



The **PILGRIM**

Vol. 18, No. 03-04 <http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith>

March-April 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



Dearrest Mother, the world is in the torrents of warfare against the evil one. We need your help to combat these forces of the occult that have taken over families, personal lives, industry, and government. This truly is a time of battle against all forces that cause division, anger, and prevention in carrying out the teachings of the Word of God.

Godliness has left lives in place of moral decayance.. Children lack parental and spiritual guidance . Dearest Lady and our mother, bring back that union of children with parents that once radiated respect, love, and a gift of praying together.

Give mankind the power to stand up against the powers that attempt to take away our privileges of religious freedom . Turn the hearts of those who support killing of babies, and restore our country to one that upholds the right of life.

Thank you Mary, for your intercession, and for our being able to turn to your mantle of protection. Thank you Mary for being our Mother. Thank you for always being available to understand our problems, and to give us guidance to learn virtues, prayer, love, and to help us convert our lives.

Mary, we want to love you more and more. AMEN

REPORT on the FEBRUARY SPIRITUAL WARFARE RETREAT

The **PFMC 2007 RETREAT CONFERENCE (RC)** held from *Friday thru Sunday, 16 - 18 February 2007*, was a tremendous spiritual success.

The **CLARION HOTEL** was indeed turned into a retreat center for over 400 attendees. The speakers were all guided by the **Holy Spirit** under the theme **“BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE.” Matthew 6:13 [NAB]**

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

We are still getting phone calls, letters, and notes about how this weekend of teaching about **SPIRITUAL WARFARE** particularly **HEALING PRAYER** and **DELIVERANCE MINISTRY** touched their lives.. **Neil and Janet Lozano** have reported how this weekend has expanded their ministry and opened more of the world to the book **UNBOUND**. **Father Halbing** has widely spoken of how powerful the weekend went. See page 2 for what he put in his parish bulletin. We would all like to repeat another weekend like this one, and are investigating the possibility of this in the greater **New York** area. We will need volunteers.

CESSATION of PFMC OPERATIONS at 61 COOPER ROAD, VOORHEES, NJ

We have received many calls, cards, and letters about our plans for cessation of **PFMC** operations at **61 Cooper Road** in **Voorhees, NJ**.

Many have offered prayers, which we truly appreciate. We have not seen an increase in volunteers to help us on a regular basis. We need assistance from volunteers even in these final months of closing down **PFMC** operations at **61 Cooper Road** in **Voorhees, NJ**.

We have not found the volunteers necessary to continue operations on a daily basis much less to plan events such as conferences and retreats that require so much help. We do hope we can continue individual **PFMC** ministries from another location, but without your help we can not do much.

At least 3 realtors have taken information from us and offered their assistance with marketing the property. We will make the final decision about placing the

“The PILGRIM” for *March-April 2007* is dedicated to **“Mary, Our Mother of Spiritual Warfare.”** See page 3 for **“IN THIS ISSUE . . .”** or the **Table of Contents**. for this issue.

property at **61 Cooper Road in Voorhees, NJ** on the real estate market in **May of 2007**.

We have been involved with a number of ministries including **Good Counsel Homes, Camden Project, the Coming Home Network, and Bloomfield Productions / Mary Shop** to see if anyone knows of a ministry that would like to take over the property. No one seems to have the resources necessary to do this. We are still looking for a place from which we can operate the **PFMC** ministries at little to no cost to us. **Father Halbing** has offered us space in the **Saint Antoninus** properties but this is such a long drive for us and other volunteers from the greater **Philadelphia** area. **Monsignor Myron Grabowsky** of **Saint Mary Church** in **Bristol, PA** has asked us to visit him and the core groups of the **Southeastern PA Charismatic Renewal** to see what can be done in that area. We appreciate all the leads and will try to investigate them all to the best of our ability.

Please keep praying for a successful sale of this property and the grace to continue some of the **PFMC** operations at another location.

PEOPLE WANT TO GET RID OF THE GARBAGE and . . . GOD IS DOING IT!

At a time when attendance at conferences is seriously waning, it was a full house at the Pilgrims of Faith Conference in Cherry Hill in February. There was even some debate as to not have another one, attendance was so poor. So why the turn around?

The theme: . . . Deliverance.

The Holy Spirit is really working in this area as people are now so desperate enough to allow Him to do so. As one of our people there commented, there was an intensity and a focus and a spirit of overwhelming joy at seeing people set free and people experiencing being set free. People were prayed over and walked through the deliverance process and amazing things happened in the Confessional. The lines were overwhelming and people with normally no patience, waited patiently for hours to go in. One husband hadn't been there in 28 years and even though he was encouraged not to go as

he could just "tell his sins to God," he persisted and when he entered, the first words out of the priest's mouth were: "Jesus has been waiting for you." That after 28 years! And then the priest proceeded to tell him his sins . . . something along the lines of a great saint we know . . . Padre Pio. A heart was softened, changed, moved to tears, and transformed. Praise be to God!

And, of course, the evil one was there trying to rob people of their encounter with the Lord . . . as sharing the experience to those out in the world has often been met with sarcasm, skepticism, and downright self-righteous dismissal. But the key is to persevere. Expect the attack and hang on.

As is often the case according to one of our holy ladies who prays with people for healing, people give up seeking the healing. When it doesn't happen instantly, we tend to stop asking. **ASK, SEEK, KNOCK** . . . remember the persistent lady with the judge in Scripture. She kept after him until he gave in. That is the reason for the story being there . . . that is how we need to be in prayer . . . persistent.

Healing is more often than not, a process. Yes, there are instantaneous healings, but for most it is a process. We have to trust Him and continue to ask Him. And as we are healed, we grow in a loving relationship with the One Who heals us and guess what? Love heals. This is the time. This is the day of salvation. What better season than Lent to get rid of the garbage. He's waiting . . . for you.

(by **Father Bill Halbing** in **Saint Antonine**, Vol. 1, Issue 1, March 2007)

WHEN the DEVIL DARES: TEENAGERS and SATANISM

Parents, teachers, and law enforcement personnel in Monroe County Michigan knew something strange was going on with local high school students, but they couldn't figure out what. One boy, who lived with his grandmother, took all her religious pictures off the walls, turned her crucifixes upside down, and then beat her up. Two boys fought in the high school cafeteria and the winner jumped up and flashed a strange hand salute, a clenched fist with his index and little fingers sticking up. The art teacher couldn't figure out why so many kids drew pictures of

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.

demonic-like men with goat's heads. And the occult books kept disappearing from the school library. The adults knew something was wrong, but they didn't know what.

The teenagers were flirting with satanism. The power, the magic, the mystery -- for most it was fun and exciting. For some, it was serious, deadly serious to Lloyd Gamble, who lost his life in a satanic sacrifice. After Lloyd's death, and his younger brother's arrest for the murder, the adults learned to understand the signs that had been so mysterious before: The "devil's sign" hand signal, the two fingers representing the horns of the "goat" image of Satan; the goat's head baphomet pictures symbolizing the dark lord; and the books that fed the teenagers' imaginations, rituals, and spells. Across America, fascination with satanism is infecting our schools and enticing adolescents into destruction with false promises of power, control, and excitement. In a contemporary society where Christian beliefs and morals are ridiculed, and self-indulgence and self-gratification are worshipped, teenagers are easy prey for the Prince of Darkness. Christian educators, parents, pastors, and youth leaders, like the adults in Monroe County, too often have been tricked by the Deceiver's sleight-of-hand to focus on the sensational, the false rumors, and the conspiracy mirages while signs of typical teenage satanic involvement escape our notice. It shouldn't take a tragedy like the killing of Lloyd Gamble by his brother to shift our focus.

Equipped with sound information and good answers from God's Word, educators can recognize the danger signals of teenage satanism, and take positive steps to intervene for a troubled student who has turned to satanism to solve his or her overwhelming problems. Satanic involvement does not occur in isolation from other problems. Most teenagers who practice satanism also abuse drugs and alcohol and are sexually promiscuous. As with drugs and sex, satanism is an indicator of serious personal dysfunction, and the teenage satanist will not be truly free of occult bondage unless his or her underlying problems are recognized and resolved. Occult expert Doctor John Cooper notes, "Satanism blesses and encourages the expression of all that is natural to adolescent development -- rebellion, defiance, and specialness -- yet it lacks a positive, rational framework and totally disregards relational, social, and religious boundaries and values".

First, recognize that satanism appeals to teenagers who have significant problems dealing with the world and who are convinced that satanism is their solution. Eight major risk factors often accompany teenage satanism: (1) extreme alienation; (2) morbid

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fascination with horror, death, and pain; (3) drug and alcohol use; (4) difficulty conforming to the system (whether in school, at home, or on the job); (5) a frustrating sense of powerlessness; (6) an excessive need to control; (7) high intelligence and creativity that often is used destructively; and (8) unnatural attraction to the mysterious, the occult, or the magical. Each of these risk factors are experienced to some degree by all adolescents, but for the teenager who gravitates toward satanism, these factors are consuming motivators.

Second, be aware of specific signs of satanic involvement. Watch for the teenager who seems obsessed with power, both exerting his own power over others and rejecting power over himself. Watch for the teenager whose words and actions display unusual destructiveness, who openly defies authority, and who seems almost consumed by feelings of vengeance and hate. Notice the teenager who seems absorbed with himself or herself, preoccupied with self-interests and self-indulgence.

Third, recognize that for most teenagers, satanism is an expression of rage, hostility, and self-indulgence more than it is a developed religious conviction. Most teenagers have little exposure to Christianity other

than the mocking of television or the movies. Strong belief in a literal powerful spiritual person called Satan is usually as ridiculous to them as belief in some omnipresent God in heaven. Consequently, while all teenage satanists “worship Satan,” most conceive of Satan as a self-serving natural force, or a symbol of their own rejection of authority. As one satanist proudly declared to us, “I am Satan and I worship myself!” Little wonder that Anton LaVey, founder of the Church of Satan and author of *The Satanic Bible*, declares that the satanist’s own birthday is the most important “unholy” day of the satanic calendar!

Fourth, physical clues are important. Although occult symbols and signs are scattered throughout contemporary music, videos, movies, television programs, comic books, and video games, the teenager who exhibits some of these signs and also uses occult symbols on papers, notebooks, jewelry, tattoos, and clothing is probably involved in satanism. The most common symbols are the pentagram, an inverted five point star in a circle; the baphomet, or “Goat of Mendes,” representing lust; the inverted cross, and words written backwards, such as “redrum” (murder) or “live” (evil). Satanic literature is as close as the nearest discount bookstore or public library, and almost all teenage satanists use Anton LaVey’s *The Satanic Bible* as their satanic handbook. Satanists compose their own rituals and ceremonies and add to them their satanic “prayers” and writings in a personal “Book of Shadows.” This may be a simple spiralbound notepad or an elaborately handtooled leather diary. Frequently the writing is coded or backward. At home, the satanist will have ritual tools such as an altar (even a black cloth over a card table will do), a black robe, candles (especially black and red), bells, a chalice, a sword or staff of “power,” and a dagger. Not all teenage satanists have elaborate and extensive ritual aids, and they are extremely good at hiding them, so concerned parents must look carefully. As a concerned Christian educator, you can intervene to help the troubled teenage satanist.

