of 25 December 1992 Our Lady spoke to us and taught us the following: "Dear children! ... Do not forget that your life does not belong to you, but is a gift with which you must bring joy to others and lead them to eternal life." We all know that we can be a burden and a cross to others, as well as others can be the same to us. Nobody is heavy or dull

to Mother Mary because she loves us. Listen to a story that supports these words. There was once an 8-year-old girl carrying her little 2-year-old brother on her back. While passing by people asked her: "Isn't it heavy for you to carry such a burden?" She replied: "This is not a burden, this is my little brother." Only love can make us carry others with joy, and not just tolerate them. Mother Mary carries everyone of us with her love. She was the first to carry the Gospel, to carry God in her mother's lap and in her heart. God gave her this mission through Angel Gabriel. She was not scared off by this task and by numerous offspring entrusted to her by the Heavenly Father. In a lot of her previous messages she encouraged us to read the Scriptures, as she still does today. Mary is a woman-gospel. That is why she calls us to read the Scriptures, which are divinely inspired, permeated with God's character and His spirit. She has been here since her first appearance 25 years ago. However, she has not come to unveil new truths or to add something new to the Gospels. She has been coming as the Mother desiring us to take God's word seriously so that we do not think of the Gospels as something abstract, detached from life. And the gospel is not something that happened in the past and finished. The gospel happens and renews in life of every Christian. St. Jerome said: "Who does not know the Scriptures, does not know Christ" In the Bible we find Jesus Christ himself, his love, his grace and omnipotence. God's word is not man's word. God resides in his words. Just like the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says: "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." (Heb 4:12). Through faith in the Bible I touch God Himself. Reading the Scriptures means listening to the words spoken by God to me, receiving the word of the Bible as a gift. Exactly that is the attitude Mary took after having heard the words conveyed to her by the messenger of God, the words that she kept, cherished and thought upon in her heart. I am talking

about hearing, listening attentively to and cherishing the words through worship, obedience and admiration. We are not masters of God's word, we are its slaves. When we are reading the Bible while in prayer and full of faith, we must not search for something that might satisfy our curiosity or a story we could tell to others. We should let God speak to us in peace and silence. Mary promises us to be close, to provide support and guidance. Let us not be indifferent to her calls.

Father Ljubo Kurtovic, Medjugorje, 26.1.2006,
(<http://medjugorje.hr.nt4.ims.hr>)

ANOTHER NOVEMBER REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of 1/25/2006

“Dear children! Also today I call you to be carriers of the Gospel in your families. Do not forget, little children, to read Sacred Scripture.” With these first two sentences of Her message of January 25, 2006, Our Lady continues to call us to embrace Christian discipleship. As one brings the message of the Gospel or is a carrier of the Gospel within one's family, he or she can profoundly share the message of Jesus with others. As we contemplate these things within our hearts, we can determine very quickly that there is nothing that is more important than sharing the message of Jesus with others.

Reading Sacred Scripture and reflecting upon certain passages of both the Old and New Testament can help us to connect with our loving God. From the Old Testament, we believe that God revealed himself to His creation, and that many people responded to that revelation by making a covenant with God. In the New Testament, the Gospels develop the theme regarding the coming of the Messiah. The Messiah referred to as the “Word made Flesh” and the “Son of God” is Jesus Christ who becomes the Lord and Savior of all humanity. Through the writings of the evangelists, the person of Jesus is described as He reveals himself through teaching, preaching, challenging and interacting with individuals and groups of people. Through the books of the New Testament that follow the Gospels, one can study and learn the ways that writers such as St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John and others encouraged those first Christians to fully embrace the message of Jesus.

As it was for those believers in the first century, it is most important for all of us living in the twenty-first century to accept the message and teachings of Jesus.

This is the first step in the process of being ***“carriers of the Gospel”*** to our families and to others. While attending Mass, listen attentively to the Gospel readings. Reflect upon Jesus' words and be one with Our dear Lord through the steps necessary to be His disciple. In fact, in Mark 8:34-38 Jesus describes in a very direct way what must be done for those who are to be His disciples. He said, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? What could one give in exchange for his life? Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this faithless and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels.”

These words of Jesus seem very appropriate for the world of today. Also, they fit in very well with the words of Our Lady in Her message of January 25, 2006. In the next sentence of this message, Our Lady explains the importance of reading Sacred Scripture and embracing the word of God that is found in our Bibles. ***“Put it in a visible place and witness with your life that you believe and live the Word of God.”*** Are we placing our Bibles in a visible place or most importantly, are our lives a witness to the fact that ***“you believe and live the Word of God.”*** These are very important questions for us to reflect upon.

To be fully committed to Jesus and to witness to that belief by the way that we live can be a significant challenge for all of us: priests, religious, and lay people alike. Again, we must focus our time and effort in accepting and embracing the passion, death, and resurrection of our dear Lord. Are we willing to offer ourselves to Jesus and carry His cross in a courageous way? To say yes to this question with much exuberance and joy and to ***“witness with your life that you believe and live the Word of God,”*** is the only way to become a Christian disciple. Unfortunately, many folks cannot move beyond this point. It requires us to change, when we do not want to. It definitely involves a process of conversion. We must admit to ourselves that the selfish ways of the world are not the ways of Christ; and then with courageous faith, undying hope, and unconditional love, we must give ourselves to Jesus. However, to be successful in this endeavor, we must

realize that we cannot become a Christian disciple on our own. Thus, the next sentence of Our Lady's message of January 25, 2006 is most important. ***"I am close to you with my love and intercede before my Son for each of you."***

During these days, may we seek out that special love of Our dear Blessed Mother. If we will only give Her the chance, She will lead us to the sanctifying love of the Holy Spirit. With much zeal, let us pray the rosary with our hearts, become devoted to the Eucharist, read the Holy Bible, fast on bread and water each Wednesday and Friday, and receive the sacrament of Penance monthly. This is Our Lady's way to the Sacred Heart of Her dear Son. May we either begin or continue to be prayer warriors of Our Lady. Then, the reality of Christian discipleship will become part of whom we are.

I hope you are all well. Give my best to all of your families. May Christ's peace fill your lives. Be His servant, be His apostle, and become His Saint. This is our call. May we do all that we can to answer God's call to become one with Him and His message of unconditional love and mercy. May the blessing of 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, 30 January 2006)

PRESS BULLETIN 217, 12/26/2005

SPIRITUAL KITSCH

I would like to cite an example in order to show the spiritual reality surrounding us. A couple of years ago a team of basketball players had been preparing for a match for quite some time. They had been practising a lot, coordinating their game, working out the strategy.... Several days prior to the already scheduled match another player joined them. However, he did not show up for training. In fact, he did not practise at all and eventually did not pass the performance test. Despite that, he still thought that he deserved to play in the first team. Just before the beginning of the match, he entered the court thinking he would be among the five players to start the game, which provoked a reaction from his team mates. They were appalled by his attitude. They could not understand that there was actually someone that wanted to be "on stage" without any preparation, practice and hard work that had to be put in before that match.

