



THE SPIRIT OF MEDJUGORJE
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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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The Vatican Has Granted a Nihil Obstat to Medjugorje!

MONTHLY MESSAGE OF NOVEMBER 25, 2024

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! In this time of the grace of expectation, I desire to call you to prayer for Advent to be prayer of the family. In a special way, little children whom I tenderly embrace, I encourage you to prayer for peace in the world; for peace to prevail over peacelessness and hatred. Thank you for having responded to my call.”
(With Ecclesiastical approval)

The picture shown above was taken outside the entrance to the cabin of Fr. Ray Donohue, our spiritual advisor. It is best viewed in color at our website, www.spiritofmedjugorje.org (click on the "current issue" tab). "Dear children! I am calling you to prepare yourselves for Christmas by means of penance, prayer and works of charity. Dear children, do not look toward material things, because then you will not be able to experience Christmas. Thank you for having responded to my call" (Our Lady 12/5/85). May the Lord bless you and your families with peace, love and joy during these holy seasons of Advent and Christmas and throughout the New Year!

It Only Makes Sense!

By Fr. Ray Donohue



Fr. Ray

No one who is going on a car trip would not make sure that the car is filled with gasoline, or in today's world "charged up" with electricity. No one would think of calling someone in the middle of the night to remind them of a coming event weeks away. No one would look forward to Holy Christmas without taking advantage of the Holy season of ADVENT!

Yes, it is Advent, the preparation and guidance showing us the way to such a huge event throughout the world! Advent is upon us, all around us, and inside of us and all others!

Advent is the preparation we need to understand, through the Holy Scriptures, homilies, spiritual readings, singing holy carols, and of course, an Advent Wreath of three purple (or violet) candles and one pink candle surrounded with pine or holly.

We put up Christmas trees, decorate the house inside and out, put up the Manger scene, (as a child we would always wait until after the Midnight Mass and then we would put baby Jesus in the manger in his bed of hay)!

Advent is a time of preparation, preparing us, our family, our churches, our homes with joyful decorations and, of course, beautiful Christmas hymns and music.

Advent, by its very nature, is not a time to just think about buying Christmas presents, talking about, and going to department stores to visit Santa Claus, Rudolph and his eight other reindeer, buying over-the-top presents and only thinking about what you will get, or give, for Christmas morning! It is so much more of spiritually giving, God's gift to us to prepare the way for the Lord Jesus!

We give gifts because the Wise Men brought gifts to Jesus to celebrate His birth! We put stars and lights on the trees because the Star led them to the manger where Jesus and His parents were.

Advent prepares us through Holy Scripture, Holy Mass, the Advent calendars and Advent wreaths, as we count down the days until Christmas, to allow once again to invite Jesus to be re-born again in us... in ALL OF US!

As the Church has taught us for centuries, Advent has a two-fold character, for it is a time of preparation for the Solemnities of Christmas, in which the First Coming of the Son of God to humanity is remembered, and likewise a time when, by remembrance of this, minds and hearts are led to look *forward* to Christ's Second Coming at the end of time (as the Universal Norms for the Liturgical Year states).

Advent begins this year with Evening Prayer on Saturday, November 30th, and ends after Mid-afternoon prayer on Christmas Eve.

Advent is the time to recall the cry of the early Christians: "Maranatha!" or "Come, Lord Jesus!" A most favorite hymn in Advent (my favorite Advent hymn) is "O Come, O Come Emmanuel!"

The Church (and WE ARE the CHURCH!) is encouraged to make a Holy Confession during Advent, to "Prepare the Way of the Lord!" We don't want to invite Jesus to be born again in us if our soul is like the original manger in Bethlehem: in a dirty, smelly and broken-down heart and soul! Instead, we want Jesus to be reborn in us in a clean, welcoming, holy place to make room for Him in the Inn of our hearts and souls and love! In the warmth of love for God and for each other!

Advent is a good time to forgive others the hurts and faults that came upon us, because that is the reason Jesus was born for us in that shabby manger... to come to us as one of us, fully human (and yet He remained Fully Divine, unlike us).