Six elements are key to successfully rescuing a teenager whose personal problems have driven him or her to cry out with destructive satanic involvement. First, be committed to helping through listening, educating, talking, praying, working with parents, disciplining, and offering better solutions to the individual problems experienced by the satanists. Second, seek professional help from responsible, non-sensational books (see sidebar), experienced pastoral counselors, and youth workers who specialize in out-of-control teenagers. Since most teenage satanism is symptomatic of broader problems, you don’t need expertise in satanism as much as expertise in

adolescent problem solving. Third, intervene in appropriate and constructive ways to turn the teenager from satanism and toward good solutions. Intervention varies by case, and may range from forbidding occult symbols, terminology, or themes from classroom work to working with parents, juvenile authorities, and your school administration to enforce consequences on continued teenage satanic destructiveness. Fourth, expose the ultimately self-destructiveness of satanism and its false promises. Fifth, offer better solutions, problem solving techniques, and lifestyle choices. This includes being a good role model so the teenage satanist sees that constructive commitment is far more personally fulfilling than the abandonment of destructive occultism. Finally, pray and enlist the prayers of friends, colleagues, and family. Be confident that **“the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4)** and **“the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16b)**. When the smoke and trick mirrors are removed by the power of God’s truth, Satan’s allure is exposed as an empty shell of broken promises. Teenage satanists are looking for truth and life -- show them the One who is Truth and Life (**John 14:6**).

Teenagers and Satanism: Danger Signs

Satanic and/or occult symbols on schoolwork, clothes, personal belongings.

Attitudes of extreme isolationism, hatred, vengeance, and personal destructive power, all seemingly without remorse.

Obsession with death, violence, evil, the mysterious, and the occult.

Concurrent drug, alcohol, and sexual activity.

Reputation among peers as someone to be feared or catered to because of his/her personal power. (Or, appears to follow someone with such a reputation.)

Self-proclaimed satanist, devil-worshipper, or “witch.”

Preoccupation with colors red and black (such as clothing), knives, candles, and other occult paraphernalia.

“Book of Shadows” (secret ritual book), backward writing, occult-themed writing.

Suggestions for Intervention

Approach student with confidence, honesty, and genuine concern.

Work with student on areas impacting his/her school work or school participation.

Try to discover student's fundamental problems (which he/she is trying unsuccessfully to solve with satanism).

Offer better, more successful, and more constructive ways of solving those problems.

Point out the destructiveness of satanic involvement and its ultimate spiritual and emotional bankruptcy.

Involve parents or another responsible adult the student trusts if you can enlist their sensible cooperation.

Pray for the student, the family, the student's fundamental problems, and those who are encouraging the student's satanic involvement.

Be a good role model with consistent Christian maturity -- show how Christians successfully meet life's challenges with the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

(By Bob and Gretchen Passantino

http://answers.org/satan/teens_satanism.html)

WHAT IS TRUTH

“Pilate asked him, ‘What is Truth?’“ John 18:38

Truth is quite a fantastic subject. For many, it is the goal for which they quest. Many others still, find the quest *itself* the goal. While yet others, care nothing for either--truth or the quest for it.

Yet, Truth is nothing more than what is. To deny Truth is to deny reality. To deny reality is to make oneself a proud fool.

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools.” Rom. 1:18-22

Many philosophies are appearing each day, and as we move closer towards the Second Coming of the Messiah, we see that Philosophy and Science are becoming more closely entwined.

Modern theories of relativity, ways of explaining reality and the universe, and even the very idea of the atom's parts, tend to be based around a single idea:

***The PILGRIM*, Volume 18, Number 03-04 – March-April 2007**

one cannot know everything at the same time. This is typified in the famous Heisenberg Uncertainty principle, which states that you cannot exactly know both an electron's position and velocity at the same instant.

The Principle Which Halts Knowledge

The very paradox shown here in fact bleeds over into every other accepted theory and philosophy: as many stones are “turned over,” there exists an infinitely increasing number of them left. The more which are turned over seem to reveal the more which are left unturned.

Some have realized this effect, and have decided that the only way to stay both sane and continue living in “normalcy” is to continue to “turn over these stones” one by one, without thought of where the person himself is going. Yet, what will this produce? Where will it get them? In all probability, farther away from the truth. For the closer one gets to physically understanding the universe, the farther one gets from spiritually understanding it. To observe the observable is to miss the invisible.

Therefore one must ask: which is the reality, spirituality or physicality?

Why not learn from the Teacher who set it all in motion, rather than seek those who are truly unlearned in the grand scheme?

Observing the Physical Universe: A Never-ending Paradox

According to both the Creator's own record of the situation, as well as the continued evidence which

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
Vice-President / Publisher / Co-Director: Keith Werner
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OFFICE HELP, ASSEMBLY, LABELS and MAILING: Too many wonderful pilgrims and volunteers to mention them all by name.

scientists and philosophers “reveal,” the physical world cannot be completely understood. Therefore, all of its problems cannot be understood. This leads to the final conclusion that the human race is faced with quite a disturbing dilemma. Our very act of trying to understand why things are as they are is what creates the very paradoxes and seemingly endless path of knowledge for us.

If we would not observe the physical world, it would have no paradoxes. The fact that people attempt to solve the universe is what creates its very unsolvability.

The Answer to the Problem: Seeing the Unseen

Therefore, to turn one’s attention from physical observation is to focus on the invisible: this is what most people call faith, or trust.

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen.” Heb. 11:1

“For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.” II Cor. 4:17,18

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were completely made by the spoken word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.” Heb. 11:3

“By faith he (Moses) forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.” Heb. 11:27

“For we walk by faith, not by appearance.” II Cor. 5:7

Thus I conclude, with many others, including the One Who gave us the very ability to choose what to conclude, that one must go to the Source, rather than seeking answers from the Results.

In other words, seek the Creator for one’s answers, not the Creation.

Asking the One Who knows

I pray that you too will come to this conclusion, and begin to unfold some of the deepest mysteries held from the majority of humankind. These have been patiently waiting for those sincere, diligent, and humble enough to admit that they will never obtain all the answers by their own searching. They must be taught by the Creator of the puzzle Himself.

“Thus says Yahueh, Who made the earth; Yahueh, Who formed it to establish it—his name,

Yahueh (He Who Causes To Become): ‘call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.’“ Jer. 33:2, 3

“The fear of Yahueh is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Prov. 1:7

The Teacher is waiting... are you done yet?

Are you really being deceived?

Are these indeed the last times? Could it be that we are nearing that wondrous end when the forces of this world collide for one final time?

“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for you know not what hour your Lord does come.” Matt. 24:37-42

What signs will mark the end times? Is there a way to know that the end is coming?

“The Spirit lays before us distinctly, that in the last times some will desert the faith, and give their mind to deceiving spirits, and teachings of demons. Disseminating false doctrine in hypocrisy, having their consciences made insensitive, as though seared with a hot iron; forbidding people to marry and to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who have faith and fully know the truth. For all creation of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, Because it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.” 1 Tim. 4:1-5

People today are saying that eating meat is wrong; if you are not a vegetarian, you are a murderer. Yet, God has said that He *made* the creation good, and it is to be received with thanksgiving, not rejected, because His Word and our prayer have made it holy and acceptable.

Whole denominations who name Christ as their Lord forbid certain people to marry. According to the Spirit, this is a teaching of a demon. Has this blatant defying of God’s Word become so commonplace and accepted that we do not even realize it?

“Moreover know this: There will be difficult times in the end of the days. Humans will be lovers of themselves, greedy for money, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, without self-control, savage, hostile to virtue, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God—Having an appearance or form of godliness and holiness, but denying its very power. Avoid these. Of this sort are the kind who sneak into homes, and take control of foolish women, who are loaded down with sins and are led away by all kinds of lusts; always learning, but never able to come to the full knowledge of the truth.” 2 Tim. 3:1-7

Humans have become self-loving to the point of murdering others: Abortion. Take a look at the family life of America; kids not honoring their parents, and being supported by adults who say they don't have to. Without self-control, they are taught to indulge their every whim, even to the detriment of others. This shows their conceitedness, how they have become hostile to virtue and everything that is holy, and they foster this as they grow up into adults teaching their kids the same thing.

People have replaced God with fleshly pleasure; sexual fornication, drug use, alcoholism, obesity, etc. The list is long.

Yes, these types indeed have a form of religion, a form of godliness, but they deny its very power. Look at all of the spiritually-dead religions. Going to church every Sunday (Friday night, or Saturday morning), claiming to believe in God, yet “not knowing what they worship” (John 4:22).

These are the type who are constantly indulging in every new cult that appears each week, always searching for something different, always learning the “newly revealed” philosophy, but never finding the whole Truth which has been there the whole time.

The Consequences of Action

These ones, who knowingly do these things... are they promised heaven, because they haven't killed anyone? They haven't committed any “big sins,” so they are assured a place in heaven's luke-warm section? Is there, in fact, a “big sin” and does it matter relating to sin's penalty?

“See not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor

extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” 1 Cor. 6:9,10

“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.” Rev. 3:15-19

“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.” Rom. 3:19

“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.” James 2:10

Here is our answer. Indeed these people who continue in their sin will not inherit heaven.

Yet, there is hope. Some of the very people described, the godless, turned from their sin. And what was their end? They were washed fully, they were *made holy*, they were *rendered innocent* in the name of the Lord Jesus: [Yahueh Saves](#), and by His Holy Spirit.

“And such were some of you: but you are washed fully, but you are made holy, but you are justified (rendered innocent) in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” 1 Cor. 6:11

The Selfish: turned inward

Oh, what Truth is the Word of God. Read this with an open heart, and peer into the fact that God knew the end from the beginning. Indeed, He saw you afar off, and is reaching out to you, with the gift of repentance.

“For I am not ashamed of the Good News of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has

shown it unto them. For the invisible things of him—his eternal power and Divinity—from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, so that they are without excuse.” Rom. 1:16-20

Clearly all humankind knows there is a God. Look around yourself. The creation speaks boldly: “praise our God the Creator!” The human body, intricate, complicated, dependent on many things within itself, yet working all together; ecosystems, our distance from the sun, the earth being mostly water, as are our bodies; all these things testify and show the invisible qualities of God: His Power and Divinity. The ones who don’t believe in Him are clearly without excuse.

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.” Rom. 1:21-23

In their blatant lack of acknowledging the Creator, they have turned to themselves as a god, thinking themselves to be wise. They have made idols, in the form of man, animals, and other imagined beasts. Look at the many gods of ancient cultures; the God of heaven saw their vainness! He has offered Himself, yet they deny Him. They have become fools.

“Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.” Rom. 1:24,25

God then has let them go according to their wicked ways, because He has given them a free will. They, in turn, have changed God’s truth into a lie, lifting up creation as a god, rather than its Creator, Who is praised forever. In addition they bring dishonor to their own bodies by committing sins with one another.

“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that penalty of their delusion as it must be. “ Rom. 1:26, 27

Because of this, they were turned to horrible forms of lust. The women forsook the ordained order of creation, coming together in sexual sin, rather than becoming one flesh with a husband as God has graciously planned for us. In the same way, the men have rejected the natural use of the woman, and have burned in their sickening lust towards one another. They do those indecent acts which caused Sodom to be thoroughly destroyed from the face of the earth. And the end of this was the consequence of their actions; they have received within their own bodies sickness comparable to the sickness of their lust, according to their delusion, as justice would have it. Sadly, the rise of AIDS and every other sexually transmitted disease, resulting from these practices, is only the fulfillment of this truth.

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” Rom. 1:28-32

Obviously these ones who know God exists, but have consciously rejected, despised, and broken His plan for them, do not want to retain their original knowledge of God. Therefore, God accommodates their free will and gives them up to everything not of Him: every kind of sin imaginable. Even worse, these sinners not only take pleasure in what they do, knowing they deserve death for them, but have pleasure in those that do the same things. This is easily seen in the modern “movements” to get all kinds of sin “accepted” by society: homosexuality, abortion, fornication (sexual sin), pornography, self-indulgence, no discipline of children, etc.

