



The **PILGRIM**

Vol. 18, No. 02

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

February 2007

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

A PRAYER

My Jesus, despite Your perfect love for each one of us, we only offer an imperfect love to You and to others in our lives.



Help us to look at all of our work done in imperfection and in impatience. Allow us to see every incident of impatience that captures us and prevents us from coming truly to Your Infinite Heart. Here you wait for us to say "I do." We want to love you, perfectly love You. Help us to know it and reflect it in our hearts.

From the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)-Catholic Edition:

[Psa 18:28] It is you who light my lamp; the LORD, my God, lights up my darkness.

[Psa 18:29] By you I can crush a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall.

[Psa 18:30] This God—his way is perfect; the promise of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all who take refuge in him.

[Psa 18:31] For who is God except the LORD? And who is a rock besides our God?—

[Psa 18:32] the God who girded me with strength, and made my way safe.

This scripture really touches my heart. AMEN

**IT IS NOT TOO LATE to JOIN US
16 - 18 FEBRUARY 2007, PLEASE
PRE- REGISTER IMMEDIATELY**

Pre-registrations have been regularly arriving for the **PFMC 2007 RETREAT CONFERENCE (RC)** but there is still plenty of room in both the **WINDSOR BALLROOM** which seats **800** and the **CLARION HOTEL** which has more than **100** rooms available. This **RC** will be held from **Friday thru**

The *January MESSAGE*, from *GOSPA, Our Lady, Queen of Peace*, to an alleged visionary from *Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina*, is presented on page **12** (centerfold page) with **REFLECTIONS**.

Sunday, 16 - 18 February 2007, which is the last weekend before **Ash Wednesday 2007**. It will be held at the **CLARION HOTEL, Interstate 295 and NJ 70, Cherry Hill, NJ** from **Friday, 16 February 2007** through **Sunday, 18 February 2007**. See: www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2007/07RET2.pdf, or the **blue** information packet enclosed, review it, and print out the form, fill it out, and mail registration form to **61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043-4963**.

Call **(856) 428-2300** or FAX **(856) 354-7662** to make your room reservations at the **CLARION HOTEL**.

The speakers have all been arranged and the topics under the theme **"BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE."** **Matthew 6:13 [NAB]** are ones you would not want to miss. We have finally found the lost. **Father Michael Semana** wants to be with us again and has graciously agreed to serve as our **Master of Ceremonies (MC)**. He will offer his gift of song in support of the **World of Hope Foundation** in between talks. He will also celebrate **Holy Mass** on **Saturday** before lunch. It will be one that you will never forget.

Bishop Gallante of **Camden Diocese** has approved this **PFMC 2007 RETREAT CONFERENCE (RC)** to be held in the **CLARION HOTEL** and to provide **Holy Mass, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Praise and Worship, Confessions, and Speaker Presentations** in the hotel setting. Bring a friend or an entire prayer group. We have put together a program to teach you about **SPIRITUAL WARFARE** particularly **HEALING PRAYER** and **DELIVERANCE MINISTRY**. We encourage all to come for a full self contained weekend in the **CLARION HOTEL**. **Father Halbing** and **Francine Schmatz, Neil Lozano, Robert Abel, and Moira Noonan** will do extensive teachings on **Healing the Wounded Person** and **Ministry to the Wounded**.

Please review the **blue** information packet inserted in this issue of **"The PILGRIM"** and sign up both with the **PFMC** for a seat reservation and the **CLARION**

"The PILGRIM" for **February 2007** is dedicated to **"Our Lady of the Book."** See page **3** for an **"IN THIS ISSUE . . ."** or **Table of Contents**.

HOTEL for hotel room reservation now, as **PFMC** seats will be limited to **800**, and we anticipate a full house using all the rooms in the hotel.

We do plan to accept walk-in registrations but have found it easier over the years to handle pre-registrations. Last minute pre-registration attempts prior to **2/15/07** should be made by **FAX** to **(856) 768-9428** with a credit card and the **3%** surcharge donation. We will not be at the **PFMC** on the afternoon of **2/15/07** and all day on **2/16/07**. Come to the registration desk in the **CLARION HOTEL** after **4:30 PM** on **Friday, 2/16/07**.

We have been processing pre-registration reservation applications for attendance at the **2007 RETREAT CONFERENCE (RC)**. We have sent out confirmation letters to all who have pre-registered with the **PFMC**. If you have not pre-registered and wish to guarantee a seat, please fill in at least one of the pre-registration reservation forms in the **blue** information packet enclosed and Priority Mail it in to us at **61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043**. If the mail will not arrive before **2/14/07** use the **FAX** instructions on page 1 or carry the form with you to the **CLARION HOTEL**.

Call **(856) 428-2300** or **FAX (856) 354-7662** to make your room reservations at the **CLARION HOTEL**. Room reservation at the **CLARION HOTEL** is a "must do" as the good rooms go fast and you wouldn't want to have to stay at another hotel and commute to this wonderful three day experience.

If you would like to distribute some of the **blue** information packets to your prayer group, family, or parish, please contact us at **856 768 9228** from **10 AM to 5 PM Monday – Friday** and we will be glad to provide you with as many as you need. Parishes can be provided with enough flyers for bulletins.

Please consider giving reservations for this event, with or without the meal plan, or hotel rooms as gifts.

“ACCEPTANCE” SEMINARS / WORKSHOPS – SATURDAY, 3/24/07

As a person living in today's society, do you find yourself angry and frustrated relating to old conflicts and grievances?

Are you unable to come to terms about what

happened and why?

Do you struggle with **ACCEPTANCE** of yourself and possibly how you became involved in the dilemma?

What does **ACCEPTANCE MEAN TO YOU?**

How much do you need to give up to be **ACCEPTED** by others?

Beginning to acknowledge what has occurred, what our **BEHAVIOR** is or has been is important in **ACCEPTING** who we are.

Are you unable, unwilling, or **FEARFUL** of **ACCEPTANCE** by others?

Are you **FEARFUL** of acknowledging a difficult and complex situation exists, making it difficult to **ACT** on the situation.

This full day experiential set of seminars and workshops will provide you with an opportunity to illuminate core beliefs that often impact on how we behave and respond to old issues, grievances, and present conflicts.

It will provide you with an opportunity to learn how to **ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONCERN . . . ADDRESS IT . . . AND LEARN TO APPLY THIS KNOWLEDGE IN ACCEPTING NEW EVENTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES.**

The main speaker will be **Irene Atwell, M.Ed., LPC**, an individual and couple/family clinician who has worked for over three decades with couples / families of various backgrounds who experience stress and conflict in their lives. She also works with individuals who experience distress and mental illness.

Irene Atwell facilitated the **Daughters of Ruth** group at the **PFMC**, a support group for women, in **2002** and **2003**. She has appeared on television and radio discussing mental health concerns and relationship issues, and she has authored and coauthored several articles. She has significant expertise and skill working with chronic mental illness, panic disorders, BiPolar, Depression, Addiction, and Family / couple conflicts. She is a member of the **National Association of Black Psychologists**, the **Delaware Valley Association of Black Psychologists**, and the **American Counseling Association**.

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.

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Other speakers will be **Reverend John O. Parker, Pastor of Antioch Baptist Church**, and **Kathleen Werner, RN, BSN, LNHA, Member of the Association of Christian Therapists (ACT), Leader of Healing Prayer, and President of the PFMC.**

The **PFMC** will host **ACCEPTANCE** seminars and workshops in the **UPPER ROOM** at **EPIPHANY HOUSE, 61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043-4963** from **9 AM to 4 PM** on **Saturday, 3/24/07.**

Donation for these seminars / workshops is **\$60** per person for the day, and includes registration packet, coffee / refreshments, light snacks, and a full lunch.

Registration will be open about **8:30 AM** and a full schedule for morning and afternoon sessions will be provided. Pre-registration is preferred so we can plan for setup and food as well as save time that morning.

Please fill out the registration form at the bottom of the enclosed information sheet or print it from www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2007/07RET3.pdf and submit it with the registration fee by check, money order, or information to charge it on your Discover, MasterCard, Visa credit card.

For **Roman Catholics**, **Saturday, 3/24/07** is the **SOLEMNITY** of the **ANNUNCIATION** or **INCARNATION** of **OUR LORD** and **SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST**, in the **WOMB** or **OUR BLESSED VIRGIN JEWISH MOTHER, MARY.**

What did **Mary ACCEPT** when she heard the words of the **Angel Gabriel** in **Luke 1:26-38**?

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." (Luke 1:38)

Her **"YES"** was human **ACCEPTANCE** of God's will.

Her son, **Jesus**, **ACCEPTED** a life of suffering and an agonizing death:

"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13)

P IN MEMORIAM

lease pray for the repose of the soul of:

Dominic Lettieri, 1/3/07, A Great Friend of the PFMC, Leader of In His Sign (IHS) Ministries, Catholic Talk and Internet Radio Broadcaster.

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

NOVENA to the HOLY FAMILY

This novena is most appropriately begun nine days before December 28, the feast of the Holy Family. It is also fitting to pray it during the month of February, which is consecrated to the Holy Family.



Novena Prayer:

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, bless me and grant me the grace of loving Holy Church as I should, above every earthly thing, and of ever showing my love by deeds.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, bless me and grant me the grace of openly professing as I should, with courage and without human respect, the faith that I received as your gift in holy Baptism.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, bless me and grant me the grace of sharing as I should in the defense and

propagation of the Faith when duty calls, whether by word or by the sacrifice of my possessions and my life.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, bless me and grant me the grace of loving my family and others in mutual charity as I should, and establish us in perfect harmony of thought, will, and action, under the rule and guidance of the shepherds of the Church.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, bless me and grant me the grace of conforming my life fully as I should to the commandments of God's law and those of His Holy Church, so as to live always in that charity which they set forth.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I ask in particular this special favor: (*Mention your favor*).

Dedication of One's Family:

Most loving Jesus, by Your sublime and beautiful virtues of humility, obedience, poverty, modesty, charity, patience, and gentleness, You blessed with peace and happiness the family which You chose on earth. In Your mercy look upon my family. We belong to You, for we have received Your many blessings over many years and we entrust ourselves to Your loving care.

Look upon my family in Your loving kindness, preserve us from danger, give us help in time of need, and grant us the grace to persevere to the end in imitation of Your holy Family, so that having revered You and loved You faithfully on earth, we may praise You eternally in heaven.

Mary, dearest Mother, to your intercession we have recourse, knowing that your Divine Son will hear your prayers. Glorious patriarch, Saint Joseph, help us by your powerful prayers and offer our prayers to Jesus through Mary's hands. Amen.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, being subject to Mary and Joseph, You sanctified family life by Your beautiful virtues. Grant that we, with the help of Mary and Joseph, may be taught by the example of Your holy Family, and may after death enjoy its everlasting companionship.