God is LOVE, and we celebrate that love in Advent and Christmas! Holy Christmas is allowing Christ Jesus, to not only save us, but to dwell in us, so that we can live a holy life, a life that forgives others as Jesus did in His crucifixion. Jesus shows us how precious each of us are to Him, and how we need to work on ourselves to prepare the way of the Lord! Jesus uses us in that preparation, so we can do this by



A small sampling of Fr. Ray's Christmas decorations

loving, forgiving, and letting go of past hurts, worries, hate, past sins through Holy Confession, being more devoted to our families, being an example to others, especially your spouse and your children as a role model.

We have old clothes that we don't wear anymore, in our closets or dressers or attic. There are many homeless people, children and adults without the loving care they deserve, who would be so grateful and warm by our donating the unused clothing in the winter months and knowing someone out there cares for him or her!

This Christmas, remember with love and not sadness, loved ones whom God has called home to be with Him. Remember the poverty the Holy Family had at Jesus' birth, so we can share with others some of the things we have, especially LOVE. Enjoy the Christmas decorations, the lights and joy, the beautiful hymns and carols, and most important of all, BE the gift that the baby Jesus is sending to others! It only makes sense!

I love Christmas! My father loved Christmas. Every decoration had a story about it, and even though I heard about each story for many years as we decorated for Christmas, it was always new and exciting! I now have

had those decorations for over 40 years since my dad died, and as I have people come over to see the decorations, I tell them the exact same stories my father told me about each and every decoration and his favorite old Silver Tree that revolves around and changes colors. That tree is older than I am, but the stories behind each little thing are wonderful and still very much alive, just as Advent and Christmas are forever old, and yet, forever new!

“Oh Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here; Until the Son of God appear! REJOICE! REJOICE! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!”

May your Advent be fruitful and prayerful. May you welcome Jesus into your home, your family, your neighbors, your heart, and the friends you haven't met yet. May all hate disappear as Christ came in LOVE for you and for EVERYONE! May Christmas Peace be above all things and last throughout the years, and may Jesus, the Christ, the Savior, the very Son of God and also being GOD, be first in your life and in your actions, and in all that you see.

Now, get your fannies to Church and get to Holy Confession, and tell your priest that Father ray sent you! And think of the Blessed Mother asking us to go to monthly Confession, where Jesus is telling us to forgive as the Heavenly Father forgives. And make room in your life to allow Jesus to be re-born in you, and in our world!

You are in my prayers, whoever you are, wherever you are, and I hope you all pray for each other, and include me in your prayers, and all humanity. Pray for Peace, to the Prince of Peace! Thank the Blessed Mother for saying YES to God, and pray to Saint Joseph who had nothing but faith, love and belief that God can and does everything, and it is all out of LOVE for us, for you and for me, and for everyone!

Have a Holy Advent, and a very Blessed and Merry Christmas to one and all!

Love and many prayers,

~Father ray and Dublin and Sweet Pea ☺ (and remember, if cats and dogs can get along and love each other, so can we love each other and take care of them, in the very eyes and love of Jesus!)

Joy to the World!

By Jayne Murphy

Have you ever noticed how many times the Scriptures instruct us to be joyful? By utilizing a computerized Bible verse search, I found that we are told to be joyful 467 times! In my unscientific experiment, I typed the words “joy,” “glad,” and “rejoice” and their variations (i.e., “joyful,” “rejoicing”) into a search of the Revised Standard edition of the Bible. It scanned every book from Genesis to Revelation and found 467 incidences of these terms. For comparison, I typed in the words “sad,” “sorrow,” and “mourn” with their variations (i.e., sadness, mournful) and produced only 157 references. Even though my investigation would not earn me a doctorate in the theology, it does help reveal what I suspected: the Lord spends a lot more time than we do accentuating the positive!

Even a quick glance over Our Lady's monthly Medjugorje messages for 1997 shows nine direct references to joy and one use of the word lament. She entreats us to be joyful and peaceful in almost every message.

Advent seems to be the best time of year to strengthen our positive, joyful selves. I use the word strengthen because rejoicing can require spiritual exercise. Many people today face personal hardships and tragedies. For some, the over-commercialization of Christmas also becomes a grief that makes it difficult to be joyful. Numerous frustrations in life can cause the gladness in our hearts to wither.

But take heart! With a little effort and discipline, we can become the joyful children our Father created us to be!