Why? Pride. Loving themselves more than their own Creator. And why? Pride. What is the end? A life void of any real accomplishments, and for what: a series of temporal pleasure, and fun, having at each of its ends: sickness from living in sin, and disappointment, because it has not yet filled the void within.

“For what advantage is it to man, if he shall gain the whole world, and injure his own soul? Or

what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8:36,37

Is there no answer? There *is*.

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Good News', the same shall save it." Mark 8:35

The proud: turned outwards

Not only are there those who take pleasure in themselves alone, but there is a group worse than those: the ones who not only deceive themselves, but others as well.

"Jesus replied: Beware that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name and authority, saying, 'I AM. The time is at hand.' Do not follow them." Luke 21:8

"But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Matt. 15:13,14

How many people exist today saying they are God? Even saying, "I AM"? They blaspheme the Almighty, and risk sure and quick judgement in this life, as well as the next. As the Master told us, **do not follow them.**

We do not originally, within ourselves, possess Truth. We are not God. Many have gone in search of many concoctions of their own minds, rather than embrace their Creator.

"This only have I found: God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes." Ecclesiastes 7:29

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and Yahueh has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53:6

How many cults, religions, and new beliefs are taught on every corner, in new books, and even endorsed by society itself as a whole! Do not be mistaken, when a person consciously decides to reject God, and to live for themselves, they will not find the Truth -- they will create in their mind a reasonable religion to suit their chosen lifestyle, and heap to themselves those who will reinforce that belief in their mind.

"For the time will come, when men will not endure healthy and sound teaching and doctrine; Instead, according to their own diseased lusts, they will accumulate for themselves, teachers and instructors, having itching ears. They will turn away their hearing

from the Truth and turn away unto myths, fables, fiction." 2 Tim. 4:3,4

They will condemn the bearers of Truth as narrow-minded, lacking individuality and creativity, and closed to the new revelations, which they claim to have received! However,

Truth conceived is not Truth received

And even so, *something* received is not necessarily Truth. For we know that many are "receiving" teachings and doctrines today, are claiming them to be the Truth, but we know what they are: **teachings of demons** -- and they will bring swift destruction and eternal death to all those who imbibe them without thought. They might seem "neat" and "good" and even "right" -- but, God isn't found by feelings -- He's found by faith; faith that only He can impart if you believe and ask for it:

"There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof: the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." Rom. 3:28

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he becomes a rewarder of those who diligently seek him." Heb. 11:16

Never let these people convince you otherwise -- there is One Truth, and this Truth is the source of all.

Time for a choice

Perhaps, you are *one* of these people? You don't have to be. You have the choice, to continue on as

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you are now, or to face the situation you are in -- you *can* be free. As Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth, some of those Christians used to be the very sinners he was describing! But they *turned* from their sin, unto God, and unto life, through Christ.

“And such were some of you: but you are washed fully, but you are made holy, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” I Cor. 6:11

I will not condemn you; there is One who judges. I *will* witness to you about the freedom you can have, the peace you can know, and the life you can live, all through Christ. There is a whole other world awaiting you, that dwarves the one you are living in now.

“And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeks and judges. Truly, truly, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.” John 8:50,51

All you must do is believe and receive. Ask for the faith to know that He has given Himself for you, and open your heart to Him.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, to them that believe in his name (As most know Him, Jesus; though, in Hebrew: Yahushua meaning ‘Yahu is Salvation’): Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:12-13

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Rev. 3:20

“While it is said, ‘Today if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the provocation.’“ Heb. 3:15

If you think you know *pleasure and happiness* now, *think again*. If you think you know *truth* now, *think again*. If you think you are *alive* now, *think again*. If you think you know *freedom* now, *think again*. If you long for *lasting contentment, true peace*, hear me now --

“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Rom. 14:17

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, ‘If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’ They answered him, ‘We are Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how do you say, ‘You shall be made free?’” Jesus answered them, ‘Truly, Truly, I say unto you, whosoever

continues in sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abides not in the house for ever: but the Son abides ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.’ John 8:31-36

“And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” John 11:26

You can know it.

As much as this Satan, and his angels, enemies of God and man, continue to create deception, and pass it off as truth, there is One Truth awaiting those, **Who Hear His Voice.**

“Give ear, O heavens, and I will declare; consider, O earth, the words of my mouth. My teaching shall fall like rain, my words descend like dew; like small showers on new grass, like full rain on green grass. I will proclaim the name of Yahueh. Give greatness unto our God! He is the Great Rock, his work is perfect, true, for all his ways are verdicts, just. A God of Truth, never evil, righteous and just is he.” Deut. 32:2-4

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he does judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.” Rev. 19:11-13

“Make them holy through your Truth; your Word is Truth.” John 17:17

“Of his own will begat he (God) us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” James 1:18

“And you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.” John 8:32

“Jesus said to him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no one comes to the Father, but by me.” John 14:6

We are delivered from deception, and set free through the Truth, the Living Word of God!

Modern Deception?

The Word of God cannot go unfulfilled: what God says, is. Satan and his angels only serve to prove the Truth of Yahueh’s Word, by living out in plain view, what our Lord has already declared.

<http://members.nuvox.net/~on.roz/God/truth.html>

VOCATIONS DEPARTMENT

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A PRIEST FOREVER

When saying Mass a few days ago I paused to reflect on a phrase from the psalms in the Communion Antiphon: *The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want*. It reminded me of another psalm which was used in the rite of tonsure: *The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup*. Christ Himself is placed in the hands of priests who thus become *the stewards of the mysteries - of the wonders - of God*.

Next summer some fifty members of Opus Dei will receive Holy Orders. Since 1944 small groups of members of the Work have been ordained, each ordination giving witness to the working of God's grace and to service to the Church. And yet each year some people are surprised. How is it, they ask, that thirty, forty or fifty men whose lives are so rich in achievement and so full of promise, are ready to become priests? I should like today to dwell on this subject - though I run the risk of adding to people's bewilderment.

Why be a priest?

The sacrament of Holy Orders is going to be conferred on this group of members of the Work who have had very substantial experience, perhaps over many years, in medicine, law, engineering, architecture and many other professional activities. They are men whose work would allow them to aspire to more or less prominent positions in society.

They are being ordained to serve. They are not being ordained to give orders or to attract attention, but rather to give themselves to the service of all souls in a divine and continuous silence. When they become priests, they will not allow themselves to yield to the temptation to imitate the occupations of lay people - even though they are well able to do that work because they have been at it until now, and have acquired a lay outlook which they will never lose.

Their competence in the various branches of human knowledge such as history, natural sciences, psychology, law and sociology is a necessary feature of this lay outlook. But it will not lead them to put themselves forward as priest psychologists, priest-biologists or priest-sociologists: they receive the

sacrament of Holy Orders to become nothing other than *priest-priests*, priests through and through.

They probably know more about a wide range of secular, human matters than many lay people. But the moment they are ordained they cheerfully silence this competence and concentrate on fortifying themselves through continuous prayer so as to speak only of God, to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. If I can put it this way, I would say that this is their new professional work. To it they will devote their whole day and find that they still have not enough time to do all that has to be done. They have constantly to study theology; they must give spiritual guidance to very many souls, hear many confessions, preach tirelessly and pray a great deal; their heart must always be focused on the tabernacle, where He who has chosen us to be his own is really present. Their life is a wonderful self-surrender, full of joy, though like everyone they will meet up with difficulties.

As I said, all this may serve to increase people's surprise. Perhaps some may still ask themselves: What is the point of this renunciation of so many good and noble things of the earth? These men could have had a successful professional career. Through their example they could have exerted a Christian influence on society, on cultural, educational, financial and many other aspects of civil life.

Others will remind you that in many places today the idea of the priesthood is very confused. They keep on saying that you must search for the *identity* of the priest and they question the value of giving oneself to God in the priesthood in present-day society. And then others will ask how it is that, at a time when vocations to the priesthood are in short supply, this very vocation should arise among Christians who, thanks to their own efforts, have already found their place in society.

Priests and lay people

I can understand this surprise, but it would be insincere of me to say that I share it. These men become priests of their own free will, because they want to, and this is a very supernatural reason. They know that they are not renouncing anything in the normal sense of the word. Through their vocation to Opus Dei they have been devoted to the service of the Church and of all souls. This full, divine vocation led them to sanctify their work, to sanctify themselves in their work and to seek the sanctification of others in the context of their professional relationships.

The members of Opus Dei whether priests or lay people, are ordinary Christians, and like all Christians, they are addressed by Saint Peter in these words: *You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a*

holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.

As Christian faithful, priests and lay people share one and the same condition, for God our Lord has called us to the fulness of charity which is holiness: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*

There is no such thing as second-class holiness. Either we put up a constant fight to stay in the grace of God and imitate Christ, our Model, or we desert in that divine battle. God invites everyone; each person can become holy in his own state in life. In Opus Dei this passion for holiness, in spite of individual errors and failings, does not vary from priests to lay people; and besides, priests make up a very small part compared with the total number of members.

So if you look at things with the eyes of faith, there is no question of renunciation on entering the priesthood; nor does the priesthood imply a sort of summit of vocation to Opus Dei. Holiness does not depend on your state in life (married or single, widowed or ordained) but on the way you personally respond to the grace you receive. This grace teaches us to put away the works of darkness and put on the armour of light: which is serenity, peace and joyful service, full of sacrifice to all mankind.

The dignity of the priesthood

The priesthood leads one to serve God in a state which, in itself, is no better or worse than any other: it is simply different. But the priestly vocation is invested with a dignity and greatness which has no equal on earth. Saint Catherine of Siena put these words on Jesus' lips: *I do not wish the respect which priests should be given to be in any way diminished; for the reverence and respect which is shown them is not referred to them but to Me, by virtue of the Blood which I have given to them to administer. Were it not for this, you should render them the same reverence as lay people, and no more ... You must not offend them; by offending them you offend Me and not them. Therefore I forbid it and I have laid it down that you shall not touch my Christs.*

Some people keep searching for what they call the identity of the priest. How clearly Saint Catherine expresses it! What is the identity of the priest? That of Christ. All of us Christians can and should be not just other Christs, *alter Christus*, but Christ himself: *ipse*

Christus! But in the priest this happens in a direct way, by virtue of the sacrament.

To accomplish so great a work - the work of redemption - Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the Sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of his minister, 'the same now offering through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the Cross, but especially under the Eucharistic species. The sacrament of Orders, in effect, equips the priest to lend Our Lord his voice, his hands, his whole being. It is Jesus Christ who, in the Holy Mass, through the words of the consecration, changes the substance of the bread and wine into his Body, Soul, Blood and Divinity.

This is the source of the priest's incomparable dignity. It is a greatness which is on loan: it is completely compatible with my own littleness. I pray to God our Lord to give all of us priests the grace to perform holy things in a holy way, to reflect in every aspect of our lives the wonders of the greatness of God. *Those of us who celebrate the mysteries of the Passion of Our Lord must imitate what we perform And then the host will take our place before God because we render ourselves hosts.*

If you ever come across a priest who apparently does not seem to be following the teaching of the Gospel - do not judge him, let God judge him - bear in mind that if he celebrates Mass validly, with the intention of consecrating, Our Lord will still come down into his hands, however unworthy they are. Where could you find greater self-surrender and annihilation? Here it is greater than in Bethlehem or on Calvary. Why? Because Jesus' heart, filled with a desire to redeem, does not want anyone to be able to say that he has not been called. He goes out to meet those who do not seek Him.

That is Love! There is no other explanation for it. When it comes to speaking of Christ's Love, we are lost for words. He has so abased Himself that He accepts everything; He exposes Himself to everything - to sacrilege, to blasphemy and to the cold indifference of so many people - in order to offer even one man the chance of hearing the beating of his Heart in his wounded side.