Lord Jesus, help us ever to follow the example of Your holy Family, that in the hour of our death Your glorious Virgin Mother together with Saint Joseph may come to meet us, and we may be worthy to be received by You into the everlasting joys of heaven. You live and reign forever. Amen.

<http://www.ewtn.com/Devotionals/novena/HolyFamily.htm>

VOCATIONS DEPARTMENT

If you need vocation information and you do not find it in your local parish or diocese offices, please call (856) 768-9228. We will do our best to locate the information you need and send it to you.

PERVASIVENESS of NEW AGE AMONG NUNS MAY LOOM AS SCANDAL ON SCALE RIVALING ABUSE CRISIS AMONG MALE COUNTERPARTS

[As shown in the source link at the end of this article, <http://spiritdaily.com/newagefolo1.htm>, it came from the Internet and has a great number of links to other Internet articles imbedded within it. The links have been expanded to show what they really are in brackets so that those who read this on paper can see what the links really are. There were just a few cases where the links used are no longer active. Keith.]

Special Report:

The infiltration of New Age practices into convents and retreat houses operated by Catholic nuns appears to have reached the level of an epidemic, with so many reports that at times it appears difficult to find one that doesn't allow such spirituality, at least to some degree.

Such may be hyperbole but what is not hyperbole is that esoteric spirituality has spread -- in alarming measure -- through what is left of female American religious in a way that recalls the startling prevalence of sexual abuse among male religious counterparts.

That's not to say that most religious have gone occult. And it is certainly not to cast aspersions. The majority of nuns are in their seventies or eighties -- beyond active involvement in activities such as operating a retreat center. Moreover, those who are linked to these practices often appear to be good, well-meaning women who have simply followed the spirit of our time.

But the question is what that spirit is and the trend -- contravening Vatican teaching -- is as widespread as it is troublesome. One thing is clear: the call of Vatican Two for women to distinguish themselves spiritually has been answered in virtually every part of North America in a totally unexpected way: establishment of mysterious, Eastern-style meditation.

When we ran an article on this several weeks ago, we were deluged by instances -- many dozens -- in which

Eastern contemplation, labyrinths, reiki, or other exotic non-Catholic methods of spiritual development were present at Catholic retreat centers -- almost surely unknown to the Vatican.

The examples seem daunting, and because of their serious nature, we are going to let this report proceed at length.

One example: the [Portiuncula Center for Prayer](http://www.portforprayer.org/holistic.php), [http://www.portforprayer.org/holistic.php] modeled after Saint Francis and run by Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

Located less than an hour southwest of downtown Chicago, this Catholic center offers therapeutic massage, reiki, reflexology, holistic facials, and Zen Shiatsu (which taps into the “energy” points around the body). It also has a “labyrinth” which it describes as “an ancient circular diagram” consisting of a “single concentric circular path with no possibility of going astray. The path winds throughout and becomes a mirror for where we are in our lives; it touches our sorrows and releases our joys. So walk it with an open mind and an open heart.”

Labyrinths are a meditation, relaxation, and spiritual tool that invite a person to walk towards the center with a problem, prayer, or idea.

Once at that center, the person spends some time in quiet thought, then lets go and makes the journey back out of the labyrinth to reengage with the world with a “clearer” heart and mind. While they are even to be found in some churches, the way they are used evokes worry in many circles.

“Like Stonehenge, they are geographic forms that define sacred space,” says website dedicated to the practice -- and referring the famous spot in England where monuments were erected by occult Druids for ancient solstice rituals, among other non-Christian mystical practices.

“The labyrinth is a large, complex spiral circle which is an ancient symbol for the divine mother, the God within, the goddess, the holy in all creation,” quotes [http://fatima.freehosting.net/Articles/Art7.htm] a website critical of its use.

When paganism is refined in modern terms, it becomes the “New Age,” a modern amalgam of practices often preaching that each human is “god” and viewing the Creator as a less personal and universal “energy” that is not usually identified as the “Holy Spirit.” It was of course paganism that Christ descended to battle.

Two other remarkably widespread practices are reiki, which taps into the “energy” around us, and the “enneagram” -- a controversial way of categorizing

personalities. The energy of reiki is the “ki” of Eastern religions, which tends too rapidly toward psychic energies and earth spirits. The symbol of the enneagram was promoted by a famed occultist name Gurdjieff and bears certain resemblances to the way personality types are discerned through a zodiac (though in this case the discernment comes by way of “self evaluation”).

At [another Franciscan center](http://www.thecasa.org/) [http://www.thecasa.org/] in Scottsdale, Arizona, is not only the enneagram but “aqua yoga.” Many Catholic convents, retreat houses, and parishes are embracing this technique of meditation and relaxation -- often as a mere physical tool but nonetheless in contradiction to a Vatican document on the New Age, “[Jesus Christ the Bearer of the Water of Life](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20030203_new-age_en.html)” [http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20030203_new-age_en.html], that prohibits it.

The argument for it: 16 million Americans now use [yoga](http://www.cjr.org/issues/2006/6/Love.asp) [http://www.cjr.org/issues/2006/6/Love.asp] and find health benefits from what is simply an exercise in breathing. The concern: yoga is from Eastern pagan religions and like reiki can tend toward a deeper involvement in mysterious energies. In some cases, “mantras” (a word used over and over) are employed and such mantras can be the name of Hindu or other “gods.” The Beatles brought a focus on yoga when they studied it with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in the 1960s. Before that, it was popularized by deep occultists known as Theosophists.

In some cases, centers that hold seminars in reiki and enneagram are receiving funds through diocesan appeals. Defenders say there is a Christian type of reiki that is different than the New Age version, and

The PILGRIM is normally a Monthly Publication of the **Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) A Religious Association, Inc.**

Non-Profit and **IRS** Code 501 (c)(3) Tax-Exempt
61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ. 08043-4963
(856) 768-9228 FAX: (856) 768-9428

DISTRIBUTION: To more than **1000** addresses in most of the **50** United States (U.S.), U.S. territories and many foreign countries.

President / Editor / Co-Director: Kathleen Werner

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Scranton, Trenton and Wilmington Dioceses.

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

others say that “healing touch” ministries are similar to the laying on of hands common to Christians. Neither, argue others, is there anything wrong with healing oils.

Such is confusing in that in its 2003 document the Vatican explicitly warned that “there is a remarkable variety of approaches for promoting holistic health, some derived from ancient cultural traditions, whether religious or esoteric,” and covering “a wide range of practices” including “kinesiology, homeopathy, iridology, massage, and various kinds of ‘bodywork’ (such as orgonomy, Feldenkrais, reflexology, rolfing, polarity massage, therapeutic touch, etc), meditation, and visualization... The source of healing is said to be within ourselves, something we reach when we are in touch with our inner or cosmic energy.” It also cited the enneagram -- along with more blatant New Age articles such as crystals, strongly warning the faithful away from them.

That document was written by the Pontifical Council for Culture and the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, which also named the enneagram as a subject of concern.

There are those who take issue with some of what the Vatican cited, especially chiropractic and acupuncture methods. But it is beyond dispute that exotic new spiritual ways have overtaken many nuns (and in some cases priests) -- apparently revealing a yearning for something more than the dry theology that has dominated Western seminaries for more than a half a century.

[Dominican sisters in Houston](http://www.houstonop.org/index.cfm/MenuItemID/131.htm) [http://www.houstonop.org/index.cfm/MenuItemID/131.htm] offer tai chi (also involving “ki” energy) along with the labyrinth -- using the occult ying-yang symbol (right) in their literature. Benedictine Sisters of Mount Scholastica in Atchinson, Kansas, meanwhile, have named their retreat area the [Sophia Center](http://www.mountosb.org/sophia.html) [http://www.mountosb.org/sophia.html] -- after the feminine form of God.

“Sophia is the name often given to the feminine image of God as portrayed in the wisdom books of the Bible,” said a nun there, Sister Linda Herndon, in response to a query from us.

In Cleveland, a former mother house at a Catholic high school has been converted into a retreat center called “River’s Edge,” offering yoga, quigong, reiki, and other esoteric “wellness” programs (while ironically, across the way, is the monastery of the [Poor Clares](http://www.poorclarecolettines-cleveland.org/index.htm) [http://www.poorclarecolettines-cleveland.org/index.htm] -- a shining light in the darkness).

“My brother’s dear wife is in the last stages of ovarian cancer and near death,” writes Ruth Stamps of Blue Ridge, Georgia. “She is not Catholic, but a devout Evangelical Christian. At one point, she considered going to River’s Edge for their cancer support group, but found this place’s agenda too weird and New Age! The Cleveland area seems to be eaten up with this stuff, but it does not apparently reflect on the Cleveland Diocese itself.” Enter the [\[https://www.enterthecenter.org/categories.aspx?cid=12\] center](https://www.enterthecenter.org/categories.aspx?cid=12).

“I left a job as a fifth grade teacher at a parochial school after three years because I could no longer tolerate or ignore the watering-down of the faith,” wrote another woman named Coreen Herrick. “My most recent experience with New Age happened this summer at the Saint Edmund’s retreat center near Mystic, Connecticut. The ‘nun’ invited retreat members to join her after dinner in the ‘touching of hands’ massage. Of course, it was cloaked in therapeutic terms. But I knew better. This same nun also (even though this was a silent retreat) engaged us in a ‘pagan’ spirit ‘blessing’ before the meal.”

There are sisters who are reiki “[masters](http://catherinespaldingcenter.org/reikiclasses.htm) [http://catherinespaldingcenter.org/reikiclasses.htm].” You can find them in the Midwest. Or in Kentucky. There are monks. “Encountering Divine Goodness in Earth and Cosmos: New Ways of Being in the World,” says [an advertisement](http://www.loyolahouse.ca/calendar.html) [http://www.loyolahouse.ca/calendar.html] for a retreat at Loyola House in Guelph, Ontario.

In Ringwood, New Jersey -- where it is once more [Franciscan nuns](http://www.franciscanspiritualcenternj.com/services.cfm) [http://www.franciscanspiritualcenternj.com/services.cfm] -- the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament is a lonely place (with Host exposed, left), but presumably not so the lessons in reiki in the same complex. In many cases, questionable spiritual practices are part of the solemnity of Lent.

Nor is it confined to North America. “Another sad example comes from the UK,” notes a viewer named Ken Simpson. “At the shrine of St Jude, Faversham, Kent, the Carmelite priest in his sermon asked people to put feet flat on ground, ‘to feel the earth,’ lay hands open, ‘not to hold on to anything, then to breathe out the badness from inside, and then to breathe in God’s goodness.’”

Is that really bad? How far do we go with this? Can we overstate the case? Might not some of it be okay -- just oddly expressed?

In some cases, perhaps. But in others, the psychic is clearly predominant.

There is [dream exploration](http://www.dominican-spiritual-life-center.com/pathways_for_dreamers.htm) [http://www.dominican-spiritual-life-center.com/pathways_for_dreamers.htm]. There is guided imagery. There are non-Christian healing rituals. Once again -- time and again -- there are the enneagram and labyrinth. Or Yoga.