This is an example that reminds me strongly of those Christians who want to enjoy the fruits of Christian life without any effort at all.

We are aware that God gives us time to prepare for the great holidays. God knows that without preparation, self-sacrifice and effort put in oneself, man cannot grasp important things. However, it seems that man always wants to get something quickly, without much effort. As if he cannot wait. Always in a hurry, losing pace with himself, with others, and with God. In such situations, sensing his own pending failure, man starts searching for satisfaction in a different direction trying to compensate the essential with unimportant things. One does not have to be wise to be able to say that this is futile. This is a path leading to absurdity: searching for earthly things in order to compensate for the heavenly. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that people plunge into consumerism before Christmas. In such an environment people invest much of their time making themselves more beautiful on the outside, they put shining lights everywhere, they buy and give presents. They are busy doing everything but true and sincere preparation for adorning themselves with the fruits of spiritual richness that would bring more light to their lives and bestow on themselves the most precious gift of all – God.

In the light of the example of the basketball players mentioned above, we can say that many will turn out silly this Christmas once again. On Christmas Day they will appear "on stage" wanting to squeeze their religiosity into 24 hours of this great and joyful holiday. They, of course, will understand nothing of the greatest gift coming from the Bethlehem stable. Such people will always be poor in spirit fulfilling their hearts and lives with kitsch offered on every corner while being convinced that this is the Bethlehem light.

.....
Father Mario Knezovic

COMMUNIONS and PRIESTS

During the month of **November**, **50,500** received Holy Communion and **1249** priests from this country and abroad signed the register for celebrating Holy Mass in Medjugorje.

5th ANNIVERSARY of FATHER SLAVKO BARBARIĆ'S DEATH

On 24 November 2005 the death of Father Slavko Barbarić was commemorated by the parishioners and pilgrims of Medjugorje praying the Way of the Cross on Križevac (Cross Mountain), where Father Slavko

died. The commemoration was followed by the evening Holy Mass and Eucharistic worship in the parish church. The same evening the book "Living with one's whole heart" ("Živjeti srcem") by Father Martin Šakota was promoted.

We contemplated the stations of the Way of the Cross through meditation written by Father Slavko himself as encouragement to prayer on Križevac. The prayer was led by Father Ljubo Kurtović. The Holy Mass was presided by Father Svetozar Kraljević and concelebrated by 25 homeland and foreign priests. The worship was led by Father Bože Milić

After the worship the book "Living with one's whole heart – life and work of Father Slavko Barbarić" written by Father Marinko Šakota was presented. There were several speakers talking about the book: Father Ivan Sesar, parish of Međugorje and chair of "Father Slavko Barbarić Foundation," Father Svetozar Kraljević, head of Mother's Village, and Silesian Don Mirko Barbarić, Father Slavko's childhood friend, and the very author of the book. The children from "Mother's Village" led by Prof. Zrinka Boras gave a musical recital. Višnja Spajić, reporter of the Medjugorje Radio-station "Mir" ("Peace") was the programme presenter. The book written by Father Marinko is intended to pay «homage to Father Slavko Barbarić five years after his death, and to encourage the faithful to reflect on the Christian calling more closely taking him as an example.»

That day the death of Father Slavko Barbarić, who was also a contributor to the Radio-station programme as well as its supporter and their dear friend, was commemorated once again in the broadcast entitled "Living with one's whole heart" by the Medjugorje "MIR" Radio-station. In spite of his tireless work, he managed to find time to contribute to the work of the Radio-station as well. Actually, it was his idea to start up a radio broadcast entitled „Joyful hearts, let us pray together” which succeeded in forming a listening community dedicated to prayer, whose members are always very happy to get together. This tireless Franciscan started and used to give a broadcast entitled „The Voice of the Queen of Peace” until his death. The broadcast of this programme has never ceased. He was also the author of the broadcast "Medjugorje ABC" with which he tried to find connections between messages of Our Lady and the Holy Scriptures. The broadcast "Living with one's whole heart" dedicated to life and work of Father Slavko Barbarić was a homage rendered to him for his life and for all good things the Lord and The Queen of Peace have woven in our lives through him.

CHRISTMAS at MEDJUGORJE

The parishioners, the faithful from neighbouring parishes and pilgrims prepared for Christmas by a novena. In addition to the evening prayer programme in the parish church, the Rosary was recited during the nine-day devotion on Apparition Hill, and early morning services were held.

During Advent three fasting, prayer and silence seminars were given at "Domus pacis," the House of Prayer. As many as 110 Italian, Croatian and German pilgrims attended the seminars desiring to prepare for Christmas through fasting and prayer. The days before Christmas confirm that Medjugorje is the „confessional of the world": large crowds of the faithful come from all corners of the world to receive the sacrament of reconciliation.

During the Christmas holidays, peace prevailed at the shrine of the Queen of Peace creating an atmosphere of prayer and unity among the faithful who arrived from all parts of the world. There were several hundreds of foreign pilgrims here for Christmas. On Christmas Eve several thousands of pilgrims participated in the evening service. The Vigil began at 10 p.m. in the church overflowed with the faithful, and ended with the midnight service. Christmas Day passed in an atmosphere of peace and joy felt among the parishioners and pilgrims gathered around Mary, their Mother. As on any 25th of each month the silent worship of the altar sacrament in the parish church that continued throughout the night.

On 18th December the Dubrovnik Children's Choir "Little Singing Dubrovnik," the Medjugorje Little Children's Choir "Little Doves of Peace" and the Dalmatian harmony-singing group "Luka" from Ploče gave their 6th Christmas concert wishing in this way a merry Christmas to all the faithful and pilgrims from around the world that gathered in Medjugorje.

As a tradition, the members of the Cenacolo community (former drug addicts) presented a production of the Living Manger three times to the parishioners and pilgrims. Through such an original musical and scenic presentation they showed to the faithful their desire to come from the darkness into light.

WHOLE-NIGHT WORSHIP on the 25th of EVERY MONTH

Throughout last year, which was proclaimed the „Year of the Eucharist" by the Holy Father, on 25th of every month, when Our Lady conveys her message to the parish of Medjugorje and to the whole world, the whole-night worship of Jesus with the Holy Altar Sacrament was led. The parishioners and the pilgrims

embraced the opportunity for silent prayer with great joy. The whole-night worship will continue to be led in the parish church on the 25th of every month.

SEMINARS at “DOMUS PACIS”

In 2005 as many as 45 various seminars attended by 1,532 pilgrims were held at “Domus pacis” – the House of Prayer.