- Take a stroll through your Bible and linger on passages which call us to joy.
- Exercise your memory: they named the baby “Emmanuel” – “God is with us.” Remember often that He still is!
- When weighed down by sadness, uplift yourself and others with two joyful thoughts for each unhappiness.
- Give your vocal cords a workout by singing songs of joy. Listen with your heart when you sing “Tidings of Comfort and Joy” and the other songs of the season.
- Cast out fear. The angels told the shepherds, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all people” (Lk 2:10).
- If the Christmas extras cause you stress instead of joy, exercise restraint. Concentrate on the fact that Christ was born in a stable and not at Martha Stewart's house. Having enough energy to rejoice with friends and family can be more important than an abundance of presents and cookies.
- Celebrate all of life with the wonder of a child.

Blue Letter, November 1997

Editor's note: I did a search on our website of Our Lady's past messages, current to the October 25, 2024 message and found some form of the word “joy” in 336 of the messages.



Fr. Ray singing and playing the piano

Our thanks to Fr. Ray Donohue, Carol Bleck, Laura and Kevin DiBacco, Diane Niebauer, Sue Taccone, Peggy Chludzinski, Pat Heinlein, Tom Kennedy, Kathy Wayman, Corky Young, Louise Lotze, Barb Cesare, Betsy Truran, Joan and Deacon Jerry Peterson, Sue Verga, Irene and Dan Zuba, Darleen Wilkinson, Peggy Smith, Chris Falk, Cindy Bielani, Kandace Lyons, Judy Johns, Barb Sirianni, Marlene Figurski, Ronalee Curtis, Stephanie Koshinskie, and those who want to remain anonymous for their help with the November mailing. We thank Rachel Solis Hoover for making us more prayer cloths and Dave Wilkinson and Carol Bleck for the use of their photos in this issue. We also thank our proofreader, Don Spaeder, our webmaster, Jason Klins, and our prayer group administrator, Patti Millar.

“Do You Believe in Miracles?”

The following is excerpted from a testimony by Philip Donohue on Fruit of Medjugorje (Episode #579, aired on 10/21/24).

My name is Philip Donohue and I'm from Hull, MA in the USA. I'm here in this beautiful holy place in Medjugorje to give my testimony about a miraculous event that I truly believe happened in 2019.

But before I give that beautiful testimony, I want to share with you how my faith has been cemented by the grace of God through another miraculous event in 1999.

I was admitted into the hospital, Beth Israel, which is in downtown Boston, MA. I had severe bleeding...and it was like a terrible amount of blood coming out, so they put me into the hospital for serious evaluation – MRIs, CAT scans, four days of testing and prodding and checking me out, and they weren't able to find where the bleeding was coming from. They were putting in extensive antibiotics and they were coming in every day and trying to do different tests, but they were struggling. Where was all this bleeding coming from? By the 4th night, my wife was sitting there with me at 7:00 at night, and a young doctor came in and said, “We're going to discharge you because we

feel you'll be able to get better being home just as being here in the hospital.” My wife Carol was kind of stunned. How can you send me home when I'm still bleeding badly? So she suggested I go into the bathroom and I tried to capture some of the bleeding, which I did, and when the doctor came back in with discharge papers, I directed him into the bathroom, showed him how bad I was bleeding. He was stunned. He said, “You're doing bleeding like that?” I said, “Yes, for the past four days, I've been bleeding horrible.” ... So he called on the phone and a bunch of other doctors arrived right then and there. They determined I had an artery that was bleeding and they had to operate the next morning.

After the doctors left, they scheduled me for 8:00 in the morning. My wife and I sat there for a few minutes. Then she left and I was all alone in a private room. The door was ajar in the hallway. I could see the nurse outside. The bathroom door was ajar. I started feeling really sorry for myself. I was 48 years old at the time. And I'm saying, “Woe with me. This shouldn't be happening to me. What did I do wrong to deserve this?” I was just feeling sorry for myself and I went on and on and on, probably for 10 minutes, 15 minutes in this sorrowful state – woe, woe with me. Then, all of a sudden, this absolutely beautiful, powerful male voice said to me (nobody's in the room now)...“So, Philip, how's it working for you relying on the doctors and the hospitals to get better?” I immediately thought somebody was pranking with me...and I'm looking around, under the bed. I'm looking around the room. There's nobody there. After about several seconds, it dawned on me – something's going on. So I answered, “It's not working.” And then the

voice said, “So when are you going to turn to your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for help?” Instantly it hit me like a ton of bricks. I didn't realize that for the four days I was there, I had not made one single prayer! So I answered the voice that I was going to do it right now. Then I was waiting for the voice, and I haven't heard the voice since then. I never heard it before. I'm 75 years old next week, and it was the only time that I ever had a voice talking to me. I was pinching myself to find out if I was dreaming. I wasn't dreaming. It was an absolute voice.

