



The PILGRIM

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July - August 2005

The *PILGRIM* is a periodical from the **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



Holy Spirit, spouse of Mary, the Mother of God, you know our desires to love and serve Thee. Your love burns and never fails. Your love teaches us through virtues and in wisdom how to choose only those things that will deepen our lives and make of them a channel of a consuming fire to love and serve perfectly.

Come Spirit of God and fill every crack and every area of our souls, so that we may come to see God face to face. Allow all our sufferings on this earth to merit for our eternal reward.

In love we come with hearts open wide for you to fill. Let your Spouse, Mary, intercede for us. AMEN
(Kathleen prays from the heart for each issue.)

9-17 October 2005 PILGRIMAGE is CANCELLED

We were informed by **Father Glenn Hartman** that he could not be Spiritual Director for this pilgrimage. Then we had pilgrims but no Spiritual Director. We called all the priests we could think of after the notification by **Father Hartman**. Every one of them had conflicts with the dates of this pilgrimage. Please pray for us as the costs of setting up a pilgrimage and making changes to it based on the desires of the Spiritual Director and then having him cancel out his participation are staggering.

(Keith and Kathleen Werner, Co-Directors)

VACATIONS, AN OPPORTUNITY to RESTORE BODY and SPIRIT

VATICAN CITY, JUL 17, 2005 (VIS) - This morning Benedict XVI prayed the Angelus together with more than 6,000 people, including locals,

"The PILGRIM" for July - August 2005 is dedicated to "Mary, Model for all Models of Sanctity". See page 3 for an "IN THIS ISSUE . . ." or Table of Contents listing.

holiday-makers and pilgrims, who joined him at Les Combes in Italy's Valle d'Aosta where he is spending his vacation.

Before the Marian prayer, the Holy Father referred to his "beloved predecessor," John Paul II, "whose memory is still alive in the stupendous mountains of the Valle d'Aosta" where "for many years he came to spend brief periods of vacation."

"This summer break," the Holy Father continued, "is a truly providential gift of God following the first months of the demanding pastoral service with which Divine Providence has entrusted me."

"In the world in which we live it is almost a requirement to be able to restore body and spirit, especially for city dwellers, where the often frenetic lifestyle leaves little time for silence, reflection or the soothing contact with nature. Vacations are also a period in which one can dedicate more time to prayer, reading and meditation on the profound meaning of life, in the serene environment of one's own family and loved ones."

"Through contact with nature, people again find their true dimension, they rediscover themselves as creatures, small but at the same time unique, and 'capable of God' because of an interior openness to Infinity. Driven by the need for meaning which rises from their hearts, they perceive in the surrounding world the signs of goodness and of Divine Providence and, almost naturally, they become open to praise and prayer."

(ANG/VACATIONS/LES COMBES VIS 050718 (270))

2006 RETREAT CONFERENCE

Reserve *Friday, 17 February 2006* through *Sunday, 19 February 2006* for the **PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE**. It is shaping up

The *June* and *July* MESSAGES, from **GOSPA, Our Lady, Queen of Peace**, to an alleged visionary from **Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina**, are presented beginning on page 20 (centerfold page) with REFLECTIONS and PRESS BULLETINS.

beautifully. In prayer we have signed a contract with the *Clarion Hotel* on **Old Marlton Pike (New Jersey Route 70)** near **Interstate 295** in **Cherry Hill, NJ**. Those of you who have been attending the **PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE** events over the years may remember this 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.

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.

In order to encourage more attendance and in recognition of the room costs, the **PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE** registration rates have been revised downward to **\$50** per person and **\$95** for a married couple. An green color information brochure with registration forms for the **RETREAT CONFERENCE** and **YOUTH TRACK** is enclosed and a color version of it is available online at: www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2006/06RET2.pdf.

You must register for the **PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE** with the **PFMC** using a **PFMC** registration form from the information brochures mentioned above or by calling **(856) 768-9228**. Early registration is recommended. You may be a walk-in registrant but this is discouraged due to the advance planning put into the attendance of each registrant.

You may use facsimile (FAX) to send room reservations to the *Clarion Hotel* **(856) 354-7662** or **PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE** registrations to the **PFMC** **(856) 768-9428**. This is recommended in the last few weeks when mail might be delayed.

We will have a food plan available that will make it

worth your while to purchase hot meals. On the premises is a restaurant that will facilitate anyone who just wants to order from the menu. 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**. Music will be by **"REFUGE."** **Al Barbarino** has agreed to be our **Master of Ceremonies** as well as provide his music ministry witness on **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. **Daily Rosary, Angelus, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Confessions** and much more is in the planning process.

The **PFMC** will have a gift or display room with all of our stock of books, statues, and religious articles available. *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 will parents attend the adult program. Youth / young adult participants are expected to be that by being at all sessions and taking an active part in the program. Parents should make arrangements for leave little children or those who do not wish to participate in the 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.

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

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

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.

(Kathleen and Keith with all the **PFMC** Volunteers)

IN MEMORIAM

Please pray for the repose of the souls of:

Robert Lee Scott (7/10/05), father of Robert and Lori Ann Scott (Lion of Judah)

Margaret Bowden (5/8/05), mother of Father Jay Bowden

Elizabeth Feehan (1/26/05), aunt of Father Jay Bowden

Alice Messmer, cousin of Deloris Slesiensky

Michael Swierzy (7/25/05), dear friend of PFMC and volunteer for “The PILGRIM” assembly.

Please send us death notices, prayer cards, etc. so we can pray for the deceased who are beloved by our readers.

(Requested by Colleen Thomas, **PFMC** Volunteer)

PLEASE MARK YOUR 2005 CALENDARS for **PFMC** EVENTS

See **Conference Corner** on page 38 as well as **Bulletin Notices** on page 38. Most **PFMC** area events will be preceded by their own information sheets with reservation forms.

August 2005

7 August 2005: The annual **PFMC Business Meeting** will take place after **Prayer** at 3 PM in the midst of a **PFMC Pot Luck Picnic**.

October 2005

9 October – 17 October 2005: Pilgrimage to **San Giovanni Rotondo, Monte Sant’ Angelo, Lanciano, and Rome, Italy** has been cancelled. Due to the **Camden Diocese Priests Convocation** during this pilgrimage **Father Glenn Hartman** has had to withdraw from it. No other priests on our lists were available for the dates shown above.

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PILGRIMAGES

We have published information sheets with reservation forms to coordinate pilgrims for pilgrimages to **Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina** and to **San Giovanni Rotondo, Monte San Angelo, Lanciano, and Rome, Italy** and now for a **Spring 2006 Pilgrimage** to the **Holy Lands of Israel and Jordan** with **Father John Tino**. Departure will be on the **Monday after Easter, 17 April 2006**. See the

blue colored information sheet enclosed with this issue of **"The PILGRIM."**

What would you like to do with regard to visiting **Medjugorje** or any other shrine or holy place recognized by the **Magisterium** of the **Roman Catholic Church** as a worthy place of pilgrimage?

Please let us know the times of the year you might want to go on pilgrimage and interim stopover points. We can go via a number of airports with moderate layovers in the airport. We have always preferred to spend at least a day visiting holy places around the airport by arriving early and departing late.

If you would like us to set up a pilgrimage or a retreat cruise for your prayer group, parish, or school, with or without **PFMC** coordination, please call (856) 768-9228 for estimates on your ideas.

For our 2005 pilgrimages we are using the services of **206 Tours**, from **Smithville, NY**. They have been organizing such pilgrimages since 1985. **206 Tours** has set up a special web page for the **PFMC** at: <http://www.pilgrimages.com/pfmc/>.

5 to 13 September 2005: Pilgrims may join a pilgrimage to **Medjugorje** coordinated by **Rafael Villongco**, (732) 441-0567 or (732) 441-1513. The **Spiritual Director** will be **Father Donald Calloway, MIC**. The base price is \$1499 plus \$160 - \$200 for travel / airport taxes. Add-on air fares from other cities to **Newark, NJ** are available. Please visit: <http://www.pilgrimages.com/fralloway> for more information. This pilgrimage has over 40 pilgrims.

1 to 9 October 2005: Pilgrims may join a pilgrimage to **Medjugorje** coordinated by **Dawn Rusinko**, (732) 714-1170. This is from **Newark, NJ** for \$1450.

9 to 17 October 2005: **San Giovanni Rotondo (Saint Pio of Pietrelcina)**, **Monte San Angelo, Lanciano (Eucharistic Miracle)**, and **Rome, Italy**, has been cancelled.

(The Volunteer Staff at the **PFMC**)

PILGRIMAGE to the HOLY LANDS of ISRAEL and JORDAN – EASTER MONDAY, 17 APRIL 2006 through SUNDAY, 30 APRIL 2006

WALKING in the FOOTSTEPS of JESUS

We have received notice that the ban on travel to the **Holy Lands of Israel and Jordan** has been lifted. With the awareness that there have been numerous successful pilgrimages to the **Holy Lands**,

we have put together a pilgrimage of a lifetime for anyone who has ever wanted to experience the **Footsteps of Jesus**. It is a culmination of the best of our 3 previous **PFMC** pilgrimages to the **Holy Lands** along with other information that we have accumulated.

We plan to stay in 3 to 4 star hotels, and will have the best of all we can see shown to us. It will be a prayerful experience 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**. We will have **Daily Holy Mass** and other times of prayer at each site visited. **You will experience one of the greatest gifts of a lifetime on this pilgrimage.**

We have worked very hard to keep expenses down, and we offer you all breakfasts and suppers and the services of an excellent guide along with comfortable motor coaches as well as any entrance fees. See the blue colored information sheet enclosed with this issue of **"The PILGRIM"** or view it online at: www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2006/06HLP04.pdf.

Please, look over the planned itinerary enclosed, and do send in your deposit now. We need deposits to lock in airline seats now. With any questions, please call **Kathleen**, (856) 768-9228. 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 change.

(Kathleen)

HOLY FATHER'S VACATION: WORK, WALKS and MUSIC

VATICAN CITY, JUL 17, 2005 (VIS) - During an informal meeting with journalists at Les Combes, the locality in the Italian region of Valle d'Aosta where the Pope is spending his holiday, Holy See Press Office Director Joaquin Navarro-Valls described Benedict XVI's vacation, which began on July 11 and will last until July 28, as "a real holiday, but a working holiday."

After celebrating Mass and eating breakfast the Holy Father reads the breviary before retiring to his room to write, said Navarro-Valls. "I would not say he is writing an Encyclical," said the Holy See spokesman, suggesting that perhaps the Holy Father is working on a book. In the afternoon the Pope usually takes a walk around the local area. On Saturday, returning home, he paused to greet some of the locals.

The Holy Father's chalet, the property of the Salesians, is the same one in which John Paul II used

to stay. “Everything has remained as it was,” said Navarro-Valls, save the piano which has been placed in the study. The Pope loves music and “over these days I have heard him play Mozart”, the press office director added.

This evening, Benedict XVI visited a museum dedicated to John Paul II located some 500 meters from the chalet in which he is staying. The museum was inaugurated in 1996 and brings together personal objects used by John Paul II during his holidays in the alpine mountains. It also contains many photographs of the late Pontiff including pictures of him walking in the mountains wearing sports shoes and an alpine hat.

Before returning home, the Holy Father paused briefly in a small nearby hermitage, where he spent a few minutes in prayer.

(.../VACATIONS:LES COMBES/NAVARRO-VALLS
VIS 050718 (300))

ORDER THIS IMPORTANT NEW BOOK

Pope John Paul II performed 3 exorcisms in 25 years, but he warned us, often, about Satan’s influence. He stated:

“The devil, the prince of this world, even today continues his insidious actions. Each and every man is tempted by the devil when he least expects it.”

A book that has been out in Italian has now been translated into English, and we would like to tell you about it.

The title is **‘THE DECEIVER...Our Daily Battle with Satan’** by Father Livio Fanzaga. This book has been the top selling religious book since 2000. Father Fanzaga, the Rome educated and Vatican endorsed writer and director of Europe’s largest Catholic radio network, warns:

“Efforts to soft pedal the reality and continuous threat of the devil have left many Catholics unarmed and unprepared to resist him. But the question is: How does Satan tempt and deceive us? How can we see through him, and resist him?”

Drawing dazzlingly from Scripture, tradition, saint’s lives, and his pastoral experience, Father Fanzaga supplies practical answers to:

- How Satan “personalizes” temptations?

- Two “fundamental activities” of Satan, seen in Scripture.
- The False Benefactor: how Satan always has something seemingly “good” to offer at the moment of temptation.
- How individual corruption by sin can pass through families?
- How Satan takes advantage of human desire for happiness?
- Most potent defense against evil.
- Why does God permit an experience – temptation – that could lead to our defeat?
- How God limits temptations?
- How Our Lord faced His adversary in the desert, and the clear lessons here for us?
- The tempting illusion that death is still very far away
- Why Satan does not challenge God directly?
- Why Genesis represents Satan as a serpent?
- Why revelation alone, not reason or science, is our source of knowledge about Satan?
- Two great events in history reveal the evil one.
- How we know from Scripture that temptation is lifelong?
- Why fallen angels were never forgiven?
- How Satan hides himself behind people and events?
- Gospel passage spotlights origins of Satan’s hatred of God.

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

- Special sources of strength, when we feel abandoned by God.
- The trap of discouragement.
- Satan's strength: not to be underestimated, but limited in one all important way.
- How Satan tempts you with (and how to resist) by attachment to Material Things, Worries and Anxieties of Life, Distrust, Complaining, Irritability, Misunderstanding, Curiosity, Lust, Immodesty, Infidelity, Gossip, Foul language, Deception, Injustice, Misuse of Free Time Television and Entertainment, Neglect of God and Prayer, and much more?

This is a very special book that we encourage our readers to purchase now, and to not only read, but use in their own understanding, and conversion experience.

Order this from the **PFMC** at our address by phone and credit card (MasterCard, Visa or Discover). Be sure to write out the whole number and give us the expiration date; or send us a check made out to **PFMC**. The cost may seem high, but the benefits are worth far more at **\$22.95** per book.

If you order this book by **September 1, 2005** we will absorb the postage and handling for you. After **September 1, 2005**, please send **\$3.95** in addition to the **\$22.95** per book.

(Kathleen)

LACE FLORAL MANTILLAS 40 INCHES X 23 INCHES

Many have asked us to carry the mantillas. We have ordered the above sizes in both white (**American** lace) or black (in the **Spanish** lace) at **\$22.00** per mantilla. You may order this now, or call us about other sizes (longer or cap style). We will try to accommodate your needs. Send check to the **PFMC** or send your information on the use of **MasterCard, Visa, or Discover** credit cards. Please be helpful with the 3% service charge for the use of credit cards.

(Kathleen)

“UNBOUND”

Do you find yourself struggling with the same sin area time after time? Do you feel hopeless in finding freedom, despite your best efforts? By tapping into the potent power of the Gospel you can

foil Satan's plans for your life and live the abundant, glorious life God has in mind.

This new book is a breakthrough book that is much needed today. It will bring new life and hope to countless individuals. This book is most helpful for dealing with evil spirits and related impairments in people's lives. It is easy to read, and will help one to understand that God desires for each child of His a level of peace and freedom.

“Unbound” is one of the best books on deliverance and healing ministry. It is one that will open closed doors that were available to the evil influence and Satan's underhanded strategies.

We encourage you to write for this new book by **Neal Lozano** with a foreword by **Francis MacNutt**. It is **\$12.99 + \$3.95** shipping and is now available through the **PFMC**. If ordered by **September 1, 2005**, there is no mail charge, but after **September 1**, please send us the postage. We will send it out to you immediately.

(Kathleen)

NAIL in the FENCE

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His Father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence. The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper.

The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, “You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same.

When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there. “ A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one. Friends are very rare jewels, indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear, they share words of praise and they always want to open their hearts to us.”

(From Dottie Lyons)

PADRE PIO'S UNUSUAL WAY of SWEETENING OUR SORROWS

It took place at Christmas time in the Fifties. To be exact in 1954. I decided to confide what troubled me to Padre Pio in Confession. I had written an article for the Christmas issue of this magazine, at that time called a journal, addressed to the readers, in which I remembered Guglielmo Sanguinetti, who had died three months before with a heart-attack.

During those days of the season which should be merry, I found it only natural to speak about him. There was still a feeling of acute sorrow for his death and everyone suffered deeply, above all Padre Pio. Sanguinetti had been his closest collaborator. The man who, as soon as he met Padre Pio, rapidly changed from disbelief, so to say, to absolute faith. Sanguinetti absorbed, perhaps more than anyone else, all that he learnt from Padre Pio. Above all during their evening meetings. At first during the relatively short periods that he spent at San Giovanni Rotondo, coming here from Borgo San Lorenzo, in the Mugello, where he was a general practitioner. Then, after he moved here as a fixed abode, regularly every evening.