Here we have the priest's identity: he is a direct and daily instrument of the saving grace which Christ has won for us. If you grasp this, if you meditate on it in the active silence of prayer, how could you ever think of the priesthood in terms of renunciation? It is a gain, an incalculable gain. Our mother Mary, the holiest of creatures - only God is holier - brought Jesus Christ into the world just once; priests bring him on earth, to our soul and body, every day. Christ comes to be our

food, to give us life, to be, even now, a pledge of future life.

The common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood

A priest is no more a man or a Christian than any ordinary lay person. That is why it is so important for a priest to be deeply humble. He must understand that these words of Saint Paul also apply to him in a special way: *What have you that you did not receive? What he has received . . . is God!*

He has received the power to celebrate the Holy Eucharist, the Holy Mass (the principal purpose of priestly ordination) , to forgive sins, to administer the other sacraments and to preach with authority the Word of God, governing the rest of the faithful in those matters which refer to the Kingdom of Heaven.

While it indeed presupposes the sacraments of Christian initiation, the priesthood of priests is nevertheless conferred by its own special sacrament. Through that sacrament priests, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are marked with a special character and are so configured to Christ the Priest that they can act in the person of Christ the Head. That is the way the Church is. It does not depend on man's whim but on the express will of Jesus Christ its founder. Sacrifice and priesthood are so united by God's ordination, that in both laws - the old and the new covenant - both have existed. Since therefore the Catholic Church in the New Testament has received, through the Lord's institution, the visible sacrifice of the Eucharist, we must also hold that she has a new priesthood, visible and external, which has taken the place of the old priesthood.

In those who have been ordained, the ministerial priesthood is added to the common priesthood of all of the faithful. Therefore, although it would be a serious error to argue that a priest is more a member of the faithful than an unordained Christian is, it can, on the other hand, be said that he is more a priest: like all Christians he belongs to the priestly people redeemed by Christ, and in addition to this he is marked with a character of the priestly ministry which differentiates him *essentially and not only in degree* from the common priesthood of the faithful.

I cannot understand why some priests are so eager to be indistinguishable from other Christians, forgetting or neglecting their specific mission in the Church, that for which they have been ordained. They seem to think that Christians want to see the priest as just another man. That is not so. They want to find in the priest those virtues proper to every Christian and, indeed, every honorable man: understanding, justice,

a life of work - priestly work, in this instance - and good manners.

But the faithful also want to be able to recognize clearly the priestly character: they expect the priest to pray, not to refuse to administer the sacraments; they expect him to be open to everyone and not set himself up to take charge of people or become an aggressive leader of human factions, of whatever shade. They expect him to bring love and devotion to the celebration of the Holy Mass, to sit in the confessional, to console the sick and the troubled; to teach sound doctrine to children and adults, to preach the Word of God and no mere human science which - no matter how well he may know it - is not the knowledge that saves and brings eternal life; they expect him to give counsel and be charitable to those in need.

In a word: they ask the priest to learn how not to hamper the presence of Christ in him, especially in those moments when he is offering the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood and when, in God's name, he forgives sins in secret, private sacramental confession. The administration of these two sacraments has so important a part in the priest's mission that everything should hinge on it. Other priestly tasks, such as preaching and giving instruction in the faith, would lack solid foundation if they were not aimed at teaching people to relate to Christ, to meet Him in the loving tribunal of penance and in the unbloody renewal of the Sacrifice of Calvary, the Mass.

Let me dwell just a little longer on the Holy Sacrifice: for if the Mass is, for us, the centre and root of our lives as Christians, it must be so in a special way in the priest's life. A priest who, for no good reason, does not celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the altar every day, would show little love of God. It would be as though he wanted to reproach Christ by stating that he did not share Christ's desire for redemption, that he did not understand his impatience to give Himself,

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defenseless, as food for the soul.

A priest to say Mass

We must remember that all of us priests, saints or sinners, are not ourselves when we celebrate Holy Mass. We are Christ, who renews on the altar his divine sacrifice of Calvary. *In the mystery of the Eucharistic sacrifice, in which priests fulfill their principal function, the work of our redemption is continually carried out. For this reason its daily celebration is earnestly recommended. This celebration is an act of Christ and the Church even if it is impossible for the faithful to be present.*

The Council of Trent teaches that *in the Mass is performed, contained and sacrificed, in an unbloody manner, that same Christ who once and for all offered Himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the Cross . . . thus the Victim is one and the same; and He who is now offered through the ministry of priests is the same as He who offered Himself on the Cross; only the manner of offering is different.*

The fact that the faithful attend or do not attend Holy Mass in no way changes this truth of faith. When I celebrate Mass surrounded by people I am very happy; I don't need to think of myself as president of any kind of assembly. I am, on the one hand, a member of the faithful like the others; but, above all, I am Christ at the Altar! I am renewing in an unbloody manner the divine Sacrifice of Calvary and I am consecrating, *in persona Christi*, in the person of Christ. I really represent Jesus Christ, for I am lending him my body, my voice, my hands and my poor heart, so often stained, which I want Him to purify.

When I celebrate Mass with just one person to serve it, the people are present also. I feel that there, with me, are all Catholics, all believers, and also all those who do not believe. All God's creatures are there - the earth and the sea and the sky, and the animals and plants - the whole of creation giving glory to the Lord.

And especially I will say, using the words of the Second Vatican Council, that *we are most closely united to the worshipping church in heaven as we join with and venerate first of all the memory of the glorious ever Virgin Mary, of Saint Joseph and the blessed apostles and martyrs, and of all the saints.*

I ask all Christians to pray earnestly for us priests that we learn to perform the Holy Sacrifice in a holy way. I ask you to show a deep love for the Holy Mass and in this way to encourage us priests to celebrate it respectfully, with divine and human dignity: looking after the cleanliness of the vestments and other things used for worship, devoutly, without rushing.

Why the hurry? Do people in love hurry when they are saying goodbye? They seem to be going and then they don't go; they turn back once and again; they repeat quite ordinary words as if they had just discovered their meaning ... please don't take exception to my applying to the things of God the example of noble and fine human love. If we love God with our heart of flesh - and we have no other - we will not be in a hurry to finish this meeting, this loving appointment with Him.

Some priests take it all very coolly. They don't mind stringing out the readings, announcements and notices until we are tired of them. But when the main part of the Mass arrives, the Sacrifice proper, they actually rush. This means that the rest of the faithful do not devoutly adore Christ, Priest and Victim; nor do they learn to thank Him, calmly and respectfully, after Mass for his having come among us once again.

In the Holy Mass, all the affections and needs of a Christian's heart find their best channel: through Christ the Mass leads to the Father in the Holy Spirit. The priest should make a special effort to ensure that people know this and put it into practice. No other activity should, normally, take precedence over this task of teaching people to love and venerate the Holy Eucharist.

The priest carries out two acts: the principal one is an action on the true Body of Christ; the secondary one affects the Mystical Body of Christ. The second act or ministry depends on the first, but the reverse is not the case.

Therefore the most important part of the priestly ministry consists in trying to get Catholics to approach the Holy Sacrifice with growing purity, humility and devotion. If a priest strives to do this, he will not be cheated, nor will he defraud the consciences of his fellow Christians.

In the Holy Mass what we do is adore: we fulfill lovingly the first duty of a creature to his Creator: *You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.* Not the cold, external adoration of a servant, but an intimate esteem and attachment that befits the tender love of a son.

In the Holy Mass we find the perfect opportunity to atone for our sins and the sins of all men, so as to be able to say with Saint Paul that we are completing in our flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. No one is an isolated individual in this world; no one can consider himself completely free from blame for the evil that is done on earth, which is the result of original sin and the sum total of many personal sins. Let us love sacrifice; let us seek atonement. How? By uniting ourselves in the Mass to Christ, who is Priest

and Victim. He is always the one who bears the tremendous weight of the infidelities of men - your infidelities and mine.

The Sacrifice of Calvary is an infinite expression of Christ's generosity. It is true that each of us is very much out for himself; but God our Lord does not mind if we lay all our needs before Him at Mass. Who doesn't have things to ask for? Lord, this illness ... Lord, this sorrow ... Lord, that humiliation which I don't seem to be able to bear out of love for You ... We desire the welfare, joy and happiness of the people in our own home; we are saddened by the condition of those who hunger and thirst for bread and for justice, of those who experience the bitterness of loneliness and of those who end their days without an affectionate smile or a helping hand.

But what really makes us suffer, the greatest human failure we want to remedy, is sin, separation from God, the danger that souls may be lost for all eternity. Our overriding desire when we celebrate Mass is the same as Christ's when he offered Himself on Calvary: to bring men to eternal glory in the Love of God.

Let us get used to speaking sincerely to our Lord when he comes down to the altar, an innocent Victim in the hands of the priest. Confidence in the help of God will give us a sensitivity of soul which is expressed in good works: charity, understanding, tender sympathy for those who suffer and for those who pretend to be happy enjoying false and empty joys, which soon turn to sadness.

Finally, we give thanks to God our Lord for the wonderful way He has given Himself up for us. Imagine, the Word made flesh has come to us as our food! ... Inside us, inside our littleness, lies the Creator of heaven and earth! . . . The Virgin Mary was conceived without sin to prepare her to receive Christ in her womb. If our thanksgiving were in proportion to the difference between the gift and our desserts, should we not turn the whole day into a continuous Eucharist, a continuous thanksgiving? Do not leave the church almost immediately after receiving the Sacrament. Surely you have nothing so important on that you cannot give Our Lord ten minutes to say *thanks*. Let's not be mean. Love is repaid with love.

A Priest forever

A priest who says the Mass in this way - adoring, atoning, pleading, giving thanks, identifying himself with Christ and who teaches others to make the Sacrifice of the altar the centre and root of the Christian life really will show the incomparable value of his vocation, the value of that character with which he has been stamped and which he will never lose.

I know that you will understand what I mean when I say that, compared with a priest like that, those who behave as if they wanted to apologize for being ministers of God are nothing less than a failure - a human and Christian failure. It is most unfortunate because it leads them to give up the ministry, to ape lay people and to look for a second job which gradually takes over from the task which is proper to their vocation and their mission. Often when they flee from giving spiritual attention to souls, they tend to replace this with another occupation (moving into those areas which belong to lay people - social action and politics) and we get the phenomenon of *clericalism*, the true priestly mission gone wrong.

I do not wish to conclude on a somber note which might sound pessimistic. The genuine Christian priesthood has not disappeared from God's Church. The teaching which we have received from the divine lips of Jesus has not changed. There are many thousands of priests throughout the world who really do respond to their vocation, quietly, undramatically. They have not fallen into the temptation to throw overboard a treasure of holiness and grace which has existed in the Church from the very beginning.

It warms my heart to think of the quiet human and supernatural dignity of those brothers of mine, scattered throughout the world. It is only right that they should now feel themselves surrounded by the friendship, help and affection of many Christians. And when the moment comes for them to enter God's presence, Jesus will go out to meet them. He will glorify forever those who have acted on earth in his Person and in his name. He will shower them with that grace of which they have been ministers.

Let us return again to those members of Opus Dei who are being ordained next summer. Do please pray for them, so that they will always be faithful, devout, learned, committed and happy priests. Commend them especially to our Lady. Ask her to take special care of those who will spend their lives serving her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Priest.

(by Saint Josemaria Escriva, A homily given on 13 April 1973, Friday in the first week of Passiontide,

www.theworkofgod.org/Library/Sermons/JMScriva/Prst4evr.htm)

ENCLOSED ITEMS

In this *March-April 2007* issue of "**The PILGRIM**" is the new larger **PFMC** donation envelope and the new larger donation coupon for the **PFMC**. Please respond if you are able.

