



# THE SPIRIT OF MEDJUGORJE

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SUBSCRIPTION RATE - FREE WILL OFFERING - PLEASE SEE PAGE 8

*If this is the first time you have received this newsletter, and you would like a "Beginner's Guide," please contact us for one.*



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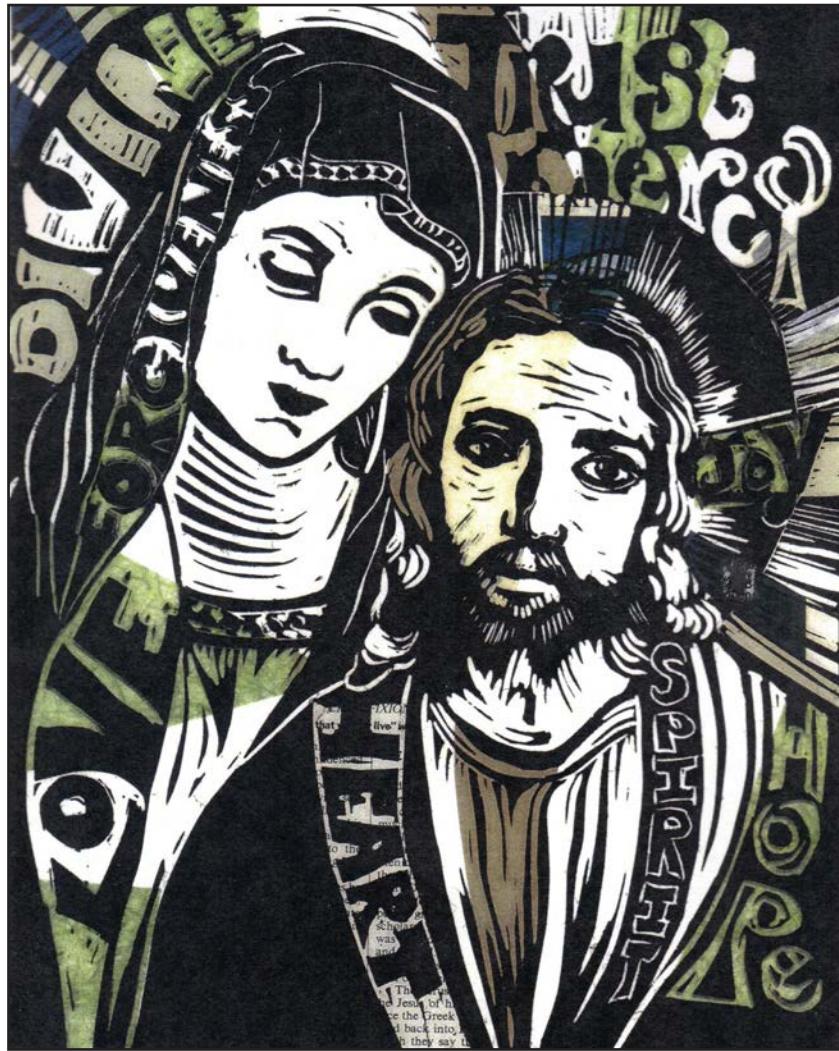
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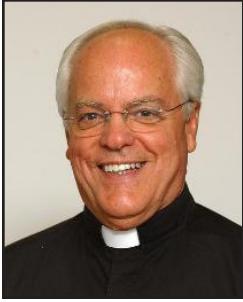
## CURRENT MONTHLY MESSAGE OF JANUARY 25, 2018

ON THE 25TH DAY OF EACH MONTH, THE BLESSED VIRGIN GIVES A MESSAGE TO THE VISIONARY, MARIJA, THAT IS TO BE GIVEN TO THE WORLD.



"Dear children! May this time be for you a time of prayer, so that the Holy Spirit, through prayer, may descend upon you and give you conversion. Open your hearts and read the Sacred Scripture, that through the testimonies you also may be closer to God. Above everything, little children, seek God and the things of God and leave earthly ones to the earth, because Satan is attracting you to the dust and sin. You are called to holiness and created for Heaven; therefore, seek Heaven and the things of Heaven. Thank you for having responded to my call."

This year Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day fall on the same day. This has only happened 16 times since 1584, the last time being in 1956. We thank subscriber Debi Byham for the original Block Print/Mixed Media Collage above (see our September 2017 issue for Debi's story). She titled the artwork "Refuge." She said it depicts Jesus as the source of Divine Mercy, and Mary, our Mother, who lovingly leads us to Her Son, our Refuge in and during the storms in our lives.



Fr. Bill Kiel

## Confession Brings Peace to Your Heart

By Fr. Bill Kiel

This year, Lent begins February 14, Valentine's Day. Love is common to these two celebrations. Valentine's Day is more of an emotional kind of love with beautiful cards, gifts and dinners—shared with those in our lives to whom we feel emotionally attached, such as, spouses, parents, grandparents and special friends.