Sanguinetti was a man of sterling character, loyal and dependable. Once he had made up his mind he was a most faithful collaborator, making no secret of his convictions, but revealing them without reserve in all of his writings, letters and articles for Padre Pio's Work. It might seem that Padre Pio chose to involve him in the Work by chance, but it was instead a deliberate choice, having picked him out among the many people that surrounded him. Padre Pio read his heart and knew the total dedication he was capable of offering, as he in fact did.

PADRE PIO WEPT INCONSOLABLY for the DEATH of HIS FRIEND

Sanguinetti was Padre Pio's disciple and never missed a word. He made them his own, to the point of being able to repeat them not only in what he wrote, but also what he said. However, he was also Padre Pio's doctor, and with his recognized talent for diagnosis, he understood Padre Pio's physique. He knew that Padre Pio should only be given medicine when really necessary and even then, with the lowest possible dosage. "If he needs to take an Aspirin - he used to say - you should only give him half, as you would do with a child."

Finally, Sanguinetti was Padre Pio's friend. And when he died Padre Pio wept inconsolably, complaining to the Lord, with rash words that were

almost a rebuke, in a tone that only mystics dare to use: «If you'd only told me, I would have torn him from you.»

This is only to show the great affection that Padre Pio felt for Guglielmo Sanguinetti, who, apart from anything else, was one of the men who enabled Padre Pio to start his project for the relief of suffering. Sanguinetti dedicated himself to this without reserve. Physically and spiritually. But also, it must be said, ideologically. As the Work came into being, Sanguinetti's thoughts accompanied it step by step. With all that he said, his articles for the magazine, his letters and even the leaflets published, Sanguinetti managed to diffuse the principles that Padre Pio wanted his Work to be founded upon, explaining and stressing them one by one.

THE DEATH of SANGUINETTI WAS A GREAT LOSS TO US

In a certain sense Mario Sanvico was also an ideologist, but in a different way. He was more passionate. A man of action who followed the impulse of the moment, extemporaneously. For Sanguinetti, however, it was a fulltime commitment. He was also passionate in his ideals, but he was in any case methodical, persistent and rational.

In this way the Work also grew on solid concepts. It was not only a material construction, based on calculations, numbers and square metres, but also on words, thoughts and prayers. An unusual combination, inspired by Padre Pio, which was coming into being with the right men to guide it.

This was another reason why, for those of us who worked with him, the death of Sanguinetti was a tremendous loss. He was irreplaceable. After his death a highly esteemed spiritual son of Padre Pio was proposed as head of the Home for Relief of Suffering. He was from Milan, a true gentleman, but absolutely out of his depth in dealing with the problems and highly intricate situations that had made life so difficult for Sanguinetti and that perhaps, or even without perhaps, had helped to kill him. This was meant to be a leadership of transition, in order to overcome a difficult moment. In fact it lasted less than three months. Just enough time for the board of directors to make an adequate decision.

The result was to put the Work in the hands of real and proper managers: industrialists, engineers and professionals, in order to complete its construction. And it was to the head of all these men, to the managing director, that I duly took the proofs of my article for the Christmas issue. At that time the magazine didn't have a cover and my article was to

be printed on the front page, as the editorial. I had felt it my duty to remember Sanguinetti with heartfelt warmth and stirring words, as I had been his close collaborator. Right from the start Sanguinetti had shown absolute trust in me, even though I was really a freshman to the job.

The managing director, however, was not of the same opinion. His embarrassed restraint, more than his actual words, made me realize that he didn't accept what I had written about Sanguinetti. It seemed incredible to me that there could be any reserve, in fact censorship, because this was what it really was, regarding Sanguinetti. However, it was not just a chance occurrence. It was all part of a general plan, which had been going on for some time, to subtly, but at times even openly, cut his figure down to size. Almost as though the managing director wanted to bring himself to the fore and put Padre Pio in the shade. And this was done by minimizing the importance of the lay people, who Padre Pio had chosen to realize his idea.

WE MUST NEVER FAIL to RETURN to the PRINCIPLES PADRE PIO WANTED

I naturally did as I was told. In one way or another I modified the article. With just one paragraph of only a few lines dedicated to Sanguinetti: too few words for a traveling companion who, if things had gone differently, would have once again addressed the friends of the Work that Christmas, with the same familiarity as always, on the front page of the magazine. Perhaps because, in this shorter version, the article didn't seem complete to me, or for other reasons, I didn't sign it in full, but only with my initials.

It was quite natural for me, feeling embittered as I was, to confide my distress to Padre Pio. I did this in confession, in the little sacristy, as I knelt beside him. He listened to me with his usual attention. Afterwards, however, he didn't say a word or make any comment, as he often did about what he was told. Instead he surprisingly extracted a chocolate from the folds of his habit and handed it to me saying: «Here, sweeten your mouth with this.» Such an unexpected thing to do calmed me down immediately, putting to flight, so to say, any bitterness I felt. It was the highly original reply of a saint, who wanted to overcome that critical moment and complete his Work, repressing any personal sentiment to do so.

From then onwards, whether I wanted to or not, I had to remain quiet regarding Sanguinetti. Who was remembered and loved, in private and among ourselves, but publicly ignored, except on formal occasions. Then, at a certain moment, his figure

began to re-emerge, coming to notice, so to say, on its own.

When Monsignor Ruotolo took the reigns of the Work he searched back to the origins, in order to get to know Padre Pio's thoughts, and he found, in the pages of the early years of this magazine, in other publications, and by talking to collaborators and friends, that Guglielmo Sanguinetti had in fact been the interpreter of these thoughts, as dictated to him by Padre Pio himself. These thoughts have defined the charitable and spiritual characteristics of the Work.

Sanguinetti's many words and the many things he wrote, now collected and published, are like a code, a *memorandum* that we can refer to in order to cultivate, relive and remember the origins of the Work. Something that is even more essential today, now that the hospital activity is far more extensive than it ever was with the original «clinic». This prodigious development, which was in any case prophesied, makes it essential for us to always return to the fundamental principles established by Padre Pio, so that the true identity of the Work is never lost, but instead transmitted to all of the future generations who work in the Home. The president always reminds us of this in his speeches, and we always try to remind everyone in this magazine.

(By Gherardo Leone, LA CASA SOLLIEVO DELLA SOFFERENZA, March 2003)

DARK DATA on MARRIAGE

The state of the family has been very much on the mind of Benedict XVI. Last Saturday, in an address to a diocesan pilgrimage from Verona, Italy, the Pope expressed concern over the increase in divorces and de facto relationships.

Then, on Monday, he gave a lengthy speech on themes related to marriage and the family during the opening of an ecclesial congress organized by the Diocese of Rome.

The Holy Father has good grounds for being concerned, as demonstrated by recent data from a number of countries. A statistical analysis presented at a seminar held by the Lateran University showed a marked change in marriage when data from 2001 and 1981 were compared.

According to the report on the seminar in the newspaper *Corriere della Sera* on March 19, Italy in 1981 had a rate of 5.6 marriages per 1,000 people, for a total number that year of 316,953. By 2001 the rate had fallen to 4.5 marriages per 1,000 people, or 260,904 marriages in all.

Couples living together outside marriage have also risen. In 1993 there were 277,000 de facto couples in Italy. By 2001 the number had risen to 453,000. Bishop Dante Lafranconi of Cremona reported at the seminar that around half of the couples who attend Church-run pre-marriage courses are already living together.

The latest figures on the Italian family released by the country's official statistical office, ISTAT, back up the concerns. For 2002-03, singles accounted to 25.4% of family units, compared with 21.1% in 1994-95, according to a report last Oct. 28 in the *Corriere della Sera*. The number of de facto couples was estimated at 564,000.

Spain is also seeing strong challenges to the family. An article June 3 in the newspaper *La Razón* revealed that a report published by the Institute of Family Politics showed a 60% increase in separations and divorces in the last 8 years, for a total of 134, 931 in 2004.

Out of wedlock

On the other side of the Channel things are worse. The *Guardian* newspaper reported last Dec. 17 that data published by the Office for National Statistics showed that 41% of births in England and Wales in 2003 took place outside marriage. This compares with 12% only a decade earlier. In some areas, such as northeast England and Wales, the proportion of out-of-wedlock births is now over 50%.

London's *Telegraph* newspaper on Feb. 5 analyzed further information coming from the Office of National Statistics on the family. The number of marriages in 2003 rose by 4.7% on the previous year, to 267,770.

But the rise in the last two years in marriages is due above all to an increase in second marriages after divorces. In fact, in 2003 only 59% of all marriages were to first-time brides and grooms. Moreover, the average age for first marriages in England and Wales in 2003 was 29 for women and 31 for men, compared with 23 and 26, respectively, 40 years earlier.

Marriage stability might also suffer in Ireland soon, as a report published Feb. 26 by the news portal *Catholicireland.net* revealed. Following a 1997 referendum on divorce, Irish couples have had to live apart during four out of the five preceding years before applying to the courts for a divorce.

However, a new law of the European Union, which automatically overrides the Irish Constitution, changes the situation. The law, which came into force March 1, allows a spouse who has lived abroad for one year to apply for a divorce in that nation's jurisdiction. And once a case is initiated in another

EU country, Irish courts no longer have jurisdiction in the matter.

In North America the situation is no less serious. A report released by Statistics Canada showed a sharp increase in repeat divorces. In a March 10 article, the *Globe and Mail* newspaper reported that 16.2% of the divorces granted in 2003 involved men who had previously been divorced. The figure for women was 15.7%. Overall, there were 70,828 divorces in 2003, up almost 1% from 70,155 a year earlier.

"We are ... a very individualistic society, and we value choice, we value romance, and we've become much less tolerant of anything that goes wrong," said Anne-Marie Ambert, a York University professor and one of Canada's foremost specialists on marriage and divorce. "We are less willing to work at relationships. It's much easier to break up a marriage than it used to be in the past."

Everyone's problem

An editorial March 11 in the *Globe and Mail* expressed concern over the state of marriage in Canada. It noted that the proportion of marriages expected to break up before they reach the 30th wedding anniversary reached 38.3% in 2003. And while politicians are busy introducing same-sex marriage, they do nothing to help husbands and wives stay together.

"Divorce is considered to be a private matter between husband and wife, an individual choice in which government and society have little interest," said the editorial. "That's obviously not true. Divorce is not just a tragedy for couples. It's a problem for everyone else." After noting how divorce harms children, and the couple themselves, the editorial concluded: "When a marriage ends, a home is destroyed as surely as when a house burns to the ground. Every divorce is a tragedy."

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In the United States, Census Bureau figures for 2003 show that both men and women are putting off marriage, the Associated Press reported Dec. 1. In fact, one-third of men and nearly one-quarter of women between the ages of 30 and 34 have never been married. This is nearly four times the rates in 1970.

The data from the Census Bureau's "Current Population Survey" showed that the age at which people marry for the first time rose from 20.8 for women and 23.2 for men in 1970, to 25.3 and 27.1, respectively, in 2003. The number of births outside marriage reached nearly 35% in 2003, compared with 11% in 1970.

The family is also under threat in Australia. Households comprising both parents and at least one child now account for only 47% of the total, the newspaper *Australian* reported Jan. 22. On the rise are single-parent families, up from 552,000 in 1991, to 763,000 by 2001. The newspaper based its report on information in the 2005 Year Book Australia, published by the country's Bureau of Statistics.

Vocation to love

In his speech Monday, Benedict XVI explained that marriage is a lot more than the result of social and cultural factors. The question of what is the right way for a man and a woman to unite their lives is founded on the deepest essence of what it means to be a human person, he said.

The Bible reveals to us that we were created in God's image, and that God is love, the Holy Father said. Being an authentic image of God therefore means that we must find the way to live out our vocation to love. And the love expressed between the couple at the moment they commit themselves in marriage must be complete and total for it to be authentic.

Thus, the decision to live together without marrying, as well as the attempts to create "pseudo-marriages" of same-sex couples, are a misuse of our liberty, said Benedict XVI. Such moves, he added, also stem from a refusal to acknowledge the profound spiritual dimension of our human nature.

(ZE05061106 ROME, JUNE 11, 2005 (Zenit.org).-
http://www.zenit.org/english/send_friend/index.phtml?sid=72434)

CELEBRATING 'THE THEOLOGIAN of the MOUNTAIN'

On Wednesday, 18 May, a peak of the Gran Sasso, in the range of the Abruzzi Mountains in

the Apennines that cross Central Italy, was named after Pope John Paul II. Cardinal Jose Saraiva Martins, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, presided at the Eucharistic celebration held in the Church of San Pietro della Jenca in L'Aquila, the capital of the Abruzzi region. The following is a translation of the Cardinal's homily, given in Italian.

"Levavi oculos ad montes... I lift up my eyes to the mountains: from where shall come my help? My help shall come from the Lord who made heaven and earth" (Ps 122[121]:1-2).

The inspired words of the Psalm, rich in poetry and spirituality, seem to me the most fitting to express the close connection between the mountains and the search of human beings of all epochs for something greater, something that surpasses them, something transcendent.

At the same time, the Psalmist's words also suggest to us an interpretation and an understanding of the strong, evocative fascination that mountain peaks never failed to exercise on John Paul II.

If we could juxtapose, as if on a topographic map, all the well-known names of mountains in Holy Scripture and link them accordingly to all their spiritual "patrons", that is, to those biblical figures who are in some way connected with their summits, we would be able to make an unusual and especially significant pilgrimage through the various phases of salvation history. And among them all, Jesus of Nazareth would dominate; indeed, the Gospels often say of him that "he went up on the mountain by himself to pray".

Although we cannot do this, the mere thought of it enables us to see how this "map" turns out to be not only "physical" but also spiritual, theological and even eschatological: ready to flash before us a glimpse of distant peaks, towering for ever in the skies of eternity and the infinite.

On a mountain, closer to God

Let us attempt, therefore, only as the crow flies, to visualize the scenery of the map mentioned above.

We will find Abraham, accompanied by his son Isaac on his dramatic pilgrimage to Mount Moriah; Noah, on Mount Ararat where the Ark came to rest; Moses on Sinai; Aaron, who died on the peak of Mount Hor; and many others, not forgetting the mountains of the beloved in the Song of Songs.

We also know well that Jesus lived much of his life against a backdrop of mountains. The Gospels frequently speak of Jesus "going out to the mountain".

Before choosing the Twelve, he spent the night alone on the mountain (Lk 6:12-13). And after the multiplication of the loaves, Jesus dismissed the crowd and “went up on the mountain by himself to pray, remaining there alone as evening drew on” (Mt 14:23-24).

Jesus even gave one discourse, perhaps his most famous, conventionally known as “the Sermon on the Mount” (Mt 5-7), precisely on the mountain of the Beatitudes. Francois Mauriac, commenting on this *Magna Carta* of Christianity, said: “Those who have never read the Sermon on the Mount cannot grasp what Christianity is all about”.

At the same time, we must mention Mount Tabor, the mountain of the Transfiguration (cf. Lk 9:28-29), and the mountain that was featured in the last week of Christ’s earthly life, most of which he lived against the background of mountain scenery: the Mount of Olives.

Lastly, there is one other mountain among the many others that we are unable to list, a paschal mountain: the mountain in Galilee whose name is not given in the Gospels; it was there that the last solemn apparition of the Risen and Glorified Christ occurred. Indeed, at the end of his Gospel, Matthew recalls that the eleven disciples made their way to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had summoned them” (Mt 28:16), and it was there, on that mountain, that the epilogue of the earthly life of the Risen One was played out

So far, the Biblical and Gospel references (cf. G. Ravasi, *I monti di Dio*, ed. Ancora) have helped us to focus our reflection clearly on the event that is taking place today.

However, before entering into the lofty and memorable significance of this day, I would like first to mention one other point: the presence of the mountain in the iconography of all times.

It suffices, to give just one example, to mention Leonardo da Vinci’s *Virgin of the Rocks*: John Ruskin, the art critic, observes in his vast work on modern painting that “there has always been an idea of holiness” in art, “connected with rocky solitude, for .It. was on mountain peaks that the divinity would speak’ most intimately to human beings, and it was always to the mountains that *the saints withdrew for meditation and special communion with God*”.

Moreover, there is no need to teach this to you who know it well, given the history of St Celestine V and the important role he played in his unusual spiritual journey in your fascinating Abruzzi Mountains.

So it is that the mountain, even before any consideration of its physical height, is a spiritual symbol.

‘The theologian of the mountain’

I would like to interpret in this dimension the naming of this beautiful peak of yours- and the path that leads to it after John Paul II.

A distinguished ecclesiastical personage, today a Bishop (Alberto Careggio, Bishop of Ventimiglia-San Remo), who for many years had the good fortune to accompany John Paul II on his hikes and climbs in the mountains as his Alpine guide, coined a beautiful, original definition of John Paul II when he described him as “the theologian of the mountain” (cf. *Sui monti con Giovanni Paolo II*, G. Galazka, Libreria Ed. Vaticana, 2002, p. 15).

Like Elijah, who encountered God in the gentle refreshing breeze on Mount Horeb, and Moses, who prayed on the mountain to encourage his people in their struggle to breach their way to freedom, so also Karol. Wojtyla had a very special relationship with mountains.