So I went into a really powerful, beautiful deep prayer, and I was in it for a while and then all of a sudden, I felt like I was a little baby and I'm being held in my mother's arms or in the Blessed Virgin Mary's arms. And I was snuggling with this shoulder (my left shoulder) and my head is rubbing against the holy being that was holding me and I was really feeling...I was saying, “Gosh, this feels so good. I feel great.” It was just like a beautiful blue light. It was not a baby blue, not a dark blue, like a neon blue and it was pulsing. It just felt extraordinarily beautiful and peaceful. I fell asleep or passed out, whatever it was.

I woke up in the morning and I had to go to the bathroom, because they were filling me with fluids and antibiotics. I went to the bathroom and there wasn't a drop of blood at 6:00 in the morning. Now for the past previous four days, every time I went, there was a huge amount of blood. So then I went again about 7:15 to 7:30, not a drop of blood. I know I was healed. And so when my wife arrived, I told her the story and shortly after, the doctors arrived. Beth Israel is a Jewish teaching hospital and it's a very, very good hospital. I'm proud that I knew that I've been healed through the grace of God and I told the doctors my story. As incredulous as it might have been to them, I insisted. I said, “Look guys, I know it's strange and I know just last night I was bleeding bad, but I'm 100% healed right this second and there will be no surgery. Thank you so much for your professionalism, but there will be no surgery.” They argued with me and I absolutely, emphatically told them, “No. There is no surgery. I'm healed.” That happened in 1999.

Now fast forward to 2018, the autumn of 2018, and I'm diagnosed with severe prostate cancer. This is at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, MA. Great group of people, fabulous doctors, great service. I was told that due to their testing and their methodology, that I was, on a scale of 1 to 10, a “9,” which is very, very serious. So why I mentioned the miracle that happened 20 years earlier was because I really wasn't troubled whatsoever. I put my faith in Jesus. I really, truly believed that I was going to be healed, and also knew I was going to Medjugorje at the end of May. I scheduled it six months earlier before we even knew that I had the prostate cancer.

So I went through all the radiation treatments, the



Philip giving his testimony in Medjugorje at the Mary TV studio

hormonal treatments, radioactive isotopes...For like 6-8 weeks, we were in every day for all that period of time... The doctors in the hospital accommodated me because they knew I was going to Medjugorje around the 25th of May. They were finished with their treatment and my wife and I got on the plane and came over here to Medjugorje. I was so happy that I was going to Medjugorje because we had heard so many beautiful, magnificent stories about God's grace here in Medjugorje – the Blessed Mother appearing before so many people – so many beautiful, wonderful stories of healing and God's grace. So we spent, I think it was, eight or nine days, and it was absolutely wonderful. We had 40+ people on our pilgrimage, went to many of the beautiful sites in the area, many Masses, and we went up on Cross Mountain. We went to the Blue Cross Mountain. Apparition Hill is the middle hill and Cross Mountain is the high mountain. We did those and many other of those beautiful pilgrimage trips. I could actually honestly feel that I was being healed right here in Medjugorje. I don't know how to describe how that feeling was, but it was just this tremendous peace. It's almost like you're feeling God's grace.

So anyway, we packed up and went back to Boston to do my MRIs and CAT scans, whatever they had to do just to see how the treatments they had just done were coming along. About a week later, they had the doctor in charge of radioactive treatments that they gave me – he called me in, sat me down and he asked me, "Do you believe in miracles?" I smiled and told him, "I absolutely do believe in miracles. I just came back from Medjugorje, where many, many miracles occur." He told me, in his words, that they believed that I had a miracle, that they were looking at my "before I went to Medjugorje" and my "after Medjugorje" X-rays and MRIs and there was NO TRACE, not even the slightest trace of those tumors. He said [that] why they find it is a miracle is tumors normally never disappear. In fact, he said, they never found that to happen before. I had two tumors, 9 mm and 7 mm, and it's very easy to video what I'm testifying to because it's a huge hospital, phenomenal record-keeping that they have. I absolutely was there and this all really absolutely happened. He said that they were convinced it was a miracle, and that they were very happy for me because I was completely healed.

