



**THE SPIRIT OF MEDJUGORJE**  
P.O. BOX 6614 • ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA 16512  
[www.spiritofmedjugorje.org](http://www.spiritofmedjugorje.org)

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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.*



EDITOR: JUNE KLINS  
PHONE: (814) 898-2143  
E-MAIL: [jklins1981@verizon.net](mailto:jklins1981@verizon.net)

EDITOR EMERITUS: JOAN WIESZCZYK  
SPIRITUAL ADVISOR  
FR. RAY DONOHUE

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## MONTHLY MESSAGE OF DECEMBER 25, 2023

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.



*January 1 is the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. She has been asking us to pray for peace for years, but especially has emphasized it last year. As you make your resolutions for the New Year, we hope you will make Our Lady's Peace Plan a priority. The picture above was taken in Medjugorje. It is part of a relief sculpture by Carmelo Puzzolo, the same artist who designed the Stations of the Cross on Cross Mountain and the Mysteries of the Rosary on Apparition Hill.*

“Dear children! I am carrying my Son Jesus to you to fill your hearts with peace, because He is peace. Little children, seek Jesus in the silence of your heart that He be born anew. The world needs Jesus, therefore seek Him through prayer, because He gives Himself daily to each of you.”

(Today Our Lady came solemnly dressed with little Jesus in her arms. Jesus extended His hand in a sign of blessing as Our Lady prayed over us in Aramaic.)



Fr. Ray

# “Do-Over!”

By Fr. Ray Donohue

It still feels very much like winter and Christmas time here – snow, the beautiful Christmas lights, still listening to favorite Christmas carols and songs, but it has suddenly turned into a New Year! 2023 has been put into the past, and now we look ahead into a brand new year of 2024!

Do we feel any different than we did just a few days ago? Have our lives drastically changed so that last year is unrecognizable? Well, possibly, but doubtful. I will guess the majority of us slid into the new year as we always do, as one day goes into another day!

But there is change – a brand new year and lots of wonder what it will bring. We don’t just sit back and let things happen, however. If we do that, we not only miss out on so very much, but we are also letting God, others and ourselves down!

Change is hard, but it is also good. Many times things are what we make of them, or fail to make of them. Opportunities missed can be sad and many blessings be lost! No one would want to lose a blessing now, would we? Missing out on an opportunity is sad, especially if that opportunity was given to us by God Himself!

Many people make “New Year’s resolutions” before the stroke of 12:00 a.m. as December 31<sup>st</sup> turns into January 1<sup>st</sup> and a new year. It really is not just another day, as I keep saying; it is a door to opportunities and Graces!

What good is it if we never celebrate a birthday, thus never knowing how old we are (or how young we are)? What if we don’t keep track of certain days, such as anniversaries, and other special occasions? If each day is just another day, then where is God in all this and in our lives? What goals would we have to improve ourselves and our families and neighborhood and world? What a boring place this would be, and we would sure let God down in so many ways, as well as ourselves and families and everyone else! We have an opportunity to begin again, not talking resolutions, but real change in our habits!

How many of us pray as the Blessed Mother asks us to pray, as from our hearts? Be honest, don’t we sometimes pray the Holy Rosary so fast all the while thinking of other things? Sometimes I find myself praying and then realize I haven’t a clue what I just prayed, in my Breviary, or Holy Rosary, or prayers I have on prayer cards. I just mumbled a lot of words and I am supposed to call that “prayer?” Intentions are good, but if I intended to feed my dog, Dublin, and didn’t do it, is he fed and happy or is his stomach growling, and possibly growling at me?

A great new start is to really just start simple and make prayer times when you are not sleepy or have to run to

the store, but to take our time, and as a wonderful Mother told us a few thousands times: “Pray with our Hearts!” All prayer is good, but just reciting words either out loud or silently doesn’t mean much if our hearts aren’t there with us!

When that happens to me, I smile, apologize, and start over and BOY, does that make a huge difference in my praying and love! Prayer is so important just as communication is to us on earth. Would you love it if your spouse, or child, or friends, or church members just rattled a bunch of stuff at you, but you could see that their minds and their thoughts and their earthly presence were thousands of miles away from you? If you shouted: “Billy, throw out the garbage” so that even your neighbors who had their windows closed

could hear you a block away, and yet dear little Billy was deaf to it completely, or, if he did hear you, it didn’t “take” in his mind, he simply answered, “OK, Mom,” but did absolutely nothing but sit there and drift off into space – how would that make you feel?