It dates back to the years of his youth when, as a newly-ordained priest, he- would accompany university students to Tatra, the beloved mountain range in his Homeland. Even when everything seemed to prevent it- in the first place his health - this relationship never ceased.

We know practically everything there is to know about John Paul II’s Journeys: the number of his Speeches (3,288 in Italy and abroad), the number of kilometers he traveled (247,613 in 104 International Journeys and 146 in Italy); this would amount to spending about three years outside the Vatican.

If, however, we try to ask how often the Pope went to the mountains, how many times, so to speak, he secretly left the Apostolic Palaces or the Pontifical Villa at Castel Gandolfo, we are given a vague answer: “several times” (*ibid.*). It is right that this should be so.

Someone, for example, has endeavored to count all the excursions John Paul II is supposed to have made to the Abruzzi Mountains and their number is impressive; the newspapers have published it in the past few days, precisely in reference to today’s event. Although the Pope carried this secret with him to heaven, there is certainly “someone” who would be able to tell us one day, having faithfully accompanied him for the more than 26 years of his Pontificate in these most intimate and private moments.

What interests us is the contemplative gaze of Pope Wojtyla, who among other things sang of the

mountains in sublimely poetic tones, seeking in them beauty and power, deep silence and voices of mystery.

‘Straining to touch heaven’

In one of his Addresses there is a passage that I find striking: “Looking at the mountaintops one has the impression that the earth is pointing upwards, almost as if it were straining to touch heaven: men and women feel in a certain way that their yearning for the transcendent and the infinite is expressed in this reaching upwards”.

And further: “The contemporary man or woman who seems at times to be addressing only earthly things with a materialistic vision of life, must once again be able to look upwards, to the peaks of grace and glory, for which he or she was created and to which the goodness and greatness of God is beckoning” (*Address at the Glacier of Brenva, Mont Blanc, 8 September 1986*).

It seems to me that John Paul II’s words contain the important message that the Great Polish Pope has desired to bequeath to us through his boundless love for the mountains, closely related to love for “his Master”, of whom he also spoke to us in his Testament.

Just as a mountain peak always impels us to raise our eyes, to reach up towards the heights of heaven, the life and teaching of John Paul II likewise continue to be for us, as it were, a sign pointing to heaven, a reference to the infinite majesty and divine transcendence of Christ, as opposed to the flat and mediocre horizons by which we are all too often surrounded.

What John Paul II said and did through his presence in these mountains he will continue to do also with this peak, which from today is named after him, “*Cima Giovanni Paolo II*” (John Paul II Peak), and will lift him far beyond its altitude of 2,424 metres in this splendid massif of the Gran Sasso. It will do so thanks to the love of these magnificent Abruzzi people and to their understandable pride at having received and perceived Pope Wojtyla as “their own”. This is why you planned this day, in view of his 85th birthday.

I end with the very words that John Paul II spoke on Campo Imperatore, right underneath the Gran Sasso, certain that this peak will point out “the way of contemplation, not only as an excellent way to experience the Mystery, but also as a condition for humanizing our life and mutual relations”..

**(HOMILY in HONOUR of POPE JOHN PAUL II,
L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO, 13 July 2005)**

POPE EMBODIED PROFOUND, UNSHAKABLE FAITH in FACE of SUFFERING

It is finished.

Pope John Paul II had said time and time again whenever his health was called into question that he would continue in his God-given mission to the Church until Christ said it was finished.

That day came on Saturday, April 2, 2005 at 9:37 p.m., Rome time. It was the day dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and on the eve of the feast of Divine Mercy Sunday.

By the end we saw a man stripped of all that had once made him strong and powerful to the world.

The man who loved to travel, visiting 129 countries and spending more than three years away from the Vatican - could no longer walk.

The man who longed to share the depths of his soul - putting into words an innumerable amount of encyclicals, letters, homilies and addresses in which he shared the wisdom of what he knew to be true -- could no longer write.

And the Pope who loved to communicate - inviting the media on his travels so he could give testimony to the love of God and welcoming them into his hospital room so that he could be united to those suffering - could no longer speak.

What was left was a man who had so completely died to himself that he had become the ultimate instrument of God’s power and a witness to the sanctity and frailty of human life - a reality that not even the secular world could deny.

He became the embodiment of profound and unshakable faith, and the undying fidelity that was at the core of everything he taught throughout his pontificate.

“Men and women can accomplish no more important act in their lives than the act of faith; it is here that freedom reaches the certainty of truth and chooses to live in that truth,” he wrote in his 1998 encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (“Faith and Reason”).

What he taught was nothing new. What he witnessed with his life, countless people before him had also witnessed: It was a deep faith in Christ crucified, through Whom the resurrection brought salvation to the world - the victory of life over death and freedom over slavery.

“*The word of the Cross* is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the

power of God ... We preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor. 1:18-23).

Yet, to imitate Christ, he knew he must also accept suffering.

The world witnessed how he endured his great suffering and frustrations in his last months, always praying, while uniting his suffering to Christ on the Cross. He had done this time before: after being shot in 1981; after the removal of a tumor in his colon; when he dislocated his shoulder and broke his leg, and through all those years with arthritis and Parkinson’s Disease - a debilitating neurological disease characterized by muscular tremor, slowing of movement, partial facial paralysis and peculiarity of gait and posture, as well as generalized weakness.

Through it all, the Pope’s message remained: “When God permits us to suffer because of illness, loneliness or other reasons associated with old age, He always gives us the grace and strength to unite ourselves with greater love to the sacrifice of His Son, and to share even more fully in His plan of salvation. Let us be convinced of this: He is our Father, a Father rich in love and mercy.”

The Pope knew true suffering in his life before he became Pope.

He lost his mother when he was only eight. Three years later, he lost his older brother to scarlet fever. By the time he was 20, his very religious father - who became everything to him - died.

His nation, likewise, suffered greatly. Nazi Germany invaded Poland, and in an attempt to destroy the Polish identity, rooted out priests and the Catholic faithful along with Jews. The Pope saw many of his friends - Jewish and Catholic - led to their death.

Yet, his life was spared.

“Sometimes, I would ask myself: ‘So many young people of my own age are losing their lives, why not me?’ Today I know that it was not mere chance,” he said after he became the 264th successor of Saint Peter.

He knew that, despite trials that he did not understand, faith was the answer. It was what got him through every stage of his life, to his final moments.

It was reported by Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the official spokesperson for the Vatican, that the Holy Father asked aides to read him the liturgy of the Third Hour - the biblical passage describing the final stage in the Way of the Cross, the path that Christ took to his Crucifixion. In that stage, according to the Bible, Christ’s body was taken down from the cross, wrapped in a linen shroud and placed in his tomb.

Navarro-Valls said the Holy Father followed attentively and made the sign of the cross.

“The Pope is still lucid, fully conscious and extraordinarily serene,” Navarro-Valls said at the time.

“The victory of life over death is what every human being desires,” the Holy Father told over 4.5 million people at the 1985 World Youth Day in Manila, Philippines - the largest gathering ever to answer the call of one individual. “The risen Christ assures the men and women of every age that they are called to a life beyond the frontier of death.”

As with everything he said, he went on to witness this when it came to his own dying moments. It was reported that the Holy Father had told his aides to feel joy and hope while he was in his final hours.

At the Jubilee celebration for his 25 years of service as Pope two years ago, the Holy Father thanked the faithful for the countless sacrifices, prayers and suffering offered to sustain him in his service for the Church, giving thanks to God and offering the fruits of his pontificate to Him

“Everything is Yours and the glory is owed only to You,” he prayed.

But now that service is finished. The man who died so completely to himself, so that God could live completely and touch the lives of His people, is now through death, living in eternal life.

We offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the gift of this great servant of the servants of God - a man who has left a legacy of faith and fidelity that will not be forgotten.

(By Nadia Pozo, CS&T Staff Writer, The Catholic Standard and Times, Thursday, April 7, 2005; pg. 12, npozo@adphila.org or (215) 965-4614)

YOUNG MILK SNAKE

This warm February day has coaxed you out too soon-there’s still snow ahead. And you’re too young, fresh from the hand of God. Yet here you are, sunning on a rock.

When I pick you up, you hiss, dart your forked tongue at me. I’m probably the first human you ever saw, your world till now inside a hollow tree, coiled with your kind.

Though hesitant, I hold you gently, stroke the length of you. Slowly you begin to twine around my wrist, my arm as around a branch or vine, and finding warmth, relax your many muscles.

When I was young, I'd lightly lift the green grass-snake by neck and tail for my curious child, both of us remarking on its grace, its steady eye-all of this before I'd learned to fear as most people do any serpentine creature that happened to cross our path. And once one found its way inside my house. Then I felt loathing, fear and panic, and lashed out, in all ignorance, and took its life.

But now, my brother, as you pour from my hands to slither off, I acknowledge that we share the self-same spark, and I feel forgiveness in the air.

(Elizabeth Schmitt, Saint Anthony Messenger, February 2004)

WHAT AM I GOING TO WEAR TODAY?

“Where you are going prompts the choice you make of proper attire.”

This is a question almost everyone asks as preparations are made to go to school, to a “black tie” event, to a picnic, a hike, or a ball game. Where you are going prompts the choice you make of proper attire.

Going to church, particularly Holy Mass, is another occasion that should prompt the question, “What am I going to wear today?”

For those who minister in any way during Mass, this question is particularly important and timely.

The presence of the ministers (Lector, Eucharistic Minister, Altar Server, Gift Bearer, Usher, Minister of Hospitality, etc.) is to help others lift up their minds and hearts to God by the service they give. So their exterior appearance is very important.

Guidelines for Proper Attire

The following guidelines should help you make a good choice in what you wear so it is in keeping with the sacredness and holiness of the actions performed.

- Get dressed up -not to draw attention to yourself –but to give greater honor and glory to God. Dress up rather than dress down.
- Ask Our Blessed Mother if she would approve of what you choose to wear.
- Shorts, cutoffs, tank tops, short skirts, tight-fitting clothing, and low-cut dresses or blouses are not appropriate.
- Skirts should preferably be at least knee length.

- Give good example to the rest of the congregation by wearing the type of clothing one should wear to church - especially to Mass.

One way to show the pride you have in yourself and in your parish is by your appearance, especially at the most holy function - the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Be a leader. Inspire others to dress appropriately when going to the House of God, wherein He truly dwells in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

(Sister Mary Naomi Buniff, R.S.M., Sent to PFMC without Source Identification, insert to a bulletin)

DELIVERANCE PRAYER and PROSTITUTION

In Europe, police are discovering an extraordinary link between African women trapped in prostitution rings and the need to find Christian ministers who understand the power of deliverance prayer to break the hold of a voodoo curse. Police estimate that nearly 10,000 African women, especially Nigerians, have been lured into prostitution rings, and to ensure the permanence of their slavery, the help of voodoo priests is enlisted to put curses and spells upon the unfortunate women. Just before the prospective prostitute is sent off to Europe (for instance, to Amsterdam) she is subjected to a voodoo rite and is warned that her parents will sicken and die if she ever tries to escape her masters. The voodoo priests dramatize the rite by having her drink blood and taking her nail and hair cuttings as totems. One 24-year-old woman who had been forced into seven-night-a-week duty in an Athens flop-house brothel said about her curse, “I have no doubt about its power. Even if I had a doubt, how could I risk the life of my mother and father?”

To overcome such a perverse faith in demonic power, even skeptical international police officials have had to turn to Christian pastors who believe in the power of God to break these curses. Since the women are Christian, these pastors have to convince them of the power of Jesus Christ to free them from the power of the curses inflicted upon them by the witch doctors. The few ministers who free the women are mostly Pentecostal and non-denominational pastors who understand the reality of the demonic realm and the power of Christian prayer.

Considering that an estimated 10,000 African women are trapped in prostitution, it seems imperative that pastors from mainline Christian churches (such as Catholics and Anglicans) learn more about the reality

of the demonic realm and a Christian's ability to free victims from the power of voodoo witchcraft.

(summarized from "Voodoo a Vise in the Sex Slavery World" by Brian Murphy, AP, in *The Jacksonville Times-Union*, May 20, 2005)

ABORTION LINKED to ANXIETY

Abortion advocates frequently have claimed that carrying an unwanted baby to term is more emotionally harmful to women than having an abortion. But a recent, major study (in the *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*) shows findings to the contrary!

Researchers, using data collected from the National Survey of Family Growth, examined a nationally representative sample of 10,847 women, aged 15-34, who had experienced an unintended first pregnancy and had no prior history of anxiety. After controlling for race and age at the time of the survey, the researchers found that, compared to women who carried the unintended pregnancy to term, women who aborted were 30 percent more likely to report, subsequently, all the symptoms associated with a diagnosis for generalized anxiety disorder (GAD).

If the cases found in the study were projected onto the entire population of women having abortions, it might be found that there are as many as 40,000 or more GAD cases per year attributable to abortion. Furthermore, this new study, linking abortion to general anxiety disorder, comes on the heels of nearly a dozen other studies published in the last three years, linking abortion to an increased risk of depression, substance abuse, suicidal behavior, and death from heart disease.

In their examination of date, Jesse Cogle (the main author of this study) and his colleagues considered women as being at risk for GAD, if they reported feeling worried and anxious for a period of at least six months about things that were not serious or were unlikely to happen. They also had to experience other symptoms, such as irritability, fatigue, difficulty sleeping, a pounding or racing heart, or feelings of unreality.

There also were greater differences in rates of generalized anxiety between aborting and delivering women who were under the age of 20 than there were for women who were older at the time of the pregnancy. This may be explained by other studies that show that older women are more likely to conceal past abortions in surveys, and that abortion is a more stressful experience for younger women.

"Some studies have found that younger women are more likely to experience emotional distress following abortion than older women," Cogle said. "Younger women may feel less control over their decision and may abort under pressure from their parents and partner."

See the website www.afterabortion.org for additional material.

This fascinating study is especially of interest to those of you who are ministers of inner healing.

(The Healing Line, July/August 2005)

PRAY for FATHER JAY BOWDEN



A great friend of the *PFMC* and **Spiritual Director** for several pilgrimages, **Father Jay Bowden**, lost his mother **Margaret Bowden** (5/8/05), pictured here, and his aunt, **Elizabeth Feehan** (1/26/05) as indicated in our **IN MEMORIAM** section on page 3.

Please pray for him and for the repose of the souls of his mother and aunt.

(Keith and Kathleen Werner, Co-Directors)

"GOD'S VIEW"



On April 18th of this year a member of "*The PILGRIM*" family, Teresa Mosier, passed away after an eight-year struggle with metastatic breast cancer. She was a very special person and will be missed by her family and large circle of friends. Before her death she prepared one last "teaching" to be read at her funeral.

"From this valley they say you are going,
We will miss your bright eyes and sweet smile,
For they say you are taking the sunshine
That has brightened our path for awhile."

How do you say goodbye to the people you love? What do you say to them that is very meaningful to you and expresses who you are and yet, imparts some sort of wisdom? I have thought and prayed and thought and prayed some more. I am having difficulty handling this so I decided to visualize myself standing at this podium delivering a teaching. What follows is what the Holy Spirit led me to say.

As I look out and scan the room, I see Jesus in each and every one of you. What a beautiful sight you are! Each of you are so dear to me. I love you all in your own unique way and in the way you touched my life and my heart.

I'd like to take you on a shocking journey, so please bear with me. Please close your eyes and visualize this scene. You are driving in your car, it is late at night, and you round a bend. Suddenly a car appears from nowhere and hits you head on. You are thrown from the car and are killed instantly. You see your limp body lying on the ground and then you see your spirit leave your body. Your spirit is floating and traveling to the place where you will come face to face with Jesus.....How do you feel?.....Are you at peace or full of fear and anxiety at the thought of coming face to face with Jesus? Be honest. It is your initial gut reaction that I am looking for here. Finally, you reach your destination and there you stand completely naked before Jesus.....How does that make you feel?.....Are you happy and excited, or uncomfortable and want to have something to cover yourself with, to make you feel more secure, to help you hide yourself?.....Jesus doesn't say a word. You are expected to speak to Jesus.....What do you say? Can you look him in the eyes or do you glance away?....Do you know Jesus well enough to speak with him eye to eye or is there shame, wishes that you had done things differently, periods of silence where you are trying to think of something to say?

You can open your eyes now. Did I cause you to squirm in your seats? If I did, I have partially succeeded.

I am 51 years old, too young to die. One would say my life was cut short. I would agree. I wanted to live longer, but that was not God's will. We are not guaranteed a long life. We assume we will live to our 70s and beyond, but there is no guarantee. This applies to all of us.

When I was 25 years old, I was involved in a very serious automobile accident, in which our car was hit head on. I almost died that night, but thankfully I survived. It could happen to any one of you. Was I ready to meet Jesus that night? No. Did I change my life after that accident? No. I was too ignorant, too self-absorbed, so confident that Jesus would be there when I was ready.....There are no guarantees.