One of the beautiful things about coming to Medjugorje and then going back home is how we try to help all our family, our friends, our neighbors, and we give testimony to people of what we've experienced, what we've seen. In my case, I really believe truly it was a miracle, confirmed by the doctors, not me. I think it helps a lot of people, not just in our area, but now with MaryTV (which I watch all the time), we can reach countless, thousands and thousands of people throughout the world. It's so beautiful that we're trying to let people who are not sure whether God is real or Jesus can hear us, know that miracles can happen. I'm absolutely living testimony that miracles DO happen, that Jesus is real, that our Catholic Church is a beautiful Church, and that we have nothing to fear. We have to genuinely try to make our Blessed Virgin Mother part of our life on a daily basis. We have to talk to Jesus on a regular basis. It's such a beautiful thing to be able to have Him right there with you...

I can understand that it sounds strange, as our beautiful

priest here in Medjugorje, Fr. Leon, says. He really doesn't care whether you believe what his testimony is [see our May 2020 issue] – and I really don't care whether you believe my testimony or not. But I'm telling you on a stack of Bibles that everything I've told you is 100% true.

Now, one of the beautiful things about Medjugorje...I had taken 10 or 12 of these beautiful Christmas Day Crucifixes from Medjugorje [see our December 2020 issue]. Fr. Leon blessed these crucifixes. I had heard the stories about Jim Browne and the healings that occurred with these crucifixes, so I specifically went to people, members of my family, who were sick. My own sister was in and out of a coma because of serious blood problems with her body. I gave several other people these holy Christmas crucifixes and every single one of them got better. One of the gentlemen that lived down in Florida with us in the wintertime, his doctor told him he had two weeks to a month to live...He had good faith. I asked him, "Please wear this crucifix, put it around your



Philip with fellow pilgrims in Medjugorje

neck and put your faith in God. Put your faith in Jesus." He was blessed to have another five years added to his life expectancy! He recently died, close to 80, so I think it was a beautiful blessing from Medjugorje that helped him have his extra five years. My sister, I talk with her once a week. She's feisty as all get-out. She's strong as an ox and all her female sicknesses are gone!

We all have our aging issues. We're not going to live forever. We know that...I handed them [the Christmas crucifixes] out to several people and all of them have gotten better...They all did. That's why I'm pretty excited about sharing my message to you folks about Medjugorje...It's real. In fact, if you come here, you'll see for yourself that these people from this region, Croatians, they're incredible people. They're so devout it's unbelievable. It just goes to show the Blessed Virgin Mary is working every single day here, helping our faith, come back to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

www.marytv.tv

Editor's note: Philip is working on obtaining the documentation from the medical professionals to substantiate the miracle, to be sent to the Apostolic Visitor in Medjugorje, Archbishop Aldo Cavalli. See page 7 for information on how to obtain a Christmas Day Crucifix.

As of November 25, 2024, the number of Masses reported for Our Lady's intentions was 40,245. How wonderful it would be to have a Mass said for Our Lady's intentions for a Christmas gift for Her Son. If you do, let us know so we can add it to the tally. Thank you.

Editor's introduction: On December 24, 2024, Pope Francis will open the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica to begin the Jubilee Year, whose theme is "Pilgrims of Hope." Deacon Jerry Peterson of the Diocese of Erie, PA, was inspired to compose these Rosary Mysteries of Hope for the Jubilee Year.

Rosary Mysteries of Hope

By Deacon Jerome Peterson

Jesus is the source of all hope. In these mysteries, Jesus feeds, calls, restores, raises, and welcomes.

1. Jesus feeds 5,000

[Jesus] said to them, "There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves." But they said to him, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have here." Then he said, "Bring them here to me," and he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied." (Mt 14: 16-21)

2. Jesus calls Peter to walk on the water

Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how [strong] the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him. (Mt 14: 28-31)

3. Jesus restores Bartimaeus' sight

[Jesus said to him] "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see." Jesus told him, "Go your way; your faith has saved you." Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way. (Mk 10: 51-52)

4. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. [But] even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (Jn 11: 21-23, 25-26)

5. Jesus welcomes the Good Thief into His kingdom

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Lk 23: 42-43)



"Hope in His goodness and redouble your confidence in proportion as your troubles increase."
~ St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, our patron saint for 2024

Christmas Eve in Medjugorje 1981

The following is used with permission from the book *My Heart Will Triumph* by visionary, Mirjana Soldo. This is an excerpt of Mirjana's account of her first Christmas Eve after the apparitions started in 1981.