Ask those at the College of Saint Catherine in Saint Paul, Minnesota, or the Holy Spirit Center in Encino, California.

“Out of all of the New Age stuff, the labyrinth is the most pervasive,” notes another viewer. “It seems to pop up everywhere -- we were at Saint Anne’s shrine in Sturbridge [Massachusetts] looking around -- thought the place very beautiful and appeared holy -- until we noticed the new meditation labyrinth had been created on the grounds. I think people read about these fads and are duped and they get no direction from priests and pastors.”

In Santa Fe, a practicing shaman is involved in church fund-raising.

In Brooklyn, New York, according to another correspondent, a parish called Saint Ephrem has advertised reiki in its weekly newsletter and “because of this I encouraged my wife to stop attending and to go to another Catholic church. I’m not sure if they still offer this,” says a resident named Gerard Mastrapasqua. The cases go far beyond even those we [http://www.spiritdaily.org/Quickhive%20articles/newageinfiltration.htm] reported previously.

No doubt, good people get wrapped up in this. Also no doubt: we should be careful not to condemn. When we are on the other side of the veil, there will be surprises. But we are called to obedience and especially to stay away from anything that leads to strange, universal “spirits” or that see God as a cosmic energy.

Examples? The Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet have status at the U.N. [Check them out](http://www.csjministriesfoundation.org/spirituality.aspx) [http://www.csjministriesfoundation.org/spirituality.aspx]. Daring to try new symbols? There are the [Sisters of Saint Martha of Prince Edward Island](http://www.csmpei.org/html/program.html) [http://www.csmpei.org/html/program.html]. A labyrinth can be found at another [beautiful retreat center](http://www.serraretreat.com/about/index.htm#Virtual%20Tour) [http://www.serraretreat.com/about/index.htm#Virtual%20Tour] (in tony Malibu, alongside grottos devoted to the Blessed Mother). If you’re in Wisconsin and want the enneagram, [this is your spot](http://www.franciscanspiritualitycenter.org/FSC_Programs/programs_ongoing.htm) [http://www.franciscanspiritualitycenter.org/FSC_Programs/programs_ongoing.htm].

One group of [Dominican nuns in Grand Rapids](http://www.grdominicans.org/SocialJustice/Promoter) [http://www.grdominicans.org/SocialJustice/Promoter

[Justice/SESP/](http://www.grdominicans.org/SocialJustice/Promoter)] calls itself “Sacred Earth and Space Plowshares.”

Maya Abdominal massage or a drum-making workshops or Chinese Essence Qi Gong or “Feng Shui for the Soul”?

Go to the [Sisters of Mercy in New Jersey](http://www.portforprayer.org/images/Port_Newsletter_6_05%5B1%5D.pdf) [http://www.portforprayer.org/images/Port_Newsletter_6_05%5B1%5D.pdf].

Beginners in yoga can find Catholic resources in Arlington, Virginia. (“The priests and nuns there seem like good folks, but the labyrinth seems like a bad idea,” notes a viewer). Integrated energy healing, reiki, angel healing? Go [here](http://www.john23rdretreatcenter.com/general.htm) [http://www.john23rdretreatcenter.com/general.htm].

“In every woman there is a queen, speak to the queen and she will answer!” says another Catholic group (“Called a Circle of Wisdom”).

[This](http://bellaonline.com/articles/att3130.asp) [http://bellaonline.com/articles/att3130.asp] is what we really think it is.

Holistic health? [Go here](http://www.genesiscenter.us/aboutus.html) [http://www.genesiscenter.us/aboutus.html]; you can “develop your spiritual muscles” and learn yoga by visiting [these nuns](http://transformationscenter.org/news/10-06/October06.htm) [http://transformationscenter.org/news/10-06/October06.htm] “Celebrate the arrival of winter and our turning toward the light during this season of peace, love and joy. Bring bells, drums, rattles to join in the songs and holiday,” they say; massages and labyrinth [as pictured left] [here](http://www.cenacle.org/labyrinth.aspx) [http://www.cenacle.org/labyrinth.aspx]; for Danville, Pennsylvania, you can get a labyrinth retreat [here](http://www.sscm.org/retsch.htm) [http://www.sscm.org/retsch.htm]; an especially beautiful labyrinth is available [pictured below, right] at [Marie de la Roche Province](http://www.divineprovidencweb.org/page/ministries/kearns/brochure/pg1.htm) [http://www.divineprovidencweb.org/page/ministries/kearns/brochure/pg1.htm] in Allison Park, Pennsylvania. Reflexology? [Our Lady of Grace Retreat Center](http://www.olgcenter.com/ctr_center_holistic_center) [http://www.olgcenter.com/ctr_center_holistic_center.

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 going to visit or 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.

[html\]](#) on Long Island has what you want; get in the “Zen Spirit/Christian Spirit” [\[http://www.inisfada.net/winter_spring_2007.pdf\]](http://www.inisfada.net/winter_spring_2007.pdf) here; head to Northport for reiki. And so on. While we have to rely on field reports -- and thus can't verify each one -- those we were able to check out have proven to have what was reported.

These are confusing times and while the Vatican document seemed aimed at society at large [a “pastoral” document to warn the faithful, it said], the New Age, it now is clear, had already infiltrated deeply into the Church itself -- to a degree much beyond that raised as a concern in the early Nineties. Such is the perplexity of our times that a Cardinal has said he was [fascinated by a Hindu experience \[http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=22099\]](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=22099).

We are certainly to be open and ecumenical -- full of love, at every turn, finding common ground -- at the same time that we must guard against paganism.

“In Saint Peter Hospital in Albany New York, they have a pamphlet for yoga and other connected exercises, with the picture of the Hindu elephant god Ganesha [in an] advertisement on the first page, in the lobby of the hospital,” a medical doctor informs us.

It is one of many Christian hospitals with [\[http://www.averasacredheart.com/ash/services/wellness/index.aspx\]](http://www.averasacredheart.com/ash/services/wellness/index.aspx) [a New Age slant.](#)

In Austin, Texas, the Seton Family of Hospitals run by the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul has a center called [“Seton Cove” \[http://www.seton.net/locations/cove/Oct_Dec_Catalogue.pdf\]](http://www.seton.net/locations/cove/Oct_Dec_Catalogue.pdf) that like so many others offers touch massage, a labyrinth walk, and “chair massage” -- a seeming far cry from the prim conservative nature of Saint Elizabeth Seton [left], its patron. It doesn't even help if a hospital is named [Saint Mary's \[http://www.stmaryhealthcare.org/body.cfm?id=146\]](http://www.stmaryhealthcare.org/body.cfm?id=146).

Some of the links to the occult are direct and startling. Noted a writer from the Winnipeg, Canada, of a meeting that was focused on writing for the parish bulletin: “Somehow the conversation turned to ecumenism, and the stewardship coordinator mentioned an article in our local newspaper about ‘the study of wicca and how it is “parallel” to Catholicism.’ Of course I immediately disagreed, but she proceeded to defend the study as being ‘in tune with mother earth.’ I just sat there with my mouth open! Our priest said nothing!”

Wicca is the formal name for witchcraft. “Each year I have purchased a planning calendar from the Sisters of Saint Joseph of LaGrange -- Ministry of the Arts. Some major feast days and saints' days are noted,”

writes Barbara Garfield of Ryegate, Montana. “However, as I paid closer attention to the entries this year, I see there are Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and other feasts listed. That did not bother me as I have tried to become familiar with other religions and their practices. What does bother me are the entries for Samhain (wicca) for October 31 and Samhain (Celtic) for November 1 (as well as All Saints).”

In Seaford, New York, writes another worried viewer, was a visiting woman evangelist who “would come out in a costume that looked just like a priest and pretty much ran the whole retreat while he sat on the side.

“Each night they did a ritual. The first night we all lit candles. We were told to bathe ourselves in the light. No mention of Jesus being the Light. Then they had us march around until we ended up in a big circle around the perimeter of the Church. It looked like a witches' coven.”

Circling it like Joshua circled Jericho -- or something else?

Meanwhile, Saint John's University in New York offers its downtown campus for [advanced reiki courses \[http://www.nyreiki.com/ENGLISH/ClassDescriptions.html\]](http://www.nyreiki.com/ENGLISH/ClassDescriptions.html). The list seems endless.

The Daughters of Wisdom, sponsors of Wisdom House Retreat and Conference Center in Litchfield, Connecticut, originated in Poitiers, France in 1703. Founded by Saint Louis de Montfort and Blessed Marie Louise Trichet, the aim of the congregation is to seek Divine Wisdom.

Now such wisdom -- at [a retreat center \[http://www.wisdomhouse.org/about/history.html\]](http://www.wisdomhouse.org/about/history.html) that has turned into an interfaith one -- includes the labyrinth.

We are sorry to prolong this. But the extent of such practices is almost certainly unknown by the Vatican.

“I am beginning to become so disenchanted with my parish, Saint Matthias in Somerset, New Jersey, that I have chosen so far to split my Sunday giving between my parish and another church 45 minutes away in Newark,” noted one more distressed website viewer. “I have always had concerns about the permanent reiki section in the Sunday bulletin, but when I also saw that brochures were also prominently displayed at the exits right next to those for ‘spiritual direction’ (both ministries provided by the ‘reiki master’), I felt really sick. Last year I worked up the nerve to ask a deacon, who directed me to the Pastor. I went to him and he told me it was completely harmless: ‘Trust me, I've had reiki therapy and I would tell you if it were

harmful.' He told me not to pay attention to those 'conservatives.'"

And indeed, we do not want to go overboard with this. Our greatest calling is love for one another in circumstances that are often strenuous. But the occult can have long-term ramifications.

Tai chi is offered at Saint Joseph Dwelling Place in Ludlow, Vermont -- tapping once again into that 'chi' or Ki. Is that always bad, especially when associated with martial arts? It is a question. In Ontario, the same. "I also went to a Capuchin Retreat House in Mt. Washington, Michigan. They have since started 'massage therapy' and who knows what else," writes another viewer.

The Daughters of Charity in Emmitsburg, Maryland, reportedly have a labyrinth on their property. "I just read the article today on the new age and Catholic retreat houses. I have discovered such practices in the Immaculate Heart of Mary Visitation Spirituality Center here in Monroe, Michigan," reported yet one more viewer.

"I wrote to you a little over a year ago on a group of these nuns in Baltimore," reported another, part of the mail barrage we received. "I ran a retreat house, and one of the groups turned out to practice Zen Buddhism, after telling me they weren't Buddhist. They had a statue of Buddha, incense, gong, candle, flower. This is idolatry."

Does this not matter to the bishops?

Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church in Alexandria, Louisiana. What is going on there?