Oh, I lived a "good life." I went to Mass on Sundays, although there were times when other things were a higher priority. I taught RCIC for five years, was a very giving person of my time. I have a very big heart. But, where was Jesus?.....I was competitive, not that that is all bad. I hesitated going to Confession because I had sinned. I wasn't perfect

and somehow I needed to make it right before I could approach God. Now, how ignorant is that? I denied myself God's grace because I was ashamed. There are things in my past that I am not proud of. I lived with fear of being judged, not loved, not good enough, not being heard, not accepted for who I am. I'm sure all of you have felt these fears during your life and may still be experiencing them.

I would periodically feel unrest. I had this source of energy caged inside of me, bouncing off the walls of my body, unable to be released. I would suppress it and it would die down again for a little while. Throughout the years, God would tap me on the shoulder or nudge me, but I would not listen. There was no time. There was too much going on in my life to go to Mass during the week, to take five minutes to read the Bible, to pray other than right before I fell asleep. I had too many responsibilities. There simply wasn't enough time.

This cancer was a blessing. It's not something I wanted in my life, and it's certainly not something I asked for, but it was an opportunity for me to get to know Jesus. Did I make changes in my life following my first diagnosis with cancer? No. I was still too ignorant, too self-absorbed, and still placed a high emphasis on worldly matters. If you don't know what living in the world means, I challenge you to find out.

It took a diagnosis of metastatic disease to knock me off my high horse. I was very frightened. I was afraid that I would die and have to face Jesus, and I was not ready. I could not put it off any longer. Remember, there are no guarantees to a long life. You have no guarantee that you will be alive tomorrow. If you have unresolved issues in your life that keep rising to your conscious mind to take some form of action, I highly recommend you listen and do something about it. That is God speaking to you.

God blessed me with the gift of time.....Time to finally get my act together, time to get to know Jesus, time to empty my suitcase and rid myself of life's excess baggage, time to make amends, time to forgive, time to really love and appreciate my family, time to learn to love myself. I was also blessed in that at the time I was diagnosed with metastatic disease, in our parish, the Mother of Joy Charismatic Prayer Group was holding a Life in the Spirit seminar. I thought, what the heck, I haven't done a very good job in my spiritual life so far. I am going to die and I need to be ready to meet Jesus. I attended more out of fear than from a true desire to change my life spiritually. I had to try and cover my bases you know.

During the seminar there is a ceremony which we invite the Holy Spirit into our lives. It's more of an

awakening of the Holy Spirit because we take the gifts we received during Confirmation down from the back of the closet, dust them off and watch your life change.

The Holy Spirit came down, swooped me up and has taken me on a magical carpet ride. My feet have not touched the ground since. The more grace I received, the more I wanted. I was being healed spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. I released anger, hatred, and resentment of past hurts and disappointments. I started to forgive others and more importantly to forgive myself of my past wrongs. As I was freed of deadly emotions, I became happy, joyful, at peace. As I allowed the Lord's love to engulf me, I learned how to love myself. My life is simpler. I am not ashamed or embarrassed to let others know of problems or weaknesses in my life. I was blessed with a life changing experience. If you ever have the opportunity to attend a Life in the Spirit seminar, do it without hesitation, with no fear or shame. You will not be judged. Trust that.

OK, the people in my prayer group will understand the following. I hope you will also, as it applies to all of you. My last prophesy is.....take to heart the Greatest Commandment. Read it, meditate on it, memorize it, let it permeate your entire being. You must learn to love yourself before you can truly love anyone else.....Who is your neighbor? Many times we look outside of ourselves and our families to identify our neighbor. The most important neighbors you have are your spouse, children, and parents.....How can you say you love God if you have unresolved issues in your family life and in your heart?.....To love God you must love your neighbor. To love your neighbor you must love yourself.

If I can leave you with one final thought, it would be to read the Bible and say the rosary every day. It only takes 20 minutes to say the rosary, and you can say it anywhere, in the car on the way to work or while running errands, waiting for an appointment, or heaven forbid, 20 minutes before Mass. It only takes five minutes to read a passage in the Bible. You can read as much or as little as you wish, but read it daily. Saying the rosary and reading the Bible will change your life, and before you know it, you will truly know that you are a Beloved Child of God.

Thank you for sharing in my life. You blessed me in ways only God knows. To my family, I cherish you, and I love you all, more than you will ever know.....Mom, I will tell Dad Hi for you and how much you love him.

Please be happy. I am in a good place. I am in God's hands.....And now, I have finished my course, and I pray:

***The PILGRIM*, Volume 16, Number 7-8 – July-August 2005**

“Dear Lord Jesus, as you have run beside me, please run beside them. Strengthen their knees that they might finish. And dear Father, when they cross that eternal finish line — may I be there to welcome them home. May we laugh and cry through eternity — praising the grace that gave us this victory.”

I love you, Teresa

(Sent to us by Marty Mosier with permission to print.)

LOVE SONGS

The day I married you
the sun grew wings
and flew around our heads dizzying us, melting us
into one. It was eons ago
when our world was young. Our days
melted like candles
softened by the burning wick of our love,
dripping
over our dreams
until wax puddled on our saucer, cooled to a disk,
a record I can play
and you, with celestial ears, can hear the music
and laugh with me again.

(Katherine Short, Saint Anthony Messenger, February 2004)

ARCHBISHOP FOLEY on the INTERNET and the CATHOLIC CHURCH

VATICAN CITY, JUN 7, 2005 (VIS) - Archbishop John Foley, president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, yesterday addressed the Information Office of the Italian Episcopal Conference on the topic “Internet and the Catholic Church in Europe.”

He defined the Internet as a “present and pressing reality that cannot be ignored,” and noted that the Internet had been the subject of both John Paul II's Message for World Communications Day in 2002 and two documents from the pontifical council, “The Church and the Internet” and “Ethics in the Internet.”

The archbishop stated that the Church must welcome the challenges posed by the Internet but also “remain firm on the ethical principles and values that are universally recognized as indispensable for the growth and evolution of all cultures. The Church, as the bearer of the Revelation of God, has the duty to

communicate the Word and to encourage the use of the Internet for the common good, for the development of peace and justice in respect for personal dignity and in a spirit of solidarity. ... Internet is thus the areopagus of our times, the instrument for spreading the Christian message.”

“Among the millions of people who navigate daily on the Internet,” said Archbishop Foley, “many will be able to find a word of hope. ... Thus the Internet can be a new path to God,” a way for the Church “to bring the Word of God to every place, to reach those living in solitude and who perhaps would never open the doors of their home.”

(CON-CS/INTERNET/CEI:FOLEY VIS 050607 (270))

MORE THAN JUST “I’M SORRY”

I think “I’m sorry” are the two hardest words to say. The words themselves aren’t particularly challenging. It’s what they represent that proves most difficult.

By saying I’m sorry, I am admitting that I have fallen short of expectations, that I have hurt someone, that I have done something wrong. For me, that’s hard to face. I imagine it is for most people.

I first learned to recite the Act of Contrition when I was in the second grade preparing for my First Confession. The prayer I learned at that time was the more traditional “O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended thee” version. The version contained in this column, however, seems to spell out more completely what I’m trying to say by reciting the prayer.

Regardless of which version I used, I spent quite a bit of time reciting it for any number of reasons such as hitting my sister, making fun of someone, lying to my parents, etc.

My mom was a firm believer in the importance of not only saying “I’m sorry,” but also reflecting on the implications of what you did. Thus the reason I know the prayer so well!

Finding the Right Words

Perhaps some of the difficulty with saying “I’m sorry” is pinpointing exactly all that those two words represent. That’s where the Act of Contrition so often comes to my rescue.

This prayer fleshes out all the reasons saying those two words seems so hard-“I am guilty of sin against you. I have not loved you, my neighbor and myself with my whole heart. I have not kept your commandments.” Talk about a reality check!

But the beauty of the prayer is that it also shows us the way to forgiveness. Through our sins we have separated ourselves not only from whomever we have wronged, but also from God. The second half of the prayer focuses on asking God to help us make amends for our sins.

It’s probably a good idea to offer an Act of Contrition at least once a day. But some people find it helpful to recite it even more often than that, and that’s O.K. The bottom line is to remember why you’re saying it-and mean it.

An Ongoing Struggle

Each night as I recite this prayer before drifting off to sleep and once again ask for God’s help and forgiveness, I am reminded that I am not perfect. I will learn from my sins and mistakes of today, but will probably fail in other ways tomorrow. And so the following evening I will once again ask God for forgiveness and pledge to try to do better the next day. And so the cycle will continue.

That is the great comfort this prayer brings to me-that no matter how badly I mess up today, I can always seek forgiveness and ask for God’s help as I try to do better tomorrow. All I have to do is ask. The Act of Contrition provides me with the words to do just that.

Susan Hines Brigger is an assistant editor of this magazine, and the author of the “Faith-filled Family” column. As parents of a five-year-old daughter, Madison, and a two-year-old son, Alex, Susan and her husband, Mark, spend quite a bit of time addressing the issue of saying “I’m sorry.”

(by Susan Hines Brigger Saint Anthony Messenger
February 2004)

ACT of CONTRITION

Merciful God,

I am guilty of sin against you.

I have not loved you, my neighbor and myself with my whole heart.

I have not kept your commandments.

I am sincerely sorry for all the wrong I have done and all that I have failed to do.

I beg you for your forgiveness.

You alone can make new what sin has spoiled or destroyed.

I am confident of your love, even though I have sinned. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to enter into true penance, to be wholly

converted to you, and to repair the damage that I have done.

I trust only in your power, your love, your healing presence. Amen.

(Saint Anthony Messenger February 2004)

HE WAS LOST and HAS BEEN FOUND

My job as a counselor at a mental health center was satisfying and I wanted to keep it that way. We are talking about a major job change, and I wasn't sure if I could handle that. I was anxious, to say the least.

The pastor told me it was possible to return to active ministry, but I would have to update my theology, Sacred Scripture, and Canon Law. Once this was satisfied, my case would be reviewed, and a decision would be made. So I quit my job, took up residence at a parish in Erie, and updated for the next 11 months.

One day I received a call from the bishop. He had good news. Rome had responded in my favor, and I had been returned to active ministry and priesthood. I was so overjoyed, I thought I would cry. It was like receiving the news of my ordination, April 25, 1958. I should add here that once a priest, always a priest. I never lost my priesthood, just the license to practice, so to speak.

In June of 1993, I made a pilgrimage to Medjugorje to give thanks to God and Our Lady for the many blessings and graces I've received. The high point of the trip was the climb up Cross Mountain, where I got on my knees to give thanks. Concelebrating Mass each day in Saint James Church was an experience I shall always remember. What happiness - what tears of joy!

November 6, 2003, marked 13 years of active ministry. They've been among the happiest years of my life. My priorities have changed. God is now first in my life. I have a deeper appreciation of the Church and the priesthood. I attribute my return first to God, second, to Our Lady, and third, to the prayers of my mother, who prayed for seventeen years. I asked her if she ever thought I would return to the priesthood. She said she didn't know if it were possible. She just prayed. She lived to help me celebrate my "second first Mass". She died in 1995.

The parable of the Prodigal Son is my favorite, for obvious reasons. The father said to the elder son, "Now we must celebrate and rejoice because your

brother was dead and has come back to life. He was lost and has been found". Amen.

"By their fruits you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thorny bushes or figs from thistles? Just so, every good tree bears good fruit, and a rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree bear good fruit. So by their fruits you will know them". (Mt 7:16-18, 20).

(By Rev. James A. Wiley Courtesy: The Spirit of Medjugorje)

POPE: WE WILL MEET IN COLOGNE!

VATICAN CITY, JUL 17, 2005 (VIS) - At midday today, after praying the Angelus, the Pope greeted the bishop, priests, religious, families and local authorities of the Valle d'Aosta region in northwestern Italy where he is spending a brief vacation, and assured them of his special prayers for the sick and suffering.

The Holy Father then approached the faithful who had gathered to see him and personally greeted the sick and disabled people occupying the front rows.

Before leaving, he addressed some remarks to young people saying: "You have come to my first Angelus in the mountains. We are already spiritually on the march to Cologne. We will all meet in Cologne!"

Benedict XVI is due to visit Germany from August 18 to 21 for the occasion of the 20th World Youth Day, which will be held in the city of Cologne.

(ANG/GREETINGS: YOUNG PEOPLE/LES COMBES VIS 050718 (150))

PRO-LIFE ALERT

Expectant Mother Care (EMC) is a family-like non-profit counseling service for young girls and women caught in an untimely pregnancy or in a cycle of promiscuity or post-abortion syndrome.

Their calling is to serve the distraught and disadvantaged through life-affirming and pro-chastity education, counseling, on-site contracted medical care, and referrals.

Visit <http://www.expectantmothercare.org> and consider supporting them. They are in need of help.

(Keith Werner)

MESSAGE of 6/25/2005 via Maria Pavlovic Lunetti

Dear Children! Today I thank you for every sacrifice that you have offered for my intentions. I call you, little children, to be my apostles of peace and love in your families and in the world. Pray that the Holy Spirit may enlighten and lead you on the way of holiness. I am with you and bless you all with my motherly blessing. Thank you for having responded to my call.

MESSAGE of 7/25/2005 via Maria Pavlovic Lunetti

Dear Children! Also today, I call you to fill your day with short and ardent prayers. When you pray, your heart is open and God loves you with a special love and gives you special graces. Therefore, make good use of this time of grace and devote it to God more than ever up to now. Do novenas of fasting and renunciation so that Satan be far from you and grace be around you. I am near you and intercede before God 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 6/25/2005

APOSTLES of PEACE and LOVE

Our Lady concludes each one of her messages by the words: "Thank you for having responded to my call." With her gratitude, she seems to want to motivate and wake up our hearts, so that we listen to her and walk on the way of conversion and of holiness. Today, she is thanking us for every sacrifice that we have offered for her intentions. In preceding messages for the anniversary of her apparitions, she was saying: "Today I desire to thank you for all your sacrifices and for all your prayers." (25.6.1990). "Today I am happy, even if in my heart there is still a little sadness for all those who have started on this path and then have left it." (25.6.1992). Although she knows that all her children will not accept her motherly words, she is not giving up, she believes and she hopes. This is why she was saying: "There are many people who do not desire to understand my messages and to accept with seriousness what I am saying. But you I therefore call and ask that by your lives and by your daily living you witness my presence." (25.6.1991).

Our Lady's messages reveal to us the heart of Mary and they speak to us about it. It is the heart of the mother who loves her children. This heart is grateful for every sacrifice, which we offered for her intentions. We need to pray and, from day to day, to offer our hearts to the Heart of Mary, so that we also become grateful.

Only a blind man does not see that all in life is given to us, and that nothing belongs to us: neither the earth,

nor people, nor our body, nor life that God gave us. Everything is a gift of God. Only a humble, pure and simple heart discovers the greatness of the love of God and of the gift of God. Only a heart filled with the Holy Spirit, like the heart of Saint Elisabeth, exclaims: "And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Lk 1,43). The heart of Elisabeth is grateful because, in the Visitation of Mary, it recognizes the gift and the blessing.

God has created everything for us, and not for any reason, and not anyhow, but magnificently, marvelously, and out of love. We should relearn the alphabet of the language and of the conversation with God. We need to learn how to say thank you; and not only superficially, with our lips, our mouth, or our reason, but with our whole being and with our whole life.

God gave us more than life and all that He has created for us; he gave Himself to us in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, in the fullness of life and love, gave Himself in the Church and through the Church in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist.

In these days and in this time, God sends to us also the Mother of His Son Jesus and our Mother, so that we become her apostles of peace and love in our families and in the world. Our families and the world need people who will spread peace and love, because there is too much disorder, too much fear, too much darkness and too much wickedness among us. Gospa, who dwells in the glory of Heaven, and who comes and speaks from this glory, knows that love and peace are stronger, and that it is worthwhile to love and to spread peace. Mary, our Mother, knows that we cannot do it by our own forces, and this is why she is

advising us to pray to the Holy Spirit by Whom she conceived Jesus. She is encouraging us to pray to the Holy Spirit, whose force and power made it possible to the apostles to become fearless witnesses of Jesus, until shedding of blood. We cannot do it, but the Holy Spirit in us, He can do it. We are called to holiness and to sanctification of our life. Saint Paul reminds us: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification." (1 Thess 4,3) Only on this way of sanctification and of holiness we can experience the joy and the truth of the words of the Scripture: "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1 Thess 5,16) We are neither alone nor abandoned. Mary, our Mother, is with us and she is giving us her motherly blessing.

Father Ljubo Kurtovic, Medjugorje, 26.6.2005

REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of 7/25/2005

FILL YOUR DAY with SHORT and ARDENT PRAYERS

The Virgin Mary tells us: "Fill your day with short and ardent prayers". She wants to tell us to wrap the whole day with prayers, so that God can come, and that the evil and the wicked one cannot have access to our life. There is too much evil and wickedness, too much sinister and dark news, which fill our hearts with worries and fear. There are too many news about tragedies, terrorism, assassinations, which surround us, and about which we hear each day. There are so many malicious words, which hurt trust and love in us and in our neighbour. There is too much superficiality in our conversations, and we go away empty and burdened. Mary shows us the way, she is putting into our hands the means, so that God may find a place where to come.