St James Church overflowed with parishioners and pilgrims. Christmas trees, a nativity creche, and candles adorned the interior of the church. With no electricity at night, the only illumination besides candlelight came from two light bulbs powered by a small generator.

The main celebrant that night was Fr. Jozo Vasilj, a Franciscan priest who had been born in Medjugorje – and who would later spend over a decade of his life helping the poor in Africa before his death in 2007. Bringing the six of us visionaries to the front of the altar before Mass, Fr. Vasilj asked us to share some of our experiences. As I listened to the other five report some of the messages they had received, I was surprised to discover that they were nearly identical to the ones Our Lady had given me on the same dates. My messages, however, were always somewhat longer.

For example, when Our Lady asked everyone to fast on bread and water on Wednesdays and Fridays, she included additional things when she said it to me, such as the importance of praying while fasting, and how pleasing it was to God when we made small sacrifices.

Why, I wondered, was Our Lady telling me extra details? By then, she had also given me more secrets than she had given to the others.

Fr. Vasilj gave an impassioned homily that night. "Jesus was born at midnight and transformed night into day," he said. "He died during the day and transformed day into night. He resurrected at midnight and transformed night into day. But it does not stop there. Jesus remained to live among us. There will always be Christians on Earth, but it all depends on me and you, dear brother or dear sister, if there will be more or less."

Looking out at all the people who braved the midnight chill to attend Mass, I felt confident that Our Lady's appearances were already resulting in more believers. Praying in the dimness of St. James Church on Christmas Eve was a beautiful experience.



St. Anthony and the Christmas Day Crucifix

By June Klins

Last year, a lady named Judy called me and said she had found a copy of our newsletter from 2006 and wondered if we were still publishing. She shared with me that years ago someone had given her some water that had been blessed in Medjugorje and she used it to bless someone who was very sick and that person had a complete recovery. She asked me if the apparitions were approved yet and I explained that the commission appointed by the Vatican had recommended that the first seven days of the apparitions be approved, but it had not yet gotten the official stamp of approval. (Since that time, the Vatican did grant Medjugorje a Nihil Obstat on September 19, 2024.) We talked a little more about Medjugorje, she gave me her address for a subscription, and we hung up.

About 15-20 minutes later, Judy called me back, very excited to tell me that her mail had just come, and in the mail, she received a crucifix that had been blessed in Medjugorje! Wow! What are the odds of that? I exclaimed, "Mary is calling you!" She agreed it was no coincidence. She read me the information that came with the crucifix and I knew right away it was a Christmas Day Crucifix. I told her we have featured stories about the Christmas Day Crucifix in our December issue since 2019.

When I asked Judy who had sent her the Christmas Day Crucifix, she told me it was a friend named Grace. Judy went on to tell me how St. Anthony had led her to Grace. About five years ago, when Judy had read a plea in the newspaper

about a lost dog, Judy felt prompted to call the owner, Grace, whom she did not know, and told her to pray to St. Anthony to find the dog, even though she did not know if Grace was Catholic. Through this little act of kindness, Judy and Grace became good friends.

When Judy called to thank Grace for the crucifix, Grace told her that she had purchased the crucifix at a thrift store. Although Grace was not a practicing Catholic, she knew Judy would like the crucifix and felt that she just had to buy it for her. What she did not know, though, was that this crucifix from Medjugorje would arrive at Judy's house just minutes after she asked to be on the mailing list for *The Spirit of Medjugorje*! I suspect St. Anthony may have had something to do with leading Grace to that thrift store – and maybe even played a part in Judy's finding that issue of the newsletter from 2006! He is, after all, a favorite saint of the people in Medjugorje.

Last month, when I called Judy to ask her permission to share her story, she told me her friend's name (which she had not told me last year). We both agreed the name "Grace" seemed providential. I also wondered if Grace ever found her dog. Judy said she did not, BUT she found something even better – she found her way back to the Church!