MESSAGE of 2/25/2007 via MARIA PAVLOVIC LUNETTI

Dear children! Open your heart to God's mercy in this Lenten time. The Heavenly Father desires to deliver each of you from the slavery of sin. Therefore, little children, make good use of this time and through meeting with God in confession, leave sin and decide for holiness. Do this out of love for Jesus, who redeemed you all with His blood, that you may be happy and in peace. Do not forget, little children: your freedom is your weakness, therefore follow my messages with seriousness. Thank you for having responded to my call.

MESSAGE of 3/25/2007 via MARIA PAVLOVIC LUNETTI

Dear children! I desire to thank you from my heart for your Lenten renunciations. I desire to inspire you to continue to live fasting with an open heart. By fasting and renunciation, little children, you will be stronger in faith. In God you will find true peace through daily prayer. I am with you and I am not tired. I desire to take you all with me to Heaven, therefore, decide daily for holiness. 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 2/25/2007

OPEN YOUR HEART to GOD'S MERCY

God ceaselessly searches and calls men to His side, so they can live and find the fullness of bliss in Him. His merciful love was manifested when He sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem us and save us by His passion, death and resurrection. **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."** (John 3, 16)

"Open your hearts to the God's mercy in this time of Lent", Virgin Mary is saying to us. Where, if not in the God's mercy, can a man find salvation and hope? We can ask ourselves: why is it so hard to believe in the God's mercy? By believing in the God's mercy, we return to the very roots of sin. The hardest thing for a man is to admit his own sins. When a man does not feel himself a sinner, he will not feel the need to beseech the God's mercy. On the other hand, the world and every single human being wail for mercy, forgiveness and love.

In the depths of the God's heart there is a yearning and a desire to save His own creature from the slavery of sin. Although the awareness of the sin is decreasing, it nevertheless remains a reality which exists and whose consequences are damaging us and our families daily. Most often, a man is haunted by the very thing he denies, by the very thing he is running from. Only if he has enough courage to stand up to the thing which hurts him most, which is most

embarrassing for him – only then does the process of healing and deliverance begin. However, it is also the hardest step for a man. For a drug, gambling or alcohol addict, the hardest thing is to admit his addiction. Only when he admits it, he becomes a winner fighting for his freedom, only then he becomes a free man.

Mother Mary, who invited us to confess more often, in this message invites us also to seek the shelter of the God's mercy in the sacrament of the holy confession, through which God forgives our sins, and also gives us strength to fight and to persist on the path of peace, freedom and conversion.

"Your freedom is your weakness", Virgin Mary is saying to us. The time of the Lent is the time which warns us we did not reach our goal yet. The Lent is telling us we are still in the desert. In this desert, we are not yet safe. We always have the possibility to fall, to lose our freedom or to sell it for a little happiness, pleasure and joy which the sin promises us. God does not want to give us just a little of something, he wants to give us everything, His own self. The freedom which God gives us is a gift, a burden and a responsibility. In such freedom, we are responsible in every moment, and we cannot be released from that responsibility.

On this road of life, we are not alone and deserted, nor are we left to ourselves. We should take sincerely the words of the Heavenly Mother, so we can meet Jesus and walk the path of holiness, peace and freedom.

ANOTHER REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of 2/25/2007

"Dear children! Open your heart to God's mercy in this Lenten time." With a profound mother's love, Our Lady in this first sentence of her message of February 25, 2007, gives us a beautiful spiritual goal to contemplate upon during the Lenten season of 2007.

In order to open one's heart to God's mercy one must first step back from the "rat race" of daily living. Most people are so busy that they never find time to give themselves to God. We must slow down and listen for the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. He speaks to our hearts in the quietness of our existence. The Holy Spirit wishes to sanctify our souls, but will we give Him the chance to do so? Through His sanctifying grace the Holy Spirit can help us to understand that God's mercy can change us. It can take away that anger and bitterness that often causes us to become arrogant, indifferent and complacent.

"The Heavenly Father desires to deliver each of you from the slavery of sin." Through these words of Our Lady in her second sentence of her message of February 25, 2007, she challenges us to be inspired by the presence of the Eternal Father within our lives. Through His paternal love, we are encouraged to change. Sinful activity is rampant in our world with all of its horror. Through their actions many have rejected God and His love. God's mercy can lead us out of sin. However, first we must adjust our attitude and accept Our Lady's call to change.

"Therefore, little children, make good use of this time and through meeting with God in confession, leave sin and decide for holiness." With much hope, may we accept these words of Our Lady in this message of February 25, 2007. Lent is that time of the year when we should challenge ourselves to become more faithful to God. Confession can help us in this process. The Sacrament of Penance is always a spiritual encounter with the love of God. We must examine our consciences and be honest with ourselves regarding the state of our souls. As we confess our sins, proclaim our sorrow, accept our penance and receive absolution, we share in God's love in a very personal and intimate way. God's forgiveness and mercy purifies our soul, and opens the way to holiness. However, this spiritual connection to Our Triune God can only begin when we open our hearts to Him and His mercy.

"Do this out of love for Jesus, who redeemed you all with His blood, that you may be happy and in peace." Are we ready to love Jesus and others in the way that He has loved us? To be successful in this endeavor, we must constantly reflect upon Jesus' Paschal Mystery: His passion, death, and resurrection. In a few weeks the Church will celebrate another Holy Week commemorating those sacred events when Jesus sacrificed Himself to atone for the sins of all humanity. Will we be ready? Unfortunately, some Christians will not really care. Again, this is that special period of the year when we are challenged to spend time with the Lord.

Within your heart, contemplate Jesus' mental anguish as He took upon Himself the horror and slime of all sin during His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Remember the harassment He endured before the Jewish authorities and Pontius Pilate. Beaten by a severe scourging, Jesus embraced a weakened physical state to carry the cross to His place of crucifixion. I wonder are we inspired by Jesus' suffering? Are we grateful for what He has done for us? Being crucified, Jesus' pain increased, but His love flowed through His words as He said, **"Father forgive them, they know not what they do."** (Luke 23:34)

This is our Savior! This is our Lord, who comes to us with His never-ending presence. May we embrace Jesus by attending Holy Mass very regularly. Let us also pray before the Blessed Sacrament believing that through this adoring of our dear Lord that we can spiritually connect with Him. If we give Jesus the chance, He will heal our pain and it is only through Him that we will find lasting happiness and peace.

"Do not forget, little children: your freedom is your weakness, therefore follow my messages with seriousness." Through these words, Our Lady places a special challenge before us. Will we accept the fact that we can create our own problems by a lack of discipline; and by those selfish and indifferent attitudes where we wish to do anything that we please? These types of feelings lead many folks into situations where they engage in acts of immorality; and their sinfulness often destroys their peace while placing their salvation in jeopardy. Through the grace of God we can be forgiven, but we must do our part.

In these monthly messages, Our Lady encourages us to embrace conversion and seek out holiness. Are we listening? Are we willing to change? The time to embrace Our Lady's love is now. If we come to her in a very personal way, through the power of the Holy Spirit, she will lead us to Jesus. For all of us, this is a beautiful blessing. It is an astounding gift from the

Eternal Father. Let us listen. Let us be filled with hope. May we, “follow” these messages of Our Lady “with seriousness.”

I hope you are well. Give my best to all of your families. Look at each day of this Lenten Season as an opportunity to be with Jesus. Embrace His love, carry His cross, be His disciple. May we always challenge ourselves to become holy. In this way, we will have started that ongoing necessary process of preparing ourselves for Jesus. 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, 3/1/2007

REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of 3/25/2007

FASTING AND RENUNCIATION WILL MAKE YOU STRONGER IN FAITH

As a mother, Mary, the Queen of Peace, thanks us for our Lenten renunciations. Mother Mary thanks us because she loves us. Only a heart filled with love can be a grateful heart. We should be thanking her for her encouragement, her call and love, her interceding with her son Jesus for us. She calls us because it is her desire that we continue to live fasting. She speaks to us about it and calls us to fast and make renunciations for ourselves and because of us, for our happiness and joy.

“By fasting and renunciation, little children you will be stronger in faith”, – Heavenly Mother says to us. Fasting and renunciation are necessary in order for us to earn God’s mercy. Our renunciation is like a bowl into which God pours His mercy. Blessed Mother Teresa said: “We need to be emptied before God can fill us”. Fasting and renunciation are our part of the job in faith. Saint Augustine teaches us: “God created us without our aid; but he did not choose to save us without our aid.” In Lent we should practise self-renunciation and do penance as if our salvation depends solely on us, but pray as if our salvation and everything else depends solely on God. Praying without self-renunciation is just like stopping halfway. It is as if you were rowing in a boat tied to the shore. We shall never move until the boat is untied. We cannot empty our body of sins nor eliminate sins from the world we live in. But we can die to sin and then He no longer has authority over us. Renunciation is dying to sin.

When Our Lady speaks to us about renunciation, she does not have in mind the mere physical penance and renunciation, but the spiritual side of it. The mere physical penance and fasting are not enough. They may lead us to arrogance, pharisaism and formalism. They may make us want to display our strength, not to subdue our will to God’s will. Therefore in one of her messages Our Lady says to us: “Little children, fasting has become a custom which no one wants to stop. Fast with the heart.” Fasting and love are indivisible. One cannot fast without love, nor can one love without fasting in its broadest sense. Prayer is also our answer to God’s love. That is why fasting and prayer are inseparable. Fasting without prayer is a mere slimming diet. By fasting without prayer we in fact just revolve around ourselves. Fasting turns all our spiritual forces and powers of the heart, all of our inner being towards God.

Our Lent should not finish with Easter. Setting our mind on fasting and living it means to struggle for freedom. It will not mean much if we renounce some of our bad habits only during the time of Lent, whereas we continue pursuing them afterwards. If this is the case, our renunciation can become self-deceit. One may indulge in arrogance and self-sufficiency and say to oneself: “I am strong, I can do that. “ Lent then becomes just another break of this habit, while there has been no change in the man himself. Fasting and renunciation is not proving your strength, but subduing your will to God’s will. The best and the most fruitful renunciation is denying one’s own self. Even Jesus will say: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself.” (Mark 8: 34).

The Virgin Mary comes and speaks to us not to steal something from us or to deprive us of our joys of life. She comes because she wants us to be happy, normal and free in God. Let us thank Mary from the bottom of our hearts because she has not become weary with us. Let us not become tired of everyday responding to the call of our Heavenly Mother.

Father Ljubo Kurtovic, Medjugorje, 26.3.2007,
<http://medjugorje.hr.nt4.ims.hr/Main.aspx>

ANOTHER REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of 3/25/2007

“Dear children! I desire to thank you from my heart for your Lenten renunciations. I desire to inspire you to continue to live fasting with an open heart. By fasting and renunciation, little children, you will be stronger in faith.” In these first three sentences of Her message of March 25, 2007, Our Lady is thankful

for all of the sacrifices of Her little children during the Lenten season, is encouraging all believers *"to live fasting with an open heart,"* and to realize the positive impact that fasting and renunciation can have for our spiritual journeys: *"you will be stronger in faith."*

As we begin Holy Week, let us look deeply into our souls and contemplate our personal relationship with God. Are we spiritually ready to celebrate our dear Lord's Paschal Mystery? Will we accomplish something special for Jesus during these days? Let us open our hearts to the mystery of our faith. The Son of God came into this world to be its Savior. With a profound act of sacrificial love, Jesus atoned for the sins of all humanity and reconciled man with the eternal Father. God has given us sufficient grace to save our souls, but have we responded to that grace by giving ourselves totally to God?