Whatever we look at, listen to or read, is shaping our interior life, our heart, and then our words. Our words and our conversations reveal the contents of our heart. If our heart is anguished, in darkness and filled with negativism, then our words will be similar. Such a heart will see only what is bad and negative in others. "Blessed are the pure of heart, they shall see God", tells us Jesus. A pure heart is unable to make dirty, to wound or to burden others. A pure heart will try to wipe and wash the dirtiness of others. Who is nervous and unhappy will make all around him nervous and unhappy.

You have undoubtedly already experienced that some people radiate a certain restlessness, nervousness and

darkness. There are others who radiate peace, security and trust. They are connected to God, because He is the source of peace, of security, of love and of trust. Mary wishes that all of us, her children, belong to God, that we are people who radiate peace and love. Only a heart that is praying becomes an open heart. Only to an open heart, God can grant his grace, his force and his almightiness.

It is not enough to read and to hear the Gospel and the words of Our Lady's message. They have to be carried out, put into practice. Many have heard the Gospel and Our Lady's message, but it is possible to distinguish those among them who have put into practice what they have heard. Only those who have tried to put into practice at least something of what they have heard, deserve heaven. There are people who pray unceasingly without ever doing anything. There are some who pray, but criticize everything and everyone. They measure all according to their theoretical prayers, which are sterile, if they are not put into practice in our life. The prayers have a meaning only if they change our life, our heart, and if we try to put them into practice. God is doing nothing without us - He is doing everything with us. He is waiting for our works in order to collaborate with us, to help us. This is why: to pray and to do nothing, means to prevent the realization of what we are praying for.

The worst of all things, it is to wait a long time before putting one's decisions into practice. It is necessary to do immediately, and not to delay, to leave for later. More we delay our prayer, our work, an obligation, more we create a feeling of emptiness and helplessness. Then we begin to pity ourselves and we fall into depression. It is necessary to start with one small millimetre, and then you will be greater than all those who criticize. Faith without works is useless; such a faith is dead.

The words of Our Lady's message will be a dead letter if you do not try at least a little bit to put them into practice in your life. When we begin, we will discover the infinitude and the almightiness of God in our life. May God, through our decisions and our prayers, protect us from Satan and wrap us with his grace.

Father Ljubo Kurtovic, Medjugorje, 26.7.2005

ANOTHER JUNE REFLECTION

"Dear children! Today I thank you for every sacrifice that you have offered for my intentions."
On this twenty-fourth anniversary of the beginning of Our Lady's apparitions to the visionaries of Medjugorje, She begins Her monthly message with a

beautiful thank you. To all of Her *“little children”* who are offering prayers and sacrifices for Her intentions while accepting the call to be Her prayer warriors, Our Lady is forever grateful.

Let us take a moment to reflect upon these words of Our Lady in this first sentence of Her message of June 25, 2005. ***“Today I thank you for every sacrifice that you have offered for my intentions.”*** Our dear Blessed Mother is with us in a most beautiful way. May we become more aware of Her presence within our lives. She is our dear and loving Blessed Mother given to us by our dear Lord Jesus as He was dying on the cross. Let us be forever grateful to God for the gift of Our Lady to us. During these days, we must pray constantly in thanksgiving to God the Father for the gift of these apparitions of Our Lady to the visionaries of Medjugorje. Since Our Lady continues to give Herself to us with an undying and unconditional love, we must continue to change. We cannot become complacent. We can be better.

The opportunity to come to God and Our Lady in faith with our whole being continues to be our calling. However, living in this world it is also our burden. Thus, on our own we will never be successful in doing God’s work. On the other hand, with God and Our Lady, we can change the world as the apostles did in the early Church.

“I call you, little children, to be my apostles of peace and love in your families and in the world.” Our Lady’s call to us in this second sentence of Her message of June 25, 2005 is significant and important, but also a definite challenge to us. To be ***“apostles of peace and love in your families and in the world”*** is a wonderful endeavor for all of us to embark upon. However, we will not be successful if we do not become more like our loving God and Our Lady.

Living in this world, we can be overwhelmed by the selfishness, hatred and revenge that many are promoting. This can definitely prohibit us from being ***“apostles of peace and love.”*** Often we are trapped in the world’s way of self-promotion.

Again, we are called to challenge others to change, but only in a way when we are Our Lady’s ***“apostles of peace and love.”*** As always, to be successful, we must continue to change ourselves. This only happens when we pray, fast, receive the sacraments, and become one with God’s inspired word in Sacred Scripture. Have we embraced the five stones given to us by Our Lady to be the weapon against our own personal weakness? Are we praying the rosary, attending the Eucharist very frequently, reading the Holy Bible, fasting and receiving monthly confession? Can we answer yes to these questions?

This is Our Lady’s way. Also it is the only way that we can be Our Lady’s ***“apostles of peace and love in your families and in the world.”***

“Pray that the Holy Spirit may enlighten and lead you on the way of holiness.” With this sentence of Her message of June 25, 2005, we are encouraged by Our Lady to seek out the Holy Spirit. From our baptism, the Holy Spirit, dwelling within our souls, speaks to us in the quietness of our existence. As our sanctifier, the Holy Spirit can lead us on the road to holiness. However, we need to become calm and peaceful. In this serenity, we can seek out the Holy Spirit within our being. While praying to the Holy Spirit, ask for His gifts and the virtues that come from those gifts.

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, the personification of the love that God the Father and Jesus have for each other, can help us to accept the faith. In this way, we can embrace the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, acquiring the strength to carry Jesus’ cross, while offering ourselves to God the Father and Jesus, for the conversion of sinners and salvation of souls. As we begin to change, we are being challenged by the Holy Spirit to become holy. With Our Lady, the Holy Spirit continues this process of sanctification while bringing our souls to Jesus. By taking our souls to His dear Sacred Heart, Jesus nourishes us with His sacrificial love. Through this love, as we encounter the presence of Jesus, we become one with the Eternal Father. With this precious grace, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit prepare us for the kingdom of heaven.

“I am with you and bless you all with my motherly blessing.” With much faith, hope and love, may we constantly dwell upon Our Lady’s motherly love. We must be Her *“little children”* while letting Her be *“our mom.”* Continue to accept Her presence, by living out the requests of Her messages in the fullest sense. Let us be with Our dear Blessed Mother and in Her manner of tenderness, compassion, love and gentleness, may we accept God’s love. Then, we can begin to bring others to the Eternal Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit being Our Lady’s ***“apostles of peace and love in your families and in the world.”***

I hope you are well. Give my best to your families. You are constantly in my prayers and thoughts. Enjoy the summer and God’s gifts from nature during this time of the year. Be filled with faith and continue to nourish that faith with all of your strength. 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, June 29, 2005)

ANOTHER JULY REFLECTION

“Dear children! Also today, I call you to fill your day with short and ardent prayers.” As one contemplates the reality of being a devoted person of faith, he or she will soon realize the need to embrace prayer in one’s life. For anyone of us living in the worldly environment of 2005, being willing to pray and becoming devoted to prayer must be accepted in a complete way. Thus, this first sentence of Our Lady’s message of July 25, 2005 is simple, short, and very profound. Also, since prayer is the means to developing a personal relationship with God, these words of Our Lady are life giving.

Are we ready to fill our day ***“with short and ardent prayers?”*** Most importantly, are we willing to make prayer a priority in our life? This appears to be the intention of Our dear Blessed Mother in Her words found in this first sentence of Her message of July 25, 2005. Our Lady is challenging and encouraging us to be people of prayer. Again, are we ready? Will we make the necessary adjustments in our personal lives to accomplish this task? The time is now, not next week, next month, or next year. By being devoted to prayer, we can change this world and lead people to Jesus. Let us begin.

In the second sentence of Her message of July 25, 2005, Our Lady explains the gifts that one can receive through prayer. ***“When you pray, your heart is open and God loves you with a special love, and gives you special graces.”*** As we read these particular words of Our Lady, we must continue to change and be filled with hope. During these days we can be one with Jesus’ message of love and mercy.

Prayer can begin this process and praying can open us up to the love of God. When the unconditional love of God becomes the essence of who we are, we can do wonders for Jesus.

Are we ready to accept these special graces from God? Will we carry the Lord’s cross offering our personal suffering to Jesus for the conversion of sinners and the salvation of souls? One may say how can I accomplish this endeavor? We must live as the Christians of the first century did: being completely devoted to Jesus. As priests, religious and lay people, we are called to give ourselves to Jesus. This process can only happen when we pray, pray, and pray some more.

Those of us who have accepted Christian discipleship while being prayer warriors of Our Lady must encourage others. We cannot waver. We cannot fail. This work is about saving souls: our own and the souls of others.

We have been taught by Our Lady. She has confidence in us, but we must trust in God while having confidence in ourselves.

Reject the materialism, indifference, selfishness, greed, and lust that are so common in our towns, cities, states and environments. We have been created in the image and likeness of God with sacredness to each one of us. These beautiful words describing the essence of who we are come to us from the Vatican II Document, The Church in the Modern World. Again, we must stay away from sin, evil and those inclinations that lead to selfishness. We need to be open to God’s grace, while being faithful to Jesus. Will we sacrifice for Jesus? The apostles did, the martyrs did, many saints have. Will you, will I?

“Therefore, make good use of this time of grace and devote it to God more than ever up to now. The motherly love of Our Lady flowing from Her words is astounding. Her call to us has been made. Again, the challenge has been placed before us.

May we be filled with Jesus’ joy and peace at the opportunity that we have to, ***“make good use of this time of grace.”*** We are blessed and we must be Jesus’ apostles during these days. The choice to say yes to God is ours to make. Will we make that choice for God?

Those of us who have been on pilgrimage to Medjugorje have been given many graces. However, with those graces comes a serious responsibility to the love of God. This is our glory, and it is also our burden. Burdens are difficult, but they are life giving because when they are accepted they purify the soul. Throughout our lives they prepare us for our loving God.

“Do novenas of fasting and renunciation so that Satan be far from you and grace be around you.” In this sentence of Her message of July 25, 2005, Our Lady is showing us the importance of fasting and renouncing sin. When we fast and offer that fasting to God, we become one with the love of Jesus while becoming less dependent upon our personal desires and wishes. Thus, we begin to move away from our selfishness, while finding the courage to renounce sin.

Fasting in one’s life is so important for the sanctification of the soul, but it is also very difficult. Begin by fasting on bread and water for part of a day. Later on increase the fasting to one full day. After being successful at fasting for one day try to add another day. Keep working hard at this endeavor. Do not be overwhelmed or filled with guilt if you are unsuccessful at first. Put much effort into this fasting, remembering that you are accepting a beautiful

request from Our Lady that can open the “hardest of hearts.”

During these days, let us continue to renounce sin in all its forms, but we must love everyone with Jesus’ love. Since all sin is an affront to the love of God, we must despise all sinful activity, but we must love all sinners. As believers in Jesus, we have been given sufficient grace to avoid sin. We must be strong rejecting satan and all his works. Sin is rampant in this world, and the influence of satan has overwhelmed many. People have rejected the Ten Commandments, while engaging in activities that are serious sins against the law of God. Again, we have to reject these activities. When we commit serious sins, we open ourselves to satan. He wants to destroy the sanctity of our souls, and will use all of his power to destroy our relationship with God. This is happening in our world. Many have become one with satan and they do not even realize it. Since sin has overcome many in this world, our willingness to work for our loving God and Our Lady is serious and definitely needed. Also, we can be successful in bringing souls to God. If we continue to accept these requests from Our Lady in Her monthly messages, we will be well on our way.

“I am near you and intercede before God for each of you.” May these words of Our Lady inspire us to accept Her motherly love, while embracing Her humility, gentleness, joy, hope, and faith. She knows we can change this world. Let us continue to embark upon this journey, and when we do it Her way our impact in bringing people to conversion can be amazing.

My thoughts and prayers are always with you. Give my best to all of your families. 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. Have a good summer.

God’s love and prayers always, Father Ed

HEdwardChalmers@aol.com, July 27, 2005

PRESS BULLETIN 211, 6/26/2005

THE PRIESTS WHO LOVE JESUS

It is very little - or not at all - that we think about the servants of God, it depends... When they do their usual - I would even say expected - works of mercy, one does not speak of them. But if they make the least wrong step, everyone wants to know about it, to speak about it, to write about it. Jesus, by inviting the apostles to follow him, showed clearly what awaits them: trial, mockeries, prison, judgment...

The priestly vocation is difficult to be understood, it is even inconceivable for those who think the thoughts of this world and not the thoughts of God. A philosopher said that, compared to the world, the spiritual vocation was “a logic of madness”. There is much truth in that. Humans tend more towards having then towards being. They tend to want to carry out their works according to the parameters of this world: professional career, family, children, heritage, reputation... However, in a priestly vocation, and more still in a religious vocation, one gives up all that. Jesus is clear. He asks that one give up everything to follow him.

In these times, much is spoken about a certain “civil society”. What does it mean? At the first thought, it seems to be a noble idea, because it supports freedom and equality between the people. And yet, if we reflect a little better, we will see that this attitude contains the denial of certain states of life and of certain vocations. A “civil society” will have difficulties to support servants of God who wear a habit, as well all those who announce a life according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. Let us thus not be surprised if the media make fun of priests, and if they are charged of all kinds of faults, with the goal of marginalizing their action. What is most dangerous, it is generalization. Let us say, if a professor does something evil, the media will say his name and will stress that this is an individual case. But as soon as it is about a priest, it is generalization, and it is said, “the priests do what is evil”.

The priests need neither consolation nor protection that comes from this world. Jesus himself said that, when they are led in front of the courts, they should not prepare their defence. The priests, on the contrary, need companions in prayer and in giving witness. The faithful, by their prayers, must obtain holiness and strength for their priests. Such priests, nourished by the prayers of their faithful, will be courageous witnesses, and nothing will be able to break them.

In Medjugorje - that I also perceive as a therapeutic centre for priests - we are seeing many spiritual vocations born in the environment of prayer prepared by Our Lady. In June this year, four young newly ordained priests from Poland and from Ireland, full of enthusiasm, came to give thanks to Jesus for having chosen them. They are happy, because they belong to Jesus and because they serve Him. We need priests, and we must obtain them in prayer. We need priests who abandon themselves into the hands of Jesus. An American scientist said so well that we need priests who love Jesus.

.....
Father Mario Knezovic
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COMMUNIONS and PRIESTS

During the month of *May*, **131,500** received Holy Communion and **2838** priests from this country and abroad signed the register for celebrating Holy Mass in Medjugorje.

ARCHBISHOP from INDONESIA

Archbishop Hieronymus Herculanus Bumbun, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of [Pontianak](#) (Indonesia) was in Medjugorje on May 13 and 14, 2005. He came on a pilgrimage with a group from Jakarta organised by Harry Karnadi. He said that he came to Medjugorje because of his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He is very impressed by the message of Medjugorje given to the 6 visionaries. He thinks that it is good for people to follow these messages, because they lead to peace, hope and faith. He sees them as a basic catholic education for the families. He says that it would be good for the families to pay more attention to these messages. In his diocese of Pontianak in Indonesia, they increase the community spirit. The messages of Medjugorje can be very well applied to the living philosophy in Indonesia. They are closely related to the life of the people and the Church. In the present globalisation of the world, which is affecting the relationships in the family, these messages can help the family to feel as the basic cell of the Church. He said that he is very touched by the openhearted way in which people offer hospitality to the pilgrims in Medjugorje. What they say is not exaggerated, there is no promotion; it is simple and real. About the prayer in the church, he said that is easy to see the strong spiritual life. He is impressed, he praises the Lord for the possibility to be here and to see with his eyes and to hear with his ears.

RENOWNED SLOVENIANS

Renowned Slovenians Alojz Rebula and Zora Tavčar came to Medjugorje in the mid of May. Alojz Rebula, member of the Pontifical Academy of science and art is the most productive Slovenian writer and translator. He translated the Holy Scripture into Slovenian language, and several documentary films were made about him in Slovenia and in Italy. This is what he said about his experience of Medjugorje. "I have to be grateful to one of my teachers for Medjugorje. It is with him that I came to Medjugorje for the first time in 1983. I wrote then my first article about Medjugorje, because of my very positive experiences. I was also very impressed by my conversation with Father Ljudevit Rupcic. I think today that Medjugorje has become one of the greatest Marian Shrines in the world, at the level of Lourdes and Fatima. We only can desire now that the Church acknowledges this.

For me, it is a great thing that Our Lady wants to show us that she is with us at every moment."

Zora Tavcar, a professor of Slovenian language, said about Medjugorje: "The conversion of my husband is Our Lady's work. I told her to look at all my troubles, and I asked her to bring peace to me and to my family. I want to suggest to every one to come to Medjugorje and make the experience of the spiritual life and of peace."