The Franciscan School Sisters conducted 7 seminars attended by 190 girls.

As many as 11 spiritual seminars attended by 404 participants were also held by different spiritual movements.

13th INTERNATIONAL MEETING of LEADERS of PEACE CENTRES, PRAYER, PILGRIM and CHARITY GROUPS

The 13th International Meeting of Leaders of Peace Centres, Prayer and Charity Groups will take place in Medjugorje from 5 to 9 March 2006. The theme of this encounter is: **...and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth... (Acts 1:8)**

The number of participants is space-limited. Therefore we kindly ask you to make your registration **as soon as possible**. Please send the registration form by fax : 00387 36 651 999 (to Marija Dugandžić) or e-mail: seminar.marija@medjugorje.hr. Simultaneous interpretation will be available for all language groups. Therefore, it would be convenient if you took with you a small FM radio with headphones. Please organize your accommodation in Medjugorje personally. You can read the seminar programme at our web site: www.medjugorje.hr We are looking forward to welcoming you at this meeting!

THE ELEVENTH INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR for PRIESTS

The eleventh international seminar for priests will take place in Medjugorje from July 3 to 8, 2006. The theme of the seminar is: “Spirituality of the priests”. **(“Let us pray, little children,... so that the Church may resurrect in love” – 3/25/1999.)**

[NOTE: The program and speaker biographies are available on line or in print from the **PFMC**.] Send registrations by e-mail to: seminar.marija@medjugorje.hr, or fax: 00387 36 651 999 (to Marija Dugandžić).

We would be very grateful if the priests who find accommodation with families living in Medjugorje on their own would include in the registration from the name and the phone number of the family

providing their accommodation. Priests who cannot find such accommodation directly, please include this information in the registration form and we will provide accommodation for you.

Seminar expenses are covered with five Mass intentions.

Please bring the following items: celebret given by your bishop, alb and stole, the Bible, a small FM radio and headphones (for simultaneous interpretation).

Many priests do not have access to the Internet and may not know about such international meeting in Medjugorje. Therefore, we would be much obliged to the pilgrim organisers, prayer groups and peace centres if they could disseminate the information through all available media so that as many priests as possible can participate. We would also be very grateful if you could use any available funds you have at your disposal to support travel expenses of the priests who otherwise can not come to Medjugorje. We thank you for your support in advance invoking God’s blessing and the blessing of the Queen of Peace.

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

PRESS BULLETIN 218, 1/26/2006

Again the **English** translation of this material is not available at publication deadline. So it will appear in the next issue of **“The PILGRIM.”**

Here are some interesting items from the home page of the **Saint James, Medjugorje, Web Site**.

Bishops in Medjugorje during 2005



During 2005, 15 bishops from 12 countries came to Medjugorje:

- Mons. Hieronymus Herculanus Bumbun, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Pontianak (Indonesia)
- Mons. Salvatore Boccaccio, Bishop of Frosinone (Italy)
- Mons. Geevarghese Mar Divannasios Ottathengil, syro-malankar Bishop of Bathery (Kerala, India)
- Mons. José Luís Azcona Hermoso, O.A.R., Augustinian, Bishop of Marajó (Para, Brazil)
- Mons. Bruno Tommasi, retired Archbishop of Lucca (Italy)
- Mons. Hermann Raich, S.V.D., Bishop of Wabag (Papua New Guinea)

- Mons. Issam John Darwish, BSO, DD., Eparch of the Melkite Catholic Church in Australia and New Zealand
- Mons. Domenico Pecile, retired Bishop of Latina (Italy)
- Mons. José Domingo Ulloa Mendieta, O.S.A., Auxiliary Bishop of Panama (Panama)
- Mons. Stanislas Lukumwena Lumbala, O.F.M., Bishop of Kole (Democratic Republic of Congo)
- Mons. Pearce Lacey, retired Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto (Canada)
- Mons. Thomas Msusa, Bishop of Zomba (Malawi)
- Mons. Allan Chamgwera, retired Bishop of Zomba (Malawi)
- Mons. Remi Joseph Gustave Saint-Marie, Bishop of Dedza (Malawi)
- Mons. Joseph Faber MacDonald, Bishop of Saint John (New Brunswick, Canada)

(1/11/2006)

Eleven priests from Portugal



On **Thursday, January 19, 2006**, eleven priests from different Portuguese parishes came to the Shrine of the Queen of Peace in Medjugorje.

In the Parish House, they met Dr. Fr. Ivan Sesar, the pastor, with whom they spoke about the international dimension of this parish and about Portuguese pilgrims coming to this place of prayer. They expressed the desire to come again, both individually, and with their faithful.

(<http://www.medjugorje.hr/ulazakenstipe.htm>)

CALL of the QUEEN of PEACE:

“DEAR CHILDREN, I LOVE YOU and YOU ARE to LOVE”

Dear Friends, I thought you might be interested in reading an excerpt from **Father Petar Ljubicic's** book, **“The Call of the Queen of Peace.”** Father **Petar** is a **Franciscan** priest from **Medjugorje** and is the one that the visionary **Mirjana** has chosen to reveal the ten secrets to the world.

Here is the excerpt:

Our Lady has come to us out of love. She knows that love is the center and the essence of the Christian and evangelical life. She also knows that out of love, God became man beneath Her very heart. The God-man, Jesus Christ, gave his very life out of love for us. He died in order to save us. He tirelessly teaches us that God loves us endlessly and that we are also called to

love God above all else and our neighbor as ourselves.

To love ardently and sincerely and to be loved in the same way, is something which belongs to our nature. It gives meaning to our life. It fills us with great joy and serene happiness. That is why **Our Lady** said; **“Dear Children, if you knew how much I loved you, you would weep for joy.”** Yes, we really would weep, for when we receive genuine love from someone, and we are not deserving of that love, we are moved to tears.

On **November 15, 1984**, **Our Lady** said: **“Dear children! You are a chosen people and God has given you great graces. You are not conscious of every message which I am giving you. Now I just want to say - pray, pray, pray! I don't know what else to tell you because I love you and I want you to comprehend my love and God's love through prayer. Thank you for having responded to my call.”**

It is very important to know what love is. Love is the aspiration of our will toward the recognized goodness. It is our decision to surrender and give ourselves to that goodness, so as to give joy to that goodness. God is our greatest and only good. When we truly love Him, we continue to be united with Him. The best way to realize this is through prayer. In effect, prayer is communion with God in the environment of love. It is through love that man grows, develops, and improves. When we pray, we also get to know Mary's love. Enduring prayer is necessary in order to comprehend love. When we come to understand that, nothing will be difficult for us. All will flow.