Since many folks embrace the days of Holy Week as a special opportunity to encounter the immensity of God's love for us, they will become stronger in faith as they reflect upon the Last Supper, and the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. However, where will we find ourselves spiritually in the days, weeks, and months after Holy Week? With the remaining sentence of Her message of March 25, 2007, Our Lady can help us through this dilemma. With her requests, she continues to show us the way to prepare ourselves for Jesus.

"In God you will find true peace through daily prayer." Again, we have been called by Our Lady to consider the importance of daily prayer. Prayer must become a priority in our lives. Praying is an opportunity to spiritually connect ourselves personally with the Eternal Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and Our Lady. When we become devoted to prayer, we begin to understand that God's love is always with us especially when we are carrying Jesus' cross. Personal suffering is life giving. It purifies our own souls while helping Jesus to change and bring hard-hearted souls to Himself. As we become disciples of Jesus, giving ourselves to the Lord's work, Our Lady is with us to help us to accomplish this work. Thus, the fifth sentence of Our Lady's message of March 25, 2007 is very important. *"I am with you and I am not tired."*

During these days, may we accept and embrace the motherly love of Our Lady. She loves all of us, Her little children, as she loves God the Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Saint Joseph, the Apostles, all the angels and saints in heaven, and the holy souls in purgatory. Her love is unconditional. She is challenging us to come to Jesus by giving ourselves totally to Her dear Son. Through human weakness we fail, but our dear

Blessed Mother is always there to help us to start again. Let us embrace Our Lady's way. It leads to Jesus. On the other hand, the way of the world leads to sin with all of its horror. With much faith and enthusiasm, may we reject sin, selfishness, bitterness, and indifference while accepting the unconditional love and mercy of God.

"I desire to take you all with me to Heaven, therefore, decide daily for holiness." For God and Our Lady, the salvation of all souls means everything to them. Do we reflect upon and think about the reality of our personal salvation and the salvation of others? If we do not, the time to start is now. Our Lady's conclusion to this sentence of Her message of March 25, 2007 is most important. Are we willing to make the spiritual effort to, "decide for holiness?" If we are not, we must change and open our hearts to the love of Jesus. If we give Jesus the chance, He will lead us to holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of His dear Mother. Unfortunately, many folks never give themselves to the Lord until they are at "death's door." In prayer, let us offer this intention to our loving God.

I hope you are well. Give my best to all of your families. Have a spiritually filled Holy Week and a glorious Easter. Let us remember that Easter is not one day or even one season. The Resurrection of Jesus gives us the hope to fully believe that we have **"life in His name" (John 20:31)** In prayer, let us always contemplate the first greeting of the Risen Lord to the Apostles, **"Peace be with you." (John 20:19)** As we live each day, let us believe that the Lord is constantly greeting us with the same **"peace be with you."**

May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and 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, 4/1/2007)

SELECTED "NEWS ARTICLES"

Pilgrims from the distant island of Tahiti



Among the pilgrims who came to Medjugorje in the month of March, there was a group from the Pacific island of Tahiti. They brought attention to themselves by their very

pleasant and harmonious singing. This pilgrimage was organized by a deacon who is in charge of the training of catechists in Tahiti.

The journey from Tahiti to Medjugorje was a very expensive one, taking about 30 hours and journeying via San Francisco and Paris, where Father Mattheiu Malonga, an African priest, a Dominican from the Congo, joined them. Father Mattheiu serves in Paris as a catechist for the students, and he has accompanied pilgrimages to Medjugorje for many years. "I am a priest who is very attached to Mary, and when Mary speaks somewhere, I come to be with the Mother. These messages are very good. The message of Medjugorje is as follows: to hold Mary by the hand, to go towards Jesus and, step by step, to reach the Father," he said. (3/27/07)

Archbishop Frane Franić has died



Monsignor Frane Franić, retired Archbishop and Primate of Split-Makarska died on the 17th of March, 2007, in the Clinical Hospital in Split.

As a professor of dogmatic theology he became an active participant in the Second Vatican Council, in addition to his membership of various other official commissions of that Council. He had served as a bishop in difficult historical times. With unwavering determination, he strengthened both fidelity to the Gospel and loyalty to the Holy Father, while at the same time he promoted ecumenism and dialogue in society as a whole.

Monsignor Franić's burial was planned for March 21st in Saint Peter's Pro-cathedral in Split.

Monsignor Frane Franić had visited Medjugorje on several occasions. His statement relating to Medjugorje is widely known: "The Queen of Peace has done more in the 6 years of her apparitions than all the bishops have done in 40 years of pastoral work in our dioceses."

In an interview given to "Kulturni Obzor" in 1999 he said: "Marian shrines are numerous in all catholic countries. The most famous of them, and those most visited today, are Lourdes, Fatima and Medjugorje. After some personal experiences of my own, it was not difficult for me to recognize the presence of Our Lady in Medjugorje, and she is speaking for 18 years now through the visionaries that she has chosen, nor was it difficult for me to recognize the authenticity of these Marian apparitions as a result." (Večernji list, str. 13, br. 250., Zagreb 14. 2. 1999.) (3/18/07)

The annual apparition of our Lady to Mirjana Dragicevic-Soldo on March 18, 2007



The visionary Mirjana Dragicevic-Soldo had daily apparitions from June 24th 1981 to December 25th 1982. During the last daily apparition, Our Lady gave her the 10th secret, and told her that she would appear to her once a year, on the 18th of March. It has been this way through the years.

This year several thousand pilgrims gathered to pray the Rosary at the Cenacolo Community in Medjugorje. The apparition lasted from 14:07 to 14:12 and Our Lady gave the following message:

Dear children! I come to you as a Mother with gifts. I come with love and mercy. Dear children, mine is a big heart. In it, I desire all of your hearts, purified by fasting and prayer. I desire that, through love, our hearts may triumph together. I desire that through that triumph you may see the real Truth, the real Way and the real Life. I desire that you may see my Son. Thank you.

Our Lady blessed all of us and all religious articles. Again She emphasized that it is only Her Motherly blessing and She asked for daily prayers for those whom She said «my Son has chosen and blessed». Mirjana clarified that she thought Our Lady was referring to priests. (3/18/07)

The 14th International Meeting for Guides



The 14th International Meeting for Guides and Leaders of Peace Centres and Medjugorje Prayer, Pilgrim and Charity Groups took place in Medjugorje from the 4th to the 8th of March, 2007.

The theme of this gathering was: "By your perseverance you will save your lives". (Luke 21, 19)

This year, 159 participants from 18 countries were involved in the work of the seminar. They came from Canada, the USA, Ireland, England, Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Italy, Poland, Spain, Slovenia, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. There were three priests among the participants.

The speakers in this year's seminar were Doctor Father Ivan Ivanda from the monastery in Široki

Brijeg and Father Branko Radoš, former parish priest of Medjugorje, who is currently in charge of a Croatian Catholic Mission in Switzerland. Father Ivan Ivanda spoke about the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, while Father Branko Radoš spoke about perseverance in fidelity to Our Lady's message and to her call. The third day of the seminar, led by Father Ljubo Kurtović, was particularly dedicated to prayer and fasting. Every day began in the Yellow Hall with a half hour's Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and concluded in the church with the Evening Prayer programme. In addition to the conferences, there were meetings suited to each relative language grouping, there was an encounter with the Parish Priest Father Ivan Sesar, and there was also the praying of the Rosary on Apparition Hill and the Way of the Cross on Cross Mountain.

The seminar concluded with Holy Mass, which was followed by lunch.

It will be recalled that the First International Meeting for the organizers of pilgrimages, for the leaders of Centres for Peace and of Prayer Groups, was organized in Medjugorje on the occasion of the 13th anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions, on the 22nd and 23rd of June 1994 to be precise. For the following six years these meetings took place in Baška Voda, Tučepi and Neum, but reverted to the Medjugorje venue since 2001. (3/15/07)

Interview: Alfons Sarrach, a Catholic writer and journalist from Germany



Alfons Sarrach was born in what was then the Free State of Danzig in 1927. He grew up in a German-Polish culture. On the 1st of September 1939, he personally witnessed the outbreak of World War II. Ten members of his family were immediately sent to a concentration camp due to the fact that they opposed the National Socialist Regime. Sarrach's own family followed only a few months later. These events naturally had a formative influence on his way of thinking.

In the nineties, "Der prophetische Aufbruch von Medjugorje", ("The prophetic start of Medjugorje") appeared on the market, recognised by a reputable foreign press as one of the most outstanding titles of the century just ending. Under the subsequent title "Medjugorjes Botschaft vom dienenden Gott" ("Medjugorjes Message of the Serving God"), certain characteristic features of a new culture were outlined. Sarrach has become the catalyst for a change of view regarding politics and theology and has paved the

way towards a new image of God. (See: <http://www.sarrach.com>)

In June 2006, Sarrach returned to Medjugorje to thank God, because of his healing from cancer. Lidija Paris interviewed him.

How did you come to learn about Medjugorje?

I visited Medjugorje in the year 1987 as a sceptic. More and more people came to me asking me my opinion of Medjugorje. At that time, I was working on a book about the apostle Thomas, who was a missionary in India. In addition to my study of the gospels at the time, I was also studiously involved with ancient Egypt, Rome and India, and all of that was enough for me. But people repeatedly remarked how shameful it was that I, a catholic journalist, was not sufficiently interested in Medjugorje. My wife advised that I had no other choice but to go there. In 1987, together with our three Indian children, we visited Medjugorje at Christmastime. Initially I spent my time merely observing, but after one week of this something had changed in me. We had been staying in Miletina in the house of a family that arranged a meeting for us with the visionary Marija Pavlović. I had a long conversation with her, and thus the ice was broken. It became obvious to me that Medjugorje was something exceptional, a completely unusual event anticipating the approaching new millennium.

I had always tended to be preoccupied with the future. A few times in my life, I had a kind of intuition for future events. This feeling would not leave me while in Medjugorje, an intuition that Medjugorje was the crossroads for the upcoming third millennium. I was not so much interested in the visionaries themselves, despite my very deep conversation with Marija Pavlović. I rather spoke with other people, with the members of the prayer group for example, in order to figure out what attitude was the Mother of God engendering here. What was most important to me, was the reaction in the souls of those who lived through these unfolding events.

How can you separate this education, emanating from the Mother of God, from the prevailing mentality and the family education imparted in Herzegovina?

It was clear to me that, precisely because of the prevailing values, the Mother of God chose Medjugorje. In my opinion, she found the suitably natural conditions here. I also believe that here, in Herzegovina, the least perverted family consciousness was to be found. Here, she could still build on a healthy nature that was no longer to be found in other areas of Europe. It is often said that grace presupposes nature. I have observed people and

families here, and the relationship between children and their parents and between the parents and the children. It was clear to me that the Mother of God did not choose the destructive western civilization setting. God became man neither in Athens, nor Rome, nor in Alexandria, but in Israel. At that time, the Jews were the only Monotheists in the world. They possessed a unique and truly great religious authority, Temple and Scripture. It was to this untainted, but otherwise apparently insignificant Israel, that Jesus came. He used the prevailing natural conditions to introduce a unique Revelation. This comparison occurred to me forcefully here in Medjugorje. I found a similar atmosphere here to that which prevailed in Israel then. I also noticed that the first Christians, those who knew the message of Jesus, could not remain silent. They had an interior fire which they had to carry to the rest of the world. The very same has happened here in Medjugorje. Those who came to Medjugorje could not be silent either. The departed Bishop of Fulda said once, during a large Medjugorje Conference in the Cathedral of Fulda, in front of approximately 8.000 people: "The followers of Medjugorje are a stiff-necked race!" They have this need to communicate to others what they themselves have experienced here.

What exactly is to be communicated?

