

THE SPIRIT OF MEDJUGORJE
P.O. BOX 6614 • ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA 16512
www.spiritofmedjugorje.org

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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MONTHLY MESSAGE OF FEBRUARY 25, 2019

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.



The painting to the left, entitled Mary Magdalene, is the work of Croatian artist, Petar Šibenik. According to the EWTN website, although the sinful woman who anoints Jesus' feet with fragrant oils in Luke 7:36-50 is never named, Western Christianity, since the time of St. Gregory the Great, has traditionally identified Mary Magdalene as that woman. "I desire, dear children, to call all of you to a full conversion so that joy will be in your hearts." (Our Lady, June 25, 1990) Visit our website to see this painting and the rest of this issue in color.

“Dear children! Today, I am calling you to a new life. It is not important how old you are, open your heart to Jesus who will transform you in this time of grace and, like nature, you will be born into a new life in God’s love, and you will open your heart to Heaven and the things of Heaven. I am still with you, because God permitted me out of love for you. Thank you for having responded to my call.”

A Most Unusual Penance

By June Klins

The year before I was healed through Our Lady of Medjugorje, when I was in severe pain and unable to drive, I often watched Mass on TV. I heard the following story in a homily and it made a great impression on me. I later shared it with a nun, who told me the story was attributed to St. Philip Neri.

At the time, I was "addicted to" the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, as I needed uplifting things to read to keep my spirits up, so I decided to write the story and send it to them. I was excited when I got a letter back saying they were going to use it! Later, I got a second letter saying they had just realized they had already used the story. So much for my hopes of having my writing published... or so I thought...

Never would I have imagined, at that time in my life, that after being healed through Our Lady of Medjugorje in 1998, I would begin writing for a newsletter called *The Spirit of Medjugorje*, eventually become the editor, and that St. Philip Neri would be our patron saint for 2019! As I mentioned in January, St. Philip Neri had a good sense of humor, so I am sure he is laughing now that, after all these years, I am finally going to share his story. So here is the story:

Once when a woman went to confession to St. Philip, she confessed the sin of gossip. St. Philip paused thoughtfully

before giving the woman her penance. He then gave her a most unusual penance. He told her that she was to get a feather pillow and go to the top of a nearby hill. There she was to open the pillow and let all the feathers out. Then she was to gather all those feathers and bring them back to St. Philip the following week.

When the woman returned to St. Philip the next week, she only had a handful of feathers. She said that she had tried very hard all week long, but that was all she could get. Then St. Philip explained to her that it is far easier to gather up all those feathers than it is to undo the damage done by her malicious gossip. I'd love to have seen the look on that woman's face! But it is so true.

On April 12, 1984, Our Lady said, "Dear children! Today I beseech you to stop slandering." And Pope Francis once said, "I am convinced that if each one of us would purposely avoid gossip, in the end, we would become a saint! It's a beautiful path." Maybe start this Lent?!

Please continue to pray for Fr. Bill Kiel, our spiritual advisor, who has cancer. If you would like to send him a card or note, you can send it to him c/o *The Spirit of Medjugorje*, P.O. Box 6346, Erie, PA 16512, and we will forward it to him.

"...the tongue is a small member and yet has great pretensions. Consider how small a fire can set a huge forest ablaze" (James 3:5).

Message to Mirjana on February 2, 2019

Dear children! The love and goodness of the Heavenly Father give revelations which make faith grow, for it to be interpreted, that it may bring peace, certainty and hope. In this way, I, too, my children – through the merciful love of the Heavenly Father – always, anew, am showing you the way to my Son, to eternal salvation. But, unfortunately, many of my children do not want to hear me; many of my children are of two minds. And I – I always, in time and beyond time, magnified the Lord for all that He has done in me and through me. My Son gives Himself to you and breaks the bread with you. He speaks the words of eternal life to you so that you may carry them to everyone. And you, my children, apostles of my love, what are you afraid of when my Son is with you? Offer your souls to Him so that He can be in them and that He can make you instruments of faith, instruments of love. My children, live the Gospel, live merciful love for your neighbors, and, above all, live love for the Heavenly Father. My children, you are not united by chance. The Heavenly Father does not unite anyone by chance. My Son speaks to your souls. I speak to your heart. As a mother I am saying to you: set out with me, love one another, give witness. Do not be afraid, with your example, to defend the truth – the Word of God which is eternal and never changes. My children, whoever acts in the light of merciful love and truth is always helped by Heaven and is not alone. Apostles of my love, may you always be recognized among all others by your hiddenness, love and radiance. I am with you. Thank you.