November 29, 1984: Dear children! No, you don't know how to love and you don't know how to listen with love to the words I am saying to you. Be conscious, my beloved, that I am your Mother and I have come on earth to teach you to listen out of love, to pray out of love and not compelled by the fact that you are carrying a cross. By means of the cross God is glorified through every person. Thank you for having responded to my call.

In this message **Our Lady** has expressed why she came to us. She wants us to take this seriously and allow ourselves to be taught.

Our Lady knows that it is not easy to love. It is the assignment of our entire life. In eternity, when we come before God, our main assignment will be to

love one another and to be happy in reciprocal love. That is why it is essential we learn this here on earth.

Love is before all, the ability of a person to understand how to learn this skill. It is the strength of his spirit, the ability of the soul. Love embraces the care for that which we love, and for Him whom we love. Love contains responsibility for the loved one, the respect of the person, recognizing individuality, knowing the loved one and his secrets.

In order for man to be able to love, he must be a mentally competent and mature person. A person who is anxious, undecided, dependent, and does not know how to control himself; such a person cannot truly love.

If you want to learn the wisdom of love, then learn to compose yourself, learn to reflect, to enter into yourself, to look at your interior being, at your thoughts, your aspirations, and at everything that has come to pass.

Daily life is full of worries and tensions. We all complain that we have no time. Seldom are we alone with ourselves. For most, it is impossible just to sit quietly, to relax without speaking, without smoking, without reading. He who desires the most beautiful flower to bloom in his garden must first have a garden. This means that he must have his spiritual life; his thoughts, his silence, time, concentration, and the ability to enter into himself. To really be able to compose oneself means to be able to spend time alone with oneself, and that ability is always the ability to truly love.

It is necessary to always go beyond our horizons, to try hard to understand the other person as he is. To just to look at him from our own point of view, or to love him because it is beneficial or good for us to do so. It is necessary to be humble.

Our Lady is tireless when she calls us to love:

November 7, 1985: Dear children! I am calling you to the love of neighbor and love toward the one from whom evil comes to you. In that way with love you will be able to discern the intentions of hearts. Pray and love, dear children! By love you are able to do even that which you think is impossible. Thank you for having responded to my call.

December 19, 1985: Dear children! Today I wish to call you to love of neighbor. The more you will to love your neighbor, the more you shall experience Jesus especially on Christmas Day. God will bestow great gifts on you if you surrender yourselves to Him. I wish in a

special way on Christmas Day to give mothers my own special motherly blessing, and Jesus will bless the rest with His own blessing. Thank you for having responded to my call.

May 29, 1986: Dear children! Today my call to you is that in your life you live love toward God and neighbor. Without love, dear children, you can do nothing. Therefore, dear children, I am calling you to live in mutual love. Only in that way will you be able to love and accept both me and all those around you who are coming into your parish. Everyone will sense my love through you. Therefore, I beseech you, dear children, to start loving from today with an ardent love, the love with which I love you. Thank you for having responded to my call."

There is no explanation necessary. All that is the most important has been expressed. Without love we are nothing and we can do nothing worthy or beneficial for ourselves or for others. That is why it is necessary for us always to be open and to love all people with a fervent love. By loving our fellow man, we love God. It is then that we truly transform every moment of our lives into a moment of salvation for ourselves and our brothers and sisters.

February 28, 1985: Dear children! Today I call you to live the word this week: 'I love God!' Dear children through love you will achieve everything and even what you think is impossible. God wants this parish to belong completely to Him. And that's what I want too. Thank you for having responded to my call.

July 4, 1985: Dear children! I thank you for every sacrifice you have offered. And now I urge you to offer every sacrifice with love. I wish you, the helpless ones, to begin helping with confidence and the Lord will keep on giving to you in confidence. Thank you for having responded to my call.

During an apparition of **Our Lady**, the visionary Marija Pavlovic asked **Our Lady**, "Our Lady, do you have something concrete for me?" The answer was, "**Yes, I give you my love, so that you give it to others.**"

On one occasion **Father Slavko** asked the same visionary if she was able to choose the most beautiful and the most difficult of all messages. She reflected for a moment and then remembered her question and

Our Lady's answer above. "To experience the beauty of **Our Lady's** love, and to know that it is that love which gives itself to you, is the most beautiful thing in life. But, when I try to love others and to try to give that love to them, then that is difficult and I often feel shame for my insufficiencies to love in the light of **Our Lady's** all encompassing motherly love."

When asked what can be done, the visionary answered, "I pray everyday that I may be all the more open to this love of **Our Lady**, and that I may be able to pass it onto every person, and I pray for others that they may be able to feel this love and in turn give it to others. We are so far from loving one another and this is a sign that we are also far from God's love. And the closer we are to God's love, the easier we will be able to live that love and bear witness to others."

We must not ignore or forget the great danger which threatens us, and that is the rush and the chase for that which is passing; money, wealth and treasure. Today, all these things divert us from reflection and from life's true values. It has been well said that modern man is estranging himself from himself, from his fellow man, from nature, and from God. That is why he has become tired of life, his heart is wounded, and his family shaken.

Man has forgotten that which is the ultimate, the most difficult, and the most valuable thing which he is to learn, and that is love. We must learn to love our entire lives, and only then will we be prepared for eternity.

All in all we can conclude, that all instruction, all commandments from God to man are all united into a single call. Learn to love God in all people, and to love all people in God. Love is truly the divine mountain which a true Christian must climb each day and each moment of his entire life.

Take care and God bless, Mike

("The Call of the Queen of Peace." Father Petar Ljubicic from mikesepal@webtv.net "We Are Called to Love" 1/17/06)

THE ROSARY – A DESCRIPTION

I came across this lovely description of the Rosary written by **Bishop Fulton Sheen** in 1953.

"The Rosary is the book of the blind, where souls see and there enact the greatest drama of love the world has ever known; it is the book of the simple which initiates them into mysteries and knowledge more satisfying than the education of other men; it is the

book of the aged, whose eyes close upon the shadow of the world and open on the substance of the next."

Peace, **Bernard Gallagher**

(from b_gallagher@btconnect.com, 1/17/06)

THE SECRETS

Dear Friends, **Janice Connell**, in her book, "**The Visions of the Children**," conducted a question and answer session in 1991 with the **Medjugorje** visionary, **Mirjana Soldo**. I would like to share with you an excerpt from that interview dealing with the secrets.

Here is the excerpt: on "**THE SECRETS**"

Q. It has been ten years now since this monumental apparition began. Looking back, it might seem that the Blessed Mother gave you all those ten secrets concerning the future of the world very quickly.

A. I had enough time. It may seem fast to you, but I have had more one-on-one time with the Blessed Mother than the other visionaries who were here in Medjugorje. They were constantly surrounded by people. They were asking the Blessed Mother questions for priests and for all those who come here. My time with the Blessed Mother was private and quite concentrated.