In my opinion, it can be summarised quite simply: The world, the way it is today and the way it has been for thousands of years, was governed according to the division of power. There were those who exercised power, and those others who were victims of power. This pattern of thinking is still very deeply rooted in human nature, not only in political life, but also in the family. The fathers have a saying, whereby they claim they are the Patriarchs. This pattern was broken through here and, in my opinion, it was replaced by radically new thinking in terms of serving rather than ruling. When Marija Pavlović told me that the Mother of God was appearing in a grey dress, everything became crystal-clear to me. Grey is the colour of serving.

This was one awareness. The other was the fact that western civilization is wholly influenced by the statement of the famous French philosopher Descartes: *Cogito ergo sum. I think, therefore I am.* But here in Medjugorje, while I was kneeling in front of the church during one particular apparition, it became clear to me that the Mother of God is breaking through this philosophical tenet. *Cogito ergo sum* applies no longer but rather *Amo ergo sum. I love, therefore I am.* Human understanding is a prisoner of space and time. Love breaks through space and time.

While I was with my group on Podbrdo, we stood for a long time before the grey cross of the third day of the apparitions. There symbolically expressed, in my opinion, is the core of the messages... Mary in a grey dress before a grey cross and a grey background... Peace with God and among men. This peace is possible only if you live in the spirit of serving. No one is afraid of the person who is serving. The one who serves does not spread around the panic of subjugating power.

You overcame a serious illness recently?

One year ago I was extremely ill to the point of death. I was bleeding grievously, losing a litre of blood, and I had to be taken urgently to the hospital, where a malicious blood cancer was diagnosed. I wanted to know, how long I had to live, because I wanted to prepare myself... The doctor said six weeks to two months, perhaps even a little longer. He suggested chemotherapy, warning however that it was possible that the body might reject it because it was perhaps too late... after one or two chemotherapy sessions death could ensue! I looked at him and said: "You know, Mr. Professor, I am looking forward to it. The day of my death will be the most beautiful day of my life. Therefore I would like to experience it consciously. Promise me that you will not try to prolong my life in any artificial way. I would like to die in full consciousness." He was surprised. Other doctors and nurses came and said: "We want to be with you when you are dying. We want to see whether you will continue to think in this way right to the end... whether you can persevere with your desire to die this way".

The chemotherapy was duly administered. They told me that every fever attack was potentially dangerous. If it surpassed 38 degrees, I would have to go immediately to the hospital, as I could die within 24 hours! It transpired that I had to be brought very quickly to the hospital twice... On one of those occasions the doctor told me that this was the last minute... I would not survive the night. But after the fifth chemotherapy session I was thoroughly examined, and the doctor informed me that the cancer was gone, although it was still expected to be there! Full remission! While he did not dare to say that I was healed, I was allowed to live a normal life, as if I were completely healthy. I did not know whether I should be happy or sad... The doctor said to me: "Take the chance and write another two books!"

My whole attitude had been based upon my experience of Medjugorje. I have spoken with many people here, and they always emphasized that time and eternity were one. Already today we live in eternity, and we should live as we would if we were

already living in eternity. For me, this is the secret behind my probable or supposed healing.

The day before yesterday I experienced Adoration here. I cried and asked God, "How have I deserved this grace?" Those people praying before the exposed Blessed Sacrament foreshadowed for me the eternal Adoration. It is a piece of heaven on earth. People from all cultures, from all parts of the world, adoring before Holy God... this cannot be as deeply experienced anywhere else in the world... not even in Rome... people so deeply moved that they switch completely off and pray single-mindedly.

These apparitions are different from those in Lourdes, Fatima, La Salette or elsewhere. Why, do you think this is so?

We stand on the threshold of the collapse of western civilization. We observe a totally secular Europe without God and without interrelating with the Christian message. It is dreadful. We have a Christian continent that wants to deny its own roots, and this will precipitate the collapse. It has already begun. The politicians experience increasing difficulties in trying to make people understand that we cannot any longer maintain our social system because of the age profile of the population! In Holland, as in England, when you are over 70, you are denied treatment! An acquaintance of mine in London, 72 years old, had contracted cancer. The doctor told him: "Over 70 we do not give any treatment any more!" This will become the norm. This will become widespread practice simply because they will no longer be able physically to care for the already too numerous old people. On this issue, Medjugorje is a great hope. In Germany, wherever there is a renewal, the roots invariably stretch back to Medjugorje! Therefore one can really speak of the intervention of Heaven, because Medjugorje contributes in one way to the acceleration of the collapse, by announcing something new. Father Kenntenich, a famous Marian prophet from Germany, said once: "If God allows something to break down, it is only in order to build something new". While we experience the collapse of western civilization, we also experience God wanting to make something new, something that will make people happy.

Why is the Church delaying recognition?

We should see this delay in a positive light. In my opinion, those who came to the faith through Medjugorje are tested in this way and are thereby strengthened in the faith. This promotes the maturation process of Medjugorje. Also, a hastily granted recognition could have negative consequences. We have to struggle through. I possess an exchange of letters with Cardinal Ratzinger

concerning Medjugorje. He knows exactly what I myself think about it. He has also read my books. Monsignor Perić has spread wrong information, claiming that the Pope was laughing at Medjugorje. He wasn't laughing but smiling! This can in fact be interpreted positively. If he wanted, he could have said something, but he said nothing. He just smiled. Concerning Medjugorje, Benedict XVI will pursue the same line as John Paul II. (3/10/07)

Statistics for January and February 2007

January 2007:

Holy Communions distributed: 51,000
Concelebrating priests: 803

February 2007:

Holy Communions distributed: 35,000
Concelebrating priests: 693 (3/1/07)

The 8th International Meeting for Married Couples - "Dialog in the Family"



The 8th International Meeting for Married Couples will take place in Medjugorje from October 31 to November 3, 2007. The theme of the seminar is: "Dialog in the Family" (*"Dear children! I beseech you to start changing your life in the family. Let the family be a harmonious flower that I wish to give to Jesus"* - From the message of *May 1st, 1986*) ([Program](#))

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

Lecturer is Jozefina Škarica, MD, born in 1948, married, mother of four, medical doctor. Following the end of her medical studies, she works in Medical centre in Šibenik, Croatia. She specializes in school medicine in 1985. In 1993, late Šibenik monsignor Srećko Badurina establishes a Counseling Centre for the Young, Marriage and Family in Šibenik, and appoints doctor Škarica head of the Counseling Center. In 2004, after two-year training in Zagreb, she earns a diploma of Family Counselor. In the last ten

years, she has been participating in marriage preparation seminars and held numerous lectures and seminars on marriage, family and child-rearing both in Croatia and abroad. (2/21/07)

Members of the Franciscan Youth Fraternity in Medjugorje made their promises



On Sunday, February 18, 2007, during the evening Mass at 6 pm, members of the Franciscan Youth Fraternity from Medjugorje (FRAMA)

celebrated the rite of making their promises. 51 new members were received into the Fraternity, and 34 of them made their first promises “to consecrate themselves during one year to Christ, living his Gospel within the Franciscan Youth Fraternity”. 13 of them renewed their promises for one more year. Young parishioners entered into the church carrying in their hands stones “to build the Church”, saying thus symbolically that every Christian is a living stone to be built into Christ’s building. Their entry into the church was accompanied by the reading of a meditative text. Holy Mass was presided by Father Sretan Ćurčić, provincial and national assistant of the Franciscan Youth Fraternity, and concelebrated by 9 priests.

This celebration was honored by the presence of the members of the Franciscan Youth Fraternities and their spiritual assistants from Mostar, Humac, Tomislavgrad, Posušje, Čerin, Čitluk, Gradnici, Široki Brijeg Roško Polje and Kočerin. After the liturgical celebration, there was a fraternal meeting and sharing in the parish hall.

This Holy Mass and the rite of reception into the Fraternity was for them an encouragement to persevere in following Jesus Christ according to the example of Saint Francis. (2/20/07)

The 18th International Youth Festival - Mladifest 18 – Medjugorje 2007



The 18th International Youth Festival - Mladifest 18 – will take place in Medjugorje from August 1st to August 6th, 2007. The theme of the encounter is, “**Just as I have**

loved you, you also should love one another” (Jn 13:34) (“Dear children! Today I call you to love. Little children, love each other with

God’s love...The risen Jesus will be with you and you will be His witnesses.” - Message of March 25, 2005) (Program. See also: [International meetings](#))

This theme is in harmony with the theme of the 22nd World Youth Day, which is taking place on April 1st (Palm Sunday) in local Churches. Holy Father is addressing his word to young people:

“Everybody feels the longing to love and to be loved. Yet, how difficult it is to love, and how many mistakes and failures have to be reckoned with in love! There are those who even come to doubt that love is possible. But if emotional delusions or lack of affection can cause us to think that love is utopian, an impossible dream, should we then become resigned? No! Love is possible, and the purpose of my message is to help reawaken in each one of you - you who are the future and hope of humanity-, trust in a love that is true, faithful and strong; a love that generates peace and joy; a love that binds people together and allows them to feel free in respect for one another. Let us now go on a journey together in three stages, as we embark on a “discovery” of love.” (2/19/07)

Monsignor Karlic, former president of the Episcopal Conference of Argentina, visited Medjugorje



Archbishop Estanislao Esteban Karlic, Archbishop Emeritus of Paraná, Argentina, and former president of the Episcopal Conference of Argentina, visited Medjugorje on February 13 and

14, 2007. Monsignor Karlic, who received his Episcopal consecration 30 years ago, is now member of the Commission of Faith and Culture in the EC of Argentina. He stayed in the parish house, where the parish priest Doctor Father Ivan Sesar informed him about the pastoral work with the pilgrims and the life of the parish. Monsignor Karlic expressed his admiration about the intensity of the sacramental life here. (2/14/07)

Holy Mass in memory of the victims of the past wars



Every year on the feast of Blessed Cardinal Stepinac, Medjugorje Parish celebrates Holy Mass in memory of all the victims from this parish who fell during World Wars

I and II, or during the recent war in defence of the country, and also in memory of all those who gave

their lives for the faith and for the homeland. The parish remembers especially the Franciscans who were either born in Medjugorje or who had worked in the parish, and who - either during or immediately after World War II - perished at the hands of the partisans and the communists. Out of the 66 Franciscans from Herzegovina who perished in this period, ten of them were either born in the parish, or they had served in it. Their names are Father Jozo Bencun, Father Marko Dragičević, Father Mariofil Sivrić, Father Grgo Vasilj, Father Jenko Vasilj, Father Križan Galić, Father Bono Jelavić, Father Paško Martinac, Father Anđelko Nuić and Father Bernardin Smoljan.

This year, Holy Mass was presided by Father Svetozar Kraljević. (2/12/07)

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. (<http://212.39.96.6/sveeng%2007.htm> and [registration seminar.marija@medjugorje.hr](http://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.

THE ISLAND

A voyaging ship was wrecked during a storm at sea and only two of the men on it were able to

swim to a small, desert like island. The two survivors, not knowing what else to do, agree that they had no other recourse but to pray to God.

However, to find out whose prayer was more powerful, they agreed to divide the territory between them and stay on opposite sides of the island.

The first thing they prayed for was food. The next morning, the first man saw a fruit-bearing tree on his side of the land, and he was able to eat its fruit. The other man's parcel of land remained barren.

After a week, the first man was lonely and he decided to pray for a wife. The next day, another ship was wrecked, and the only survivor was a woman who swam to his side of the land. On the other side of the island, there was nothing.

Soon the first man prayed for a house, clothes, more food. The next day, like magic, all of these were given to him. However, the second man still had nothing.

Finally, the first man prayed for a ship, so that he and his wife could leave the island. In the morning, he found a ship docked at his side of the island.