THE MAYOR of ZAGREB

On May 26, 2005, the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, M. Milan Bandic, mayor of Zagreb (Croatia), came to Medjugorje. In a short meeting with Father Branko Rados, parish priest of Medjugorje, and Father Mario Knezovic, Director of the Information Center "Mir" Medjugorje, he was informed about the pastoral life in the parish, about the care for the pilgrims, and about the activities of the Information Center "Mir" Medjugorje.

In an interview for Radio "Mir" Medjugorje, he said: "I came here to thank God and to Our Lady for everything, especially for my health. I also wanted to pay a visit to the Franciscans who are working here so diligently and so patiently for the Homeland and for the whole world. As a believer, I am at his moment somewhere between the 6th and 7th Station of the Cross."

GENERAL MINISTER of the FRANCISCAN SECULAR ORDER

Encarnacion del Pozo, Minister General of the Franciscan Secular Order, was in Medjugorje on May 22 and 23, 2005. Together with Father Ivan Matic, the Assistant General of the Franciscan Secular Order, and Father Milan Kristo, National Assistant, she was on her regular working visit to the fraternity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She also wanted to visit the Shrine of Medjugorje. This is what she said about her experience of Medjugorje: "For me, this is a new, deep and wonderful experience. Here, I see the wonderful work of Providence. Everything here can be observed and understood only with the eyes of faith. I also went to the Apparition Hill. Walking on these paths, my reflection brought me to understand the way of simplicity. I am happy because of the possibility to be in this place."

IN MEMORIAM OTTO HERZ

A great friend and benefactor of Medjugorje, Mr. Otto Herz (63 years), was called into the heavenly homeland on May 19, 2005, after a long and very serious illness. Since his first pilgrimage to Medjugorje in the year 1994, the importance of

Medjugorje and the large needs of the population became the central task of his life. With Father Slavko Barbaric, he founded in the year 1995 the non-profit association „Tal des Friedens“ e.V., in Pörling near Munich, in order to win godfathers for the war orphans of the children in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to support with donations various humanitarian projects, which had been founded by Father Slavko. Thus, in the course of the years and thanks to the untiring and generous service of Otto and his wife Betty, not only considerable sums of money were collected for the poor of this country, but also humanitarian goods were collected and transported for the needy, in a way exceeding his forces. This long-lasting devoted activity was recognised by the Federal Republic of Germany, which honoured Otto and his always helpful and affectionate wife Betty in the year 2002 with the Medal of merit.

Because of his serious illness, it was no longer possible for Otto to visit his beloved Medjugorje in the past year, although this was his greatest desire. We thank Otto for his great heart, always open for the poor and the needy of our country, and for everything that he did for the intentions of Our Lady in such a generous and exemplary way. Thank you, dear Otto, thank you, dear Betty, we include you both into our prayers.

AN ITALIAN BISHOP

Monsignor Salvatore Boccaccio, bishop of the diocese Frosinone near Rome, was on a private pilgrimage in Medjugorje from June 4 to 7, 2005. During his stay, he visited the places of prayer and participated in the liturgical and prayer programme in the parish church. He also met the Medjugorje Franciscans. Asked about the reasons for his pilgrimage to Medjugorje, he said: “In my diocese, I have young people who were converted and whose life was changed in Medjugorje. Their witness was for me a sign of a great presence of God in Medjugorje. I also read what Rene Laurentin wrote about Our Lady’s apparitions, and it also had an influence, but most of all, I was inspired by personal witnesses of the pilgrims. I congratulate the Franciscans who are tirelessly serving the pilgrims and patiently and humbly supporting all attacks and provocations”, said the Monsignor Salvatore Boccaccio, visibly filled with joy because of his coming to Medjugorje.”

LEADERS of the CROATIAN ACADEMY of SCIENCE and ART

On Thursday, June 9, 2005, the leaders of the Croatian Academy of Science and Art came to Medjugorje. The President of the Academy Milan

Moguš, the Secretary General of the Academy Slavko Cvetnić, and the secretary Professor Doctor Slobodan Kaštela led the delegation. President Moguš expressed his joy for coming for the first time in a place where so many are converted and where s many pour out their prayers to God through Mary. In a conversation with the parish priest Father Branko Radoš, and the Director of the Information Centre “Mir” Medjugorje Father Mario Knezović, they were informed about the work of the Parish and the Shrine. The academics showed a special interest in documentation and proofs of miracles and healings at the intercession of Our Lady. While visiting the space around the parish church, they expressed their satisfaction about the harmonious and artistic details, which structure the space of prayer.

PEACE MARCH

The 14th traditional Peace March was held as every year on June 24th, the eve of the 24th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady. It began with prayer and the blessing of the pilgrims in front of the Franciscan monastery of Humac. About 3000 pilgrims started their march at 6 am. Upon their arrival in Medjugorje, pilgrims gathered in front of the parish church for a short common prayer. “The Peace March” is the fruit of an idea born in the hearts of Medjugorje pilgrims and friends of Medjugorje at the time of war, in 1992. Although the years of war are behind us, Our Lady reminds us in her messages that there are wars “in our hearts”. This 13 km-long march is a response to the trouble, violence and hatred, as well as an appeal to real peace and reconciliation. This Peace March was led by fra Ljubo Kurtović fra Bože Milić.

THE CELEBRATION of the 24TH ANNIVERSARY of OUR LADY’S APPARITIONS

During the last 24 years, Our Lady’s message of peace was spread all over the world through pilgrims, reached homes all over the world, and made Medjugorje one of the most visited places of pilgrimage, a powerful source of grace and of conversions. This is confirmed by the presence of more than 100 000 faithful from 5 continents that came to Medjugorje for the 24th anniversary. Very many local pilgrims came on their bare feet to pray to the Queen of Peace, their heavenly mother.

In the morning of June 24th and June 25th, Holy Masses were celebrated in 13 languages. During these two days, 40 000 communions were distributed.

The evening Mass on June 24th was presided by Father Valentin Vukoja and concelebrated by 163 priests. About 15 000 faithful were present.

The evening Mass on June 25th was presided by Father Branko radoš in front of about 50 000 faithful. 205 priests from approximately twenty countries concelebrated the evening mass.

REGULAR ANNUAL APPARITION to the VISIONARY IVANKA

The visionary Ivanka Ivankovic-Elez had her regular annual apparition on June 25th 2005. According to the visionaries, Vicka, Marija and Ivan continue to have daily apparitions, and Mirjana, Ivanka and Jakov have an annual apparition.

At Her last daily apparition on May 7, 1985, Our Lady confided to Ivanka the 10th secret and told her that she would have an apparition once a year on the anniversary of the apparitions. It was that way also this year. The apparition lasted 10 minutes. Ivanka had the apparition at home in the presence of her family, her husband and her three children.

Our Lady gave the following message:

“Dear children, love each other with the love of my Son. Peace, peace, peace.”

Our Lady was joyful and spoke to Ivanka about the 6th secret.

16TH YOUTH FESTIVAL

The 16th International Youth Festival – Mladifest – will take place in Medjugorje from August 1 to 6, 2005. The theme **“WE COME TO ADORE HIM”** (Mt 2,2) is in harmony with the Year of the Eucharist and the World Youth Day, which, later in August, will gather together in Cologne hundreds of thousands of young people around the Holy Father

PUBLISHERS NOTE: A complete schedule, recommendations, and special announcements were printed in the Press Bulletin but have been removed since this issue of “The PILGRIM” will arrive after the Youth Festival is complete.

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PRESS BULLETIN 212, 7/26/2005

PRIESTS at the SCHOOL of OUR LADY

Often, the priests quote and address to the faithful the following words of Jesus: “Come to me, you all who

are tired and oppressed, and I will give you rest.” (Mt 11: 28) These words are addressed to all, including to the servants of God. With the echo of these words, each year at the beginning of July, in Medjugorje gather together priests from the whole world. Our Lady is inviting them to restore their spirit. The Mother knows that her sons are at service, that they are tired and, more, heavily burdened, and she is inviting them to her school - the school of total abandonment and of listening to the will of God.

Thus Medjugorje became, so to speak, a center of rehabilitation for priests. It became a place of transfiguration. The priests feel here at home. They are at their Mother’s house. It is like remembering one’s own childhood, hearing again the call, which they had heard from their own mother: “My son, are you hungry? My son, do you have worries? Are you well?” These are questions that a mother is asking. These are questions asked by a love without end and without limits.

Priests who, for years now, are coming towards their Mother in Medjugorje, feel this love. Here, in a deep trust, continue conversations started a long time ago, new topics are opening, weights imposed by the world are rejected; the Mother is dressing the wounds of her children, the Mother is comforting and giving direction. So, it is not surprising that many priests are saying that - precisely in Medjugorje - they rediscovered the force of their vocation and their election. Here, they feel like at the permanent source of their vocation and they feel the importance of the priestly service.

In our times, when everything is done that the servants of God are pushed at the margin of the contemporary world, Our Lady is gathering them and preparing them for new missions. The Mother takes care of her sons and she is stretching her hands, which lead to Jesus. At the school of Our Lady, the priest returns to his roots and turns to the source. Thus is renewed the identity of this vocation for the service, service appointed by Jesus Christ.

Father Mario Knezovic

COMMUNIONS and PRIESTS

During the month of *June*, **111,100** received Holy Communion and **3574** priests from this country and abroad signed the register for celebrating Holy Mass in Medjugorje.

A NEW CROWN for OUR LADY’S STATUE at SAINT JAMES

The crown was blessed and the statue was officially crowned by Father Branko Rados, pastor of

Medjugorje, after the solemn evening Mass on June 25, 2005, the day of the 24th anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions in Medjugorje, in the presence of two bishops: Monsignor Geevarghese Mar Divannasios Ottathengil, Catholic Syro-malankara Bishop of the Diocese Bathery, Kerala (India), and Monsignor Jerome Gapangwa Nteziryayo, retired bishop of Uvira (Congo).



Angel Maria Garcia Alvarez (from Madrid, Spain), architect designer of the new crown offered to Saint James' in Medjugorje at the occasion of the 24th Anniversary of the apparitions (also designer of the magnificent Magna Monstrance offered to the Shrine in 2001) gave a testimony about how this project came about and how it was realised.



"This is a beautiful story that starts with the Magna Monstrance, and in my understanding, the crown is the logical conclusion of it. The Magna Monstrance was dedicated to the memory of father Slavko Barbaric. It was commissioned in January 1st 2001, about a month after his death, and was the first of several works in which we have been involved, helping the parish to renovate the most important liturgical objects: those that are related to the Eucharist. After all these commissions, came the crown for the statue. I like to imagine that Our Lady takes care that all things are prepared and beautiful for the liturgy of the Eucharist and the Adoration, and then the Lord Himself is happy to see His Mother crowned with a beautiful crown.

The first time I heard about the idea to make a new crown was a comment from father Svetozar Kraljevic on the Feast of Saint Francis, 4th October 2003, after the mass, in front of the statue. I was there with my wife Amparo, when we brought a group of Spanish pilgrims to Medjugorje. Later I knew that Father Branko Rados, the pastor, was thinking about it since a long time ago. The commission was formally requested by the pastor the day before the Feast of the Immaculate Conception last year 7th December 2004. He wanted a nice and valuable crown for the statue, for the coming 24th Anniversary of the apparitions of 25th June 2005, in this year of the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception by Pope Pius IX in 1854.

The people involved, besides the pastor father Branko and father Svetozar, were my wife Amparo, the countess Felicia Traun, 14 Spanish families or individual donors, the workshop who fabricated it, and me as the designer. At the beginning, there were no donors. The parish requested the crown like a

typical commission to be paid by the parish to the workshop as usual. During the process of design someone came to me in Madrid because she was interested in giving some money for the parish. This person wished to donate half of it for the Mother's Village, and the other half for the new crown. Then my wife and I both realized that we could find enough donors in Spain to pay for the whole crown and it would be a great honour for all of us. We asked the pastor if he would accept this donation, and he agreed. So, this crown is totally a gift from a few Spanish families and pilgrims to Our Lady and to Medjugorje.

My contribution also involved the transportation: I transported the crown from Spain to Medjugorje in my own hands."

“THE MASTER OLOF CHOIR” from SWEDEN on TOUR in B&H and CROATIA



"The Master Olof Choir" from Stockholm, Sweden, under direction of M. Bo Tobiasson, began a tour in B&H and Croatia on Saturday, July 2, in the Parish

Church in Medjugorje. The choir accompanied the Evening Mass, and after Mass gave a short concert for the faithful. The concert was broadcasted live on Radio "Mir" Medjugorje.

This amateur mixed choir was founded in Stockholm in 1940. The choir is ranking four in Europe and second in Stockholm. "The Master Olof Choir" has travelled to Poland, Denmark, Hungary, France, Germany, Iceland, USA, Italy, England/Wales and Ireland.

A NEW CD for the 24TH ANNIVERSARY of the APPARITIONS - SONGS for ADORATION

For the 24th anniversary of the apparitions, the Information Center «Mir» Medjugorje published a new CD. This CD contains meditations and songs known to all



those who are coming for Adoration to Medjugorje. They were recorded by a group of young people who are from week to week accompanying the Medjugorje Adoration with music and singing. We wish it to be our contribution to the Year of the

Eucharist and a stimulation for Eucharistic Adoration.

This CD can be purchased only and exclusively in the souvenir shop of the Parish. The income is for

humanitarian purposes and for the upkeep costs of the Shrine. In Medjugorje, nobody except the Parish office has the copyright for the duplication and selling of this CD.

PARISH OFFICE MEDJUGORJE IS NOT SUPPORTING THE SATELLITE TV PROJECT "MARY TV" IN MEDJUGORJE

Numerous pilgrims are asking us questions about the construction and the media project "Mary TV" undertaken in Medjugorje by the organisations "Children of Medjugorje" and "Sveti Maximilien Kolbe", means Denis Nolan and Sister Emmanuel Maillard. The Parish Office and the Information Center "Mir" Medjugorje are doing all that is within their possibilities to spread Our Lady's message all over the world, but, in connection with this TV-project, the Parish Office declares that it is not yet time for such a step, that the Parish Office is not included in any project of creating a TV station in Medjugorje, that it has neither administrative permission nor human or material resources for the opening of such a media in Medjugorje, that it has not given any consent to Denis Nolan and Sister Emmanuel Maillard for the construction of the building, which has for the goal the opening of a satellite TV station under the name "Mary TV", that it is not supporting the fund raising for this intentions, and that it is not participating in any way in this project.

Signature: Father Branko Rados, OFM, Pastor of Medjugorje.

THE 10th INTERNATIONAL MEETING of PRIESTS

The 10th International Meeting for Priests took place from July 4 to 9, 2005. This seminar gathered 294 priests from 27 countries from all of the continents. Professor Doctor Father Zvezdan Linic, ofm, spoke to them on the theme: "The Eucharist and Mary".

During these days, priests were sharing, praying, and celebrating the Eucharist in communion with the



people of God. Feeling here at the school of Mary, they went to pray at the places that Our Lady had especially chosen for prayer: the Apparition Hill and Cross Mountain. The last day, they went to pray

at the tomb of Father Slavko Barbaric, who initiated these Priests Meetings in 1996.

From year to year, the number of priests who choose to make their annual retreat in Medjugorje, under the protection of Our Blessed Mother - the Queen of Peace, is growing.



The abundance of fruits of this meeting can be seen in the large number of participants and in their moving testimonies at the end of the retreat.

We entrust them into your prayers.

THE 16th INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FESTIVAL - MLADIFEST 16 - MEDJUGORJE 2005

The 16th International Youth Festival - Mladifest 16 - will take place in Medjugorje from August 1st to August 6th, 2005. The theme "**We come to adore him**" (Mt 2,2) is in harmony with the Year of the Eucharist and the World Youth Day, which, later in August, will gather together in Cologne hundreds of thousands of young people around the Holy Father.

THE 6th INTERNATIONAL MEETING for MARRIED COUPLES

The 6th International Meeting for Married Couples will take place in Medjugorje from October 26 to 29, 2005. The theme of the seminar is "Dialog in the Family - How to Educate Children?"

Bring with you: a small FM radio with headphones (for simultaneous translation) and a Bible. The seminar will take place in Medjugorje in the New Hall. Participation per couple: 40 €. You may make reservations by e-mail: seminar.marija@medjugorje.hr, or by fax +387-36-651-999 (for Marija Dugandzic). The number of participants is limited because of the available space in the Hall, so we ask you to send your registration as soon as possible, latest by the end of September. All the participants are invited to individually provide their accommodation in Medjugorje.

[NOTE: The PFMC can make air and land arrangements for attendance at Medjugorje events. It is best to travel in groups of at least 3 or 4 due to cost of transport from either Split or Dubrovnik, Croatia. Call (856) 768-9228.]

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

MEDJUGORJE PILGRIMAGE

I have not had much time to record the wonders of my last pilgrimage to Medjugorje in May 2005. I will try to include bits and pieces in this and future issues of "The PILGRIM." If you wish to go to Medjugorje, please drop us a note and tell us the best time of the year for you to go. If you can get 10-15 pilgrims to go with you that would make a small group. If you have a Spiritual Director in mind ask him to go with you. Father Jay Bowen has indicated his desire to return and will consider nearly any dates that pilgrims have in mind.