"How glad I am to see a place to report rampant New Age practices in Catholic retreat centers," writes yet one more viewer. "Here are a couple of places I wish to report. The first is the Jesuit Spirituality Center in Grand Coteau, Louisiana. Click on [the link \[http://home.centurytel.net/spiritualitycenter/html/2006.html\]](http://home.centurytel.net/spiritualitycenter/html/2006.html), scroll down, and you will find retreats on the labyrinth, zen, christian yoga (whatever that is!), Meyers / Briggs personality inventory, reiki, and special retreat for gays and lesbians."

"My mother was New Age almost before the New Age got here, and ended up worshiping Satan," notes a viewer, who like many preferred anonymity. "My twin sister is New Age (deeply) and seemingly can't be talked or prayed out of it. Since my baptism into the Church 33 years ago, I've been warning many many people about the occult. Lots of them were nuns -- including a prioress at a convent outside of Boston. Only that prioress seemed to listen. No one else. My sister is a medium and channels spirits who sound so wise, profound, and compassionate that their writings fooled an abbot of a monastery into approval. (Her

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vocabulary, when she is channeling, is far above her own vocabulary.) I know that lately I've been hearing hints from her that she likes the idea of 'androgynous,' a combining of male and female in one person to make them 'complete.' To me that commits an error so severe that the person has crossed over into Satanism."

For your discernment.

"It seems to me that the devil made huge inroads into Catholicism by distorting the Vatican II teaching that Catholics should respect whatever of truth lies in other religions," frets an e-mailer named Trudi Lawrence. "Monks, nuns, and probably priests mistakenly and unguardedly went *looking for truths there that they thought Catholicism didn't have.*"

Maybe all they had to do was look deeper.

(With Permission from Michael H. Brown, <http://spiritdaily.com/newagefolo1.htm>)

CONFESSIONS for the HOLIDAYS

Here [are] a few confessions from my beating Heart. I have no [] clue who Nick and Jessica are. I see them on the cover of People and Us constantly when I am buying my dog biscuits. I often ask the checkers at the grocery stores who they are. They don't know who Nick and Jessica are either. Who are they? Will it change my life if I know who they are and why they have broken up? Why are they so darned important? I don't know who Lindsay Lohan is either, and I do not care at all about Tom Cruise's baby.

Am I to be called before a Senate committee and asked if I am a subversive? Maybe. But I just have no

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In Christian charity we do not want delivery to incorrect addresses and wasting of God's precious resources. There is no "subscription" fee. We do ask for free will donations to support **"The PILGRIM"** and the operations of the **PFMC**.

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

clue who Nick and Jessica are. Is that what it means to be no longer young. Hm, not so bad.

Next confession: I am a Jew, and every single one of my ancestors was Jewish, and it does not bother me even a little bit when people call those beautiful lit up, bejeweled trees Christmas trees. I don't feel threatened. I don't feel discriminated against. That's what they are - Christmas trees. It doesn't bother me a bit when people say, "Merry Christmas" to me. I don't think they are slighting me or getting ready to put me in a ghetto. In fact, I kind of like it. It shows that we are all brothers and sisters celebrating this happy time of year.

It doesn't bother me at all that there is a manger scene on display at a key intersection near my beach house in Malibu. If people want a creche, fine. The Menorah a few hundred yards away is fine too. I do not like getting pushed around for being a Jew, and I don't think Christians like getting pushed around for being Christians. I think people who believe in God are sick and tired of getting pushed around, period. I have no idea where the concept came from that America is an explicitly atheist country. I can't find it in the Constitution, and I don't like it being shoved down my throat. Or maybe I can put it another way. Where did the idea come from that we should worship Nick and Jessica and we aren't allowed to worship God as we understand Him? I guess that's a sign that I'm getting old, too. But there are a lot of us who are wondering where Nick and Jessica came from and where the America we knew went to.

Ben Stein, 18 December 2005

(Francine Schmatz snowflake007@juno.com originally sent a much longer article that has been edited using <http://www.snopes.com/politics/soapbox/benstein2.asp>)

SOME ADDITIONS to BEN STEIN THAT ARE NOT HIS WORDS

In light of the many jokes we send to one another for a laugh, this is a little different: This is not intended to be a joke; it's not funny, it's intended to get you thinking.

Billy Graham's daughter was interviewed on the Early Show and Jane Clayson asked her "How could God let something like this Happen?" (regarding Katrina). Anne Graham gave an extremely profound and insightful response. She said, "I believe God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we've been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our government and to get out of our lives, and being the gentleman He is, I believe He has calmly backed out. How can we expect God to give

us His blessing and His protection if we demand He leave us alone?"

In light of recent events...terrorists attack, school shootings, etc. I think it started when Madeleine Murray O'Hare (she was murdered, her body found recently) complained she didn't want prayer in our schools, and we said OK.

Then someone said you better not read the Bible in school. The Bible says thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, and love your neighbor as yourself. And we said OK.

Then Doctor Benjamin Spock said we shouldn't spank our children when they misbehave because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self-esteem (Doctor Spock's [grand]son committed suicide). We said an expert should know what he's talking about. And we said OK.

Now we're asking ourselves why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it doesn't bother them to kill strangers, their classmates, and themselves.

Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with "WE REAP WHAT WE SOW."

Funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell.

Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says.

Funny how you can send 'jokes' through e-mail and they spread like wildfire but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing.

Funny how lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene articles pass freely through cyberspace, but public discussion of God is suppressed in the school and workplace.

Are you laughing?

Funny how when you forward this message, you will not send it to many on your address list because you're not sure what they believe, or what they will think of you for sending it.

Funny how we can be more worried about what other people think of us than what God thinks of us.

Pass it on if you think it has merit. If not then just discard it... no one will know you did. But, if you discard this thought process, don't sit back and complain about what bad shape the world is in.

My Best Regards .. honestly and respectfully,

(Francine Schmatz snowflake007@juno.com)

NOTE SPOCK GRANDSON VICE SON COMMITTED SUICIDE

More to follow next month. See the Internet source.

www.snopes.com/politics/soapbox/benstein2.asp

POPE BLASTS 'DISMAL THEORIES' ON GAYS

Pope Benedict spoke out on Friday [12/22/06] against legal recognition for unmarried couples and "dismal theories" on the rights of gays to marry which he said stripped men and women of their innate sexual identity. "I cannot hide my concern about legislation on de facto couples," the Pope said in a Christmas address to the Rome clergy, weighing into a raging debate in Italy over what legal rights should be given to unmarried and gay couples.

Tensions have been rising in recent months between the Vatican and left-wing parties in Prime Minister Romano Prodi's ruling coalition, which has pledged to grant some kind of legal recognition to unmarried couples. Some centre-left politicians have scorned the Vatican for speaking out against the initiative, but the Pope said the Church had the right to be heard.

"If they say the Church shouldn't interfere in these matters, then we can only reply: should mankind perhaps not interest us?" he said.

The Pope said granting legal recognition to unwed couples was a threat to traditional marriage, which required a higher level of commitment. But he saved his strongest words for those who suggest gay couples should be put on the same level as a husband and wife. "This tacitly accredits those dismal theories that strip all relevance from the masculinity and femininity of the human being as though it were a purely biological issue," the Pope said.

Theories "according to which man should be able to decide autonomously what he is and what he isn't," end up with mankind destroying its own identity, he said. Two parliamentarians in the ruling coalition this week outraged fellow lawmakers by placing four dolls representing homosexual couples near the baby Jesus in the official nativity scene in Italy's parliament. They said their gesture was to promote legal recognition for unmarried couples and the legalization of gay marriage.

(© Reuters 2006. Reprinted from NewsMax.com, Friday, Dec. 22, 2006 11:16 a.m. EST)

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.

The **PFMC** volunteers 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** volunteers to set up a display in the basement, school cafeteria, or gymnasium, or wherever we could have about **20** or more large tables with display material on them. If the donations / free will offerings are sufficient to cover **PFMC** costs, we will share them with the parish.

ENCLOSED ITEMS

In this *February 2007* issue of "**The PILGRIM**" are the following:

A **blue** information packet with registration forms for the **2007 PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE**: www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2007/07RET2.pdf.

A white information sheet with reservation forms www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2007/07RET3.pdf for the **3/24/06 "ACCEPTANCE" SEMINARS / WORKSHOPS** in the **Upper Room** at the **Epiphany House** of the **PFMC**.

The new larger **PFMC** donation envelope and the new larger donation coupon expanded in size over those smaller versions explained in the *July 2004 special financial support appeal letter* for the **PFMC**. Please respond if you are able.

MESSAGE of 1/25/2007 via MARIA PAVLOVIC LUNETTI

Dear children! Put Sacred Scripture in a visible place in your family and read it. In this way, you will come to know prayer with the heart and your thoughts will be on God. Do not forget that you are passing like a flower in a field, which is visible from afar but disappears in a moment. Little children, leave a sign of goodness and love wherever you pass and God will bless you with an abundance of His blessing. Thank you for having responded to my call.

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

REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of 1/25/2007

PUT SACRED SCRIPTURE IN A VISIBLE PLACE

The Virgin Mary loves and keeps on calling her children to a life with God. She does that once again in her message beginning with the following words: *“Put Sacred Scripture in a visible place in your families and read it.”* We have already become familiar with these motherly words and calls from her previous messages in which she invited us to read Sacred Scripture. Just as she spoke in January last year: *“Do not forget, little children, to read Sacred Scripture. Put it in a visible place and witness with your life that you believe and live the Word of God.”* In her message of 25th June 1991 Mary said to us: *“Little children, pray and read Sacred Scripture so that through my coming you discover the message in Sacred Scripture for you.”* In her message of 25th August 1993 she spoke: *“Dear children, read Sacred Scripture, live it, and pray to understand the signs of the times.”* In her message of 25th August 1986: *“Put, little children, Sacred Scripture in a visible place in your families and read it and live it.”* On 25th January 1999 she spoke to us: *“Put Sacred Scripture in a visible place in your families, read it, reflect on it and learn how God loves His people. His love shows itself also in present times because He sends me to call you upon the path of salvation.”* In September of 1999 she said: *“I call you to renew prayer in your families by reading Sacred Scripture and to experience joy in meeting with God who infinitely loves His creatures.”*

So many times in her motherly messages the Virgin Mary has confirmed to us and said the following: *“Dear children, live my messages and put into life every word that I am giving you. May they be precious to you as they come from heaven. Dear children, joyfully live the messages of the Gospel that I am repeating in the time I am with you.”*

Maybe somewhere deep inside of us we expect the Virgin Mary to explain her messages in more detail and make them more clear. However, Our Lady’s messages do not provide us with ready-made recipes for happiness. She has come to direct our look at Christ who is our only Saviour and the aim of life. She helps us with her presence, calls and love so that we can walk on the path of conversion and salvation. She does not come to tell us tales, play with us or entertain us. She has come to call us to the truth, to the light and high demands of the Word of God. She invites us to read and live Sacred Scripture so that we may discover the life-giving power of the Word of God that speaks to us. As the Holy Spirit has inspired Sacred Scripture, Sacred Scripture is permeated with it. We discover that by reading Sacred Scripture which encourages us to do good enlightening our mind and the feelings in our hearts. Saint Gregory the Great asked himself: “What can a word of Sacred Scripture be compared with?” And he answered: “It is like flint and steel, like flint which is cold when we hold it in our hand, but when used to strike iron, it sparks and lights a fire. The words of Sacred Scripture remain cold if taken for granted. When, however, a person embraced by the Holy Spirit gives them a gentle knock, they make a mystical fire.”