Q. Can you repeat once again what you are permitted to say about the secrets?

A. The first two secrets will be warnings to the world - events that will occur before a visible sign is given to humanity. These will happen in my lifetime. Ten days before the first secret and the second secret, I will notify Father Petar Ljubicic. He will pray and fast for seven days, and then he will announce these to the world.

Q. Mirjana, many evangelists these days talk about the end of the world. Will the world survive the secrets you know?

A. God's world is unchanging. All passes away but God's will. Those who pray understand.

Q. Mirjana, do you consider yourself brighter than the other visionaries so that you could absorb these amazing facts faster?

A. No.

Q. How do you remember the secrets?

A. I have them written down.

Q. In your own handwriting?

A. No.

Q. In the Blessed Mother's handwriting?

A. I received a parchment with the secrets written on it from the Blessed Mother.

Q. Is it true only you can see the writing on the parchment?

A. Yes.

Q. Where do you keep this parchment?

A. In my family's house in Sarajevo in my bedroom there.

Q. You keep this parchment in Sarajevo? What if you need it here?

A. I keep it in Sarajevo.

Q. If I looked at that parchment, what would I see?

A. Everyone who has seen it has seen something different.

Q. But only you can read what is written on it?

A. Yes.

Q. The ten secrets are written on this parchment?

A. Yes.

Q. That means you don't have to remember the secrets. You can pull that parchment and read it?

A. I remember everything. I don't need the parchment to remember the secrets.

Q. Is it true you know the day and date of everything?

A. Yes.

Q. Mirjana, are you certain you wouldn't forget anything? Do you know the day, the minute, and the hour?

A. I know the day and the date.

Q. Does that frighten you, Mirjana, especially as the days for the fulfillment of each secret draw near? [Mirjana shrugs and looks away.] Can you share whether the secrets bring good or bad news?

A. Well, the first secret will break the power of Satan, and that is why he is so aggressive now.

Q. Mirjana, concerning the first secret, some people have quoted you as saying that a whole section of the planet would be desolate - would be totally destroyed. No life would grow in that place. Is that true?

A. I don't remember talking about that to anyone. Please ask people not to speak about secrets. Please ask those who know about the Blessed Mother's apparition here to focus on God's will. Our Blessed Mother says we should pray more, and we should love God as our Father. We should accept the messages of prayer, fasting, conversion, and reconciliation that God is sending to the world through the Blessed Mother of Jesus. If we do this, we will not be afraid of anything, no matter what the future may hold.

Q. Mirjana, people are talking about three days of darkness, about tidal waves, earthquakes, catastrophes. Do you know anything about these sorts of occurrences in the future?

A. I am not speaking about any of those things, nor have I ever spoken about those things. God is peace. God is love. The messages of the Blessed Mother here are messages of peace so that all her children of the earth may experience God's love.

(Janice Connell "The Visions of the Children," from mikesepal@webtv.net "Secrets?" 1/15/06)

EUCCHARISTIC MIRACLES

Throughout Christian history, our Lord has shown us that he is really present as the Blessed Sacrament. Interestingly, many Eucharistic miracles have occurred during times of weakened Faith. For instance, many Eucharist miracles have taken place as a result of someone doubting the Real Presence. Included on this page are descriptions of just a few of these miracles. All of them have received full approval by the Church.

Most Eucharistic miracles involve incidences in which the Host has "turned into human flesh and blood". Of course we as Catholics believe that the consecrated Host is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Lord, only under the appearances of bread and wine. Therefore, Jesus, through these miracles, merely manifests His Presence in a more tangible way.

"Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.'"

(Jn 20:27-29)

EUCCHARISTIC MIRACLES by PLACE and DATE

AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND -- 1345

In 1345, a man who was a devout Catholic became very ill. He told his family he would like to receive Holy Viaticum. The family notified the pastor of the then known *Old Church*. The priest, after administering the sacrament, advised the family, if the ill man threw up (which he was known to do after taking nourishment) they were to empty the contents

in the fire. The man threw up and the family did what they were advised to do by the priest, they threw the contents in the fire in the sick room. This incident occurred on March 12th.

Early the next morning, one of the women went to rake the fire and she noticed in the middle of the grate, the Blessed Sacrament in the form of host. A light surrounded it. The woman became upset and immediately put her hand in the fire to rescue the host. This she did without any ill effects to herself. She did not burn her hand. The woman was surprised to find the host was cold! She immediately called in a neighbor and asked her to take the Sacred Host to her home. The neighbor took a clean cloth, placed the host on it and locked it in a box. She then took it home. When the husband of the woman who found the host heard what had taken place, he requested to see it. He tried to lift it off the white cloth it rested on but the Sacred Particle resisted as if to say it did not want to be touched by this man's hands.

A priest was then summoned who took the host and placed it in a pyx. When he went to wash the cloth which held the Blessed Sacrament and return it to the original box, he noticed the pyx was upset and the host was gone!

The next morning the neighbor returned for her original box and cloth. When she opened the locked box she once again found the Sacred Host in it! There was then no doubt that Our Lord wanted this miracle to made known! The priest notified the clergy of Amsterdam and a procession was held to carry the host to the church.

The home of the sick man soon became a chapel and as early as 1360 public processions and pilgrims traveled to the site of the miracle.

On May 25, 1452, a large conflagration broke out which left three fourths of the city in ruins. It was during this time, the chapel known as the Holy Room became subject to the flames. Strangely, the monstrance containing the Miraculous Host, (which had been brought over to the chapel from the old church) was spared. In 1456, a new Holy Room was built surrounded by a beautiful church.

Many pilgrims went to visit the shrine seeking cures and spiritual help. One pilgrim, archduke Maximilian, later a Roman Emperor, came seeking a cure in 1480. God heard his prayer and he was cured. In thanksgiving, the archduke dedicated a beautiful window to the Holy Room.

By the second half of the sixteenth century, Catholics in Amsterdam fell under persecution of the Protestants. The Holy Room fell under Protestant rule. In 1910, rather than sell the property to the

Catholics, the chapel was torn down. However, devotion to this Eucharistic Miracle still takes place on March 12th at the church nearest the site.

(by Andrea Erfort, Gospa Missions staff writer
Reference: *Moments Divine*, Father Frederick A.
Reuter, K.C.B.S.)

SIENNA, ITALY -- 1730

The second Eucharistic miracle of Sienna has roots in the 13th century when special services and festivities were introduced in honor of the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. These observances became traditional and were still conducted at the time of the miracle. So it was that on August 14, 1730, during devotions for the vigil of the feast, while most of the Sienese population and the clergy of the city were attending these services, thieves entered the deserted Church of Saint Francis. Taking advantage of the friars' absence, they made for the chapel where the Blessed Sacrament was kept, picked the lock to the tabernacle and carried away the golden ciborium containing consecrated Hosts.