**Prayer Intention of Pope Francis
for March Recognition of the Right
of Christian Communities:** That Christian
communities, especially those who are
persecuted, feel that they are close to Christ
and have their rights respected.



Our thanks to Diane Niebauer, Sue Taccone, Rose Heintzel, Dianne Yochim, Joan Peterson, Julie Hansen, Peggy Chludzinski, Chris Falk, Chris Opron, Cindy Bielamin, Georgia Chludzinski, Marge Spase, Pat Berrier, Elaine Brady, Barb Cesare, Irene and Dan Zuba, Louise Lotze, Peggy Smith, and those who want to remain anonymous for their help with the February mailing. We also thank our proofreader, Pat Berrier, our webmaster, Jason Klins, and our prayer group administrator, Patti Millar.

Our condolences to the family of Ruth Bonanti who passed away recently. Ruth was a member of our mailing crew years ago. It is because of Ruth that our first book, *The Best of "The Spirit of Medjugorje," Volume I* was published. When I took over as editor of this newsletter, Ruth gave me all her back issues from the very beginning, before I even knew about Medjugorje. I read with interest all those back issues and the next day, I felt a powerful prompting to compile a book from those issues. That book was published in 2005, and Volumes II and III were published later. So thank you, Ruth, and may you rest in peace with Our Lady and Her Son.

Is Medjugorje Approved by the Church?

Below is the informative transcript by author and speaker, Christine Watkins, of the video, "Is Medjugorje Approved by the Church?" which clears up many of the misconceptions people have of the Church's stance today, which has never been more positive. This information can be found in greater detail and clarity in the Appendix of the new Medjugorje book, which is a #1 Amazon best-seller: *Of Men and Mary: How Six Men Won the Greatest Battle of Their Lives*.

In these few short minutes I hope to clarify some misconceptions that are out there surrounding the Catholic Church and Medjugorje. What I am about to say is 100% verifiable so anything you might have read or seen about the apparitions that contradicts what I am about to say is either outdated or untrue:

#1: Under the pontificate of Benedict XVI, the Vatican took away the power from the local bishop to make any pronouncement about the authenticity of the apparitions and gave it to the Vatican, so anything that a past, present or future bishop of Medjugorje says about the apparitions is simply that person's opinion.

#2: Pope Benedict XVI established a commission under the auspices of Cardinal Camillo Ruini to investigate the apparitions, and they met from March of 2010 to January 2014. It was reported that in their findings, they almost unanimously agreed that the first seven apparitions of Mary in Medjugorje were authentic, were real, were her. It was also reported that the commission recommended to Pope Francis that Medjugorje become an official Catholic shrine. The Pope has yet to make any official pronouncements regarding Medjugorje, and he has made personal comments both positive and negative (and those are not official Church pronouncements).

#3: On Feb. 11, 2017, the Pope made Archbishop Henryk Hoser of Poland his Papal Envoy to Medjugorje to assess and provide help to the pastoral situation there, and currently the Pope has him in Medjugorje living there for a time under the title of Apostolic Visitor. Archbishop Hoser has declared that diocesan pilgrimages are now allowed and Medjugorje conferences should continue.

The news in Medjugorje was received with great, great joy! In his own words, the Archbishop said, "They have about 50 confessionals, which are not enough. These are very deep confessions. This is a phenomenon. And what confirms the authenticity of the place is the large amount of charitable institutions that exist around the sanctuary. And another aspect as well: the great effort that is being made at the level

of Christian formation." At a press conference in Medjugorje, the Archbishop also said, "You, my dear friends, should be carriers of the joyful news. Say to the whole world that in Medjugorje, we can find the light again."