Only if we rely on the truth of the Word of God shall we disclose the transience of our lives and the certainty of Jesus’ words: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” (Matt. 24:35). Let us listen to the Virgin Mary for the sake of our lives and our good.

Father Ljubo Kurtovic, Medjugorje, 26.1.2007,
(<http://medjugorje.hr.nt4.ims.hr/Main.aspx>)

ANOTHER REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of 1/25/2007

“Dear children! Put Sacred Scripture in a visible place in your family and read it.” In this first sentence of Her message of January 25, 2007, Our

Lady is encouraging all of Her children to place the Bible in a prominent area of the home, but most importantly we are called to read and contemplate upon the words of the Old and New Testaments. Her call to read Sacred Scripture very regularly is most important; and Her second sentence of this message of January 25, 2007 relates the impact that this endeavor can have for all believers. ***“In this way, you will come to know prayer with the heart and your thoughts will be on God.”*** It would seem if we can pray with the heart, and constantly keep our thoughts on God, then we shall be spiritually connecting with Him.

As one reads, listens to, and contemplates upon Sacred Scripture, he or she will soon begin to understand the relationship between God and man throughout salvation history. God’s love for man is constant and unconditional. In the Old Testament, God leads the Israelites back to Himself in spite of their sinfulness and the trials they experience. People such as Noah, the Patriarchs, Moses, David and the prophets perceive the necessity of being faithful to God. They lead the people through many difficult situations, while challenging them to overcome their failings, by seeking out God’s forgiveness and mercy.

When Jesus came to John the Baptist at the Jordan River, John referred to Jesus as the, ***“Lamb of God.”*** This title would define Jesus’ role as the Savior of the world. Through the incarnation (***“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.”*** John 1:14), the Eternal Father sent His Son Jesus to atone for the sins of humanity. By offering Himself as a sacrificial lamb, Jesus accepted His Father’s will. Jesus’ love manifested itself through His passion, death, and resurrection as it had flowed through all of His healings and miracles.

As we continue to contemplate Jesus’ love exhibited in His interaction with people during His public ministry, we should be inspired to become His faithful servants. Praying with the heart and worshiping God devoutly can lead us to this goal. Then as Our Lady said in this message of January 25, 2007, ***“your thoughts will be on God.”***

“Do not forget that you are passing like a flower in a field, which is visible from afar but disappears in a moment.” As we consider the necessity of staying close to God while thinking of God’s presence among us, in this sentence of Her message of January 25, 2007, Our Lady uses the imagery of a flower to remind us of the shortness of our own personal lives. We must become more focused on preparing our souls for the Lord. Are we willing to become more like Jesus? We need to challenge others and ourselves to be people of faith on a fulltime basis.

Many folks are too concerned about material things. On the other hand, do we care enough about spiritual realities? Where do the Eucharist and prayer fit into our busy schedules? On a pilgrimage it is easy to fast, pray, and attend the Eucharist each day. At home it is much more difficult. We are so busy. Work and family responsibilities envelope much of our time. Being able to pray and worship God through the holy Mass daily becomes a significant challenge to most. However, prayer with the heart, the Eucharist, the Holy Bible, fasting and monthly confession are the essence of Our Lady’s messages through Her apparitions to the visionaries of Medjugorje. Let us make the effort and find the time to adopt these realities in our lives.

“Little children, leave a sign of goodness and love wherever you pass and God will bless you with an abundance of His blessing.” With beautiful words of encouragement, Our Lady in this fourth sentence of Her message of January 25, 2007 calls Her little children to be people of unconditional love. Our love must exude kindness, compassion, mercy, and forgiveness. This challenge is never easy. We can be trapped into placing certain conditions on our love for others. We must be willing to love others as God has loved us. However, this reality will only happen when we are Christ-like. In the name of Jesus may we be His servants, but may the love that flows from the Sacred Heart of Jesus help us to see the Lord in all whom we meet. Then we can begin to love everyone unconditionally.

During this time, again may we be very conscious of preparing our souls for Jesus. Let us fervently adore the Lord at Holy Mass, or when we are in His presence before the tabernacle or at adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. With much faith and hope may we share the unconditional love of Jesus with everyone that we come in contact with. Jesus, with His unconditional love, wishes to be prominently in our lives, but we must seek Him out. We should never reject the Lord through pride, arrogance or indifference. On the other hand, bring your concerns, fears, anxieties and sinfulness to the Lord. With courage may we come to Jesus through the Sacrament of Penance. If we only give Him the chance, Jesus along with the Holy Spirit will protect us from the wiles and snares of the devil.

I hope you are well. Give my best to all of your families. In a very personal manner, let us welcome God into our lives. With this effort we can be spiritually healed by the paternal love of the Eternal Father, the sacrificial love of Jesus, the sanctifying love of the Holy Spirit and the motherly love of Our Lady. 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, Thursday, 2/1/2007)

FATHER JOZO REFLECTIONS on the DECEMBER 2006 MESSAGE

Dear children! Also today I bring you the newborn Jesus in my arms. He who is the King of Heaven and earth, He is your peace. Little children, no one can give you peace as He who is the King of Peace. Therefore, adore Him in your hearts, choose Him and you will have joy in Him. He will bless you with His blessing of peace. Thank you for having responded to my call.

(12/25/2006)

My dear brothers and sisters,

Today it is a full 25 years and six months since the Queen of Peace has been appearing in Medjugorje. Also today we hear that gentle Mother's voice, and see that most beloved image: her Son Jesus in her arms.

The Mother is with the Child, with the Newborn King, Who is our God. How much we are helped by these simple Motherly words, which become a song of Heaven and earth. It is a song of joy resounding throughout history. The shepherds were the first to hear it, then the wise men and finally all those chosen and redeemed.

That song from Bethlehem is the most beautiful ode to peace and to men of good will loved by God. He is the King of Heaven and earth and there is no other. This is His song of Peace. It is that merciful gift which man has lost, as an irresistible desire for it remains in his heart. Man has tried everything but has not found peace. It is the King of Heaven and earth who visits us with peace. Christmas, which is the birth and the coming of the Savior to man, is the discovery of the peace we have lost. It is the finding of that peace, which we could not find or replace with anything. This is the miracle of Christmas. The Son of God is our peace.

We are in error when we serve men and their programs: when we serve things and sacrifice much for the material goods in the hope of finding peace. For this reason, the return to the Manger to seek the newborn King, is our great need. The Manger

becomes a place of our rest from a strenuous journey. The Manger becomes the spring of consolation where we lay down life's heavy burdens pressing on us. It becomes a sign, which opens our eyes to see the Child and the Mother who are sought by the weak and tired humanity: 'A Son has been given to us.' It is particularly this gift that we seek and our hearts are restless until they find Him and His Mother. The Manger is that wondrous divine bridge spanning our shore and the shore of God. I am overjoyed because I can go to God. I am grateful because God has come to me. For this reason, the Manger is a place of worship. It is the truth before which I bend my knees in prayer of thanksgiving and surrender my entire self as a gift received by Him.

Angels teach me and Prophets inspire me that I must arise and find the King of Heaven and earth. They teach me that I have something to give to Him and something to receive from Him. And in turn, He directs me to finally choose the 'new way' to return to my everyday life. The Wise Men accepted this 'new way' and joyfully returned carrying with them the message and the experience of meeting the Newborn King. Christmas is ever a new and more profound experience of God's nearness to man. It is the feast in which people find peace and joyfully bring it as a gift of God to their families and communities. Christmas changes man and the face of the world. Our 'new way' is our new interpersonal relationships.

Christmas is our new approach to God and to His call. Our adoration of Jesus in the arms of the Mother is a logical fruit of a meeting in faith. A heart that finds God is happy, full of peace and overflowing with gratitude for all the graces and gifts.

The meeting with Jesus and the Mother in the mystery of Christmas is a great gift and grace, which we retain as a most beloved memory from our childhood. He is the gift, which the Father gives to His children and therefore we are on our knees in prayer of gratitude to Him. The more we prepare to meet Christmas, the more we feel the need to choose Jesus as our greatest gift, which the Father has sent through the Mother.

This is our inexhaustible joy. This is the source of the most beautiful prayers and songs, lullabies and teachings, greetings of thanksgiving and joy, which will never become just a tradition because behind them stands the joyful and rich experience of the meeting with the God-Man and the Mother. Who would not desire to share this meeting with others?

We choose the Manger and the King in it. We always find joy and peace in Him and are grateful to the Queen of Peace who teaches us in a simple Motherly way: "Chose Him and you will have joy in Him."

Among the numerous gifts, which we have received for Christmas, certainly Jesus is the most valuable.

The Lord is the most necessary gift of our heart. Therefore, Christmas is not an illusion after which, like a drunkard, we feel empty and disappointed. To the contrary, we feel rich and happy. Our celebration is not daydreaming or empty desires but a joyful meeting with Jesus and the Mother enriching us. The first treasure mentioned by the Queen of Peace in her message is the 'blessing of peace'. This cannot be offered for sale, bought, or found accidentally. This preceding Advent star, this light of hope ignited by the Lord as He calls us to wait vigilantly and to prepare ourselves - is the way that we have passed like the Wise Men from the East. This is why we know Whom we are seeking and Who we are waiting for: our King who comes. He fills us with His blessings of peace and Christmas joy. Most rich and overflowing with graces is this feast and our celebration of it.

Sometimes politicians and even our priests criticize our celebrations observing them from a material standpoint. The shop windows and tables are full, but man feels the need to give because he has received a gift. A person must sing when he is happy. A person must celebrate in community because he is no longer alone. Christmas is celebrated, and not a single dimension of celebration or joy can be taken from it. The Queen of Peace tells us that also today she brings the Newborn baby Jesus in her arms. Without Him everything is empty and a burden because everything that we have to give lasts only a brief moment and has little value. Therefore, this Christmas, we have decided to chose Him as the greatest and lasting gift we have received.

My beloved, be happy. Bring and give the gift of Jesus to everyone, and especially to those who have lost Him, forgotten Him or rejected Him.