The theft went undiscovered until the next morning, when the priest opened the tabernacle at the Communion of the Mass. Then later, when a parishioner found the lid of the ciborium lying in the street, the suspicion of sacrilege was confirmed. The anguish of the parishioners forced the cancellation of the traditional festivities for the feast of Our Lady's Assumption. The Archbishop ordered public prayers of reparation, while the civil authorities began a search for the consecrated Hosts and for the scoundrel who had taken them.

Two days later, on August 17, while praying in the Church of Saint Mary of Provenzano, a priest's attention was directed to something white protruding from the offering box attached to his prie dieu. Realizing that it was a Host, he informed the other priests of the church, who in turn notified the Archbishop and the friars of the Church of Saint Francis.

When the offering box was opened, in the presence of local priests and the representative of the Archbishop, a large number of Hosts were found, some of them suspended by cobwebs. The Hosts were compared with some unconsecrated ones used in the Church of Saint Francis, and proved to be exactly the same size and to have the same mark of the irons upon which they were baked. The number of Hosts corresponded exactly to the number the Franciscan friars had estimated were in the ciborium -- 348 whole Hosts and six halves.

Since the offering box was opened but once a year, the Hosts were covered with the dust and debris that had collected there. After being carefully cleaned by the priests, they were enclosed in a ciborium and placed inside the tabernacle of the main altar of the Church of Saint Mary. The following day, in the company of a great gathering of townspeople, Archbishop Alessandro Zondadari carried the Sacred Hosts in solemn procession back to the Church of Saint Francis.

During the two centuries that followed it has sometimes been wondered why the Hosts were not consumed by a priest during Mass, which would have been the ordinary procedure in such a case. While there is no definite answer, there are two theories. One explanation is that crowds of people from both Sienna and neighboring cities gathered in the church to offer prayers of reparation before the sacred particles, forcing the priests to conserve them for a time. The other reason the priests did not consume them might well have been because of their soiled condition. While the Hosts were superficially cleaned after their discovery, they still retained a great deal of dirt. In such cases it is not necessary to consume consecrated Hosts, but it is permitted to allow them to deteriorate naturally, at which time Christ would no longer be present.

To the amazement of the clergy, the Hosts did not deteriorate, but remained fresh and even retained a pleasant scent. With the passage of time the Conventual Franciscans became convinced that they were witnessing a continuing miracle of preservation.

Fifty years after the recovery of the stolen Hosts, an official investigation was conducted into the authenticity of the miracle. The Minister General of the Franciscan Order, Father Carlo Vipera, examined the Hosts on April 14, 1780, and upon tasting one of them he found it fresh and incorrupt. Since a number of the Hosts had been distributed during the preceding years, the Minister General ordered that the remaining 230 particles be placed in a new ciborium and forbade further distribution.

A more detailed investigation took place in 1789 by Archbishop Tiberio Borghese of Sienna with a number of theologians and other dignitaries. After examining the Hosts under a microscope, the commission declared that they were perfectly intact and showed no sign of deterioration. The three Franciscans who had been present at the previous investigation, that of 1780, were questioned under oath by the Archbishop. It was then reaffirmed that the Hosts under examination were the same ones stolen in 1730.

As a test to further confirm the authenticity of the miracle, the Archbishop, during this 1789 examination, ordered several unconsecrated hosts to be placed in a sealed box and kept under lock in the chancery office. Ten years later these were examined and found to be not only disfigured, but also withered. In 1850, 61 years after they were placed in a sealed box, these unconsecrated hosts were found reduced to particles of a dark yellow color, while the consecrated Hosts retained their original freshness.

Other examinations were made at intervals over the years, the most significant being that of 1914, undertaken on the authority of Pope Saint Pius X. For this inquiry the Archbishop selected a distinguished panel of investigators, which included scientists and professors from Sienna and Pisa, as well as theologians and Church officials.

Acid and starch tests performed on one of the fragments indicated a normal starch content. The conclusions reached from microscopic tests indicated that the Hosts had been made of roughly sifted wheat flour, which was found to be well preserved.

The commission agreed that unleavened bread, if prepared under sterile conditions and kept in an airtight, antiseptically cleaned container, could be kept for an extremely long time. Unleavened bread prepared in a normal fashion and exposed to air and the activity of micro-organisms would remain intact for no more than a few years. It was concluded that the stolen Hosts had been both prepared without scientific precautions and kept under ordinary conditions which should have caused their decay more than a century before. The commission concluded that the preservation was extraordinary, "*e la scienza stessa che proclama qui lo straordinario.*"

Professor Siro Grimaldi, professor of chemistry at the University of Sienna and director of the Municipal Chemical Laboratory, as well as the holder of several other distinguished positions in the field of chemistry, was the chief chemical examiner of the holy particles in 1914. Afterward, he gave elaborate statements concerning the miraculous nature of the Hosts, and wrote a book about the miracle entitled *Uno Scienziato Adora (A Scientific Adorer)*. In 1914 he declared:

The holy Particles of unleavened bread represent an example of perfect preservation ... a singular phenomenon that inverts the natural law of the conservation of organic material. It is a fact unique in the annals of science.

In 1922 another investigation was conducted -- this one in the presence of Cardinal Giovanni Tacci, who was accompanied by the Archbishop of Sienna and

the Bishops of Montepulciano, Foligno and Grosseto. Again the results were the same: the Hosts tasted like unleavened bread, were starchy in composition and were completely preserved.

In 1950 the miraculous Hosts were taken from the old ciborium and placed in a more elaborate and costly one, which caught the eye of another thief. Thus, despite the precautions of the clergy, another sacrilegious theft occurred on the night of August 5, 1951. This time the thief was considerate enough to take only the container and left the Hosts in a corner of the tabernacle. After counting 133 Hosts, the Archbishop himself sealed them in a silver ciborium. Later, after being photographed, they were placed in an elaborate container which replaced the one that had been stolen.

The miraculously preserved Hosts are displayed publicly on various occasions, but especially on the 17th of each month, which commemorates the day they were found after the first theft in 1730. On the feast of Corpus Christi the Sacred Hosts are placed in their processional monstrance and triumphantly carried in procession from the church through the streets of the town, an observance in which the whole populace participates.

Among many distinguished visitors who have adored the Hosts was Saint John Bosco. They were likewise venerated by Pope John XXIII, who signed the album of visitors on May 29, 1954, when he was still the Patriarch of Venice. And although unable to visit the miraculous Hosts, Popes Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI and Pius XII issued statements of profound interest and admiration.

With a unanimous voice, the faithful, priests, bishops, cardinals and popes have marveled at and worshiped the holy Hosts, recognizing in them a permanent miracle, both complete and perfect, that has endured for over 250 years.