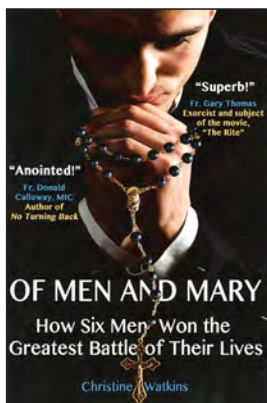
St. Pope John Paul II was an ardent supporter of the Medjugorje apparitions, and one of the things that he is known to have said is, "Medjugorje is the spiritual heart of the world." It is also known that Mother Theresa of Calcutta believed in the apparitions there as well.

If you would like to read up on where this information comes from and the details of it, I have it the appendix of my new book called: *Of Men and Mary, How Six Men Won the Greatest Battle of Their Lives*. The book is endorsed enthusiastically by Fr. Donald Calloway, Fr. Gary Thomas, an exorcist and subject of the movie, "The Rite." The book tells the incredible stories of men who have been converted by or blessed by Medjugorje. Three became priests, one became a deacon.

These stories contain the power, the graces of Medjugorje within them, and this is no small thing. It is transforming people who read them.

Another book that I want to mention is *Medjugorje and the Supernatural*, which goes into great detail about the science behind what is happening during the apparitions, how science corroborates faith. The Church has never given more official approval to Medjugorje than it has today, and this is a calling from heaven to help Mother Mary out. If she truly is appearing on Earth in our lifetime, then we have the duty to respond to what the Vatican is saying. If we are working in a diocese or can help a diocese to organize official pilgrimages, or if we have been doing conferences or have stopped doing conferences, we should begin to do them again, or to start them for the first time because the pilgrimages and the conferences have been an extraordinary source of grace, of conversion, of healings, of repentance—of changing the world. The Church is beleaguered, our world is beleaguered, and if Mary is coming to earth, she has answers to help us. So let us heed her call and not delay.

*Editor's note: Christine Watkins is a popular Catholic speaker and author. Formerly an anti-Christian atheist living a life of sin, she began a life of service to the Catholic Church after a miraculous healing from Jesus through Mary, which saved her from death. Her conversion story can be read in her book, *Full of Grace*. To see the powerful book trailer for *Of Men and Mary*, go to <https://queenofpeacemedia.com/of-men-and-mary/>.*



We have a limited supply of St. Therese sacrifice beads available for free, which can be a help when fasting or sacrificing. Sacrifice beads spring from a practice of the childhood of St. Therese of Lisieux, whose sister gave her a set of beads to count her sacrifices and good deeds. The most typical "chaplet" consists of a string of 10 beads, with a Crucifix at one end, symbolizing taking up the Cross. When you offer up something to God, you slide one of the beads toward the Crucifix, but you move a bead back for each failing. This is a good way of examining your conscience throughout the day. Hopefully by the time Easter arrives you can have the best Easter ever, filled with peace and joy!

Confession: the Grace of Healing and Deliverance

By June Klins

When I was in Medjugorje last November, my roommate was not feeling well one day, so she stayed in the room and watched MaryTV on her phone. She told me about a powerful episode of Fruit of Medjugorje (#335) that I needed to see. When I finally watched it at home, I was convinced it needed to be shared with our readers. This is the testimony of Fr. Ray Donohue. It was long and I will not be able to do it justice, but I hope this will inspire you to go to MaryTV and watch the testimony in its entirety.

Fr. Ray first heard about Medjugorje while in the seminary. Later as a young priest, a Croatian priest did a presentation about Medjugorje at his parish. Father was interested, but never dreamed he would be able to go. Some parishioners got together and paid for his way, and the adventure began...

On that first of 29 pilgrimages, Fr. Ray said there were 200 people and they had to stay in Dubrovnik and drive back and forth every day. One of the things that really impressed Father was the heartfelt prayer of Fr. Slavko Barbaric. "He spoke from his heart...and I said, 'I want to be like this man. I want to be a holy priest.' That changed my whole priesthood."

When Fr. Ray returned, he began Marian and other devotions in his parish, which continue to this day. Father was able to return to Medjugorje the following years, except for two years when they were told it was too dangerous to travel because of the war. He continued to spread Our Lady's messages by doing presentations and distributing rosaries and medals, especially to school children.