When we simply throw words at God and our Blessed Mother and the Saints, with no thought behind it, out of habit, and say the exact same thing with no thought each day or night, ask ourselves: “Am I really praying?” Ask yourselves: “Can I do better? Can I pray better, maybe even PRAY FROM MY HEART?” Remember, when I am saying

this all to you, I am saying it right back to me, because I know I need to pray better, do better, put my heart and soul and TIME into my prayers, my relationships with others, my time at Holy Mass in deep prayer, following the Mass and not answering prayers out of habit, but answering the prayers out of deep love from my heart!

When I pray the words at Holy Mass: “AMEN,” I mean it. “Amen” means: “YES, LORD, I agree.” It means: “This I believe, and I want to be a huge part of it and make it my own!”

There are times, and this is for all of us, as we all do this at times, when we go on “automatic pilot” in prayers and at Holy Mass, when in the Eucharistic prayer at the Holy Consecration, there are prayers that say: “Through Christ our Lord,” but do not call for a response afterwards by anyone of “Amen,” and yet, when we drift a bit, at almost every Mass, someone will shout out a big: “AMEN.” Is that bad? No, it isn’t, but it does mean we are drifting, and going back on automatic prayer pilot!

So, it is a New Year! Make your resolutions, they are good. But first, ask God and our Blessed Mother to help us. Ask our favorite Saints to assist us.

Don’t make resolutions that you know you can’t do or will give up quickly. Make things doable for yourselves. A good resolution we can all do is to be happier! God loves happiness; the happier we are, the happier God is! Help out shelter animals, with a donation or an adoption. Help homeless shelters



People praying at Eucharistic Adoration in Medjugorje

*“In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words” (Mt 6: 7).*



with new or gently used clothing that you don't need or wear anymore. Someone sure could use that donation! Give to places like Saint Jude's or other charities, local food banks (and don't give them a bunch of expired canned goods of goose livers and turkey feet), but donate something nice that you would like to have. In this way, you feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and really make a huge difference, as this is prayer in action! *"May this time be interwoven with prayer for peace and good deeds..." (Our Lady, November 25, 2023)*

The possibilities are endless, so ask God in Holy Prayer: "Dear Lord God, what would You like me to do? Will You help me, dear Lord, and direct my love to where it needs to go the most? Will You give me patience and strength to do Your will? Will You help me to make monthly Confessions and keep to it all year long, but if I miss a month, don't let the devil tell me I screwed up and then stop altogether, but get to Confession and the Holy Sacraments as soon as I can get there!"

Remember, the devil will want to foil your efforts, BUT he WILL NOT WIN!!! You and God and all of us won't let the

miserable devil win anything; that is why we have prayer, Holy Mass, Holy Confession and all the Holy Sacraments, and good works to follow our good intentions!

Happy New Year, and make the most of it! If you fall, get right back up, dust yourself off, and start all over again! Let us especially keep each other in Holy Prayer always. Pray the St. Michael prayer daily, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, the Holy Rosary, and get to daily Mass as often as you can. Prayer can change us and change the world! Prayer WILL change us and change the world! It is a brand new year. Nothing is written on the blackboard, but God just gave you a holy piece of chalk to write anything you want and do on that board. Write good and holy things, and see how good 2024 can be by your efforts and the love of our God! So, don't be afraid to do "Do-Overs." All of Jesus' Apostles and followers learned that by their love and commitment to Jesus!

In the Spirit of Medjugorje and all the love that comes from there,

~Father ray and my little New Year's Dublin-dog ☺

## Patron Saint for 2023

For many years, we have been randomly choosing the name of a saint to be the "holy protector" for *The Spirit of Medjugorje* for the year. St. Faustina's community used to do this every year on New Year's Day (St. Faustina's Diary, #360). This can be a fun and educational thing to do with your family and friends. Almost always, there is a connection between the saint and the person or group who randomly picked it.