By this miracle the Hosts have remained whole and shiny, and have maintained the characteristic scent of unleavened bread. Since they are in such a perfect state of conservation, maintaining the appearances of bread, the Catholic Church assures us that although they were consecrated in the year 1730, these Eucharistic Hosts are still really and truly the Body of Christ. The miraculous Hosts have been cherished and venerated in the Basilica of Saint Francis in Sienna for over 250 years.

(*Eucharistic Miracles* by Joan Carroll Cruz 1987 [TAN Books and Publishers, Inc.](#))

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BLANOT, FRANCE -- 1331

The village of Blanot is situated in a long, narrow valley surrounded by picturesque mountains. Inconspicuous because of its location, it was nevertheless favored by God, who honored it with a Eucharistic miracle. The physical evidence of this event is still preserved in the church in which it occurred.

Before relating the miracle, it would be best to recall the manner in which Holy Communion was distributed in the 14th century (and in many places yet today). During Holy Mass, when the time approached for the distribution of Communion, the communicants would approach the altar railing which separated the body of the church from the sanctuary. Taking their places side by side along the length of the railing, they would kneel. At about the same time, two altar boys would approach the railing and take their places one at each end. Reaching down for a long linen cloth that hung the length of the railing on the side facing the sanctuary, each would take his end of the cloth and flip it over the top of the railing. The communicants would then place their hands beneath the cloth. The priest, holding the ciborium containing the consecrated Hosts, would approach one end of the railing and distribute the Hosts as he moved along its length. At the time of the miracle this was the way in which Holy Communion was received at Blanot.

The miracle occurred on Easter Sunday, March 31, 1331, at the first Mass of the day, which was offered by Hugues de la Baume, the vicar of Blanot. Because of the solemn occasion, two men of the parish named Thomas Caillot and Guyot Besson were also serving in addition to the altar boys. At Communion time the two men approached the altar railing, took their places at each end and turned the long cloth over the railing. The parishioners took their places, held their hands under the cloth and waited for the approach of the priest.

One of the last to receive was a woman named Jacqueline, described as being the widow of Regnaut d'Effour. The priest placed the Host on her tongue, turned, and started walking toward the altar. It was then that both men and a few of the communicants saw the Host fall from the woman's mouth and land upon the cloth that covered her hands. As the priest was then placing the ciborium inside the tabernacle, Thomas Caillot approached the altar and informed him of the accident. The priest immediately left the altar and approached the railing; but instead of finding the Host, he saw a spot of blood the same size as the Host, which had apparently dissolved into blood.

When the Mass was completed, the priest took the cloth into the sacristy and placed the stained area in a basin filled with clear water. After washing the spot and scrubbing it with his fingers numerous times he found that, far from becoming smaller and lighter, it had actually become larger and much darker. On removing the cloth from the basin he was surprised to find that the water had turned bloody. The priest and his assistants were not only astonished, but also frightened, and exclaimed, "This is the Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ!" The priest then took a knife and, after washing it, cut from the cloth the piece bearing the bloody imprint of the Host. This square piece of cloth was reverently placed in the tabernacle.

Fifteen days later, an official of the Archdiocese of Autun, Jean Jarossier, journeyed to Blanot to initiate an investigation. With him was the Cure' de Lucenay, a monsignor of Autun, and an apostolic notary. The interrogation of witnesses was conducted in the presence of Pierre Osnonout, the Cure' of Blanot. The results of this investigation were sent by Archbishop Pierre Bertrand to Pope John XXII, who pronounced a favorable verdict and accorded indulgences to those who would celebrate Mass in the parish church of Blanot. Copies of the documents are still kept in the City Hall of Blanot and are described as being in an ancient style which is difficult to read.

The Hosts that remained in the ciborium after the distribution of Holy Communion on that Easter Sunday were never used, and were carefully reserved in the tabernacle. The reason for this is not known, although one might speculate that the priest wished to avoid a possible repetition of the prodigy. In 1706 these Hosts, preserved in good condition after 375 years, were taken in a five-hour procession around the parish of Blanot in observance of the anniversary of the miracle. Taking part in the ceremony were many prelates and a great many people of the parish and the surrounding areas. At the conclusion of the procession, the silver ciborium holding the Hosts was returned to the golden box in which it was kept. This was carefully placed in the main tabernacle of the church.

For many years there were commemorative processions and special observances, but these were discontinued at the start of the French Revolution when violent fanatics were desecrating Catholic churches and taking objects of value.

On December 27, 1793, a group of revolutionaries entered the church and boldly opened the tabernacle. The bloodstained cloth, now encased in a crystal tube, was actually handled by one of them, but fortunately was rejected as being of little value. After this

desecration of the church, the relic was entrusted to the safekeeping of a pious parishioner, Dominique Cortet. While it was in his home it was venerated and given all respect, yet despite this care, the tube was cracked on both the top and bottom. One of the injuries was caused by M. Lucotte, the Cure' of Blanot, who often kissed it and put it on the eyes of the faithful. The other end was accidentally cracked while it was hidden in the drawer of an armoire.

Following the Revolution, when peace was again restored, many persons were questioned about the authenticity of the cloth within the crystal tube. All agreed that it was the same one that had been kept in the church. After ecclesiastical officials were satisfied as to the relic's authenticity, it was solemnly returned to the church and placed in a box covered with velvet which, in turn, was placed within the tabernacle.

Sometime later a new crystal tube was designed for the relic. At either end are rings of gold and copper, with a cross surmounting the top. The tube, with the cloth clearly visible, is sealed and kept within a special ostensorium. This is adorned at its base with four enamel panels which depict events in the history of the relic.

Each year on Easter Monday, according to ancient custom, the relic is solemnly exposed in the church of Blanot.

(Eucharistic Miracles by Joan Carroll Cruz 1987 [TAN Books and Publishers, Inc.](#))

EAT AND DRINK

"So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.'"

(John 6:53-55)

TOGETHER TRANSMIT the TEN COMMANDMENTS

VATICAN CITY, JAN 16, 2006 (VIS) - Today in the Vatican, the Holy Father received a delegation from the Jewish community in Rome, headed by Chief Rabbi Riccardo Di Segni.

Benedict XVI began his short address by referring to Moses' song of thanksgiving after his passage through the Red Sea. "Your visit fills me with joy," he said "and it motivates me to renew with you this song of thanks for salvation. The people of Israel have been liberated many times from the hands of their enemies and, in times of anti-Semitism, in the dramatic moments of the Shoah, the hand of the Almighty guided and sustained them. The favor of the God of the Covenant has always accompanied them, giving them the strength to overcome trials. Your Jewish community, present in the city of Rome for more than two thousand years, can also bear witness to this divine loving attention."