As he waved his cane, Fr. Ray said that he has rheumatoid arthritis and was told he would be in a wheelchair by the age of 50. He said he is now 60, and although he had to retire early because of the arthritis, he has been blessed to be able to climb Apparition Hill and Mt. Krizevac. He said he calls himself an "old goat," but pilgrims call him a "billy goat" because he gets to the top before they do! Father said it takes him a long time to get down the mountains because he stops to bless everyone who asks for a blessing. "It's what a priest does, what a priest should be doing – blessing, bringing people to Jesus."

Father then related an experience he had one May when he went to Medjugorje. He said that he had a remarkable encounter with an Italian Byzantine Rite priest. They both spoke in their own languages but could understand each other perfectly! The Byzantine priest asked Father if he was an exorcist because he was wearing a St. Benedict cross, and Father said he was not. The priest handed him a St. Benedict rosary, which had all St. Benedict medals as beads. After Fr. Ray kissed it, he handed it back, but the priest said, "No. Father, you are going to be doing exorcisms... Pope Benedict has sent our order here, where there is very, very good and there will also be very evil...The Pope sent us here to look for exorcisms, and you will be doing them." Fr. Ray knew he needed permission to do exorcisms, so he asked one of

the priests there about it, and the priest responded, "You just have to ask yourself at this point, 'What would Jesus do if there was a need?' How would you respond?" Father said he would respond in prayer.



Fr. Ray with a little friend in Medjugorje

Two days later, the Mass had been moved to the Yellow Building, but Fr. Ray assumed they would still vest in the church sacristy, so he went there, but no one was there. He said at the time there were usually 50 or 60 priests. As he began vesting, all of a sudden, the door opened and three young people were "thrown" through the door. One of them, a little girl, landed on her face. They were Italian, but Father heard the girl say, "Father, please help me." He thought she was sick, so he pointed to the restroom. She said, "No, Father. No, please." So Father went over and lifted up her head to see what was wrong, and saw that she had no eyes at all and it was all black. "She started

hissing at me. It was a horrible, horrible sound." Then she pushed Father and he went flying back. He threw his cane down, put his hand on her head and said, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you, evil spirit, you come out of her, you don't enter anyone else, and go to the throne of God to be judged by Him." Again, she threw herself down on the ground and started making a dreadful noise. Father said the only way he could think to describe the noise was the slaughtering of a giant pig he had witnessed at a farm when he was young. But he said this noise was "a million times worse". "It was ungodly, unearthly." He said that although she probably weighed no more than 70 pounds, she threw him and he went flying. In the meantime, a nun entered the sacristy, so he gestured for her to pray.

Father continued to pray that same prayer, but she got stronger and stronger. But as he prayed, he also felt himself getting stronger. Then he remembered the St. Benedict rosary, so he pulled it out and put it on her. "She screamed as if I had just put acid on her." Father prayed the prayer again, but added, "In the name of Mary." He began to feel her getting weaker. Then she started slithering along the floor like a snake. Father was on her back, praying as hard as he could, and she was trying to throw him off, but she was getting weaker. He told the other two young people to pray hard. Just then, a little Italian priest came into the sacristy. Fr. Ray asked him to pray, so the priest began praying in Italian and she weakened more and more. Finally there was one last push, and she fell like she was dead. Father motioned to the other two, a boy about 18 and a girl about 17, to help him up. The little girl put her head at Father's shoulder and started crying. He looked down at her and saw a beautiful Italian girl with big brown eyes. Father consoled her, "It's OK. He's gone. He's never coming back."

By now the Italian priest was gone, and they were alone,

so Fr. Ray asked what happened. The teens said they had been to Mirjana's apparition at the Blue Cross and that at the moment when everything got silent, they heard a dog bark, and then the girl started screaming. They looked at her eyes, and then decided they needed to get to the church. They said they took a few steps among the thousands of people there, and the next thing they knew, they were pushed into the sacristy. Father asked if they had been to Confession. The two older ones said they had been, but the little girl (about 14 or 15) had not. Father asked her if there was anything she could have done that offended God, and she replied that a few days before, she and her friends were playing with a ouija board and they had a séance.