One of the most amazing things that happened to me was to meet **Father Peter Glas, Colm Cahill**, and his mother, **Mary**. I asked **Father Peter** if we could share the story of **Colm's** healing with our readers and he said he did not have time to write it down. He recently signed our Guest Book on the Internet and indicated that the story was now posted. One of his pilgrims got with a web site designer and they have put some of the story along with pictures on an Internet web site with the following link: <http://www.miracleatmedjugorje.com/foreword.html>.

I will ask if we can reprint the story so that those who do not use the Internet can see it. It is truly an amazing story.

(Keith Werner)

VOCATIONS DEPARTMENT

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

(Kathleen, Keith, and all the *PFMC* Volunteers)

PAPAL REFLECTIONS on MARRIAGE and the FAMILY

VATICAN CITY, JUN 7, 2005 (VIS) - Last evening at Saint John Lateran Basilica, Pope Benedict XVI inaugurated the Ecclesial Congress promoted by the diocese of Rome on the theme "The Family and the Christian Community: Formation of the Person and Transmission of the Faith."

The Pope offered some reflections on "the meaning of marriage and the family in the plan of God, Creator and Savior."

Anthropological Foundation of the Family

He starts by saying that "the human being has been created in the image and likeness of God and God

Himself is Love. Thus, the vocation to love is what makes man the authentic image of God. ... From this basic link between God and man comes another: the indissoluble link between spirit and body."

"The totality of man," he continues, "includes the dimension of time and man's 'yes' ... means 'always', it is the space of fidelity. Only within it can one grow in faith." He adds that "the greatest expression of freedom ... is the capacity to choose a definitive gift in which freedom, giving of itself, fully finds itself. Concretely, the personal and reciprocal 'yes' between a man and a woman ... is destined to the gift of a new life" and it is also a "public 'yes' with which the spouses take on the public responsibility of fidelity."

Benedict XVI underscored that "the various forms of dissolving marriages today, as well as the free unions and the 'trial marriages', including pseudo-marriage between people of the same sex, are, rather, expressions of an anarchical freedom, which passes itself off, wrongly, for a true liberation of man. Such pseudo-freedom is based on making the body banal, which inevitably includes making man banal."

Marriage and the Family in the History of Salvation.

The Pope recalled that "biblical revelation, in fact, is above all the expression of a story of love, the story of the covenant of God with man; therefore the story of the love and union between a man and a woman in the covenant of marriage was able to be assumed by God as a symbol of the history of salvation."

"In the same way that the Incarnation of the Son of God reveals its true meaning in the cross, authentic human love is the giving of oneself and cannot exist if a person wishes to rid himself of the cross."

The Holy Father underscored several negative tendencies that are in opposition to "the profound link between God and man, between God's love and human love. ...The depreciation of human love, the suppression of the authentic capacity to love is revealed, in fact, in our times as the most adept and efficacious arm to remove God from man, to distance Him from man's gaze and from his heart."

Children

"Even in generating children marriage reflects its divine model, the love of God for man. In man and woman, paternity and maternity, as the body and as love, do not let themselves be limited to the biological: life is given entirely only when, with birth, love and the sense that make it possible to say yes to this life are also given. Precisely in this way does it become clear how contrary to human love, to the

profound vocation of a man and a women, it is when the union is closed to the gift of life, or worse yet, suppresses or manipulates unborn life. ... For this reason the building of every single Christian family is placed within the larger context of the great family of the Church, which sustains it and bears it within itself.”

The Family and the Church

“Benedict XVI affirmed that “from all this comes an evident consequence: the family and the Church, concretely the parishes and other forms of ecclesial communities, are called to the closest collaboration in that basic duty which comprises, in an inseparable fashion, the formation of the person and the transmission of the faith.”

The Threat of Relativism

“Today an especially insidious obstacle to the work of education is the massive presence, in our society and culture, of a relativism which, while recognizing nothing as definitive, establishes as a final measure only one’s ‘I’ with one’s own desires and which, under the appearance of freedom, becomes for each person a prison. Within such a relativistic horizon it is not possible therefore to have a true education: without the light of truth, sooner or later every person is in fact condemned to doubt the goodness of his own life and the relations that comprise it, to doubt the validity of his commitment to build, with others, something in common. It is therefore clear that not only must we seek to overcome relativism in our work of forming people, but we are also called to fight its predominant place in society and culture.”

Priesthood and the Consecrated Life

The Holy Father concluded by pointing to the need to pray for many vocations to the priesthood and to consecrated life and to pray that priests and religious “give witness to the joy of having been called by the Lord.”

(AC/CONGRESS:FAMILY/JOHN LATERAN VIS
050607 (870))

SUMMER IS AN ORDINARY TIME BE AN ADORER

Summer at its peak gives the illusion that it will never end. One day appears to be much like another: sunny, warm and more relaxed than in other seasons. The sameness of the days makes it seem quite possible that one day will simply lead to another and another and another. This is part of the charm of summer in its fullness.

In the liturgical calendar we are in the season designated “Ordinary Time”. It is perhaps better understood as ordered or numbered time because each Sunday is designated by a number (such as the 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time). This season doesn’t have the drama and focus of the Christmas or Easter seasons. It is not a time of preparation like Advent or Lent. It does, however, comprise the majority of the year and gives us the chance to walk week to week with Jesus.

This liturgical season is like summertime in that it can give us the feeling of a seemingly endless progression of time. The fact that it is not focused on a particular dimension of the mystery of salvation like the incarnation or resurrection allows us to explore smaller yet significant moments in Christ’s life. It feels more like being with Jesus in the day to day movement of his life.

My work as a sister of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ is to help women and men discern God’s call to them through a program called LifeChoices ®. Some of the people who get involved in the program realize they are being called to a vocation as a religious or priest. My work, however, is focused on those who want to figure out how to follow Christ more intently in their daily lives.

Intense and dramatic moments in our lives have a profound effect on us. At the same time, my experience is that God’s call often comes through very ordinary events. The majority of our lives, like the liturgical season, are lived in ordinary time. Getting a clear sense of God’s will may well be an incremental process with almost indiscernible steps. I believe that God most typically speaks to us as he did to Elijah-not in storm or earthquake but in a still, small voice.

We have to carefully discipline ourselves to hear that voice. It requires mindfulness and care on our part. We also are well advised to seek out companions who will support us and help focus our attention.

HOLY MASS TIMES

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

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

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

One opportunity to intently listen for God's call is the fourth annual Gathering of Women Weekend, September 2nd through September 5th, 2005. The Gathering is an opportunity for single women age 20-45 to listen for and to celebrate the messages God has for their lives. If you are interested in attending, contact Lori Bengel at 1-877- ADORERS (236-7377) ext 1411 or e-mail Lori at bengel@adorers.org

God is speaking to each of us in simple ordinary ways this summer. Let us do all we can to hear that loving voice and be open to what God calls us to do.

To learn more about LifeChoices® or the Gathering of Women visit the Adorers website www.adorers.org or contact Sister Rita Schilling at 1-877-ADORERS (236-7377) ext 1409; e-mail schillingr@adorers.org

The Adorers of the Blood of Christ is an international congregation founded in Italy by Saint Maria De Mattias. Some 1,750 Sisters now minister in 27 nations on all the continents in the areas of education, health care, spiritual development and social justice.

The Adorers of the Blood of Christ came to the United States in 1870, settling first in Illinois, then expanding to Kansas and Pennsylvania. Nearly 425 ASC sisters minister in 17 of the United States and in Korea, Bolivia, Guatemala and Rome, making it the largest of the international congregation's nine provinces. U.S. Province headquarters are in Saint Louis, Missouri.

(by Sister Rita Schilling, ASC)

AN ACT of CONSECRATION to the HOLY SPIRIT

O Holy Spirit, divine Spirit of light and love, I consecrate to Thee my understanding, heart and will, my whole being for time and for eternity.

May my understanding be always submissive to Thy Heavenly inspiration, and to the teaching of the Catholic Church of which Thou art the infallible guide.

May my heart be ever inflamed with love of God, and of my neighbor. May my will be ever conformed to the divine will, and may my whole life be a faithful imitation of the life and virtues of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and Thee be honor and glory for ever.

AMEN

(Partial Indulgence if said once a day, originally 300 days. Pius X, June 5, 1908)

FRAGILITY

Love can be as fragile
as a butterfly or a flower, but a flower will hold
its blossoms safely in its roots while buried
in the icy heart of winter. With a faith
that can't be overcome
by frost,
it reaches past reason
all the way to April.
And a migrating butterfly will wing its way
through a thousand miles of impossibilities
until it finds
its flower.

(John Engle, Saint Anthony Messenger, February 2004)

FOSTER PARENTING and JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

Was it God's will that she adopt this child?



Alison is nearly three years old.

She was adopted last year by a single woman, Shannon, who is a campus minister at a Jesuit college. Both mother and adopted daughter have curly blond hair, round blue eyes, and fair skin—they look so alike that most people assume they are biologically related. This impression is reinforced when Alison talks. A verbally precocious child, she has taken on some of her adoptive mother's facial expressions and verbal patterns. Shannon has been bringing Allie to our HIV clinic for monthly appointments since the child was 10 months old. (Their names have been changed to protect their privacy.)

My first impression of Shannon was of an attractive woman in her mid-20's with a clean-cut appearance and an open, trusting face. She was wearing a striped, pink button-down shirt, crisp khaki shorts, white socks and sneakers. There was a small gold cross around her neck. I remember thinking that she looked like a kindergarten teacher. She seemed so young, so cheerful and so naive that I thought, "Does she really know what she's getting into, adopting a child with HIV disease?" I soon learned, however, that Shannon was 34 years old, that she worked as a pastoral counselor at a nearby college and that she fully understood the implications of adopting a child with HIV: Over time, I came to realize that Shannon is a remarkable young woman who is anything but naive—a woman who is possessed of a profound spiritual centeredness.

Shannon first heard about Alison when the child was three months old. Alison's mother, Tamara, had been caught hiding behind a cupboard with Alison in her arms during a drug sweep. Tamara was sent to jail, and the child was turned over to her maternal grandmother. But the grandmother worked from 4 P.M. till 11 P.M. in a local convenience store. It was hard for her to find friends or neighbors to watch the child, and there was no money to pay for babysitters. Shannon offered to baby-sit Alison for free. At first this was only one day a week; then it became a day and an overnight; then it was for several days and nights at a time. As Shannon grew increasingly fond of the child, she wondered who in Alison's family would be able to provide her with a permanent home.

For several months Shannon shared Alison with the baby's grandmother, mother and other relatives on both sides. But family members proved unable to care for her with any consistency. Allie's mother was on drugs and in and out of prison, and her father was in jail for assault and drug-related offenses. When her grandmother was diagnosed with cancer, it seemed that there was no one in the family who could care for the child. Shannon began to feel that perhaps she was meant to adopt Alison. But she needed to know whether this was indeed God's will. The grandmother, who by then was quite ill, agreed to put Alison in foster care while Shannon decided what she should do. This took 10 days—about the length of a Jesuit "one-week" retreat. It was, Shannon recalls, "a very hard, long 10 days"—but by the end she felt convinced that God intended her to adopt the child. "I thought, if I don't do this, I won't be complete. I need her as much as she needs me. And I feel that God decided this a long time ago."

Shannon then approached Allie's grandmother, who agreed to the adoption but warned her that Tamara

would never let go of her baby. So Shannon went to talk to Tamara, who was in a psychiatric hospital after attempting suicide in prison. The first meeting of these two mothers was as surprising for Shannon as it was dramatic: "I walked into her room," says Shannon, "and told her who I was, and she started to cry. And she said to me right then, 'I know I'm never going to be able to raise Allie. I can't even keep myself away from drugs, so how can I take care of a baby? I want you to take her.'"

Shannon was stunned by the speed with which this young woman was able to trust her. She felt this was a sign not only that she was supposed to take on Alison's care, but also that she was to help Tamara. Tamara told Shannon about her own past growing up in a welfare family in the projects with an alcoholic mother and an abusive father. She described how she became involved with street drugs when she ran away from home at 13, how her life had revolved around drugs ever since, and how she found out she had H.I.V: only when at age 18 she give birth to Alison. At the end of this long, sad story Tamara said to Shannon, "I don't think there's a way out of this for me, but there's a way out for Alison, and it's you, and I want her to have that." Ever since this first meeting, relations between the two mothers have been very warm. Tamara seems to feel that Shannon is a trusted friend, and Shannon has promised to "be there" for her.

So with Tamara's approval, Shannon was appointed Alison's legal guardian. During this time Shannon received support not only from prayer and meditation, but also from other people: from her family; from a student friend who could watch Allie during the day; from her co-workers; and from the college, which promised to pay a substantial part of the adoption fees. To Shannon, this affirmation from friends and family "confirmed what I had been experiencing in prayer. It was God's way of saying, 'You're on track here; it's okay.'" She also found that her new status as a single mom made her a very visible presence on her campus. She observes, "Most people think, here's a single woman adopting a child with AIDS whom she'll lose in 10 years, and they think I'm nuts! But I'm not alone. God is very much a part of my everyday life and when it's God's will, I have this deep sense of consolation where, with each step, I feel that this is what I need to do."

It took a full year after Shannon was appointed Alison's legal guardian for the adoption to be finalized. It was a difficult year, a year of uncertainty. Shannon continued to arrange visits between Alison and her biological family, as instructed by the court. The grandmother maintained that her own health was

improving, and that when she recovered fully, she would be taking Alison back to live with her. And Tamara seemed to have changed her mind about the adoption. Over a period of several weeks, she would call Shannon several times a day, excitedly telling her that she was fine now, and that she was going to have Alison returned to her.

Less than a month later, however, the whole situation changed. Tamara broke house arrest and returned to the streets as a prostitute to support her drug habit. Alison's father signed the adoption papers, recognizing that Tamara was unlikely ever to be a mother to his child and realizing that he was unable to care for an H.I.V.-infected child by himself. When Tamara finally returned to the grandmother's home, she signed, too. So Alison became Shannon's daughter.

Throughout, Shannon has remained on good terms with Tamara, feeling that God means her to be a part of Tamara's life as well as Alison's. The two women became even closer after the grandmother's death. Shannon reassured Tamara that she could continue visits with Alison, insisting only that Tamara be drug-free and that contact be regular, not sporadic. But in fact Tamara rarely saw the child. She would schedule visits and then not show up. She would make phone calls, ostensibly to find out how Alison was doing, but soon turning the conversation back to herself and her own problems. Shannon came to feel that the only thing she really could do for Tamara was listen.

Despite Shannon's support, Tamara's future looks dim. She does not take her H.I.V. medications regularly and she seems unable to break her addiction to heroin and cocaine. She continues to return to prostitution for weeks or sometimes months to support her drug habit. Alison's future, on the other hand, appears good. She has responded well to H.I.V. medications and remains in good health-so far. We all know that Alison's staying healthy is a race between the progression of her HIV disease and the development of new medications that can keep the virus in check. But we all believe, as well, that there are other, higher forces at work in the lives of this small family.

I've talked with Shannon many times about her decision to adopt Alison, once while visiting at her college. I find that I'm deeply moved by her story-especially by the simplicity and depth of her description of prayer. "I need quiet time," she tells me, "and if I don't have it, I get nutty inside. I just feel disconnected, and then I don't have time to be grateful for the day, or to say to God, if I've made a mistake, 'Look, I really screwed this up, and I need help with it'." For her, prayer is a dimension of her

relationship with God: "It's like spending time with your best friend, and if you don't do it, you miss it."

But Shannon intermingles homely descriptions like these with such phrases as "a time of discernment" and "the spirits of consolation and desolation," alerting me to the way her prayer life draws on the rigorous and methodical spiritual practice of Saint Ignatius Loyola. Each year Shannon goes on a 10-day silent retreat, and in her work she is responsible for student retreats involving the learning and practice of Ignatian spirituality.

When I press Shannon to explain how the experience of prayer confirms some decision or act, even asking outright how she is able to distinguish God's wishes from her own, her answer once again blends the language of Saint Ignatius with modern American colloquialisms. "When it's God's will, I feel a deep sense of peace, a deep sense of consolation. But when it's only me, I don't have that sense of peace, and it's like one of those days when you have too much caffeine and crummy food and not enough rest and you feel like you're just spinning your wheels-well, that's what it feels like inside. It's like I'm holding on too tight, and I'm just squeezing any goodness out of what I'm doing. When I let that go and I let it be 'ours' rather than 'mine,' then it feels right, and I know I can trust that. This is a prayer form I've been trained in, which is to really pay attention to feelings of consolation and desolation."

As a teenager, Shannon wanted to become a nun in order to be closer to God. In a sense, her life now can be seen as a fulfillment of the ideals and passions of a deeply religious teenager. "Alison has made my relationship with God more intimate. She's right there-it's like God's creation right out there in front of me. Of course I have no illusions that Alison will have a long life. But I wake up every day, and there she is, and she gives me a kiss, and we get to start all over again. It's just wonderful. It makes life more precious. We say our prayers at night and every night we say: 'God, thank you for today; and bless us with another day.' And that's how we live."