Lent is a season reminding us of God's love for us as He gave His only Son to die for our redemption. No greater love has one than this. Do we appreciate the love and sacrifice given to us? Do we live that gratitude for God's act of love and the death of Jesus?

One of the main messages asks us to participate in the Sacrament of Confession at least once a month. All of us are sinners—no one is without sin—and in our sinfulness, we distance ourselves from God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Confession offers the way "...to be free of the dirtiness of the past and to begin to live anew and differently. Along with confession of sins renounce everything that has distanced you from my Son and that has made your life empty and unsuccessful." (5/2/11) When we go to Confession, we receive many graces that help us to live our lives according to the will of God: "Open yourselves to Holy Confession so that each of you may accept my call with the whole heart. I am with you and I protect you from the ruin of sin, but you must open yourselves to the way of conversion and holiness, that your heart may burn out of love for God. Give Him time and He will give Himself to you and thus, in the will of God you will discover the love and joy of living." (11/25/12)



Confessionals in Medjugorje

Often we live our lives in arrogance, thinking we are not very sinful people. When we do a sincere examination of conscience, we realize what we have done against God. "I come to you today to lead you on the way to humility and meekness...confession." (7/2/07) "I call you to complete admission and confession of sins, to purification. An impure heart cannot be in my Son... cannot give the fruit of love and unity... cannot do correct and just things." (7/2/11)

When a Mass for healing is celebrated, a brief examination of conscience is a part of the penitential rite, which facilitates

an awareness of our sinfulness and begins the most important of healings—a spiritual healing. It also makes us aware of our need for the Sacrament of Confession, especially for serious sins. Our brokenness and sinfulness can only be healed through coming before God and sincerely asking for His forgiveness and the grace to resist sin in the future. God's love, through the death of Jesus,

brings us spiritual healing and great inner peace. Many times, individuals share with me the great peace they receive through God's forgiveness and the Sacrament of Confession. "Jesus desires to fill your hearts with peace and joy. ...I invite you to confession so Jesus may be your truth and peace." (1/25/95)

Let us all make the effort to participate in Confession during this upcoming Lenten season and continue with monthly Confession throughout our spiritual life.

Mary, Queen of peace, pray for us.

*Editor's note: Fr. Kiel will be the spiritual director for a pilgrimage to Medjugorje June 10 - 19, 2018. Contact Dennis Todaro at 724-837-7434 for more information.*

## A Map that Will Lead Us on a Path to Love

As I sat in Adoration praying for inspiration for this issue, what came to me were the words "the five stones." Perfect!

With Lent starting this month, what a great time for people to start living the five stones, if they are not already doing that.

Visionary Mirjana Soldo dedicated a chapter in her book *My Heart Will Triumph* to the five stones. I found it interesting that it is Chapter 33. I don't know if that was purposeful or not.

Mirjana wrote, "As our teacher in 'the school of love,' the Blessed Mother gives us a curriculum through her messages. Her 'lessons' aim to help us come to know God's

love. These include the 'five stones' identified by Fr. Jozo: prayer, fasting, Holy Mass, confession, and the Bible."

"Our Lady doesn't demand that we embrace these things. Instead, she encourages us, and she presents a map that will lead us on a path to love. Through her messages, she reminds us that the means for living Heaven on Earth – and after Earth – are at our fingertips, available freely to everyone."

We hope that you find this issue helpful. May you have a very blessed Lent.

*Editor's note: We still have some copies of Mirjana's book available free of charge to those who cannot afford it and to priests and religious.*

Our thanks to Sue Taccone, Joanne Warren, Marge Burchard, Chris Falk, Elaine Brady, Joann Collins, Kathy Wayman, Cindy Bielanin, Peggy Chludzinski, Nancy Dombrowski, Irene and Dan Zuba, Diana Englund, Barb Sirianni, Estrella Igras, Louise Lotze, Georgia Chludzinski, and those who want to remain anonymous for their help with the January mailing. We thank Mike Golovich and Susannah Klins for their photos. We thank Anita Cugini for making sacrifice beads. We also thank our proofreader, Pat Berrier, our webmaster, Jason Klins, and our prayer group administrator, Patti Millar.

As of January 25, 2018, the number of Masses reported for Our Lady's intentions was 22,988.

### Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for February

Say "No" to Corruption:  
That those who have material, political or spiritual power may resist any lure of corruption.