Christmas Day Crucifix

The Christmas Day Crucifix

By June Klins

Since 2019, in our December issue, we have featured stories about special Benedictine crucifixes from Medjugorje, known as Christmas Day Crucifixes, because they were blessed by both Baby Jesus and Our Lady on Christmas Day during Vicka's apparition. Sadly, the man who started the Christmas Day Crucifix apostolate, Jim Browne, passed away rather suddenly from heart failure in his native Ireland on April 27, 2024. May he rest in peace. (Jim's incredible conversion story is in our March 2020 issue which can be read on our website.)

Barbara Kleaveland, who is the distributor of the crucifixes for the US and Canada, assured me that the Christmas Day Crucifix apostolate would continue. Jim would have wanted that for sure. Barbara told me they were able to order 50,000 crucifixes from Italy, thanks to your generous donations. The crucifixes will be blessed on Christmas Day by Jesus and Mary. The next day, St. Stephen's Day, the crucifixes will be blessed by Fr. Leon (or another priest) with the

St. Benedict exorcism blessing. The crucifixes are then taken to all parts of the world by pilgrims traveling to Medjugorje.

Barbara shared with me one of many stories she has heard about the crucifixes: "Remember the lady whose granddaughter was mute and spoke after kissing the Christmas Day Crucifix? Her daughter gives retreats all over the US. Eighteen months ago, she counseled a young lady who couldn't have a baby. She told her about the Christmas Day Crucifix and let her hold hers during the retreat. The young lady put a picture of the crucifix on her phone. She ended up getting pregnant and has a healthy baby girl named Gianna!"

If you would like to obtain a Christmas Day Crucifix (one per order), send your name and address, printed or typed legibly, and a minimum of \$7.00 for postage to Barbara Kleaveland, 822 Moulton Ave., N. Muskegon, MI 49445. (Canadians send 15.00, U.S. money order.) Any donation beyond the postage will help buy Crucifixes for next year.



Our condolences to the family of Elaine Brady, who passed away on November 22, 2024. Elaine was a faithful member of our mailing staff. Elaine had a great devotion to Our Lady and she really enjoyed helping Her by folding the newsletters.

Even up until two months ago, she would fold two boxes of newsletters (800) while going through her cancer treatments. I am sure each newsletter was folded with love.

Elaine's daughter, Mary Ellen, shared with me that Elaine had a beautiful death. The family was gathered and praying the Rosary. Mary Ellen slipped a rosary into her hands at the

Second Glorious Mystery (the Ascension) and she started to finger the rosary and opened her eyes. She passed peacefully soon after that. She will be greatly missed.

Please pray for the repose of her soul and for consolation of her family and friends. Remember that if you pray for someone who is already in Heaven, they receive what St. Thomas Aquinas called "accidental glory" – an increase in the intimacy of God's love and an increase in the soul's own intercessory power. And remember that Our Lady said in Medjugorje that more souls leave Purgatory on Christmas Day than any other day!

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MARY IS CALLING YOU

On June 24, 1981 in Medjugorje, Our Lady began appearing to six children. She identified Herself as the Blessed Virgin, Queen of Peace. 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, the Blessed Mother still appears daily to three of the visionaries, and annually to the others. They are all now adults. 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. They declare to see the Blessed Virgin as they see other people — three dimensional. They pray and speak with Her.

The Blessed Mother granted to confide ten secrets to each visionary (some are chastisements for the world). Some of the visionaries have received all ten secrets. Our Lady promised

to leave a visible sign at the original site of the apparitions in Medjugorje, for all humanity. In the meantime, this period of grace is for conversion and a deepening of faith.

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 (as in the story of Goliath). They are PRAYER with the heart, especially the Rosary; EUCHARIST; BIBLE; monthly CONFESSION; and FASTING.

On September 19, 2024 the Vatican announced that the apparitions in Medjugorje received a nihil obstat.

If you want a prayer cloth we made, send a self-addressed stamped business size (4 1/8" x 9 1/2") envelope with \$1.01 postage on it. This offer is available while supplies last.



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If you want to receive "The Spirit of Medjugorje" monthly newsletter, please fill out the form below and return to: P.O. Box 6614, Erie, PA 16512. If you are able to send a donation to help spread Mary's messages, it would be greatly appreciated. We request that you renew your subscription annually to remain on our mailing list. May God bless you.

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