Although any list of saints can be used, there is one we recommend on the website, [www.marytv.tv](http://www.marytv.tv). You can also use the saint generator on [jenniferfulwiler.com/saints](http://jenniferfulwiler.com/saints). However you choose, it is important to pray to the Holy Spirit first! The tradition goes that it is the saint who chooses you, not the other way around. As you pray with the saint every day, that saint will pray for you and help you. On October 25, 2020, Our Lady said, *"Invoke the help of all the saints, for them to be an example and a help to you."*

At our December mailing, I asked Fr. Ray, our spiritual advisor, to pick the saint from our bag of saints. He picked



St. Margaret Mary

St. Thérèse of Lisieux. I get pretty overwhelmed on mailing day, so it was not until later that night that I realized she had been our patron in 2021. Since the saint stays with us after the year is over, we needed to pick a different one. We need all the heavenly intercessors we can get!

So I decided for the first time ever, I would pick the saint – but not by myself. Holding a relic of St. Thérèse in my left hand, I asked her to guide my right hand to the perfect saint for us for 2024. Well, when I looked at the paper, I smiled as I saw that St. Thérèse guided me to

another French saint – St. Margaret Mary Alacoque! Since St. Margaret Mary just happened to be my patron saint for 2023, she must have guided my hand also. I can just see the two of them giggling together in Heaven. Aren't we just so blessed?!!!

St. Margaret Mary is best known for spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In December of 1674, Jesus appeared to her 13 times and asked her to promote a strong devotion to His Sacred Heart. He also shared promises with her for those who prayed this Sacred Heart devotion. In 1882, a man named Philip Kemper collected these promises from her writings, and made a list of the principal ones, which he then disseminated throughout the world. Official approval was given by Pope Leo XIII in 1899. These became known as the famous "Twelve Promises" of the Sacred Heart:

1. I will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life.
2. I will establish peace in their homes.
3. I will comfort them in all their afflictions.
4. I will be their secure refuge during life, and above all, in death.
5. I will bestow abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.
6. Sinners will find in My Heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Lukewarm souls shall become fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection.
9. I will bless every place in which an image of My Heart is exposed and honored.
10. I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts.
11. Those who shall promote this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart.
12. I promise you in the excessive mercy of My Heart that My all powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Fridays in nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in My disgrace, nor without receiving their sacraments. My divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.

# My Medjugorje Miracle Was Right On Time

By Annemarie Harrington-Tenney

I first learned about a place called Medjugorje when I was in college. It was then that my parents told me that the Blessed Mother was appearing to several children in communist Yugoslavia. The thought that the Blessed Mother was appearing on earth in my lifetime was absolutely fascinating to me. I yearned to learn more about Her appearances and asked many questions. However, my fascination quickly turned into absolute disbelief, when my parents announced that they were planning to travel halfway around the world to this communist country in order to experience an apparition...ARE THEY TOTALLY CRAZY?

Upon my parents' return from Medjugorje, I saw a visible change in them. They were now eager to share their experiences of the spinning sun and their rosaries turning to gold with everyone and anyone they met. My parents were on fire and filled with love for the Blessed Mother and Jesus. I remember thinking, "I want what they've got." So, I found myself praying to Our Lady that one day I, too, could experience Medjugorje and have my life changed as well. After I said this prayer, I knew that one day I would be given the opportunity to see and experience Medjugorje for myself, but I would have to leave the "when" up to our Blessed Mother.

Fast forward 30 years later, when I was finally invited by Our Lady to go to Medjugorje. By this time in my life, I was a wife and a mother of two college students who had very busy schedules. I thought, "How was I going to find the time to go NOW in my life?" However, when the Blessed Mother calls you to go, you need to trust that Her timing is perfect. It also helps that since She is our Mother, She continued to gently, but persistently, nudge me with the constant thoughts of Medjugorje!

So, it was on one snowy day in January 2018 when I was at Adoration that I finally answered Her call, well sort of.... You see I wanted to make sure Our Lady was actually calling me to go, so I remember praying specifically that if I ran into June Klins, had the opportunity to speak with her about this calling AND she was able to give me information on how to get there, THEN I would consider going. However, I quickly added to my prayer by saying I wanted my entire family to go, especially my non-Catholic husband and my busy children, AND if Our Lady could invite a few of our friends to make it more fun for everyone, THEN I would go. Nothing like placing a bunch of stipulations on the Blessed Mother's call, right?!

Well, I am happy to say that when the Blessed Mother wants you to go to Medjugorje, then none of these stipulations can stop Her! Guess who walked into Adoration that day? Yes, it was June Klins! Guess who walked out of Adoration with me and talked to me about Medjugorje? Yes, it was June Klins! Guess who provided me with information on a tour going to Medjugorje? Yes, it was June Klins! Much to my surprise, the first part of my prayer had been answered and I hadn't even left Adoration yet!