"The Catholic Church," he continued, "is close to you and is your friend. ... Following Vatican Council II the reciprocal esteem and trust between us has increased. Ever more fraternal and cordial contacts have developed, becoming even more intense during the pontificate of my venerated predecessor, John Paul II."

"In Christ we partake in your heritage of the Fathers, in order to serve the Almighty, ... grafted onto the one 'holy tree' of the people of God. As Christians, this fact makes us aware that, with you, we share in the responsibility of cooperating for the good of all people, in justice and peace, in truth and freedom, in holiness and love. Keeping in mind this shared mission we cannot fail to denounce and fight firmly against the hatred and misunderstanding, the injustice and violence that continue to worry the soul of men and women of good will. In this context, how can we not be pained and concerned over the renewal of manifestations of anti-Semitism?"

The Pope concluded by expressing his best wishes to the rabbi, affirming that "the many challenges and needs of Rome and the world demand that we unite our hands and hearts in concrete initiatives of solidarity, justice and charity. Together, we can work to transmit the torch of the Ten Commandments and of hope to the young generation."

**AC/JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ROME/DI SEGNI
VIS 060116 (390)**

NEOCATECHUMENAL WAY: SPREAD the GOSPEL of LIFE

VATICAN CITY, JAN 12, 2006 (VIS) - Today in the Vatican, Benedict XVI received a group from the Neocatechumenal Way, including 200 families who will soon depart on evangelizing missions in various countries, especially in Latin America.

These "mission families" came into being in 1986 in response to a call from John Paul II to undertake new evangelization. Participants, who all belong to the Neocatechumenal Way, offer themselves as volunteers to go to countries where the Church needs help. Their destination is decided by the founders of the Neocatechumenal Way - the Spaniards Kiko Arguello and Carmen Hernandez, and the Italian priest Mario Pezzi - bearing in mind the specific requirements of each particular area, and in response to requests from bishops who ask for "mission families" to be sent to their dioceses.

"Your task," said the Pope after greeting the group, "is part of the context of new evangelization, ... because your apostolic activity aims to situate itself within the bosom of the Church, in total harmony with her directives and in communion with the particular Churches where you will go to work, fully evaluating the richness of the charisms that the Lord has generated through the founders of the Way."

The Holy Father stressed how the families will be "humble and joyful witnesses" of Christ, "travelling in simplicity and poverty down the roads of all the continents. "He then went on to emphasize the importance of the liturgy in evangelization: "Your long experience can well confirm how the centrality of the mystery of Christ, celebrated in liturgical rites, constitutes a privileged and indispensable way to build vibrant and lasting Christian communities."

The Pope then referred to norms concerning the celebration of the Eucharist recently emanated, specifically for the Neocatechumenal Way, by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. "I am sure," he said, "that you will attentively observe these norms, which are based on liturgical texts approved by the Church. By faithful adherence to all Church directives, you will render your apostolate even more effective, in harmony and full communion with the Pope and the pastors of dioceses."

"Dear families," Pope Benedict concluded, "with your own history you can testify that the Lord does not abandon those who entrust themselves to Him. Continue to spread the Gospel of Life. ... In a world seeking human certainties and heavenly security, show that Christ is the solid rock upon which to build the edifice of one's own life, and that trust placed in Him is never placed in vain."

**AC/NECATECHUMENAL FAMILIES/ARGUELLO
VIS 060112 (440)**

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.

BULLETIN NOTICES for *PFMC* 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 **PFMC** events for which you have an interest.

Please help get the word out on **PFMC** 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 PFMC 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 PFMC. 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 PFMC 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.

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 Street, 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>.

CATHOLIC RADIO

J. P. Kasperowicz, who has been coordinator of **Youth Track** events at the **PFMC Retreat Conference** and the **IHS Unity Conference** will be on the air from **6-9 PM** on **Tuesday** on www.CatholicInternetRadio.com.

The format will be as follows:

6 PM - Christian Contemporary Music (People can go to www.Single-hearted.com and choose songs as intercessory prayer for someone else.)

7 PM - Call in or email portion of the show (at times there will be interviews with Catholic Artists)

8 PM - Bible Study (Prepared before hand)

8:30 PM - Divine Mercy Chaplet (Sung as on J.P.'s CD)

NOTE: J. P. will have a table at the **2006 RETREAT CONFERENCE** with his ministry materials.

(from: johnpaul@single-hearted.com 1/23/06)

OUR LADY *JesusMosaic* or PICTURE

Support the **PFMC** and *JesusMosaics*. 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 with the **November 2005** issue of **"The PILGRIM"** or via the following link: <http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/ImmaculateConceptionJM.pdf> and consider ordering this beautiful *JesusMosaic* or the underlying **Frank Bear** picture of **Our Lady** for yourself or as present to others.

Frank Bear of *JesusMosaics* has gone through his *JesusMosaic* creations and made the base picture available where he could. We can show you how to see both. Call (856) 768-9228 and ask for **Keith**.



CALENDARS:

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**.

In **March**, the Church celebrates the Solemnities of **ASH WEDNESDAY (1)**, **SAINT JOSEPH, HUSBAND of MARY (19)** and the **ANNUNCIATION of the LORD (25)**, the Optional Memorials of **Saints Katherine Drexel (3)**, **Casimir (4)**, **Perpetua and Felicity (7)**, **John of God (8)**, **Frances of Rome (9)**, **Patrick (17)**, **Cyril of Jerusalem (18)** and **Turibio de Mogrovejo (23)**.

In **April**, the Church celebrates Solemnities of **PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY (9)**, **EASTER SUNDAY (16)**, and **DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY (23)**, the Feast of **Saint Mark, Evangelist (25)**, Memorial of **Saint Catherine of Siena (29)**, and Optional Memorials of **Saints Isidore (4)**, **Vincent Ferrer (5)**, **John Baptist de la Salle (7)**, **Fidelis of Sigmaringen (24)**, **Peter Chanel (28)**, and **Louis Mary de Monfort (28)**. The **EASTER TRIDUUM** is Holy Thursday (13), Good Friday (14) and Holy Saturday (15). The **DIVINE MERCY NOVENA** starts on Good Friday (14).

AROUND the **PFMC** AREA

Please review the announcements on **pages 1** through **5**, and on **pages 30** and **31** 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 **FEBRUARY 2006**

Pope Benedict's general prayer intention for the month of **February** is: "End to human trafficking. That the International Community may be ever more aware of the urgent duty to bring an end to the trafficking in human beings."

His mission intention is: "Lay faithful. That in the Missions the lay faithful may recognize the need to serve their own country with greater commitment in its political and social life."

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

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

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

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

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The PILGRIM, Volume 17, Number 2 – February 2006

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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!**"