# I'm Here Waiting For You Every Day

By Jane Monica Spurrier

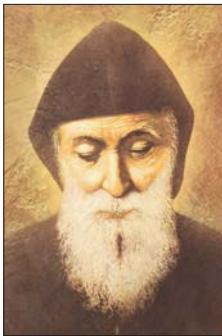
In 1987, on my third trip to Medjugorje, I purchased a book called *Modern Saints* by Ann Ball, and therein was a story about St. Charbel. I loved him instantly and discovered, lo and behold, he was canonized on my birthday, October 9th.

I lived in New York City at the time, and my church was Notre Dame on the upper west side by Columbia University. Daily Mass was said in the grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes each day at 8 A.M. One particular Saturday, I woke up late, and was so hungry I ate my oatmeal....but didn't leave myself enough time to fast before Communion. I kept praying, "Oh Jesus, what miracle could allow me to receive You?" I knew I needed one hour of fast time. This kept on, and when the Consecration occurred, I did not have the required one hour to receive. During this time, a rather odd looking old man entered the side door. He was dressed like a monk, but didn't look like our Franciscans. I was rather annoyed by his appearance, since I thought he was some psychotic New Yorker.

After Mass ended, I stayed in the grotto to pray. I noticed to my right I could see into the sacristy and there was the priest who just said Mass changing out of his vestments and the "odd" looking monk changing into vestments. The little monk was coming out to say Mass! We never have a second daily Mass, but this visitor was going to say one, and this would give me the chance to receiving Our Lord! I was overjoyed.

During the Mass, the monk was praying in a language I didn't understand. It wasn't Latin, because I know Latin, but I couldn't decipher what language it was. I was the only one there, and during the Consecration, the monk looked at me and his eyes said, "Do you want to receive?" I eagerly nodded back "Yes!" We both could understand each other without saying a word.

When Mass was over, I went in to thank the pastor (the first priest who said Mass and functioned as the altar server for the monk). I said, "Father, you don't know what a great



St. Charbel

miracle this was, that I got to receive Communion!" The monk smiled with a look of abundant joy, happiness and humor – the look of someone who laughs a lot and is very happy. The pastor didn't seem to get my point.

The next day I went back again. I saw the pastor and couldn't stop telling him what a great miracle it was for me. Then I said to him, "Father, by the way, who was that priest?" "I don't know," he replied, "I never saw him before." I couldn't believe my ears! What priest would allow another one to say Mass without knowing who he was?

Several months went by. I opened my book of *Modern Saints* again. I turned to St. Charbel and honestly, almost had a heart attack when I saw his picture. HE WAS THE MONK!!! He had appeared to say the Mass for me. Can you imagine? I later found out he has appeared numerous times since his death. I was glad I didn't know at the time who he was or I would have had a stroke. St. Charbel had a great devotion to Mass and the Blessed Sacrament.

Anyway, I haven't seen him since, but I know there is a picture of him in Charlie's store in Medjugorje. I've asked those brothers to sell me the picture, but they declined because it was a gift given to them. I thought the miracle of St. Charbel was so awesome, and then today a voice inside of me said, "But I'm there waiting for you in the Eucharist every day, to show you how much I love you. I sent Charbel so he could carry Me to you...that's how much I wanted to receive you, too."

Jesus waits for us every day in the Mass. He performed the greatest miracle on earth when He created the Eucharist. A small piece of bread, blessed, transformed into HIS presence, waiting for us. The graces we receive at Mass are incalculable. Don't miss this opportunity to meet Jesus in person...

*Editor's note: This story is a reprint from our October 2003 issue. Jane told me her story while we were on a pilgrimage to Medjugorje in 2002, so I asked her to write her story for us. I was excited when my granddaughter picked St. Charbel as our patron saint this year and wanted to share this beautiful story again.*

## Advice from an Exorcist

By June Klins

Recently I was watching the "Fruit of Medjugorje" on Mary TV ([www.marytv.tv](http://www.marytv.tv)), which I highly recommend, not only to lift your spirits, but for suggestions to help in living the messages. Episodes #268 and #271 were very good testimonies by priests. What I was surprised at in both testimonies was that both priests admitted to a struggle with fasting. That took a great amount of humility for them to admit this, knowing they were being recorded. I imagine a lot of people watching felt a sense of relief knowing they are not alone in this struggle, and that even holy priests have trouble with it.

One of the priests, who is the exorcist for his diocese, said that he used to smoke. He said that he liked smoking and did not want to stop, so he asked for the grace "to want to want" to stop smoking, and his prayer was answered (I think he said it was answered quickly also). So he said that

this is what he needs to do regarding fasting as well – to ask for the grace "to want to want" to fast.

My hope is that this helps someone, because fasting is difficult, but Our Lady needs our fasting to help us. It is for our own good. When we fast, we help Our Lady, we help ourselves, we help others, and we please Our Lord. It is a win-win-win-win situation.