Although I was amazed at the quick pace Our Lady had worked to provide me with the necessary information that day, I truly doubted that my family and friends would be able to go halfway around the world to Medjugorje with me. Yes, you may have guessed that the Blessed Mother did all

the work again by opening the hearts of my family and friends to Her call, so within a few weeks we were all planning our trip to Medjugorje. However, to say that my husband was excited to go would be a total lie. He was extremely skeptical that the Blessed Mother was truly appearing on earth and that he would witness miracles, but he was going – if only for my sake – but he was going!! I believe that getting everyone to go to Medjugorje, especially my husband, was our first Medjugorje miracle.

For five days prior to our departure and during our travel, I experienced a horrible migraine. I honestly thought my head was going to explode from the constant pain. I was unable to eat, sleep or pray due to the pain. When we finally arrived in Medjugorje, I approached our Spiritual Director, Fr. Bill Kiel, to ask him for prayer. Some of you may remember Fr. Bill, since he was the Spiritual Advisor for this Medjugorje newsletter [prior to his death in 2019] and that he had the beautiful gift of healing. So, at the time, I expected him to pray with me for a healing, but instead, he informed me that I needed to sit down for dinner and he quickly added that he would "pray for me." About 20 minutes later, while we were eating dinner, Fr. Bill asked me if I was feeling better, and to my surprise, my headache was completely gone and I was enjoying dinner for the first time in days! This was my second Medjugorje miracle.

Our Lady continued to bless us throughout our pilgrimage by our witnessing of many miracles such as the weeping Risen Jesus statue, the spinning sun, the disappearance of the cross on Cross Mountain, the mystical scent of roses on Apparition Hill, the changing of Our Lady's eyes on a statue in Tihaljina, etc. I consider these Medjugorje miracles number three, four, five, six and seven.

However, one of our greatest miracles, our eighth Medjugorje miracle occurred three years later on April 4, 2021 when my husband became Catholic, and received all of his sacraments at the Easter Vigil Mass!

Medjugorje is all about conversions of heart. What greater miracle can you experience than a change of heart and committing your life to Jesus through our Catholic faith? During those three years after Medjugorje, my husband's heart was changing. He prayed the Rosary daily, began to attend weekly Mass, became enrolled in the Brown Scapular and willingly went through the RCIA program to become Catholic.

As I look back on my 30 years waiting to experience Medjugorje, some would say that I had to wait a lifetime to go; however I would beg to differ because my Medjugorje miracles were right on time!

*Editor's note: Annemarie traveled to Medjugorje with Den Todaro. Den's next pilgrimage to Medjugorje will be June 10-20. For more information, you can call Den at 724-837-7434.*



Annemarie and her husband, Brian, at Tihaljina





Jacov wearing a shirt with the logo of his charity, Mary's Hands

## Jacov's "Smorgasbord of Spiritual Treasures"

The following is excerpted with permission from the book, *Twilight of Marxism: Medjugorje, The Downfall of Systematic Evil, and the Fulfillment of the Secret of Fatima* by Dr. Thomas Petrisko.

Jacov [also spelled Jakov] was the only child among the six visionaries when the visions began in 1981. [The others were teenagers.]

Consequently, like Jacinta and Francisco at Fatima, his experiences and perspectives are fascinating. He was, to say the least, truly enraptured by what was happening at the time. And, therefore, his sincerity in desiring people to believe him was undeniable during the first month of the apparitions, when there was so much ridicule. His comprehension of the Virgin's message, however, in lieu of his age at the time, was no different than the others in content, and held a uniqueness that resonated with listeners.

According to the Franciscans, Jacov took to the Virgin's message quickly and never hesitated from the beginning to share what he was learning from Mary. It was information and advice that added up to a smorgasbord of spiritual treasures, making his listeners smile and feel confident that his experiences validated the authenticity of the visions in a special way. The Virgin, says Jacov, from the very beginning has filled his heart with the desires of Heaven. Because of this, he always counts the minutes and moments of her arrival on the days of her apparitions, which is now only once a year. Nothing on Earth, he emphasizes often, can satisfy his heart like the joy and happiness he experiences in the presence of the Madonna. Mary has taught Jacov to trust that God's love makes all things well, if we totally surrender to it. Consequently, in his life, he understands he has been chosen as a messenger of Mary's apparition[s] at Medjugorje, and that is his role. No matter the hardships, God will make all things well for him. He embraces both the joys and the sufferings that come with his role, as he understands that those who receive great spiritual blessings also receive heavy crosses. Mary, Jacov says, is in Medjugorje to help the world understand that her Son wants all people to turn to Him. She wants the world to know Jesus more intimately as our brother, our Savior, our Lord. The means to this, he tells people, is deep interior prayer – and the greatest interior prayer is the Mass.