ANNE HUNSAKER HAWKINS is a professor of humanities at Penn State University's College of Medicine in State College, Pa. Her most recent book is A Small, Good Thing: Stories of Children With H.I. V. and Those Who Care for Them.

(by ANNE HUNSAKER HAWKINS, America, July 16-23, 2001)

THE JOURNEY BACK

Finding God and Beating Cancer Medicine healed her body – God healed her spirit

Sometimes it's Difficult to understand how God intervenes during times of trouble. I know that what I received was beyond my expectations because of the wonder God worked in my life when I was diagnosed with cancer.

On my birthday in 1988, my son, who was 10 at the time, asked, "Thirty-nine means you're at the top of the hill, right, Mom?"

Normally, I would have seen the humor in his question, but on this day his words stung. Weeks earlier, my doctor had found a lump in my right breast during a routine exam. "It's probably nothing," the doctor said. "We'll schedule a biopsy to be sure, but it's probably nothing."

The funny thing is, at the time, my husband and I seemed on top of the world. We had good jobs, a new house in suburbia and two bright, healthy children. We took trips, owned a boat and drove nice cars. Who cared if we were running on the fast track, wrapped up in ourselves? Wasn't everyone who strived for the good life doing the same thing? Wasn't that what the American dream was all about? But what exactly was at the top? I had no idea.

Two weeks after my birthday I was coming out of anesthesia, following the biopsy. Wheeled into an empty outpatient room, I lay fully alert for a long time until my husband came in. Immediately I asked if he had seen the doctor, if everything was O.K. When he didn't answer right away, I was annoyed so I asked him again.

"The doctor wants to talk to you himself," he said.

Wondering why my husband was being so evasive, I demanded to know what the doctor was going to say. I never dreamed that the words my husband said to me were the very ones I didn't want to hear.

"It's cancer," he said.

I burst out crying. I had trouble breathing. The room began to spin. My husband was at my side, taking me into his arms and pleading, "Please don't cry." I knew how much he hated to see me cry, how helpless it made him feel, but I couldn't help it. This was cancer.

Where was God? I wondered.

Welcome Back

In the weeks that followed, stupor and shock gave way to resignation and a newfound fortitude. "I've got cancer. I've got cancer," I kept telling myself until I believed it. I was in a war against my own body, and I knew I had to fight. I just couldn't handle it alone. I needed help and looked for God. I was determined to find him.

Of course, I wasn't in the habit of looking for or depending upon God. In fact, I hadn't most of my adult life.

Although I had remained a "church on

Sunday" kind of Catholic, I paid little attention to God. Growing up, I had prayed as my parents and the nuns at parochial school had taught me. Each night I would get down on my knees and recite rote prayers to a God I thought was distant and invisible.

Through adolescence and by the time I reached my 20s, I was too busy for God. Marriage, children, work and social activities occupied my days. I had come to believe that I was in charge. I had consigned God to a dusty corner and rarely prayed.

That is, until I got cancer. Then everything changed overnight. I was a schoolteacher and, as classes resumed in September, I didn't return to my teaching position. Instead, I visited doctors and hospitals. I felt fine and had no symptoms, but still I played the role of cancer patient. I was scared.

What if I died? I didn't want to leave my children motherless. I didn't want to leave my husband alone, either.

A couple of weeks after my diagnosis, I was surprised when a friend and co-worker announced at Mass about an upcoming "Life in the Spirit" seminar. Those who wanted to develop a closer relationship with God and allow the Holy Spirit to be even more present in their lives were invited to attend.

I knew that a few years earlier my friend had gone to a similar seminar and experienced God in a new and personal way. I remember noticing changes in her at the time. She was more peaceful, more upbeat at work. She began to reach out to faculty members in need.

Others, including myself, were drawn to her. On a couple of occasions she even said to me, "I think the Lord is calling you to draw closer./I But I never figured I needed to, or that a spiritual reawakening could happen to me. Yet, with the arrival of cancer, I was like a person drowning at sea, reaching for a raft. I knew God from my past and wanted him to come into my life and save me from cancer.

‘Was Blind but Now I See’

I attended the seminar and, almost immediately, I noticed changes. Each week the seminar focused on a different teaching: God’s Love, Salvation, Receiving God’s Gifts, etc. The teachings opened new worlds to me: God loves us all, but God also loves me personally Jesus died on the cross to save people from their sins, myself included. I had never thought of these truths in terms of myself.

Afterward, several people would get up and speak about how God was working in their lives. I was amazed and intrigued by these ordinary men and women sharing their spiritual journeys in the contemporary world. I had never heard this sort of thing before.

At the seminar, we were also encouraged to spend time each day in prayer. I began praying again, not in the same mechanical fashion that I had as a child, but in a conversational manner. I talked to God, asking him to be with me as I went through my day.

I placed my treatments and their outcome in God’s hands. I prayed for my family, friends and those I didn’t even know. I told God what was bothering me and offered thanks for the blessings I was beginning to see in each day.

I began to notice sunsets, the moon at night and how the leaves burst with color before dying to make way for winter. I found myself astounded by the wide-open space of barren trees, the brightness of snow and the tiny green buds that followed. Suddenly I saw these as metaphors for God’s omnipresence and Christ’s dying for us to give new life.

For years I had been in the habit of listening to pop music in my car, singing along with the artists. I began to buy spiritual tapes and listened to them while driving instead. Sometimes I’d hear them in my head when waking in the morning or working in my kitchen, and realized they were a gift of song from God.

But perhaps the most remarkable effect of my turning to God was that I began to see him in the people around me. I recognized God in the outpouring of concern and support from my husband, family and close friends. I had never been on the receiving end of so many acts of kindness.

I recall one day while our sons were in school, my husband and I drove to have lunch with close friends who had moved away a few years earlier. With them, I discovered I was more attentive than I had been before and saw them in new ways. It was as if I was seeing them for the first time. I saw Jesus transformed before their eyes.

Faith Through Prayer

The leaders of the seminar suggested we read Scripture. Over the years, I had heard many readings at Mass and had attended Catholic schools, but I had never read the Bible or paid much attention. Almost immediately, I was surprised as parables and Scriptures came to life.

Verses spoke to me, such as Isaiah 45:3: “I will give you treasures out of the darkness, and riches that have been hidden away, that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name.”

I began to think that God was calling me and had good things in store for me despite the cancer I was battling.

Still, as chemotherapy and radiation sessions zapped me of energy, feeling well became a relative expression. I worried that cancer, my unseen enemy, was gobbling me whole. With each new ache, I was convinced the cancer was worsening and that chemotherapy wasn’t working.

Some days I felt God had left me alone. Other days, I rejoiced in God’s presence. A woman in my seminar group had a sister we prayed for because she was also battling breast cancer. When her sister eventually died, the fear of death gripped me once again, and only the prayers from the group loosened fear’s foothold.

When the seminar ended, many of the people involved gathered together weekly at prayer meetings, and I, too, began attending. I discovered that letting go of my fears about my cancer and trusting God in all things was not simple. But I also learned that strength and peace come from personal prayer and praying with others.

With all of these changes occurring, I soon discovered how far from the top my life before cancer had been.

Scaling New Heights

My son’s words about being at the top of the hill still haunted me. Of course, the day he spoke them, I was worried about my upcoming biopsy. Still, I couldn’t help but see myself on top of a hill. I wondered if I would remain there, enjoy the view or drop suddenly in one quick movement to some unknown abyss. In a sense, I had.

Cancer had cast me into that valley but it also brought me to the hilltop. With my diagnosis, I was presented with two choices: I could go back the way I came, speeding along a fast track heading nowhere, trying to control my own destiny; or I could forge ahead, tackling the peak before me, rising to the top and looking for God in my daily life.

That was what I wanted--to fill my days with prayer and with Scripture and to follow God. I wanted to continue discovering God in the people I met each day and the people I already knew.

Fifteen years have passed since that time, and I remain cancer-free. I still attend prayer meetings and I continue to pray each day and read the Scriptures. Often when a "Life in the Spirit" seminar is held in my area, I am asked to speak or teach. I would never have thought this possible, which only proves that God does make all things new.

Today, I thank God for saving me from cancer and for allowing me to draw closer. Because of this, I can say unequivocally that I have indeed reached the top. And from where I stand, the only way is up.

Katherine Murphy is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in the pages of Catholic Digest, Family Digest, Word Among Us and this publication. Married with two grown sons, Katherine chronicled her fight against cancer and newfound relationship with God in her book, Awake, O Sleeper: How I Rediscovered God Through Breast Cancer, published by Ave Maria Press. She lives in Clifton Park, New York. For more information, log on to www.krmurphy.com.

(By KATHERINE MURPHY, SAINT ANTHONY MESSENGER, February 2004)

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 / Cephass or Petros depending on original or translation) of Simon bar Jonah and led by his apostolic successor **Pope John Paul II**.

The **PFMC** was established in the home of **Keith and Kathleen Werner** based on pilgrimages to **Medjugorje, Bosnia-Hercegovina**, 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 page 24.

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

Thank you and God bless you,

(Kathleen, Keith, and the PFMC Volunteer Staff)

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.

10-17 OCTOBER 2005 PILGRIMAGE to SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO (Saint Pio of Pietrelcina), MONTE SANT' ANGELO, LANCIANO (Eucharistic Miracle), ROME

This pilgrimage has had to be cancelled due to the last minute withdrawal of the Spiritual Director and inability to find a suitable replacement. Call (856) 768-9228 for more information.

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.

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

(Kathleen as well as all the *PFMC* Volunteer Staff)

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.

September 2-4, 2005 - Fourth Annual Marian Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Speakers: **Father Andrew Apostoli, Father Joseph Iannuzzi, Father Louis Guardiola, Dan Lynch, Al Barbarino, Roy Shoeman, Stan Rutherford.** Youth Conference on *Saturday.* Contact: (204) 268-2046; <http://www.marianconference.com>

October 7-9, 2005 - Camden Charismatic Conference, Wildwood Convention Center, Wildwood, NJ. Contact: (856) 589-7205. Speakers: **John Michael Talbot, Babsie Bleasdel, Father Michael Moses, and Bob Valiante, MC.**

October 28-30, 2005 - Catholic Unity Conference, Hilton Hotel, King of Prussia, PA. Contact: (610) 527-2906. Speakers: **Father Andrew Apostoli, Mother Nadine Brown, Ralph Martin, Josyp Terelya, Father Clement Machado, Jim Cowan.** www.inhissign.com.

(compiled from various sources by Keith Werner)

PFMC DISPLAYS and / or PRESENTATIONS



Kathleen and Keith are available to participate in parish or prayer group meetings with witness, and/or videotape or slide presentations, followed by a question and answer session. The experiences and continuation of the *PFMC* ministries for Our Lady and her Son in this time of manifestation of Our Lord's mercy and graces are shared at no cost. Free will offerings are accepted. This is especially true for books, tapes, and religious articles, when they are made available in displays at the presentation sites. Recipients are asked to donate at or above the suggested value posted on each article on display. Displays may be set up without a presentation.

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

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

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

(Keith and Kathleen Werner)

POPE BENEDICT XVI PRAYER INTENTIONS for JULY

VATICAN CITY, JUL 1, 2005 (VIS) - Pope Benedict's general prayer intention for the month of July is: "That Christians be sensitive to the needs of everyone, without ever hiding the radical requirements of the Gospel message."

For missions: "That all the baptized be committed, each in their own state of life, to transforming society by permeating the mentality and structures of the world with the light of the Gospel."

(BXVI-PRAYER INTENTIONS/JULY/... VIS 050701 (80))

MAY PEACE PREVAIL AGAINST TERRORISM

VATICAN CITY, JUL 21, 2005 (VIS) - Yesterday afternoon, Benedict XVI made a trip to Val Grisanche in the alpine region of Valle d'Aosta in northwest Italy where he is spending his vacation. On his return to the chalet in which he is staying, he paused to greet a group of young people and to answer questions from journalists.

As his car arrived at the chalet, the Pope requested the driver to stop, and he got out and spent ten minutes greeting people and answering reporters' questions. Asked about the July 7 attacks in London, the Holy Father said that if it is true that "terrorism is irrational" and therefore impervious to signs, then dialogue can at least "be one element, a cry of alarm, an invitation to abandon terrorism."

Benedict XVI also pointed out that, even following the London attacks, there is no clash of civilizations in the world, only "small fanatical groups." In this context, he stressed the importance of "dialogue between the three religions that recognize Abraham as father."

The Pope also underlined the need "to pray that the desire, which exists throughout the world and is

clearly against all violence, may prevail and grow stronger."

On the subject of his vacation in the Valle d'Aosta, the Holy Father said: "It is a marvelous holiday, everything here is beautiful, it is a paradise."

Benedict XVI arrived in his chalet at the locality of Les Combes on July 11 and will remain until July 28 when he will travel to the pontifical residence of Castelgandolfo south of Rome.

(BXVI-VACATION/TERRORISM/VALLE D'AOSTA VIS 050721 (270))

SHORT PRAYERS

Our Lady asked for short and ardent prayers in *July*.

Here are some from *Saint Alphonsus Liguori* written down in 1750.

For the **Nativity of the Ever - Blessed Virgin**: "Thy birth, O Blessed Virgin, was holy; may my death be holy!"

For the **Assumption**: "Most holy Virgin, who didst die out of pure love, may I at least die with contrition!"

"Let us, therefore, always try to gain Her friendship more and more; let us ingratiate ourselves with Her more and more, by continually fostering in ourselves devotion towards Her. Every day let us say Her Rosary. Fast in Her honor every Saturday. Observe the novenas and the fast before all Her principal feasts. Practice some devotion also on all Her smaller, even smallest feasts."

(By Saint Alphonsus Liguori in "The Incarnation, Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ," 1750, e-mail from June Klins of the Internet International Prayer Group)

GENNESARET RETREAT

10/14/2005 to 10/16/2005

Gennesaret Retreat is a weekend retreat offered free of charge for those who live with serious illness or are unable to attend a retreat due to disability. The retreats are held twice a year at a barrier free facility, **The Vincentian Renewal Center in Princeton, NJ**. The team members have both a spiritual and medical background. For more information and to register, call **Hilare Reinold (732) 566-7237**. Ends on **Sunday** with Holy Mass about **4 PM**. Contact: **Sister Mary Simon Robb**. Phone: **(609) 406-7400** ext. **5594**, Fax: **(609) 406-7403**, Email: srobb@dioceseoftrenton.org.

CALENDARS:

In *August*, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the *ASSUMPTION (15)*, the Feasts of *Saints Lawrence (10)* and *Bartholomew, Apostle (24)*, the Memorials of *Saints Clare (11)*, *Bernard (20)*, *Monica (27)* and *Augustine (28)* and the Optional Memorials of *Saints Pope Pontian (13)*, *Hippolytus (13)*, *Stephen of Hungary (16)*, *Jane Frances de Chantal (18)*, *John Eudes (19)*, *Rose of Lima (23)*, *Louis of France (25)*, and *Joseph Calasanz (25)*, as well as the *Queenship of Mary (22)* and the *Martyrdom of Saint John the Baptist (29)*.

In *September*, the Church celebrates the Feasts of the *Birth of Mary (8)*, the *Exaltation of the Holy Cross (14)* and *Saints Matthew, Apostle (21)* and *Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels (29)*, and the Memorials of *Saints Gregory the Great (3)*, *Peter Claver (9)*, *John Chrysostom (13)*, *Pope Cornelius and Cyprian (16)*, *Januarius (19)*, *Andrew Kim Taegon, Paul Chong Hasang and Companions (20)*, *Pio of Pietrelcina (23)*, *Vincent de Paul (27)*, and *Jerome (30)* as well as *Our Lady of Sorrows (15)* and the Optional Memorials of the *Most Holy Name of Mary (12)*, and *Saints Robert Bellarmine (17)*, *Cosmas and Damian (26)*, *Wenceslaus (28)*, *Lawrence Ruiz and Companions (28)*. Church calendars show Labor Day (5).

AROUND the *PFMC* AREA

Please review the announcements on *pages 1* through *4*, and on *page 38* in **Bulletin Notice** 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.

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 *AUGUST*

VATICAN CITY, JUL 29, 2005 (VIS) - Pope Benedict's general prayer intention for this month is: "That World Youth Day may inspire or reawaken in young people the desire to meet Christ and find in Him the guide of their own lives."

His mission intention is: "That the priests, religious men and women, seminarians and laity from mission countries who are completing their formation in Rome, may find their stay in the 'Eternal City' a time of spiritual enrichment."

(BXVI-PRAYER INTENTIONS/AUGUST/... VIS 050729 (90))

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

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**PRIORITY DATED
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**Mailed early AM,
Thursday, 8/11/2005**

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ATCO, NJ
PERMIT NO. 74
NON PROFIT ORG.

PLEASE DO NOT THROW THIS AWAY!!!!

If you do not desire to read "*The PILGRIM*," please give it to a Marian prayer group or return it to sender. If 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!*"