So if you struggle with fasting, ask for the grace "to want to want" to fast. And as one of our subscribers once suggested – after swallowing each bite of bread, pray "Jesus and Mary, I love you. Save souls," or some other similar prayer to keep yourself focused on why you are doing this.

*Editor's note: We have a new supply of St. Therese sacrifice beads, which can be a help for fasting or sacrificing during Lent. (See our February 2014 issue for the explanation.) Please contact June at [jklins1981@verizon.net](mailto:jklins1981@verizon.net) if interested. They are free.*

## Revisiting the “Five Stones”

The following is an excerpt from a homily by Fr. Benny McHale in St. James Church in Medjugorje on 10/24/13. We thank Cathy Nolan of MaryTV.tv for transcribing it. To hear the entire homily, go to English homilies on [www.marytv.tv](http://www.marytv.tv).

I must say I am often disappointed when people come here and ignore the messages. Some people don't even know the messages. People come here and they don't live the messages. Then they wonder why the Church is not being renewed. Look, Our Lady brought you all here for a purpose, to renew your church at home.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the messages this morning, because for some people, I'm not saying they shouldn't come here, but it's awfully important that you hear what is being said in the messages and go out and live them. If you don't, it's like someone buying a cookbook, and instead of making the recipe, they buy another cookbook with the same recipes in it. The old Chinese proverb says, "What you hear, you tend to forget. What you see, you remember. What you do, you understand." So it is only when you do the messages, when you live them, you understand them. You could read them to the end of your life, and still not understand; but start doing them and they become alive.

Try to remember that Medjugorje is not a place. Medjugorje is a spirituality – because wherever the visionaries are, Our Lady appears to them. It is centered here in Medjugorje like the Catholic Church is centered in Rome. But Rome isn't the Catholic Church. It is where it is centered. And Medjugorje is the center. And you know the real center of Medjugorje is your heart. Until your heart becomes infused with the messages, somehow we turn Medjugorje into a place of pilgrimage but not something that makes us vitally alive.

So I would ask you before you go home, would you all buy a copy of the messages? There are lots of books in the book stalls. And read them. Read one every day, and ask the Lord, "Lord, would you make that message alive in me?"

Can I suggest a few ways you might live the five stones She gave us?

First is **fasting**. That is probably the most difficult one, because in the western world we live in, we are probably too well fed. But do you ever feel that life is going very quickly? Do you want to slow it down? Then start fasting. Just start fasting and you will see how long the day is! You will wonder when the next meal ever comes. You'll also lose a lot of weight, which in our world today can be very helpful. But seriously, when we fast, as you heard Paul say in that first reading, "Put your bodies at the service of righteousness for your sanctification."

Fasting empties us of our ego, and makes room for God – not just fasting from food. Not everybody is able to do that, but you do what you can. Often fast from television because we waste a lot of time watching empty programs. I think Groucho Marx once called television "chewing gum for the eyes." You watch the thing and then you yawn and go off to

bed, and it does you no good. Imagine if we spent that time in prayer, if we spent that time in opening our hearts to the true love of God.

The second thing is the **Bible**. She asks us to read a little bit of the Scriptures every day. And again we have that message in today's Psalm, "Happy the man whose delight is the law of the Lord." We should read a bit of Scripture every day. Then we wouldn't be embarrassed when a Jehovah's Witness or a Mormon knocks at our door and starts quoting Scripture. We feel so inadequate. As Catholics, I am afraid we have fallen down on Scripture. We often think it is a Protestant book. It is a tragedy of the Reformation. And that Psalm today is challenging us, "Happy the man whose delight is the law of the Lord." That is Jesus' way of saying that "If you want to be happy, let My Word come into you." And if you noticed that before the Gospel today, we made three crosses, one on our foreheads, one on our lips, and one over our hearts. They represent our hope that the Word of God will come into our mind to change the way that we think, be on our lips and change the way we speak, and above all be in our hearts and change the way we love. And once I discovered that, I make a fourth cross and put it on my ear to change the way I listen – to allow the Word of God to seep into my heart.

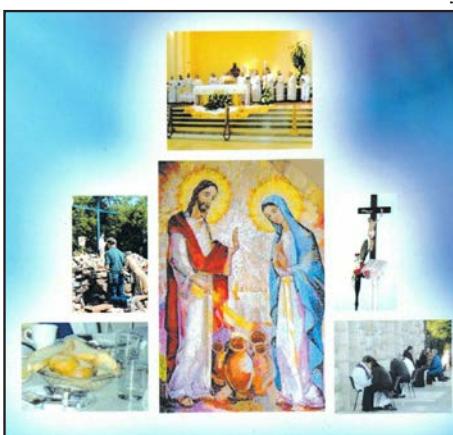
That leads on to the next one, the one of **prayer**, because again, "Happy the man who ponders His law day and night." That is prayer. We are pondering our relationship with God. And Our Lady asks that we set time aside each day to spend time with Her Son in prayer, because as we quoted at the beginning, "You've made us for You, Oh Lord, and our hearts will never find rest until they rest in You." It's amazing how much junk food has been introduced into our souls and we wonder why we are not happy. We watch programs on television that are full of violence and then we wonder then why we are disturbed. If we take the Kingdom of God seriously, we have to open our hearts to the source of truth, Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of Mary.