All creation, says Jacov, has a relationship with the Eternal Father. Therefore, the more intimate our relationship with Jesus in the Mass, the more intimate our relationship with the Eternal Father.

This begins, Jacov explains, with a person's heart. The Blessed Mother wants our hearts to be attracted to the things of God and not to people and materialism. People and possessions, he says, cause us to lose control of our lives, to lose our true freedom. This is something we don't even realize is happening to us.

When our hearts are all ours, Jacov asserts, we put God in first place and then have *interior freedom*. God can then enter our hearts and drive out illusions and attachments. His love can then flow through us to others, and we become filled with this love. In essence, Jacov says we become like Mary, as our love flows out to the world.

In interviews, Jacov has spoken of the following:

- The Virgin Mary has asked people to be careful of the problem of the tyranny of the memories – past pains, sorrows, and even sinful memories that brought pleasure, that need to be surrendered to God.
- If we attach our hearts to people and things, we lose our hearts for God. We must put God in the first place in our lives.
- People have the laws of God – which is the path to Heaven – written in their hearts. But they reject them. This causes Mary great sadness.
- The human heart is often most untrustworthy. It can refuse God's mercy. Prayer and fasting helps the human heart hear and see God. We then can choose God and accept His love.
- The Virgin has told Jacov that people must forgive. Not to forgive hurts us more than it hurts them. When we pray and fast and truly forgive, we have peace. This is the path the whole world needs to take.
- The Virgin Mary says that those who know God, love God. They are a sign of His love, His peace, His generosity.
- There is not a single creature that is unloved by God.
- When fasting is for love of self instead of love of God, it has a reverse effect. It has no lasting value.
- Our motives are important. We need to pray that all of our motives are pure.
- The human heart is very weak. It is fasting, prayer, forgiveness, and reconciliation that frees the human heart.
- Those who have little suffering are as dear to God as are those who suffer greatly. One's attitude toward suffering is what matters, not the degree. People should never compare sufferings. Any comparison is our own human judgment. Only God can see the human heart.
- Everyone should have a "prayer corner" somewhere in their home. This is the special place where they can be alone and feel near to the Lord.

## Jacov's Message on December 25, 2023

At the last daily apparition to Jacov Colo on Sept. 12, 1998, Our Lady told him he would have one apparition a year, on Christmas Day. The December 25, 2023 apparition began at 2:20 p.m. and lasted 6 minutes. Our Lady gave the following message: "Dear children, today with my Son in my arms, I desire to call all of you to pray to the little Jesus for the healing of your heart. Children, often in your hearts sin rules which destroys your

life and you cannot feel God's presence. That is why, on this day of grace, when grace is spreading throughout the whole world, surrender your life and your heart to the Lord, so that the Lord may heal them with His grace. Only with pure hearts will you be able to experience the birth of Jesus anew in you, and the light of His birth will illuminate your life. I bless you with my motherly blessing. Thank you for having responded to my call."

## The Call of St. Matthew (and Us)

*The following is excerpted from a homily by Fr. Leon Pereira, chaplain for the English-speaking people in Medjugorje, on September 21, 2020. We are grateful to Cathy Nolan from marytv.tv for the original entire transcription.*

The painter Michelangelo Caravaggio – now he's more popularly known by his surname because of the other Michelangelo, who is the famous one (Michelangelo Buonarroti) – Caravaggio was a bit of a bad boy. He was... actually, he was a terrible person in many ways – which is why he is one of my favorites. He was always getting into fights. He had addictions; he was gambling. And he was very religious as well. He tried running away from his past, but his past was always catching up with him. And he went in desperation to do penance on the island of Malta, lived with some monks. He had no money to pay them, so he made many paintings... Then his past caught up with him again. And he accidentally killed someone...he was on his way to the Pope to beg for forgiveness when he died on a beach somewhere not too far from the Pope.