Fr. Ray praying on Cross Mountain

When Fr. Ray got home, he told his experience to the bishop, who gave him faculties to perform exorcisms to assist the diocesan exorcist. Father has been doing exorcisms ever since. He has linked 100% of the exorcisms he has done in his area to a certain very evil place that is nearby. He warned to stay away from ouija boards, séances, readings, tarot cards, etc. "These are instruments of evil...that opens a door, a portal." He said that the evil one is going after young people today in droves.

Father told another incident that happened on Mt. Krizevac about five years ago. There were three Italian ladies who were screaming, so the people gathered them into an opening at the base of the big cross. One was making more noise than the other two, so Father went to her. She had broken loose from the two big men who were holding her. She threw Father quite a distance. Father got up and went back over to her and began the prayers of exorcism. She began laughing at Father in a terrible masculine voice. Father told everyone there to pray. He said he usually does not do this, but he asked the demon his name. When he looked again, the woman had no eyes, but there were circles there. Father told her she would not be laughing long because God would triumph. A horrible voice came out saying, "She's mine and you can't have her." Father said, "She's not yours. She belongs to Jesus." This went back and forth, and finally the demon said, "My name is Riches and Wealth and people love me." Father said that the sad part is that many people *do* love riches and wealth rather than putting God first, but if people could see what riches and wealth do, they would hate it.

Father continued to do the prayers of exorcism and she began biting him, so he had to hold her mouth down. Father told everyone there (about 200 people) to pray the Litany of the Saints, since demons hate that prayer. One of those saints must have touched the demon and it began getting weaker and weaker. Father prayed, "I command you, Riches and Wealth, in the name of Jesus Christ, you are to go directly into hell, never come upon the face of this earth again. Never come into this person or anyone else. You are damned to hell for all eternity." Finally it let out a big scream and she lay flat. Father told her to say, "Mary" and she said, "Maria" and he told her to say "Mary loves me," and then "Jesus"

and then "Ave Maria gratia plena." Father told the people nearby to help her up, and when they did, he saw her beautiful brown eyes. Father said that the other two were also possessed by Riches and Wealth, that this was a powerful demon because it possessed all three of them. They all prayed together, and then Father told them he wanted them to go to Confession. He told them they needed to go once a week for the grace, preferably to the same priest, for spiritual help.

After everyone left, Father stayed at the cross to pray. Soon an elderly lady tapped him on the shoulder and asked him to pray for her granddaughter who was about 14 years old and looked sickly. Father began praying and the girl put her arms around him. He thought she was hugging him, but soon it became like a death grip and she started laughing in a horrible laugh. He

started praying the prayers of exorcism and she fell. She got up and put her arms around him again like a death grip, as he kept praying. She did this three times until the demon left. Father could tell this was a lesser demon. Father said there are demons and damned souls and that sometimes the demons get the damned souls, which aren't as strong, to possess people or attach to them. "Sometimes it isn't a possession...it's an attachment. They attach themselves to some people...But you have to open a portal. It doesn't just happen where a demon is going to jump into you. If you're praying and you're keeping up your spiritual life and you're going to Confession on a regular basis...and you love God, the demon can't possess you. We're possessed, in a sense, by God and His love."

Fr. Ray summed up his testimony by saying, "Medjugorje literally changed my life. I always wanted to be a priest. Our Lady opened the door for that. There's so much more that has happened in my life through our Blessed Mother, through Her guiding me, through Her leading me, through these Medjugorje pilgrimages. So many people have come back to the faith – confessions I hear here – [after] 40 years, 50 years."

Father pleaded, "I would just ask people to pray – pray for their priests, pray for their parishes. Priests are human. We make mistakes. But at the same time, we want to be good priests, and the more you pray for your priests, the better your priests will become, the holier your priests will become."

Father concluded, "If we have the eyes of faith, we can see how God works in our lives. And what I find in Medjugorje – our Blessed Mother gives us the eyes of faith. She lets us see from our hearts and then everything becomes a joy. Even our sufferings become a joy. And I thank God because I had to retire because of my rheumatoid arthritis. I'm busier now than I ever was! And I'm doing things that Our Lord and our Blessed Mother have asked me to do that I never dreamed I can do. And I know it's through my feeble state as a human being. It's what Our Lady is telling all of us: 'Turn to me and I will work through you, and nothing is impossible with God.'"