And above all, She asks us to pray the Rosary, that powerful weapon, because the Rosary is looking at Jesus through the eyes of His Mother, the one who loved Him the most, who was with Him at the critical moments of His life, and as we do that, She shares them with us so that we will want, like the lovely prayer children say at Confession, "Help me to live like Jesus."

The fourth one is **Confession**. And again, St. Paul mentions in his first reading today that now that you've been set free from sin, by the work of Jesus on the Cross, but now the important thing is

to stay free. Because if we don't, as the old Catechism used to say, "He that condemneth small things, shall fall little by little." We've been set free; Confession once a month keeps us free. It doesn't allow the corrosion of sin to seep into our hearts and it keeps us aware of how far we have to go.

And the last one of all is the **Eucharist**...Jesus said, "I



Images depicting the five stones on the cover of our Volume III book.

came to bring fire to the earth." It is the Eucharist that brings that fire to us. Did you ever hear the word, "enthusiasm"? It comes from a lovely Greek word. The Greek word for God is "Theos" and "enTheos" is to have God inside you. And if you have God inside you, you are enthusiastic. And that is what people want to see. I'm sure you have come across people of other faiths, especially the Muslim people, who are so enthusiastic about their faith. And they want you to convert to their faith. I often wonder if that is why the Church is the way it is, because we are so lukewarm in our faith. The Lord is challenging us to get that fire into our bellies, to believe. He brought you here so that you would play your part in the conversion.

The Eucharist is God in us. In a few moments, Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Universe, is going to come into your soul. And if that doesn't produce fire, then I don't know what will. Really, He wants to fire us up.

And the last message you will hear at the Mass today is "Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord." We are sent out as ambassadors to go preach to the world the richness, the fire of Christ. We are sent to set the world on fire. But it can only happen if each one of us becomes fire.

The problem is, the Gospel tells us, that you may pay a price for that, mother against daughter, brother against brother, father against son, because people in your very own family may be the people who are opposed to what you are

doing. They may say things to you like, "What are you doing going off to Medjugorje? Why don't you go to a nice seaside resort and have a good time?" If they only knew the good time we are having here....They may have a sun tan, but we have an inner Son tan, the Son tan of God's love shining in our hearts. You can't buy that. It's a gift.

The way we participate in the Eucharist is by offering the self-sacrifice of our lives with the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. That is what the Eucharist is about, and I often ask myself what sacrifice have I brought today? What denials have I done so that I can unite them with the self-sacrifice of Jesus on the cross? The Lord gave up His life for me. It's a bit like the wife who was reading the Bible, and she came upon a passage while her husband was sleeping, "There is no greater love than this, that you lay down your life for your friends." So about three o'clock in the morning she woke her husband up and said, "Pat, I want to ask you a question. Do you love me?" Now what do you think he is going to say at 3 o'clock in the morning? He said, "Of course I love you, now go back to sleep." "No," she said, "it says here that the greatest love you could have is to lay down your life for your friend. Would you die for me?" "I would not," he said, "Mine is an undying love."

Well the kind of love that Jesus has for us is a "dying love". And in doing so He challenges us to die to sin so we can live for Christ, and that is what our Mass is all about.

## "Struck Down, But Not Destroyed"

By June Klins

Recently a friend sent me an email regarding five ploys of Satan: **doubt** – which tempts us to question God's Word and His goodness, forgiveness, and love; **discouragement** – which tempts us to focus intently on our problems rather than entrusting them to God's care; **diversion** – which tempts us to see the wrong things as attractive so that we will want them more than the right things; **defeat** – which tempts us to feel like failure so that we don't even try; and **delay** – which tempts us to procrastinate so that things never get done.