The first man boarded the ship with his wife and decided to leave the second man on the island. He considered the other man unworthy to receive God's blessings, since none of his prayers had been answered.

As the ship was about to leave, the first man heard a voice from heaven booming, "Why are you leaving your companion on the island?"

"My blessings are mine alone, since I was the one who prayed for them," the first man answered. "His prayers were all unanswered and so he does not deserve anything."

"You are mistaken!" the voice rebuked him. "He had only one prayer, which I answered. If not for that, you would not have received any of my blessings."

"Tell me," the first man asked the voice, "what did he pray for that I should owe him anything?"

"He prayed that all your prayers be answered."

For all we know, our blessings are not the fruits of our prayers alone, but those of another praying for us.

When Jesus died on the cross he was thinking of you!

(from Bill Winkelmann, billw@winkelmann.org)

THE ENEMY: EVIL SPIRITS

"For our wrestling is not against (toward, moving forward to) blood and flesh, but against

the principalities, against the authorities, against the world's rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spirits of evil in the heavenlies (above the sky). Because of this take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having worked out all things, to stand. Take the Spirit, which is the voice of God, as your sword, by means of all prayers and supplications, praying in all due times in spirit.” Eph. 6:12,17b

Here we are told, we **do not battle against blood and flesh** (people, animals, etc.), but **against the evil spirits** of this age! We pray (war, wrestle, battle) *against evil powers* in the heavens! Notice the word translated “against” can also mean, “toward” or “forward to” -- this shows the nature of the church of God: **we should be actively tearing down the strongholds of the enemy!**

This also means, the idea of “**praying against someone**” is **completely forbidden**, and in fact, <http://members.nuvox.net/~on.roz/God/warfare/enemies-allies.html> is a form of magic or sorcery, which is also most definitely *forbidden by God*.

(<http://members.nuvox.net/~on.roz/God/warfare/enemies-allies.html>)

SILENT PRAYER OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Silent Prayer - O Lord, what evil have we not done? Or if there is evil that we have not done, what evil is there that we have not spoken? If there is any that we have not spoken, what evil is there that we have not thought to do? But you, O Lord, are good. You are merciful. You saw how deep we were sunk in death, and it was your power that drained dry the well of corruption in the depths of our hearts. All that You have asked of us was to deny our own wills and accept yours. Forgive us for every failure to do so and help us to follow You in every way and always, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

(Adapted from Augustine's Confessions, IX, x <http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/topic/spiritualwarfare.html>)

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

It is known that we are not alone, and that the enemy constantly seeks to destroy God's kingdom, tearing it up and down, while we seek to be become edified and built up as a Body of Christ. Satan prowls around

looking to destroy not only us individually, but the whole church of God!

Be sober and self-controlled. Be watchful. Your adversary the devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹Withstand him steadfast in your faith, knowing that your brothers who are in the world are undergoing the same sufferings (I Pet. 5:8, 9).

Even more, the devil is successfully robbing the Church of God on earth of the use of its sole offensive weapon. Knowing that the subject in question is rejected in over half of the Body of Christ today, **we must look in the Bible for the real answers, receive authority from the Father, watch the Messiah for direction, and be led by God's Spirit**, that we may--as Yahueh's faithful warriors--go forth to take new ground for His Kingdom, tearing down the kingdom of Satan and his demons, and releasing his captives

How do we effectively nullify the devil's work, and defend ourselves from him, that we may be *edified* and *built-up* by the Spirit, both individually and as the Body of Christ?

(<http://members.nuvox.net/~on.roz/God/warfare/enemies-allies.html>)

DIRECTING OFFENSIVE PRAYER AGAINST EVIL SPIRITS

How can we direct our attacks then, towards these evil spirits in the heavenlies?

Pray in the Spirit against **the evil spirits over your city and nation**. Just as God directs His angels over His cities, so does Satan place his angels over his cities and nations. If you pray in the Spirit against these evil spirits, for them to be dethroned as they legally must obey, you will begin to notice a difference in the “spiritual climate” and the response to the Good News preached within your boundaries.

“Then he continued, ‘Do not be afraid, Dan.. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.’ So he said, ‘Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come.’” Dan. 10:12,13,20

“For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan stopped us.” I Thess. 2:18

“Now I exhort you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in the prayers on behalf of me, to God. That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.” Rom. 15:30-32

“Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ‘All this I will give you,’ he said, ‘if you will bow down and worship me.’” Matt. 4:8,9

Clearly the devil has authority over many kingdoms and cities. However, because Jesus died and rose again, He has the authority and likewise has freely shared it with us.

Pray in the Spirit against **the evil spirits behind the demonic doctrines, cults, and false religions** which surround you; especially before witnessing to someone involved in one of them. Through prayer in the Spirit, we can revoke their authority over the deceived people, and allow the Light of Christ to shine on them.

“Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, ‘These men are servants of the Most High God, who show us way to salvation.’ She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!’ At that moment the spirit left her.” Acts 16:16-18

“For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: ‘He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them.’” John 12:39,40

“As it is written: ‘God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day.’” Rom. 11:8

“But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in

Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” II Cor. 3:14-17

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Good News of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” II Cor. 4:4

<http://members.nuvox.net/~on.roz/God/warfare/enemies-allies.html>

THE ALLY: SAINTS

We do *not* wrestle against *humans*, but *evil spirits* -- never pray *against* people! **Always pray for people!** Who then, in particular, should we be praying for?

Directing defensive prayer for humans

Pray in the Spirit for **leaders of nations, all those in authority, and all people** for their salvation and a full knowledge of the truth. This is what the Body of Christ needs to be doing: **praying for the lost**, so that they can share the joy we know, of knowing God through Christ.

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all human beings—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” 1 Tim. 2:1-4

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Beg the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’” Matt. 9:36-38

Pray in the Spirit for all the saints of God: all of the believers in Christ around the world; the ones who have been begotten by the Holy Spirit, into the family of God.

“With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.” Eph. 6:18

Pray in the Spirit for the pastor and deacons of your church.

“Paul, and Silas, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thess. which is in God the Father and in

the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ... Brethren, pray for us.” I Thess. 5:1,25

Pray in the Spirit for the apostles and evangelists, and all the ones traveling in the ministry.

“Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.” Heb. 13:18

“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.” 2 Thess. 3:1,2

“Now I exhort you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in the prayers on behalf of me, to God. That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.” Rom. 15:30-32

“As you also join in helping us by your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.” II Cor. 1:11

“Devote yourselves to the prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should.” Col. 4:2-4

Pray in the Spirit for your congregation, if you are a minister; and if you are a member of that congregation, pray for the others in it to be filled with the knowledge of God’s will.

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Col. 1:9-12

“Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings, always struggling on behalf of you in the prayers, that you may stand full-grown and being complete in all will of God.” Col. 4:12

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” James 5:16

Pray in the Spirit for the ones whom you know are sinning.

“If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life.” I John 5:16

Pray in the Spirit for your enemies: this very act *shows* our place as sons and daughters of God, because our love is unconditional just as His is.

“But I say unto you, ‘Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.’” Matt. 5:44,45

Pray in the Spirit for the peace of Jerusalem, that it may be a continuing example (as it was at times during the Old Covenant) of how a city of God should exist. This also extends to the new Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all, above.

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: ‘they shall prosper that love you. Peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces.’” Psa. 122:6,7

“But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.” Galatians 4:26

It is not enough to simply *know* this [truth!](#)

We must *put this into practice!*

We must pray in spirit in every due season, to destroy the enemy and take back his stolen goods.

We must pray in other tongues, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, whenever we can!

Saints of the Most High: put on the whole armor of God --the Lord Jesus Christ-- and wage warfare, against the devil, and his angels, with the Holy Spirit of Yahueh!

<http://members.nuvox.net/~on.roz/God/warfare/enemies-allies.html>

IN MEMORIAM

Please pray for the repose of the soul of:

Therese (Terry) McElroy, 3/28/07, pilgrim to Lourdes in August, 2005.

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**. To facilitate this, we need those death notices or prayer cards.

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

Irene Atwell reports that the “ACCEPTANCE” Seminars / Workshops held in the Upper Room of Epiphany House of the **PFMC** were a tremendous spiritual success. We have heard that those who attended received a new outlook on “SELF-ACCEPTANCE” and “ACCEPTANCE” of others in their lives.

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 (Kephaz / 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 have been encouraged to bring our expertise into cooperation with other ministries and to offer team based events in the future. We will work with Roman Catholic and other Catholic ministries including Core Groups of the Charismatic Renewal in the Greater Delaware Valley to see if there are enough leaders and volunteers to offer team based events in the future. Unless there are leaders and volunteers we can not continue these events.
- 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. There are efforts being made at this time to place the property on the market in *May 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 ceased paper delivery after the *FEBRUARY 2007* issue.

We continue to ask for your donations to keep the **PFMC** operations going for at least the next seven 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 the **Werner** 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 and healing 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 ever 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 / healing 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

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.

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,. for further details: e-mail: erm@mhonline.net or call **518-943-5745**

POPE BENEDICT XVI PRAYER INTENTIONS for MARCH 2007

Pope Benedict's general prayer intention for the month of **March 2007** is: "That the Word of God

may be ever more listened to, contemplated, loved, and lived."

His mission intention for the month of **March 2007** is: "That the training of catechists and lay people may be the constant concern of those responsible for the young Churches."

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

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.

PICTURE ON BACK PAGE

This picture comes from the web page of the **Byzantine Church of the Epiphany** and is titled: **HOLY PROTECTION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD.**

We thought it was fitting for the theme: **Mary, Our Lady of Spiritual Warfare.**

(<http://www.byzantines.net/epiphany/islam.htm>)

CALENDARS:

In *April*, the Church celebrates Solemnities of **EASTER SUNDAY (8)**, and **DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY (15)**, the Feast of **SAINT MARK, EVANGELIST (25)**, the Optional Memorials of *Saints Anselm (21), Adalbert (23), George, Martyr (23), Fidelis of Sigmaringen (24), Peter Chanel (28), Louis Mary de Monfort (28), and Pius V, Pope (30)*. The **EASTER TRIDUUM** is Holy Thursday (5), Good Friday (6) and Holy Saturday (7). The **DIVINE MERCY NOVENA** starts on Good Friday (6). Church calendars recognize **World Day of Prayer for Vocations (29)**. **Happy Birthday Kurt (5) and Adoption Day (29)**.

In *May*, the Church celebrates the Solemnities of **ASCENSION OF THE LORD (17)** and **PENTECOST (27)**, the Feasts of **SAINTS PHILIP AND JAMES (3)**, and **MATTHIAS, APOSTLE (14)**, the Memorials of the *Visitation (31)* and *Saints Athanasius (2), Philip Neri (26)* and the Optional Memorials of *Saints Joseph the Worker (1), Nereus (12), Achilles (12), Pancras (12), Isidore the Farmer (15), Pope John I (18), Christopher Magallanes and Companions (21), Rita of Cascia (22), Bede the Venerable (25), Pope Gregory VII (25), Mary Magdalene de Pazzi (25), and Blessed Damien Joseph De Vuester of Molokai (10)*. Most Church calendars recognize **Mother's Day (13)**, and **Memorial Day (observed) (28)**. **Happy Birthday Katherine (15)**.

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 APRIL 2007

Pope Benedict's general prayer intention for the month of *April 2007* is: "That guided by the Holy Spirit, each Christian may respond enthusiastically and faithfully to the universal call to holiness."

His mission intention for the month of *April 2007* is: "That the number of priestly and religious vocations may grow to meet the needs in North American and countries of the Pacific Ocean."

<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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**PRIORITY DATED
RELIGIOUS MATERIAL
Mailed Tuesday, 4/10/2007**

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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!