Dogs and Demons

By June Klins

As I was transcribing Fr. Ray Donohue's testimony on MaryTV (see pages 4-5) I began to wonder what the significance was between the dog barking and the screaming of someone possessed. Father had said in his testimony, "A few years ago when I was here, I would always hear at the apparition there would be absolute silence and then I'd hear a dog bark, one little dog bark...and everybody in my group, they listen for that and they hear that dog, and then we start hearing some screams."

So I asked Father, "What is the significance of the dog barking before the screams start?" He replied, "As an Exorcist, I have seen many times that demons are afraid and hate dogs, because they (dogs) are so faithful and caring for human beings. At a conference I attended



A "Medjugorje" dog

with Exorcists from all over the world, they discussed this in length. I noticed for many years the dogs barking, for many of my exorcisms in Medjugorje are during an apparition. Demons can't be where Our Lady is, in Her complete Purity, so they are disturbed, and the dogs can recognize the Presence of Good and especially the presence of evil. Many times I sit right next to Mirjana on the 2nd of the month at the Blue Cross, and I always hear that dog barking as soon as our dear Blessed Mother appears, then, the screams.

"Confession is so needed, not holding anything back from the priest, for complete forgiveness. The devil and demons cannot touch a pure soul."

St. Joseph to the Rescue

By Sr. Emmanuel

In order to better celebrate the feast of St. Joseph on March 19, here is a beautiful testimony that I was told in Poland. Some Polish nuns ran an orphanage during the Second World War. The people were very poor, and these sisters lived on Divine Providence. Now, once, there was a severe lack of milk for the children, which could not continue without threatening their health. The mother superior asked the sister in charge of cooking to write a petition to St. Joseph and to hide it behind his icon, according to the Community's custom. But staring at the blank sheet of paper, the sister, who did not know how to write, was very flustered as to how to depict their need of milk. Nevertheless, she did her utmost.

The next day, an unknown man knocked at the door and said that he had a present for the Community. The sisters rejoiced to think that perhaps the milk had arrived! But greatly to their surprise, they saw that the visitor had simply made them a present of a cat. He then asked if they had any particular needs, and the sisters replied, "Above all, milk!" "Milk!" exclaimed the visitor, "But I have a lot! I will bring it to you as soon as possible!"

When the milk was delivered, the mother superior asked to see the petition to St. Joseph. She burst out laughing when she saw the drawing. For the cook had ended up by drawing a cat that drank in great gulps from a bowl! St. Joseph had studied the request very precisely, and in his goodness, had provided not only the milk, but also the cat!

Children of Medjugorje, www.childrenofmedjugorje.org, March 15, 2000 report

As of February 25, 2019, the number of Masses reported for Our Lady's intentions was 26,887.

Great idea for Lent – have a Mass said for Our Lady's intentions. Thank you.

The Second Station- Jesus Receives the Cross



Station II on Mt. Krizevac

When climbing Mt. Krizevac on my November 2018 pilgrimage, we prayed the Stations of the Cross written by the late Fr. Tomislav Ivancic. The introduction says, "Each of us frequently finds himself fleeing from the cross of everyday life." Each Station in this booklet names a different cross that we could encounter in our lives. I felt prompted to share the reflection from the Second Station. (There is no copyright listed and no date of publication.)

Accepting one's daily routine

I could have defended myself or wanted others to defend me. I could have said: "I am innocent, why shall I suffer?"

But I accepted the cross without complaining.

Every moment of your life is a burden. You can accept it with patience or shake it off. You can flee from it or face it.

I accepted it. So you know where to find me. Your strength does not lie in running away. At any moment you will have to decide if you want to follow me.

This is the second cross. Only few people recognize it. A lot of people look for extraordinary crosses. But your cross is here – in accepting your daily routine. Your daily routine is your life and your cross. If you accept it, you will receive a lot of graces, and your faith will grow and develop quickly.

"Dear children, pray that you may accept illnesses and sufferings with love and patience, just as Jesus accepted them." (From the message of September 11, 1986)

“Sisterly Advice” from Mirjana

The following is an excerpt from a talk given by Mirjana to pilgrims in her home on November 11, 2018.