Last month, as we approached the January mailing, I fell prey to two of those ploys, defeat and discouragement. There had been so many problems with that issue. Then seven feet of snow blanketed our city and I was concerned that not many people would venture out to help. My van would not start because of the frigid temperatures, so I would have to make two trips with my small car to transport everything to the church where we work. When one of the committed helpers cancelled that morning, I was on the verge of a "meltdown" and said to myself, "I cannot do this anymore!" That thought only lasted a second, when into my head popped the words, "I am struck down, but not destroyed." I knew these words were from one of Paul's letters, but I did not know which one. I quickly did a search and found it: "We are afflicted in every way, but not constrained; perplexed, but not driven to despair... struck down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor 4:8-9). I printed it out and put it in my purse. I prayed, "O Jesus, I surrender myself to You. Take care of everything." (See our December 2017

issue.) I was now "myself" again and ready to do Our Lady's work. I know this was a grace that my attitude changed in the blink of an eye. It was God's Word and the fact that I had just received Jesus at Mass, and prayed several decades of the Rosary – three of the *five* stones Our Lady has given us in our fight against "Goliath." Satan has *five* ploys, but we have *five* stones. Goliath was struck down, and was destroyed, but we will not be!

As it turned out, we had three small miracles happen the day of our mailing. The first one was that somehow I was able to cram everything into my small car and only needed to make one trip! The second miracle was that people I did not expect to come showed up to help, and instead of having 11 helpers, we had 19 – more than usual!!! But the biggest miracle that day was that the mailing happened at all. Kathy, the lady who is in charge of maintenance at the church, said to me, "June, the Blessed Mother was looking out for you." It turns out that the building was to have been locked up that day. (My friend who makes the arrangements for us to do the mailing at her church was not aware that the church and office were closed that day, because she did not get a bulletin.) Father had given the staff the day off, but something ("Somebody") made Kathy and another staff member come in anyway. Who comes in to work on their day off??? Wow!!!

In addition to our mailing going well, a good time was had by all. Two of our helpers saw the *miracle of the sun* when they left the church. One of them even saw a reflection of the colors of the sun in the snow! "We are struck down, but not destroyed."



"Our Lady of the Snow" statue where we do our newsletter mailing

# The Healing Power of Grace

By Cindy Lane

I first went to Medjugorje in 1990. I had undergone a very serious depression. My life was very empty and certainly God was not present in my life in any meaningful way. I had been married and divorced, married and divorced. I felt that I had to find love and relationships with men, but neither I nor they were giving – only seeking selfish ends. Neither marriage nor any of the subsequent relationships brought me joy. In 1989, my mother had died and I inherited some money which made it possible for me to go to Medjugorje, but how that happened I think is a miracle in itself.

I didn't really practice my faith. I had been raised Catholic, and went to an all girls Catholic high school, ironically known as St. Mary of the Springs. I don't remember praying the Rosary. I recall seeing my mother praying the Rosary sitting in the living room by herself. However, we never prayed as a family. When I went to a state university, without Catholic friends, it became easy to quit going to Mass. I was married in the Church to please my mother and I had my two daughters baptized to please my mother. But other than enroll them in Catholic grade schools, I didn't teach my children the faith, and I certainly was not a good example. Unfortunately, I did not learn until after my own conversion that the religion taught to them was liberal and not formative.

A year after my mother died, I traveled with my daughters to my sister's home to celebrate my nephew's graduation. I was barely recovering from a devastating depression in which I had lost a great deal of weight within a few weeks, could not sleep, and was crying all the time. I was prescribed Prozac which helped alleviate the physical impact of the depression, but not the empty hollow feeling about my life. Prior to the onset of the depression, I was an avid reader, but then found I couldn't concentrate and literally stopped reading. Arriving at my sister's home and with eight children and six adults in the home, I found myself alone in the kitchen, which I think was a miracle in itself, as the kitchen is the usual gathering place for families. I remember sitting in the kitchen feeling aimless and ill-at-ease with all the people. I saw a book on the table, picked it up, and found that I could not put it down. This was a book by Jan Connell regarding a place in Yugoslavia about our Blessed Mother appearing to six children. I didn't know where Yugoslavia was. I never had a devotion to our Blessed Mother, but I knew that this was real. I learned that my sister's neighbor was leaving for Medjugorje the next day, and I asked her questions about the trip and what she knew about Medjugorje. The neighbor let me know that the same priest she was going with would be going again that coming October should I be interested. Mary had arranged for this single mom living on a shoe string to inherit funds to actually go on pilgrimage! I asked my sister if she would go with me and she agreed.

When I arrived in Medjugorje, there was a great sense of peace. For the first time, I knew that I was loved and that my past life didn't matter – I was loved anyway. I knew God was real and that I was supposed to be in Medjugorje. I began realizing how little I knew about my faith. For instance, I never prayed for my parents who were dead. I learned the importance of praying for our dead (to this day, I now have

a strong devotion of praying for souls in Purgatory). One of my fondest memories of the pilgrimage is when I had been hoisted up on the stone wall ledge outside Vicka's home so I could take pictures of her as she was speaking. People were holding up their cameras for me to take pictures, and as I returned the cameras, I asked them to pray for my mother's soul. Someone asked her name and I could hear people calling out to pray for Margaret's soul! I was overwhelmed with gratitude, as I had been told there is no time with God – that these prayers were considered by God even back when Mom had died – I was finally praying for my mother and I knew she was praying for me.