Caravaggio is famous for a technique in painting we call "chiaroscuro." Chiaroscuro means "light and shadow." Before Caravaggio, people who wanted to paint shadows, they painted black. And it was black. But Caravaggio didn't do that. He painted a deep red and then over that, he painted black. And then when you look at it, you realize that the darkness has a certain depth to it. The reason he did this was because of the darkness within him. He knew that the darkness is not just dark. The problem is, if you stare too long at the dark, you realize that the dark has a pair of eyes and is staring back. Caravaggio knew evil because he saw it within himself. This is the reason, you know, when people do stupid things like reiki or tarot cards or Ouija board, then they're surprised that they have evil spirits attaching to them. Don't be surprised! If you stare at the dark, the dark stares back.

Now, chiaroscuro: light and shadow. In the church of San Luigi dei Francesi in Rome – this is the national French church in Rome... there's a famous painting of the gospel you heard today: The Call of St. Matthew. In it you have Jesus pointing at Matthew, calling him. And then you have Peter next to Jesus pointing like, "You mean, him?" And then you have Matthew pointing, "Do you mean me?" ...All sorts of things are going on. First of all, Caravaggio deliberately paints the source of light in the whole painting as Jesus... Look at this painting carefully – look it up on the Internet – and you'll see the light actually comes from Jesus outwards, and all the shadows follow accordingly.

Now, the finger-pointing is important. Let's go back. Let's start at the ending. Matthew – there's actually two Matthews. There's one Matthew pointing and wondering, "Do you really mean me?" And then there's another Matthew who is busy still counting the money, not looking at Jesus. Caravaggio is saying, "When you are called by God, you have a choice." You can carry on with your lousy life, still counting the money, in Matthew's case. Or you can look at Jesus and say, "Do you mean me?"

Now Matthew here is beset by doubts: Am I worthy enough? Do you really mean me? Do you even know who I am? Do you know my name? And of course, the Lord knows us. He knows us by name and calls us by

name. So, we have the first obstacle, my own doubts about myself – my unworthiness, my thoughts about my unworthiness, my unsuitability, surely someone else will be far better for this?

The second one, the one that hampers us perhaps more, is Peter: "You mean, this guy?" Our friends and family – these are the people who do not want us to change. You come back from Medjugorje and they say, "Ahhh, now you're pretending to be 'Holy Joe,' but we know what you're really like. Don't try and fool us. We know what the measure of you really is."

And these are the major obstacles in our spiritual life: other people and listening to them...When I was a child, I was told, "You're clumsy," "You're good for nothing," blah, blah, blah. And then later on, when I grew up, I kept believing I was clumsy. Then I found I was actually quite capable. And I thought, "They were lying; they were lying when they told me I was... whatever."

And also another lie that they told me, was they kept saying to me, "You're shy, you're shy." So, I believed this... And I remembered once, I was in Oxford in my 30s, training as a Dominican. And I was at dinner with my friends, and I said to them, "You know, I'm really shy." And they did the best thing anyone could have done for me – they all burst out laughing. And they were crying with their tears running down their faces. And they said, "You, shy?! How ridiculous!" And when they did that, I thought, "Oh yeah, I'm not actually shy."

So, don't believe the stuff people tell you about yourself! Why? Because they're just projecting their own rubbish at you, their own inadequacies, their own failures, their own weaknesses...you just have to shrug your shoulders and say, "Whatever." Do not believe them. It is absolute nonsense.

Then, here comes the cure – how you don't have to believe them – Jesus! How does He point? Caravaggio deliberately does something very beautiful and very clever. When Jesus points, he makes Jesus' hand do something like this (gestures with a softly curved pointing hand)...It is on the Sistine Chapel on the ceiling. When God creates Adam, He points something like this. Caravaggio is saying, "When Jesus points at you and calls you by name, it is like when God created Adam." Jesus is creating you anew. He is making you a new creation by calling you by name.

Matthew is not actually Matthew's name. We've seen the gospels. He is known as "Levi, son of Alphaeus." And here, he is called, "Matthew." Why? Most likely, Jesus gave him a new name,



Fr. Leon

*"You shall be called by a new name bestowed by the mouth of the Lord" (Is 62:2).*



meaning, "You are a new person. I make you new!" Forget about your past. Forget about what other people say about you. Forget about your own doubts about yourself. You are a new creation through the Holy Spirit, through the action of Jesus, by the Love of the Father. This is what happens to us in the call of Jesus.