It is important to talk with Her [Our Lady], but it is not that She needs our Rosaries and our fasting. We need that in order to be able to open our hearts and put Jesus in the first place, because when Jesus is in the first place, then we have everything, because we have peace. And the only true peace is given by Jesus. That is why Our Lady asks us all these things from us. She desires that Her children may be happy.

She also asks for us to go to Holy Confession at least once a month, and She says there is no man on earth who doesn't have need of monthly Confession. That is why since you already did so much for our Heavenly Mother – you left your families to set out on such a long journey – do even that step. Purify, cleanse your heart. Go to Confession, because Our Lady says only pure hearts know how to open, and only pure hearts know how to receive gifts. That is my sisterly advice for your pilgrimage to be complete.

And do not be like one parishioner, as one priest told me.

“If we say, ‘We have not sinned’ we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (1Jn1:10).

Of course he didn't tell me who this person really was, but the person is my age [50s]. He came to Confession. So when he entered into the confessional he immediately started raising his voice.

“Most Reverend, I have no sins. I have no sins. And please remember, I really have no sins, but my wife – all day long, ‘Go to Confession, go to Confession, go to Confession.’

And I only came for peace in our home, but I have no sins.” The priest said, “Then I stood up, I offered him my hand, and I said, ‘Forgive me, Jesus, I did not recognize you immediately.’”

If we want to look into our hearts, we will always be able to find something that is preventing our hearts to be open to God.



Stained glass window in St. James in Medjugorje

A Medjugorje Moment at Home

By Virginia Hogue

Every month I eagerly await the mailman to deliver my copy of *The Spirit of Medjugorje*. I was especially anxious in January because June had just returned from her eighth visit to Medjugorje. I read June's story first, as I was eager to learn what was new in the village. Her adventures are always inspiring. One in particular took my breath away. June and some other pilgrims had climbed Cross Mountain; it is an arduous climb, steep and rocky, but well worth the effort. After their day of prayer and reflection, darkness was about to set in, so they decided to begin their descent. As they descended Cross Mountain, June and Fr. Bill, one of her fellow pilgrims, were sharing their woes about how much work awaited each of them when they returned home. Then Fr. Bill told June not to even think about what was ahead and to just “drink in the peace”. As I read these words spoken by Fr. Bill, I was overwhelmed by the fragrance of roses.

Occasionally, when I pray the Rosary, I experience a faint smell of roses, but *nothing* like this. I'm not sure of the connection between the words Fr. Bill spoke to June on Cross Mountain that day and my experience an ocean away. Was the Blessed Mother sending me a message? I wonder ... I wonder?

Editor's note: Virginia lives in Edmund, OK. She was very excited when she called me to share her experience, so I asked her to write it up to show that one can have a “Medjugorje moment” without going to Medjugorje. I later heard from two other people who smelled roses while reading the account of my pilgrimage!

A Blast from the Past

As mentioned in the January issue, my son was hoping to draw some cartoons for us this year, but has been unable to finish one in time for our deadline, so we decided to reprint one from our March 2003 issue.

SIMON MIR

by Brian T. Klins



I went to Medjugorje in 1989. I was a Protestant. I had been praying, and Our Lady touched my heart, and the next thing I knew I was before Her in St. James Church in Medjugorje.

I was touched by watching people on their knees before a round white Host on the altar. I did not understand, but then I felt myself being drawn into the Host in a beautiful blue white light, and I began to have beautiful visions of Our Lord in the Host. I went outside and saw all the lines of people going to Confession. I waited in the English line for a long time and finally it was my turn. I didn't know what to say to the priest. I remember he asked me if I was Catholic and I said, “No,” but I told him I am a sinner and I want forgiveness. He smiled and said he couldn't give me absolution, but he would give me a blessing. I was so grateful I said, “Thank you, Father, I will take whatever I can get!” I felt such peace and love.

I came back to America and became a Catholic on March 4, 1990, and have been blessed to receive Jesus every day and to be a part of Our Lady's army of love for 29 years! Thank you for responding to my call, dearest Blessed Mother.

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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 "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 \$.70 postage on it.



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