This month we will pray for the following intentions:

1. For that peace that is born on earth through Jesus and given through Him to all mankind to fill our hearts and to come to rule in our families and among nations. For every war and conflict to stop among nations.
2. For all politicians and those responsible for peace and armament in the world. For the Newborn Jesus to illuminate them as the Wise Men, to find the new way - the way of peace. That they may retain peace in their nations.
3. For our prayer community, 'the Visitation', that this year we may grow in members and graces, and fulfill our great assignment in the world and in the Church by living the messages and witnessing for the

Queen of Peace. In this way, may all the poor, the pilgrims, the sick and helpless find help and consolation and become a sign in this world and time.

Dear brothers and sisters, I see you all in the arms of the Mother and I feel all of you clothed in the blessing of peace and new enthusiasm given to us by Jesus, the Newborn King of Peace. May the New Year be a new inspiration and grace for you. I greet you all and pray for you.

Most sincerely your brother,

Father Jozo Zovko O.F.M.

(June Klins [tnklins@velocity.net] Mon 1/8/2007)

SELECTED "NEWS ARTICLES"

FC Dinamo on a Training in Medjugorje



The leading team of the Croatian football, the FC Dinamo from Zagreb, spent seven days in Medjugorje on training. Under the guidance of Branko Ivanković, the chief of the team of experts, 25 players came to Herzegovina: Turina, Lončarić, Kelava, Vranić, Šarlija, Čale, Čorluka, Drpić, Jertec, Tadić, Pokrivač, Mamić, Da Silva, Chago, Sammir, Modrić, Etto, Vugrinec, Ćutura, Vukojević, Carlos, Schildenfeld, Janjetović, Pandev and Antunović. They were exercising twice a day in the sport and recreation center "Circle International". Every day, about 300 supporters were coming to Medjugorje to observe them.

On this holy place, I promise today to come walking from Zagreb to Medjugorje during summer, in order to entrust our FC Dinamo to Our Lady of Medjugorje", declared Zdravko Mamić, the executive vice-president of Dinamo, during the encounter of the leaders of the club and the footballers with Doctor Father Ivan Sesar, the parish priest of Medjugorje, in the presbytery. He also promised to bring next year Dinamo to Medjugorje for at least two weeks of training, and to play during this time four friendly matches in Herzegovina.

The parish priest of Medjugorje spoke to the guests about the Medjugorje events. Father Sesar gave to Zdravko Mamić a statue of Our Lady Queen of Peace, and two books about Medjugorje, and wooden rosaries to the footballers. Mamić responded with a Dinamo shirt signed by all the players, and a book about Dinamo. Led by Mamić and Ivanković, the footballers climbed then the Apparition Hill.

(1/23/07)

Statistics for November and December 2006

November 2006:

Holy Communions distributed: 50.500

Concelebrating priests: 1.301

December 2006:

Holy Communions distributed: 70.500

Concelebrating priests: 948 (1/4/07)

Bishops in Medjugorje in 2006

Twelve bishops from nine countries from five continents came to Medjugorje in 2006.

May:

Monsignor Emilio Ognénovich, retired archbishop of Mercedes-Luján (Argentina)

June:

Monsignor Geevarghese Mar Divannasios Ottathengil, Malankara bishop of Battery (Kerala, India)

Monsignor Roger Louis Kaffer, retired auxiliary bishop of [Joliet \(Illinois\)](#), USA)

Monsignor Brendan Oliver Comiskey, SS.CC., retired bishop of Ferns (Ireland)

Monsignor Jérôme Gapangwa Nteziryayo, retired bishop of Uvira (Congo)

July:

Monsignor Joseph Vianney Fernando, bishop of Kandy (Sri Lanka) and president of the Bishop's Conference of Sri Lanka

August:

Monsignor Jérôme Gapangwa Nteziryayo, retired bishop of Uvira (Congo)

Monsignor Antal Majnek, O.F.M., bishop of Mukachevo (Ukraine)

Monsignor Domenico Sigalini, bishop of Palestrina (Italy)

September:

Monsignor Robert William Finn, bishop of Kansas City-Saint Joseph (Missouri, USA)

October:

Monsignor Michael Pearse Lacey, retired auxiliary bishop of Toronto (Canada)

Monsignor Luigi Bommarito, retired archbishop of Catania (Italy)

Monsignor Harry Joseph Flynn, archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis (Minnesota, USA)
(1/1/07)

The 12th International Seminar for Priests

The 12th International Seminar for Priests will be held in Medjugorje from 2nd to 7th July 2007. The theme of the seminar is: "With Mary – waiting for the Holy Spirit". The preacher is Father Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap. ([Program](#) <http://212.39.96.6/sveeng%2007.htm> and [registration](#) seminar.marija@medjugorje.hr). (11/16/2006)

<http://medjugorje.hr.nt4.ims.hr/News.aspx>

WE WERE PLANNING ANOTHER PILGRIMAGE to MEDJUGORJE

If you are interested in going with us, we had hopes to plan a spring 2007 pilgrimage to **Medjugorje**. Please call (856) 768-9228 and give us your name and information so we may keep in contact with you. You may indicate the days in **May** that are best for your pilgrimage. We will try to plan this pilgrimage to utilize a maximum number of days, at least 7, and yet still keep the price affordable. The price will include all air fare, housing, breakfasts and suppers, guides, and transfers. After having to cancel the pilgrimage to **Ireland** from 11/2/06 – 11/8/06, we now have at least 7 pilgrims committed to sign up for this kind of pilgrimage if we can arrange it. Send us your names and best times to make a pilgrimage.

If you have never been to **Medjugorje** and have wanted to go, this will be the time to sign up. We would love to fill a plane. **Our Lady** calls you now.

MEDJUGORJE VISIONARY IVAN at WESTERLY, RI, IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

Dear prayer group:

Last night with Ivan was a beautiful night. It was Our Lady's intention that we pray for peace. We did. Some of us had the privilege of dining with him before. He said in his home growing up and in many homes there, if the children didn't pray or go to Holy Mass, they didn't eat. How many of us in the world take prayer that seriously? It is just another sign of why Our Lady selected Medjugorje.

There were 900 people. 12 priests concelebrated Mass. One, Father Mike Najim who received his vocation in Medjugorje gave a beautiful homily on

Marian devotion. The K of C was there in full dress. Ave Maria was sung to tears. Even Carol and Michael, with Ivan agreed it was a beautiful night. Ivan spoke for 45 minutes. Many broke down in tears. Our Lady prayed over each priest who was present and all of us. The church was filled with the Holy Spirit. There were long lines for confessions. Four priests heard confessions continually for 2 hours.

It was front page news in the Westerly Sun (circulation estimated at 30000) with a lengthy beautiful article. The reporter asked a visitor why she drove so many miles to come. She answered, "Hello, Heaven is meeting Earth in Westerly!" That's how the article ended. It can be read at <http://www.thewesterlysun.com>. [See next article.]

After Ivan finished with his apparition, he turned to me and gave me his rosary beads. He hid them in his hand until it opened in mine. Many, many blessings and graces have been bestowed this night.

There were many holy people in the Church. People came from as far away as DE.

Thank you for your prayers. They contributed to this huge outpouring of grace. The priests in the parish were so touched that they have retained all of the prayer petitions on the altar to be prayed over again at each Mass this weekend.

Tom

(From: TJG1960PC@Aol.com Sat, Jan 27, 2007)

SHARING A VISION of MARY at IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

WESTERLY – Carmela Pellegrino of Westerly arrived at The Church of the Immaculate Conception at 4:30 Friday afternoon to make sure she'd get to hear Ivan Dragicevic speak about his visions of the Virgin Mary. Pellegrino was wise. By 5:30 there wasn't a seat left in the church. People were being turned away at the door. Dragicevic, a native of Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina, wasn't scheduled to speak until 8 p.m. At least a thousand people packed into the Roman Catholic Church to pray, to spend an "Evening with Our Lady, Queen of Peace," and to see if she would make her appearance in Westerly. Dragicevic, who says that Mary – the woman Roman Catholics honor as the Mother of God – has appeared to him every day since June 24, 1981, had come to Westerly to talk about "our lady's wishes for us and for the world." Those wishes, he would later tell those gathered, are for people to "return to God and to pray." "The most important messages of Our Lady are love, prayer, repentance and forgiveness," he said through a translator. "She wants

to guide us to hope." "Families need spiritual healing," said the visionary. Mankind needs spiritual healing, you have to learn pray with your heart."

Earlier in the evening, as teenagers handed out Rosary beads and programs at the doorways, people filed into the church from the freezing temperatures outside. They waited in lines outside the church's confessionals where several local and visiting priests had made themselves available to offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation. A total of 12 priests concelebrated Holy Mass, which was also part of the evening's program. The Rev. Wilfrid Gregoire, pastor at Immaculate, was the main celebrant. The Rev. Michael Father Michael Najim, assistant vocation director for the Diocese of Providence, was the homilist. After a light sports moment, when "Father Mike" kidded the crowd about experiencing pain when the Patriots lost to the Colts in last week's AFC championship game, Rev. Najim said he had experienced a "lifechanging moment" when he visited Ivan's birthplace in the village of Medjugorje with his grandmother back in the 90s. "Marian devotion makes sense," he said, "it's logical." "At the heart of Marian devotion is union with Jesus Christ through Mary," said the Westerly native, whose parents sat in the audience before him. "Through her, who was perfectly devoted, we are formed." "She continues to form us," he added. "It's the reason she comes to us throughout history." Mary is like any good mother, Rev. Najim added; she repeats her messages so her children will listen. Eventually, he said, her message will sink in. That message, he stressed, is to "surrender to God's will." "If each of us surrendered to His will," said the priest, "the world would be a different place. Mary Kelliher of Westerly said she had also arrived early with the hope of hearing Ivan speak and of experiencing some of his message. "I've been following the Medjugorje story for years," said Kelliher. "It's just a blessing to be here." Kelliher said that Ivan's message has inspired many "conversions of heart." She hoped the same would happen. Steve Shawl, a frequent visitor to Medjugorje, says that Our Lady's visits tell us that we are living in a time of grace. "What this means is God has granted special graces during this time in history, as never before, to help people change their lives back to lives centered on God," Shawl said. "This usually starts with an awakening of sorts. An infusion of grace that helps one feel God and Our Lady's presence in a more tangible way. And then follows a deepening of one's faith."

"For Catholics this means a deeper appreciation and understanding of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist," Shawl said. "Our Lady also gives us five steps to help us to continue on our spiritual path."

Daily praying of the rosary, monthly confession, daily reading of a bit of Scripture, fasting on Wednesdays and Friday, and attending Holy Mass as often as we can.” Joanne Kudie of Westerly said that she had come to hear Ivan with the hope of becoming newly inspired. She had been to Medjugorje in 1990, she said, and was eager to hear Mary’s message again. Kris Caproni, who drove down from Providence with a car full of friends, said she had come to “hopefully get a healing.” I feel like I have been called to be here,” said Caproni. “The Lord wants me to be here.”