I said, "Do not stare at the dark too long. The darkness has eyes and will stare back." Do not be obsessed with evil and the occult, and those kinds of stupid things. Look only at the light. Chiaroscuro. Caravaggio knew that. Don't look at the darkness. Look at the light. And the source of light is Jesus.

[www.maryto.tv](http://www.maryto.tv)

## A Croatian Eucharistic Miracle

*Editor's introduction: Last month Ryan Stauffer mentioned Eucharistic miracles in his testimony of how Jesus in the Eucharist changed his life. I was surprised to discover that there is a Eucharistic miracle 219 miles (as the crow flies) from Medjugorje in a town named Ludbreg. Here is the story from [TheRealPresence.org](http://TheRealPresence.org).*

In 1411 at Ludbreg, a Croatian town, in the chapel of the Count Batthyany's castle, a priest was celebrating Mass. During the consecration of the wine, the priest doubted the truth of transubstantiation, and the wine in the chalice turned into Blood. Not knowing what to do, the priest embedded this relic in the wall behind the main altar. The workman who did the job was sworn to silence. The priest also kept it secret and revealed it only at the time of his death. After the priest's revelation, news quickly spread and people started coming on pilgrimage to Ludbreg.

The Holy See later had the relic of the miracle brought to Rome, where it remained for several years. The people of Ludbreg and the surrounding area, however, continued to make pilgrimages to the castle chapel.

In the early 1500s, during the pontificate of Pope Julius II, a commission was convened in Ludbreg to investigate the facts connected with

the Eucharistic miracle. Many people testified that they had received marvelous cures while praying in the relic's presence.

On April 14, 1513, Pope Leo X published a Bull permitting veneration of the holy relic which he himself had carried in procession several times through the streets of Rome. The relic was later returned to Croatia.

In the 18th century, northern Croatia was ravaged by the plague. The people turned to God to call upon His help, and the Croatian Parliament did the same. During the session held on December 15, 1739 in the city of Varazdin, they vowed to build a chapel at Ludbreg in honor of the miracle if the plague ended. The plague was averted, but the promised vow was only fulfilled in 1994, when democracy was restored in Croatia.

The relic of the blood has remained perfectly intact and is kept in a precious monstrance made at the request of Countess Eleonora Batthyany-Stratton in 1721.

Today the precious relic of the miraculous Blood still draws thousands of the faithful, and every year at the beginning of September, the so-called "Sveta Nedilja – Holy Sunday" is celebrated for an entire week in honor of the Eucharistic miracle that occurred in 1411.



*Since 1721, the relic of the Precious Blood has been kept in a precious monstrance of the Augsburg goldsmiths' school commissioned by Countess Eleonora Batthyany-Stratton, who gave it as a gift to the church in Ludbreg.*

### A New Year's Prayer

May God make your year a happy one!  
 Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain,  
 But by strengthening you to bear it, as it comes;  
 Not by making your path easy,  
 But by making you sturdy to travel any path;  
 Not by asking hardships from you,  
 But by taking fear from your heart;  
 Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,  
 But by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows;  
 Not by making your life always pleasant,  
 But by showing you when people and their causes  
 need you most,  
 And by making you anxious to be there to help.  
 God's love, peace, hope and joy to you  
 For the year ahead.  
 ~ Anonymous (Excerpted from a church bulletin)

**As of December 25, 2023, the number of Masses reported for Our Lady's intentions was 39,888.**

**Thank you.**

*Our thanks to Fr. Ray Donohue, Carol Bleck, Tom McIntire, Elaine Brady, Diane Niebauer, Becky Delavern, Sue Taccone, Laura and Kevin DiBacco, Pat Heinlein, Marlene Figurski, Kathy Luschini, Corky Young, Judy Johns, Tom Kennedy, Barb Cesare, Sue Verga, Georgia Chludzinski, Betsy Truran, Peggy Chludzinski, Cindy Bielamin, Joan Peterson, Barb Sirianni, Darleen Wilkinson, Peggy Smith, Kandace Lyons, and those who want to remain anonymous for their help with the December mailing. We thank Louise Lotze for the use of her photos in this issue. We also thank our proofreaders, Don Spaeder and Pat Berrier, our webmaster, Jason Klins, and our prayer group administrator, Patti Millar.*

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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.

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

If you want a prayer cloth we made, send a self-addressed stamped business size (4 1/8" x 9 1/2") envelope with \$.90 postage on it.



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