When I returned home, I prepared a little altar as suggested by Fr. Jozo. I placed on it some rocks from Medjugorje, the picture of our Blessed Mother that Fr. Jozo passed out to pilgrims, a rosary, and a crucifix on the wall. One morning, I heard my youngest daughter calling her sister to come home from college because "Mom was praying to rocks." They didn't understand.



Cindy Lane

I yearned to go back to Medjugorje to thank God for the conversion of my heart and permitting His Mother to lead me to Him. I had remarried after the pilgrimage, and in 2000, I discovered that the same priest from my first trip was again returning with a group, and I happily signed on. What I could not have imagined was that God permitted me to return every year for the next ten years! On several of those trips, I became friends with another pilgrim from Michigan named Nancy Duey, and after learning that the couple who had coordinated the pilgrimages were "retiring," Nancy and I joined together to lead groups. Each year I am granted graces that I could not even have imagined. I call these "kisses from my Mother." I am so grateful for all the people and priests I have met who share their stories, their conversions, their pains and joys. My first year I "heard" the word *trust*; and with each succeeding trip, the same message is presented with deeper meaning and understanding. I have come to *trust* and know that God is present with me in all events.

This past summer, something happened to me on June 19, for which I believe Our Lady had prepared me for all these years. I had gone out for my typical early evening walk in the nearby park, when I was attacked by a 14 year-old youth. He was with two others who dared him to do a "knock out." As a result, I was knocked down to the ground and my femur and elbow were broken. The squad and police were both called and the three youth were arrested. When the officer came to me, he picked up the rosary I was praying (I always pray the Rosary when I walk in the park) and he placed it in my hand, telling me that he had prayed the Rosary since he was three years old, and knew that Our Blessed Mother was keeping me under the protection of Her mantle. His words were very powerful, and I knew Our Lady and Our Lord were present with me in this painful and frightening incident. Even more surprising to me was to discover that I wasn't angry or vengeful or bitter. I just remember feeling

an overwhelming sense of sadness. I later learned that the young man told the officer that he did it because he was angry. Yet, when I saw his face so close to mine before he thrust me to the ground, I saw fear – not anger – in his eyes.

I was overwhelmed with love and prayers when people heard about the attack. As people began to find out about what happened to me, I asked them to pray for the boy, whose name was Ramone. I thought, "How could someone so young be so angry and aimless in life? Did he have people who loved him and prayed for him?" If someone tried to go on and on with anger towards the attacker, I simply could not listen as anger does not help anyone.

I was in a trauma unit for six days and then a rehabilitation hospital for five weeks. During that time, a friend said that it was God's grace that I was not feeling angry. I realized she was right. This reaction was a grace in that I wasn't angry, frightened or seeking revenge. I have had these feelings before, and knew that they led only to more anger, more fear and obsession with revenge. Those feelings only eat away at peace and prevent healing. I was grateful for this grace and remain so today. I have prayed that Ramone would find God in this situation – find his own grace. I asked people to pray for him and for his healing of anger. I also experienced a trust that God would intervene in Ramone's life. I knew that many people were praying with me for him.

Ramone pled guilty. The sentencing hearing took place in September. While I didn't need to appear, one of my daughters asked to go to Court, as did other family members, so I decided to attend. I had been asked to submit a "witness statement" to include the physical and emotional impact the attack had upon me and my family. I explained I wasn't angry, only sad, and that I wished only that the young man would find a way out of his aimless and angry life and be open to God's presence. I did not wish him to be incarcerated, but did want him to have some consequences for his action. His mother appeared at the hearing, and I learned that he had been fostered and then adopted by her. She was in her 60's and worked long hours. The Court asked if she wanted to say something, and she turned to me in the court room, and with anguish and pain in her voice, apologized for Ramone's actions. This was a very moving incident – for it was two mothers looking into each other's eyes – our souls in a way. I could see my daughter and cousins crying, as well as Ramone's counsel, and other attorneys (waiting for their own cases to come up), with tears in their eyes. Ramone's counsel talked about how truly sorry her client was, and had asked repeatedly during the summer how I was doing, but

he was prevented from knowing anything about me due to the "stay away order" that had been in place. The Judge asked if he wished to say anything, and he shook his head no, but the Judge told him to stand up and try. With that, he told me he was sorry, that he was thankful for my prayers and he had prayed for me. He also said that he was sorry that I was no longer permitted to take my grandchildren to the park to play. I felt in that moment that God was truly present and that the tears from Ramone, his mother, my daughter and the others were tears of healing. I knew also that Ramone would always be a part of my life even though it is unlikely we will ever meet again, for he was ordered to stay away from me. I continue to pray and trust that God will give Ramone the grace to be healed and let God in his life. I could never wish that event away. I know the grace of God and our Blessed Mother gave me the ability to forgive, and they will surely give Ramone the grace of healing.