On June 24, 1981, the story goes, a woman who identified herself as the “Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace,” appeared to young Ivan Dragicevic and five of his friends. Her mission, she told the children, was “to promote peace with God and mankind, through her Son, Jesus Christ.” The woman told the children, “I have come to tell the world that God exists.” Dragicevic, one of three of the original group of six who continue to have the apparition on a daily basis, has made it his mission to spread “Our Lady’s message” in parishes around the country. On Friday night he spread that message in Westerly. Dragicevic, who is married and has three children, spends half the year in Medjugorje and the other half in the United States. Perhaps the evening was best captured by Maryann Bennett of Johnston, who said she wouldn’t have missed Dragicevic’s appearance in Westerly for the world. When asked why she made the trip all the way down from the northern part of the state, the young mother replied, “Hello! Heaven is meeting earth – in Westerly!”

(By Nancy Burns-Fusaro, The Sun Staff
<http://www.thewesterlysun.com> sent by e-mail from
 Tom TJG1960PC@Aol.com Sun 1/28/2007)



OUR LADY of the BOOK

Image: Statue of Our Lady of the Marian Library

At the University of Dayton there is a wood carving of Our Lady of the Marian Library. The pensive Virgin is seated in an arm chair, an open book on her lap. The carving was commissioned for the Marian Library when it was founded in 1943, and has served as the logo of the great collection on Our Lady that now attracts scholars and students from all over the world.

Image: Rogier Van der Weyden (1399-1464)



Christian artists have often depicted the Blessed Virgin as reading, especially at the Annunciation. She is shown seated with a book; Gabriel is coming on the scene to deliver the message from heaven for which God’s written word has prepared Mary. “The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,” as the familiar Angelus begins, “and she conceived of the Holy Spirit.” Sometimes God’s angelic messenger holds a scroll with the legend, “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you.” In medieval art the Blessed Virgin is often shown kneeling at a priedieu, totally taken up in reading and prayer.

Renaissance art sometimes shows the child Mary reading a book, with her parents Joachim and Anne. Murillo painted Saint Anne and the child Mary reading. Rubens has Anne teaching Mary out of a book.

A striking modern example is John Angel’s sculpture over the main entrance of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C. Mary is kneeling at her priedieu, a book before her, as Gabriel approaches from behind her, surprising her in prayer. The scene is vibrant with energy: Gabriel’s wings are still extended, and the pious maiden looks back over her shoulder to God’s envoy. There is a photo of this sculpture on the cover of the United States Bishops’ pastoral of November 21, 1973, Behold Your Mother, Woman of Faith (U.S.C.C., Washington, D.C., still in print, in English and Spanish). Other artistic representations continue the theme into our own day. Sometimes it is Our Lady teaching the Christ-child to read, even the boy Jesus explaining the holy book to his mother. After Pentecost Our Lady is still shown with an unrolled scroll, one of the apostles close by to learn from her.

Symbolism of the Images

What is behind the representation of Our Lady of the Book? We find three lessons in the scene:

- Mary herself reads;
- the perfect correspondence between what was foretold in the Bible and its fulfillment in the birth and life of Jesus;
- Mary is herself the ‘book’ in which the Church reads the ways of God.

The first meaning is Mary as reader; she reads in the fullest sense, that is, she searches, she understands, she prays, she opens her mind and heart to whatever message God will send her through his sacred word. A second sense of Our Lady and the book is the correspondence in her life between God’s promises and their fulfillment in Jesus her Son. Gabriel is quoting the same prophecies Mary is reading, and as

she consents to become Mother of the Savior, the forecasts become reality.



Image: Jan van Eyck, Ghent Altarpiece, excerpt, 1432

She has said, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to your word,” and as the Angelus continues, “and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” The pattern of the Annunciation - Our Lady’s total surrender to God’s saving plan -

characterizes her entire life. Of this “daughter of Abraham,” more than of any of his children, will the followers of Jesus say, “You have great faith!” (Mt 16, 28). The holy Virgin is a true child of Abraham, who produces appropriate fruit (Lk 3, 8). Elizabeth’s words, “Blest is she who trusted that the Lord’s words to her would be fulfilled,” are repeated in her Son’s praise, “Still more blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it” (Lk 11, 28). The book is a symbol of Jesus himself; Mary is the reader. First she reads the messianic prophecies of the Hebrew Bible, then their achievement in her divine Son.

A third element in the tradition of Mary and the book is that the Blessed Virgin is herself a book in which the Church reads, a reading that began with the apostles. Early authors call Mary “the sacred book of the divine precepts, in which what pleases God is made known to us, as Jeremias saw long ago.” (Saint Theodore of Studion, D. 826). One compiler tracked

down ninety titles in which Mary is described as a book.



Image: Rogier Van der Weyden (1399-1464)

Books enshrine the past, both words and deeds. Saint Luke twice assures us that the Mother of Jesus kept in her heart and memory everything

that pertained to her Son. Pope John Paul II has described biblical ways Mary searched out God’s ways: at the Annunciation - “deeply troubled ... she wondered,” she asked, “How can this be?” in her reactions to the words of the shepherds and her twelve-year at old at Jerusalem in the temple.



Image: Rogier Van der Weyden (1399-1464)

At the visit of the shepherds Saint Luke tells us, “Mary

treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart.” At the finding of the boy Jesus in the temple, the gospel says Mary and Joseph did not grasp what he said about being in his Father’s house. All the same, concluded Saint Luke, “His mother kept all these things in memory,” while her Son returned with them to Nazareth, to obey them and to “progress steadily in wisdom and age and grace before God and men.” Some bible translations have: “Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.” Saint Luke would have us understand far more than mere memory on Mary’s part. She remembered and compared, turning over and over in her heart what she had heard and seen and experienced, seeking ever more profound appreciation and acceptance of God’s mysterious and merciful ways. In the litany we call Mary seat or throne of wisdom, meaning that divine Wisdom, the Word of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, made his dwelling place in her pure body. She is also the virgin most wise, as the newly-approved translation of her litany has for the older virgin most prudent.

A conciliar document on Revelation (Nov. 18, 1965) in explaining tradition, presented Our Lady as the model of how the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, “grows in the understanding of the realities and words which are being passed on. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (cf. Luke 2, 19 and 51), through the intimate understanding of spiritual things they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through episcopal succession the sure gift of truth” (n. 8).



Image: Ateliers Brabancons (15th c)

Our Lady of the book can teach us still how to pray better; we never grow too old to learn from the Mother of Jesus, the gospel woman of faith so well versed in God’s holy word. A confrere of mine, Father Joachim Smet, wrote the poem ‘Our Lady of the Book,’ here presented

with his permission, and for its arrangement the permission of America magazine where it first appeared November 27, 1943:

Our Lady wears no dearer look
Than when she’s reading in a book.

For then the virgin named most Wise
Reveals her schoolgirl’s earnest eyes.

A furrow grace where eyebrows meet
I trace in her called Wisdom’s Seat

The hands that steady Jesus' pace
Now cautiously each letter trace.

And Anna's lessons learned so slow
Seem long ago, seem long ago.

Our Lady wears no dearer look
Than when she's reading in a book.

For then the virgin named most Wise
Reveals her schoolgirl's earnest eyes.

A furrow grace where eyebrows meet
I trace in her called Wisdom's Seat

The hands that steady Jesus' pace
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Seem long ago, seem long ago.

The above meditation is an excerpt from an article written by a professor of the International Marian Research Institute, Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm. Father Carroll is also Professor of Theology at Loyola University of Chicago. The author acknowledges his indebtedness to Jean Leclercq, O.S.B., "Mary's Reading of Christ," in Monastic Studies (Montreal) 15 (1984) 106-117. The America article: Reprinted with permission of America Press, Inc., 106 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019.

<http://campus.udayton.edu/mary//meditations/olbook.html> by Rev. Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm.)

PSALM 138: MEDITATING on GOD, TRANSCENDENT and NEAR

VATICAN CITY, DEC 14, 2005 (VIS) - In today's general audience, celebrated in Saint Peter's Square, 18,000 people gathered to hear the Pope's catechesis on Psalm 138, "God sees all."

"The meditation of the psalmist," said Benedict XVI, "seeks, above all, to penetrate the mystery of God, Who is transcendent yet near to us."

The Pope explained: "The message we are offered is straightforward: God knows everything and is present with His creation, which cannot detach itself from Him. Nevertheless, His presence is not menacing or inquisitive, though of course He looks severely on evil, to which He cannot remain indifferent.

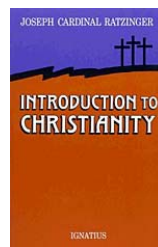
"Nonetheless, the fundamental element is a saving presence, one capable of embracing the totality of both existence and history. This is the spiritual context to which Saint Paul refers, when speaking at

the Areopagus of Athens, by alluding to a Greek poet: 'In Him we live and move and have our being'."

Benedict XVI pointed out how the first part of the psalm celebrates divine omniscience, using verbs associated with the idea of knowledge. However, he went on, "biblical knowledge is superior to plain and simple intellectual knowledge; it is a kind of communion between the knower and the known: the Lord is close to us, while we think and act."

"The psalmist then introduces the other reality in which we are immersed: time, symbolically represented by night and day. ... Even darkness, where it is difficult to walk and to see, is penetrated by the epiphany and the gaze of the Lord of being and time. His hand is always ready to take ours to guide us along our earthly path. His closeness, therefore, is not one of terrifying judgment, but rather of support and liberation."

**(AG/GOD TRANSCENDENT AND NEAR/VIS 051214
(300))**



INTRODUCTION to CHRISTIANITY

280 page Soft cover Book by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger - List Price: \$16.95.

As a Cardinal, Pope Benedict XVI wrote several books. One of Cardinal Ratzinger's most important and widely read books is Introduction to Christianity. This volume is a newly revised edition with an improved translation and an in-depth 20 page preface by the Cardinal.

As he states in the preface, Cardinal Ratzinger says he is firmly convinced that his fundamental approach in this book is still very timely and crucial for the spiritual needs of modern man. That approach puts the question of God and the question about Christ in the very center, which leads to a "narrative Christology" and demonstrates that the place for faith is in the Church.

Thus, this remarkable elucidation of the Apostle's Creed gives an excellent, modern interpretation of the foundations of Christianity.

Ratzinger's Introduction to Christianity is a must read for Catholics, Christians of all denominations and others who want to know what the new pope really believes.

Ratzinger's profound treatment of Christianity's basic truths combines a spiritual outlook with a deep knowledge of Scripture and the history of theology.

In this remarkable elucidation of the Apostles' Creed, Cardinal Ratzinger, a highly regarded theologian, gives an excellent, modern interpretation of the foundations of Christianity. This profound treatment of Christianity's basic truths combines a spiritual outlook with a deep knowledge of Scripture and the history of theology. A solid and contemporary discussion of the fundamental Christian mysteries.

“Cardinal Ratzinger offers us a profound meditation on the twelve articles of the Apostles Creed. These reflections will challenge and expand one's knowledge of the Catholic faith. The Cardinal addresses and answers many of the modern objections to faith in God the Father and Creator, his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Church. This is solid food that must be eaten slowly, but it is very nourishing and worth the effort.” (Father Kenneth Baker, S.J., editor of Homiletic and Pastoral Review)

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PILGRIMS of FAITH MARIAN CENTER (PFMC)

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

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

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

The **PFMC** is directed and operated by volunteers who monitor the donations made for all activities.

These activities included 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.

Any help to manage it would be greatly appreciated. We need volunteers to help us keep track of the entire inventory as we try to reduce it for eventual closing of operations at **61 Cooper Road, Voorhees. NJ 08043**.

If you have inventory or computer skills we would love to have your help. **Bill Malone** has been of great help in the effort of taking inventory and maintaining the Inventory data base as a follow-up on the great original work by **Vince and Livia Nocella**. If you would have a few moments to assist him by doing the computer work, **Bill** is helping **Vince and Livia** with the organizing and counting. They can always use some additional hands. We want to complete as much of the current inventory as possible before the **2007 RETREAT CONFERENCE**. After this event we will have to go over the inventory, reorganizing and counting as we go, to see where we stand.

If you wish to order, please determine what you want with as much description as possible. If you do not have an order form, call us at **(856) 768-9228** with a FAX number or mailing address and we will send you an order form. If you know what you want and we

carry it, you can order over the telephone using your credit card. If you have an order form, complete it, make out a check or complete the information for use of a credit card, i.e. card type, number, expiration date, and name on card, sign, and mail everything to the **PFMC** at the address shown on the last page.

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

2007 for the **PFMC**

In much prayer and discussions, we have reached some very difficult decisions. It saddens us that **2007** will see the cessation of **PFMC** operations at **61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043**.

As you know the tragic events and aftermath of **September 11, 2001** have taken a toll on the citizens of this great nation. The non-profit organizations dedicated to promulgation of faith and morals have lost a great deal of their support. The **PFMC** is one of those non-profit organizations.

Kathleen and **Keith Werner** have tried to continue the operations of the **PFMC** at **Epiphany House, 61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043**. The monthly donations from others rarely exceeded **10 percent** of the monthly cost of operations which averages around **\$7000 per month**. Now we must sell the property at **61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043**.

We have prayerfully considered the announcements printed below. Please pray that the transition will go smoothly. Here are some of the specifics:

- Following the **February 2007 PFMC Retreat Conference**, large **Annual PFMC Retreat Conferences** will cease. We encourage everyone reading this newsletter and who have known us these **18 years** of ministry to go to this extremely important event. Enclosed is the last issue of the **BLUE** information packet with reservation forms. Please fill out a form and submit it to the **PFMC** as soon as possible. Reserve your hotel room immediately with the **CLARION HOTEL**.
- Activities in **Epiphany House** will continue to be scheduled as private or parish groups request until the final decision is made to put the property up for sale on the real estate market. This will probably be in late **September 2007**.
- The contents of **Epiphany House**, i.e., furniture, files, inventory, etc., will be made available to anyone who wishes to bid on them. A list will be kept with names and bids. When the decision is made to vacate the premises the contents will be

transferred to those who want them with the highest bidder winning each item. The rest will be disposed of properly. We can not afford to rent storage space so stop by and bid.

- This periodical, **"The PILGRIM,"** will continue until such time as facilities for publishing, assembly, and mailing are no longer available. These will probably **NOT** be available after the sale of **61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043**. The frequency of publication will be reduced as necessary as will the size of the mailing list. This latter means that those who do not regularly contact us will be dropped from the mailing list. We have been mailing to all parishes within the **Roman Catholic Province of New Jersey** for many years. We have shifted to **FAX** notification of events to the parishes and will cease paper delivery after this issue.

We continue to ask for your donations to keep the **PFMC** operations going for at least the next nine months. We are still looking for guidance as to what to do with the **PFMC** operations after the sale of **61 Cooper Road** is completed. See article **AFTER 2007 for the PFMC** below. We hope that all can be accomplished in peace. Please pray for all the volunteers at the **PFMC**. **God Bless!**

AFTER 2007 for the **PFMC**

Kathleen will continue her work in **Healing Prayer** with **Keith** in **Intercessory Prayer**.

The base of operations may still be called the **PFMC** but it will not be at **61 Cooper Road** and probably not in their private home.

The support for **PFMC** operations set up in **Epiphany House** may be moved to a new location or completely sold with other contents. Decisions will have to be made on phones, computers, etc. particularly regarding the handling of requests for intercessory prayer.

As decisions are made and plans formulated they will be published in **"The PILGRIM"** with a complete rundown in the last printing of **"The PILGRIM."** If you wish to continue receiving **"The PILGRIM"** we ask for regular contact and monthly donations of at least **\$3**. There has been no subscription fee for all the years of periodical publication.

Over the last **18 years**, we have ministered to people seeking guidance, prayer, or help. We have done our best to be God's instruments in this way. We will continue to be available to speak on past pilgrimages,

and to assist anyone in setting up their own pilgrimage to holy shrines, including **Medjugorje**.

In our library there are many photo books of past pilgrimages. If you wish to look at them, please come to the **Upper Room of Epiphany House** at the **PFMC**, and enjoy browsing through them. Many memories will return to your heart. The same is true of our **PFMC** files and the recently acquired **KARMINSKI** files on the early years of many of the worlds apparition sites from the 1980's and 1990's.

For **18 years** we have had faithful volunteers who have been there to help with religious activities, annual events, and in the **PFMC** operations at **129 Deerfield Avenue** and **61 Cooper Road**. No one has received a salary.

We have remained in Our Lady's mantle of protection and are grateful for so many years of being able to serve her and her Son. It is now time to work more quietly and in intercessory prayer. We want to take this opportunity to thank every person who has been there for us, and for Our Lady's work. **God Bless!**

Kathleen and Keith Werner

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.

16 to 18 FEBRUARY 2007 - PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE

Theme: "but deliver us from the evil one." (Matthew 6:13)[NAB]. Location: Clarion Hotel, NJ 70 and I-295, Cherry Hill, NJ. Speakers: Father Bill Halbing, Francine Schmatz, Neal Lozano, Robert Abel, Moira Noonan, Father John Tino, Father Michael Semana.

Music: Refuge. Donation: \$50 Meal Plan: \$60. Call (856) 768-9228. Visit the following: www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2007/07RET2.pdf review, and print form, fill-out, and mail registration form to 61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043-4963.

24 MARCH 2007 - PFMC hosted ACCEPTANCE Seminars / Workshops

Location: Upper Room, Epiphany House, 61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ. Speakers: Irene Atwell, Reverend John Parker, Kathleen Werner. Donation: \$60. Call (856) 768-9228. Visit the following: www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2007/07RET3.pdf review, and print form, fill-out, and mail registration form to 61 Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043-4963.

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

CONFERENCE CORNER

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

16 to 18 FEBRUARY 2007 - PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE. THEME: "but deliver us from the evil one." (Matthew 6:13)[NAB] DONATION: \$50 Meal Plan: \$60. Call (856) 768-9228.

25 to 27 May 2007, NATIONAL CONFERENCE on MEDJUGORJE, Joyce Center, Notre Dame, IN. Contact Francis Sain, Queen of Peace Ministries, P.O. Box 761, Notre Dame, IN 46556 or call 574-288-8777; FAX: 574-288-8795; Email: maryconference@sbcglobal.net Web Site: <http://www.queenofpeaceministries.com>.

24 to 26 August 2007, THE MIR CENTER OF ARIZONA MARIAN CONFERENCE, Doubletree Resort Scottsdale, AZ.

15 to 16 September 2007, MARIAN EUCHARISTIC CONFERENCE, Catskill, N.Y. Cost is \$40 per person, tickets go on sale March 1st. for further details: e-mail: erm@mhonline.net or call 518-943-5745

CALENDARS:

In *February*, the Church observes Feasts of **PRESENTATION of the LORD (2)**, **ASH WEDNESDAY (21)**, and **CHAIR of SAINT PETER, APOSTLE (22)**, Memorials of *Saints Agatha (5)*, *Paul Miki and Companions (6)*, *Scholastica (10)*, *Cyril (14)* and *Methodius (14)*, , Optional Memorials of *Saints Blase (3)*, *Ansgar (3)*, *Jerome Emiliani (8)*, *Josephine Bakhita (8)*, and *Polycarp (23)* as well as **Seven Founders of the Order of Servites (17)**. Most Church calendars show **Abraham Lincoln Birthday (12)**, **Valentine's Day (14)**, **Presidents' Day (19)** and **George Washington Birthday (22)**. **Happy Birthday, Kathleen (21)**.

In *March*, the Church celebrates the Solemnities of **SAINT JOSEPH, HUSBAND of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (19)** and the **ANNUNCIATION of the LORD (26)**, the Optional Memorials of *Saints Katherine Drexel (3)*, *Perpetua and Felicity (7)*, *John of God (8)*, *Frances of Rome (9)*, *Patrick of Ireland (17)*, and *Turibio de Mogrovejo (23)*. Most Church calendars show **Daylight Savings Time Begins (11)** as well as **Abstinence on ALL FRIDAYS of LENT (2, 9, 16, 23, 30)**. **Happy Birthday, Bill (11) and Keith (12)**.

Please pre-register using **BLUE** form enclosed for the **2007 RETREAT CONFERENCE** with the **PFMC** and reserve your \$92 plus tax room (sleeps 2-5) at the **CLARION HOTEL**.

AROUND the **PFMC** AREA

Please review the announcements on *pages 1* through *3*, and on *pages 22* and *23* particularly in **Bulletin Notices** and **Conference Corner**.

Thank you for your support in all we try to do for Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior, and His Blessed Virgin Mother, Mary. Visit our web pages for more information. Please help get the word out on **PFMC** activities, events, and pilgrimages. Visit us for your religious articles and materials gifts. Pray for us.

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

POPE BENEDICT XVI PRAYER INTENTIONS for *FEBRUARY 2007*

Pope Benedict's general prayer intention for the month of *February 2007* is: "That the goods of the earth, given by God for all people, may be used wisely and in accordance with justice and solidarity."

His mission intention for the month of *February 2007* is: "That governments of all nations may cooperate to fight diseases and epidemics in the Third World."

<http://www.apostlesofprayer.org>

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

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

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The PILGRIM, Volume 18, Number 02 – February 2007

**PRIORITY DATED
RELIGIOUS MATERIAL**

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2/7/2007**

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PLEASE DO NOT THROW THIS AWAY!!!!

If you do not desire to read "*The PILGRIM*," please give it to a Marian prayer group or return it to sender. If 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 exist on divine providence and generous donations from those who can afford to support us. **PRIESTS!** Please note that great **HOMILY** ideas come from articles in "*The PILGRIM!*" Please, pray for the **PFMC** and the disposition of property and contents at **61 Cooper Road!**