When I arrived in Medjugorje last October, I was still in pain and walking with a cane. I was blessed to be able to remain five weeks after the group returned home. By the time I came home in December, I no longer needed my cane!

The pilgrimage itself was very blessed and included three priests and three sisters, a seminarian and a young woman planning on entering the convent this coming fall. She had been my nurse in the rehabilitation facility and the fact that we met and she was able to come on the pilgrimage is just one of the many "kisses" our Blessed Mother gave me to let me know She continues to call me and use me to bring others to Her village of peace. To be graced with the extra time in Medjugorje was truly unexpected and very important. I had retired just before leaving for Medjugorje, and I wanted the time to thank God, to talk with Him and be alone with Him, which I can't do when leading a group. More importantly, I wanted to be able to ask Him what He wants of me during this last stage of my journey here on earth. I have never done that. Instead, I'd been telling God what I wanted of Him. My month was just one of many graces I have received, and I decided to take the advice a young priest had given me before leaving for Medjugorje: "Cindy, He may not speak and give you a grand plan. He may just say, 'Shut up and enjoy the ride!'" And that I've done. I've enjoyed the ride Our Lady continues to take me on in loving Her Son more deeply. I am so very grateful.

*Editor's note: You can view Cindy's heartfelt testimony on Fruit of Medjugorje, episode #295 on [www.marytv.tv](http://www.marytv.tv). Her next pilgrimage is Nov 5-16, 2018. Email her at [ciane18@columbus.rr.com](mailto:ciane18@columbus.rr.com).*

## Mirjana's Message on January 2, 2018

*"Dear children, when love is beginning to disappear on earth, when the way of salvation is not being found, I, the mother, am coming to help you to come to know true faith – living and profound – so as to help you to truly love. As a mother, I am longing for your mutual love, goodness, and purity. My desire is that you be just and that you love each other. My children, be joyful in your soul, be pure, be children. My Son used to say that he loves to be among pure hearts, because pure hearts are always young and joyful. My Son said to you to forgive and to love each other. I know that this is not always easy. Suffering makes you grow in spirit. For you to spiritually grow all the more, you must sincerely and truly forgive and love. Many of my children on earth do not know my Son, they do not love Him; but you who do love my Son, you who carry Him in your heart, pray, pray and in praying feel my Son beside you. May your soul breathe in His spirit. I am among you and am speaking about little and great things. I will not grow tired speaking to you about my Son – the true love. Therefore, my children, open your hearts to me. Permit me to lead you as a mother. Be apostles of the love of my Son and of me. As a mother I implore you not to forget those whom my Son has called to lead you. Carry them in your heart and pray for them. Thank you."*

Thanks to subscriber, Delphine Levesque, we have another copy of the film, Apparition Hill, to lend out.  
If you would like to borrow one of our copies for a week, please contact June at [jklins1981@verizon.net](mailto:jklins1981@verizon.net).

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## MARY IS CALLING YOU

On June 24, 1981 in Medjugorje, Our Lady appeared to six children. She identified Herself as the Blessed Virgin, Queen of Peace, and has continued to appear daily. Her message is PEACE, peace with God and man. Her words to the visionaries, "I have come to tell the world that God exists. He is the fullness of life, and to enjoy this fullness and obtain peace, you must return to God."

Today, all but three of the visionaries have daily apparitions of the Blessed Mother. During the apparitions, the visionaries do not react to light, don't hear any sound or react to being touched. They feel that they are outside of time and space. All the visionaries declare to see the Blessed Virgin as they see other people - in three dimension. They pray and speak with Her.

The Blessed Mother is confiding ten secrets to each visionary (some are chastisements for the world) and promises to leave a visible sign at the place of the apparitions in Medjugorje for all humanity. This time, this period of grace, is for CONVERSION

and a DEEPENING OF FAITH. After the visible sign, those still living will have little time for conversion.

Father Jozo Zovko, who was the pastor of St. James when the apparitions began, has spoken about what he calls "the weapons" or the "five stones" of Our Lady. They are: prayer with the heart, especially the Rosary; Eucharist; Holy Bible; monthly Confession; and fasting.

The publisher recognizes and accepts that the final authority regarding the apparitions at Medjugorje rest with the Holy See in Rome.

To borrow an original prayer cloth from Medjugorje for a week, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the address below. You must include your phone number. If you want a prayer cloth we made to keep, send a self-addressed stamped business size (4 1/8" x 9 1/2") envelope with \$.71 postage on it.



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